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There must be certain leading personalities in the society who will be conducting the masses, who will be giving proper guidance to the ignorant, oppressed and suppressed persons.

– Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar

Fundamental Principles of PROUT

1. No individual should be allowed to accumulate any physical wealth without the clear permission or approval of the collective body
2. There should be maximum utilization and rational distribution of all mundane, supra mundane and spiritual potentialities of the universe
3. There should be maximum utilization of the physical, metaphysical and spiritual potentialities of unit and collective body of the human society.
4. There should be a proper adjustment amongst these physical, metaphysical, mundane, supra mundane and spiritual utilizations.
5. The method of utilization should vary in accordance with the changes in time, space and person and the utilization should be of progressive nature.

Editor
Ácárya Santosánanda Avadhúta

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Head Office : Prout Bhawan, JC-48, Khirki Extension
Main Road, Malviya Nagar, New Delhi - 110017
Mobile No. : 09212199658, 9810625082 Email : prout.am@gmail.com

For enquiries, please contact :
Mobile No(s). : 9999626164, 9350860274
Email : proutcustomercare@gmail.com

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Contents

VOLUME 45 | ISSUE 07 | JULY 2024

09

INDIA'S BLISTERING HEATWAVE AFFECTS MOSTLY THE POOR

Feature

09 SOCIAL EVILS
The Three Causes of Sin

22 NEW GOVERNMENT
Can the New Government Solve the Burning Issues

30 VULNERABLE PEOPLES
World's Forgotten Tribes

34 WOMEN AT THE FORE
Women Breaking into Male Bastions

15 NATURE AMISS
Alienation from the Natural World

26 HUNGER
Stuffed Granaries and Empty Stomachs : Hunger in India

38 IRAN FUTURES
Iranian Nationalism : Comment and Discussion

18 PROUT FUTURES
Decentralized And Integrated Energy Systems : Energy Futures in Transition

REGULARS
06 Editorial
07 Letters
08 Inspirational
43 Activities
50 Prabhat Samgiita

40 ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY
Sandeshkhali and the Exploitative Aquaculture of the Bengal Delta

PRIORITIES FOR THE NEW GOVERNMENT

After a 44 day cacophonous campaign during a long period of bitterly fought election in seven phases starting April 19, finally ended on June 1, 2024. With summer temperatures soaring to new heights, the results were declared on June 4. No doubt conducting an election of this scale is a monumental task requiring meticulous planning to ensure that the voting rights of the country's vast population are upheld. This election listed approximately 968 million eligible voters; out of them nearly 637 million exercised their franchise.

On June 6, the CEC and the two ECs met the President at Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi and submitted the list of MPs elected to the 18th Lok Sabha. The BJP with 240 seats (much lower than 303 it won in 2019) leading the NDA secured absolute majority in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections by winning 292 seats. And the new Government was sworn in by the President on the 9th.

People braving the scorching heat to cast their vote

The Election Commission of India's catchy phrase 'Celebration of Democracy' representing the world's largest electoral movement in terms of both manpower and resources, came at great cost. As per media reports, the 2024 election is expected to cost a staggering Rs 1.35 lakh crores — more than double the amount of the last election. Why in the name of humanity should it be so, especially in a country like India where poverty is pegged at 11.6% for rural and 6.3% in urban areas? And where, as of 2022 statistics, every night 35 crore people go to sleep hungry.

President Droupadi Murmu receives the list of elected members to the 18th Lok Sabha from the Chief Election Commissioner of India (CEC) Rajiv Kumar and Election Commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu.

So the new Government needs to get real about its priorities leaving campaign rhetoric behind. India despite being a large economy (aiming to take 3rd place from 5th) is still a poor country. At per capita income of $ 2,730 in current dollars, India is 136th and have more poor people than any country in the world. This malady is due to lack of jobs and inequality, both inter related. The unemployment problem is particularly distressing due to the fact that 80% of India's unemployed are youth as per ILO's India Employment Report — and the low female labour force. Deepening inequality currently at its highest since 1922 is caused by rising unemployment. The new government should take this to heart and get down to business and address these core issues.

Ideology Goal and Devotion

An excellent choice of Baba's article for the cover story! Just right for the occasion. Also the choice of devotional poems on Baba for his birthday with the background of the celestial spectacle in Ladakh is very good.

- Ravi Walia, Ludhiana

Prout -- Ananda Purnima Issue

Thank you for this illuminating Prout Annada Purnima digital issue. Baba's endearing photo says it all who He is and what He came here for. As He said, even while wrongfully incarcerated in Jail and while fasting to protest administration of poison to Him, "Why do you think I created Prout? Do you think I can sleep -- when there is so much suffering? It is my duty to help these people". Throughout human history a large majority of people have been suffering, due to incessant wars, immoral rulers, and non-implementation of Yama and Niyama of Astaunga Yoga. On the other side, while we keep talking about Prout, it is important to understand why Prout is not even known to people outside the small circle of Ananda Marga worldwide, and why Prout cannot be brought about. People should think about it, and to provide solution to this issue. In human history, any new socio-political, scientific, or medical concept can only be brought about by its teaching and development within the university system. Universities have been the agents of new knowledge in all fields of human development. So we need to have Academic Programs on Ananda Marga ideology and especially Prout form of governance offered at universities. This can even promote doctoral research on Prout impact in societal development. Through this academic development, people can come to know about Prout, its principles and community structuring, ending with the formation of the World Government by which the UN Sustainable Development Goals can be implemented. So let us embark on this visionary odyssey to make Baba's ideology and Prout form of governance known to the world, for the common good.

- Acarya Danjoo Ghista USA

What Kind of Economy is PROUT

A very well balanced approach towards solving the economic problems of the day caused due to centuries of Capitalism.

- Mahesh Kriplani, Navi Mumbai

Educated Unemployed

This is a big problem that faces the country today. People who have degrees from universities can't get jobs. As all of them cannot become entrepreneurs this problem needs to be solved most urgently. The new Govt. in office should address this without delay.

- Ramakrishna Menon, Kochi

China is not Socialist

A very thought provoking article. China is often referred to as 'People's Republic of Capitalism' where the capitalists are members of the Chinese Communist Party holding high offices in the Politbureau.

- Chun Fang, Minnesota, USA

Uttrakhand Forest Fires

It's an eye opener. We need to promote a culture of taking safety precautions to prevent such catastrophic consequences and great damage to the environment.

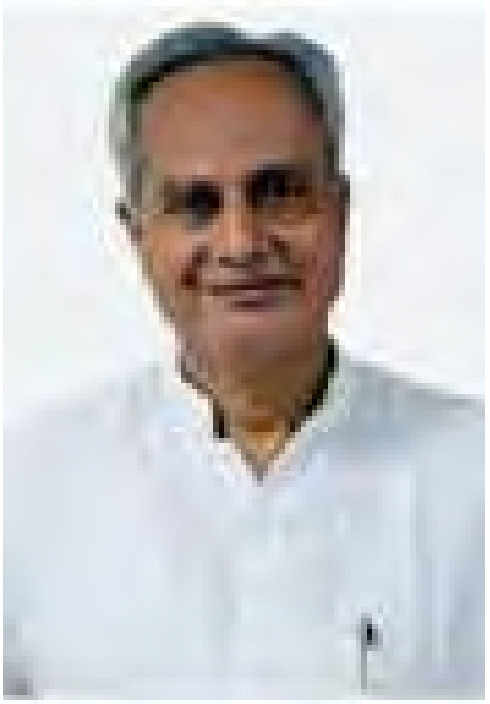
- Shweta Bisht, Almora

Indian Women Seafarers

Wonderful to see women in India breaking into fields traditionally dominated by men before! Look forward to read more such articles in Prout. ●

- Aruna, Sharma, NOIDA, UP

Harakchand Savla



Meet Harakchand Savla, the social worker who has provided free food and medicine to the impoverished patients and their relatives at the Tata Cancer Hospital at Mumbai for over 30 years

A young man in his thirties used to stand on the footpath opposite the famous Tata Cancer Hospital at Mumbai and stare at the crowd in front- fear plainly written upon the faces of the patients standing at death's door; their relatives with equally grim faces running around.. These sights disturbed him greatly..

Most of the patients were poor people from distant towns. They had no idea whom to meet, or what to do. They had no money for medicines, not even food. The young man, heavily depressed, would return home. 'Something should be done for these people', he would think. He was haunted by the thought day and night.

At last he found a way-

He rented out his own hotel that was doing good business and raised some money. From these funds he started a charitable activity right opposite Tata Cancer Hospital, on the pavement next to Kondaji Building. He himself had no idea that the activity would continue to flourish even after the passage of 27 years. The activity consisted of providing free meals for cancer patients and their relatives. Many people in the vicinity approved of this activity. Beginning with fifty, the number of beneficiaries soon rose to hundred, two hundred, three hundred and more. As the numbers of patients increased, so did the number of helping hands.

As years rolled by, the activity continued; undeterred by the change of seasons, come winter, summer or even the dreaded monsoon of Mumbai. The number of beneficiaries soon reached 700.

Mr Harakhchand Savla, for that was the name of the pioneer, did not stop here. He started supplying free medicines for the needy. In fact, he started a medicine bank, enlisting voluntary services of three doctors and three pharmacists. A toy bank was opened for kids suffering from cancer. The 'Jeevan Jyot' trust founded by Mr Savla now runs more than 60 humanitarian projects. Savla, now 57 years old, works with the same vigour. A thousand salutes to his boundless energy and his monumental contribution!

Crores of devotees hunting for 'God' in Vithoba temple at Pandharpur, Sai temple at Shirdi, Balaji temple at Tirupati will never find 'God'. God resides in our vicinity. But we, like mad men run after 'god-men', styled variously as Bapus Maharajs.All Maharajs and Bapus who become multi-millionnaires, but our difficulties, agonies and disasters persist unabated till death. For last 27 years, millions of cancer patients and their relatives have found 'God', in the form of Harakhchand Savla. ●

THE THREE CAUSES OF SIN

Criminal codes are generally framed by politicians according to their own standards. Sometimes they include a tinge of humanity and sometimes they do not.

Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar

Human beings are social beings, hence, they have to follow certain social codes. But they must follow some spiritual codes as well. Because of illusion or some other reasons, if people break these codes, these "dos" and "don'ts", sometimes we call it "sin" or Pápa and at other times, "crime" or Aparádha. If the violation is in the spiritual code, rather the religious code, it is termed as "sin". If the violation is against the legal code it is known as "crime". Sin is sometimes based entirely on dogmas and not on cardinal human values. Wise people will never entertain a conception of sin based on religious dogma. Rather, they will judge with discrimination the correctness of the code according to cardinal human values. The concept of sin has been given by people on the basis of religion, religious dogmas and cardinal human values. As intellectuals and developed people of the second half of the 20th century, we should keep away from religious dogma and attach the highest importance to cardinal human values.

Long ago Vyása said the following about sin:

Astádashapuránesu Vyásasya vacanádvayam
Paropakárah puńyáya pápáya parapiidánam.

That is, that action which checks the progress of the society is sin, and that action which accelerates social progress is Punya or virtue. This is a fact. But what is crime? Any action which goes against the different legal codes made by the different nations, according to their spatial, personal and collective differences, is crime. In Samskrta crime is known as Aparádha. Sin or Pápa should be formulated on the basis of cardinal human values. This was also supported by Vyasa.

Criminal codes are generally framed by politicians according to their own standards. Sometimes they include a tinge of humanity and sometimes they do not. Thus the present-day legal codes are not necessarily humanitarian. Rational people may defy a legal code but they should never violate cardinal human values. I would never tell the people of a country to follow their legal codes blindly, but would

tell them to always follow cardinal human values. The cardinal human values are the silver lining between the psycho-spiritual world and the spiritual world. They are at the meeting-point of these two strata – the spiritual stratum on one side and the psycho-spiritual stratum on the other.

In Saḿskrta there are two words for sin – that which should be done but is not done is called "Pratyavaýa", and that which should not be done but is done is "Paýpa". The combined name of Paýpa and Pratyavaýa is "Paýtaka". Here I will make use of the word Paýpa because it is more popular.

Wherever we mention cardinal human values, we are not referring to any religious code, for that is based on religious dogmas. Again I repeat, why should the people of the second half of the 20th century follow religious dogmas? I advise you not to follow them but to revolt.

As far as possible the gap between cardinal human values and crime should be lessened. The smaller the gap the better it is. Cardinal human values are mostly unchangeable. They may change after a long time as they remain associated with the physical world, but it is natural that they will not have frequent changes because of their subjective approach. Crime will undergo transformation according to changes in time, space and the collective body. Hence, both the conceptions cannot be exactly the same – difference between them will remain. But efforts should be made to lessen the differences. This task will be the duty of Sadvipras or spiritual revolutionaries.

Now, let us come to the three causes of sin. If sin and crime are considered together there are three reasons for them. The first cause is shortage of physical and psychic pabula. The second one is non-utilization of over-accumulated physical and psychic pabula. The third one is stagnancy in the psychic and physical strata.

Let us discuss the first cause.

If human beings lack the basic physical necessities of life they will not be able to follow higher pursuits. You will find that a person's sense of discrimination is disturbed if he or she is confronted with only a little physical hardship. If an intellectual becomes angry, he or she may utter insentient words. Hence, the shortage of physical wealth results in restlessness and causes the loss of people's sense of discrimination, and then people naturally tend towards brutality. It is because of this that communism has tended towards brutality. This is the underlying psychic reason. Likewise, if there is a dearth of intellectual pabulum and the intellectual standard of the people is not high, they can take "dos" to be "don'ts" and vice versa. Take for example, a communal riot where a little innocent boy is killed, and when the person who encourages the riot becomes the peoples leader. Where the intellectual standard of the people is low, people commit blunders – prompted by such leaders they become beasts. Those backward countries which have less socio-politico-economic consciousness in the people tend to have more immorality. In such countries the leaders misguide the people in order to collect votes. I call such leaders "political satans" or "political pigs" Such pigs become leaders only when the intellectual standard of the common people is low. In a country with shortages of

physical and intellectual pabula, people ultimately become beasts and commit sins and crimes. To murder a person during a riot is both a crime and a sin. In political clashes innocent people are killed. This is also a crime as well as a sin. So, to summarize, when physical and intellectual pabula are lacking, people become beasts and commit sins and crimes. Among the three reasons for sin, this is the first and primary one. It is prevalent everywhere in the world although it is less evident in a few of the more affluent countries.

The second cause is non-utilization of over-accumulated physical and psychic pabula. Where there is over-accumulation of physical wealth several problems occur. Human beings do not have many needs. Primarily they need satisfying meals and clothing, according to their necessities. Most people do not even want many things. The desire to accumulate money is actually a mental disease. The accumulators do not accumulate to fulfil their basic needs a human needs are few. For instance, if a person has a mango grove which yields 500 mangoes and a family of five, what will he do with so many mangoes? In cases of over-accumulation there is very little chance of utilization. Hence, if the Sadvipras are not vigilant, where there is over-accumulation non-utilization will occur. Moreover, where there is over-accumulation people tend to misutilize wealth by indulging in their baser propensities rather than their finer ones. Therefore you will mark, as I am making it crystal-clear to you, that most of the kings and Nawabs of ancient times were, and most of the aristocrats and wealthy people of today who have nothing to do are generally wicked and mean-minded. In addition, you will see that government officers who do not have psychic and spiritual interests also become mean-minded. When we have to judge, we must be frank. It can be observed that it is natural for people to move towards sin if over-accumulated physical and psychic pabula is not utilized. If people have developed intellects which are not properly directed, and there is no administration of the Sadvipras, people become polished satans and inflict sufferings on others. If the parents of a boy die and he has no guardian, due to a lack of proper guidance the boy may easily become reckless and a sinner.

To repeat, non-utilization of over-accumulated physical and psychic pabula is the second cause for becoming a sinner. I have already discussed the problems of the "haves", and the "have-nots". To satisfy the greed of the have's, the have-not's become slaves, and to appease their own hunger they become sinners. The haves misutilize the intellectual and physical wealth of the have-nots to satisfy their baser propensities. In the back ground sit the big capitalists; in the foreground, as their agents, are half-naked children! This is the cause of the downfall of society.

There is still one thing more. There are countries in the world where the average standard of living of the people is quite high and where there are no have-not's who become slaves due to the evil designs of the haves. Where there is excessive wealth, the feeling of, "What should I do?" crops up in the minds of the people. Moreover, people take to the path of suicide in the absence of proper direction. They also become addicts and social parasites and they do not know what they should do and what they should not do. ●

To be concluded

CLIMATE CHANGE EFFECT

INDIA'S BLISTERING HEATWAVE AFFECTS MOSTLY THE POOR

Arun Prakash

The months of April, May and June saw a brutal heat wave hitting India, which affects the poor mostly and poor women even more. This heat wave has upended lives of millions of people in India who are struggling to cope with the soaring temperatures - the highest in over 100 years. Heat waves have increased in intensity and duration in recent years across South Asia, from the Indian subcontinent to the Maldives, Bhutan, and Afghanistan. A study published in 2022 reported that heat-related deaths in India increased by 55% in the 17 years from 2004 to 2021.

Caught in the middle are India's poor – vegetable vendors and fisherwomen who disproportionately bear the cost of such extreme weather events. With a limited income and little resources to adapt to the heat, they are now struggling to survive. Vegetable vendors keep sprinkling water to minimise damage to the fresh stock bought every morning and fisherwomen who sell what their men folk catch struggle to keep their produce as fresh as possible.

In the extreme heat vegetables and fruits get spoilt making them useless for selling. An elderly woman who has been selling vegetables for decades says this is the first time she has lost so much of her produce - worth 70 rupees a significant amount for someone whose daily income is 800 rupees. "Most of what I earn is just spent on ice trying to preserve these fish," a fisherwoman says. "I have never had so much spoilt fish in all these decades of selling. Now I am sometimes losing produce worth 2,000 rupees a day". With rising prices of ice it's a twofold blow that she is struggling to adapt to. She adds, "The government needs to provide equipment and ice to help the fishing community adapt to rising temperatures and the longer summers". The woes of the two women reflect those of millions employed in the country's vast unorganised sector, who have no choice but to work outdoors in the heat to make ends meet.

But as heat waves become

more frequent, experts say work such as construction and agriculture will become dangerous during the hottest hours of the day. This is not just a matter of public health and safety, but also a grave economic issue for a country that is highly dependent on labour. India is already losing $101bn annually due to heat - the most in the world - a report by Nature Communications has found. The lost labour hours due to increasing heat and humidity could put approximately 2.5-4.5% of GDP at risk by 2030, up to $250bn, according to a 2020 McKinsey report. The number of daylight hours - during which outdoor work is unsafe - will also increase approximately 15% by 2030, compared to a decade earlier, the report says. A labourer says who drags his hand cart uphill on a bridge during the hottest hours of the day, whose cart weighs 60kg and feels even heavier in the scorching heat, for him it's a hard climb for a meagre 200 rupees, but despite his aching knees, he has little choice.

Such occasional series of reports from the front lines of climate change explores how extreme weather already affects millions of people in different settings around the globe, looking at both the real-world impacts and possible ways forward. Heat waves that are sending temperatures soaring across parts of Europe and North America are grabbing media headlines, prompting coverage of the dangers posed by extreme heat brought on by the climate crisis. But such heat in other parts of the world rarely makes international headlines, often rendering invisible the daily dangers faced by women in communities like Sikari Tola, a village in the semi-arid north-central Indian region of Bundelkhand. Men do not usually fetch water or perform any other chores to aid in cooling during a heat wave, Ramkali, a woman in Sikari Tola, explained: "It's all our burden."

Heat waves put an inordinate strain on India's poorest women, who do most of the domestic work in their communities. The New Humanitarian an NGO recently spoke with women in Dalit and Adivasi Indigenous communities — where poverty is inescapable — who are responsible for providing water and other ways to cool their families. Here is the story of Sheel Kumari of Sikari Tola, who is in her late 40s, said the temperatures hit 35-38C as early as February this year but in mid-June it was at least 47C every day, and highs have reached 49C.

Sheelkumari wakes early to join dozens of other village women to make the half-kilometre walk to a well to fetch water in the sweltering heat. She has to fetch more than usual, making more trips to the pump as the heat intensifies throughout the day. Some days, she visits the well as often as 10 times. "Getting water in this peak heat is even more difficult, especially when I am forced to make water fetching rounds in the afternoon, when the heat is highest," Sheelkumari said. "Taking care of the domestic chores along with this makes me feel drowsy and dehydrated the whole day." But she has no choice. "Even when I am unwell," she added, "I have to make trips for water." This daily ritual is repeated by untold other Dalits and Adivasis, who are on the lowest rung of India's marginalised society and must often work outside despite the heat and live in poorly ventilated homes that are

difficult to cool. A recent study blamed the June heat wave to 100 deaths in two of India's most populous states. Temperatures of 45C, along with humidity, were recorded for several days in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in the east, where the deaths occurred. Another worrying tendency with heat waves is increasing water and insect borne diseases, which could further strain India's already beleaguered public health system.

Climate scientists predict that rising temperatures will make some parts of the globe uninhabitable. What's surprising many of them is the speed at which temperatures are rising: Numerous heat records were broken worldwide this month alone. The heat wave that has struck India this year has been particularly severe, but experts say it is not an isolated incident - they say it is a harbinger of the type of events that might become more common in the future as temperatures rise. Extreme heat, for example, can exacerbate drought by drying up the soil and disrupting rainfall patterns, ultimately blighting crop production and food security, which endangers the health and wellbeing of a large portion of Indian society. Being a primarily agricultural economy, productivity losses in this sector threaten the jobs and health of millions of marginal and small landholding farmers, as well as their ability to adapt and take up new livelihoods.

People who must work outdoors and those with health conditions are particularly vulnerable to extreme temperatures.

But poor street vendors do not understand what heat wave means or what may have caused it. All they know is that their daily lives and their earnings are being affected, and that they must continue to work - heat wave or not - to feed their families. "It is especially hot this year. But if I don't work, how will I fill my stomach?" The cart puller just shrugs. Experts say that poor infrastructure in cities has made life harder for people. Free and clean drinking water is limited and there aren't enough shelters for him to escape the heat, even for a while. An expert feels that cities need to urgently take action by developing data-driven climate action plans. This should include clear, tangible actions on mitigation and adaptation, as well as building resilience to events we are already experiencing such as heat plans".

For Sheelkumari and other women who lug pots, jars, and pitchers to the hand-pump near their village, the daily struggle is all-consuming. In the scorching heat, women fill their containers quickly, taking enough to last a few hours before they have to return. "The climate is changing across the region for everybody, but only the socially marginalised communities don't have the resources to battle it effectively". Policy makers should prioritise for such vulnerable populations to reduce the stress from heat, ●

Alienation from the NATURAL WORLD

People's bodies and minds are out of rhythm with their natural environment, and they are disconnected, disassociated from the other species and even from other human beings.

Ronald Logan

In earlier times of human existence, people spent their evening hours sitting beneath the moon and the starlit sky. They heard the sounds of the wilderness. They stayed close together so as to feel safe in the night, and they maintained fires for protection. In those times people had a sense of the natural rhythm of the earth.

This is now lacking for most people because when the day grows late the lights go on, and there is no connection to the natural world to create attunement with the natural rhythm. People do not even know if the moon is full or dark, and they do not take notice of the sunrise or the sunset. So their biological existence is disassociated from the natural rhythm of the environment. They have become disassociated from the natural cycles of the earth, from the cycles of the moon, the cycles of the rising and setting sun. Though awareness of the seasons is more prevalent, there are those today who barely notice that it is spring or winter or fall or summer, for they are in their heated and air-conditioned homes and office buildings where the season makes little difference.

In a world where people have become disassociated from the rhythms of the environment, it is little surprise that they do not notice that many animal species are becoming extinct and that there is much disruption in the natural world. Unless it is seen in the news, they do not notice, for they live in an artificial world of their own creation.

People living in this artificial world, in their electrically heated and lit homes, do not feel a connection to other living beings, but for many, there is a yearning for this. They yearn to be in the natural world; they yearn to feel the living expressions of nature. Without this

Image courtesy Neo humanist Review

connection, they feel disassociated, disconnected; they feel alone in the world. Though they may go to social gatherings and have many possessions, they are unhappy and restless.

People's bodies and minds are out of rhythm with their natural environment, and they are disconnected, disassociated from the other species and even from other human beings. They have just a few friends, and they have little or no extended family. They do not gather in the night. They do not come together; they do not stay together. When their children are grown, they go far away. They do not have a sense of home and family. They are wanderers in the world.

The Cause of Human Alienation

What is the cause of this condition of people? The cause is not the technology that surrounds us; it is materialism. It is that the emphasis has been to build, produce and consume at the expense of the natural environment. Technology is not the problem; it is how it is applied. The ways technologies are used disrupt the natural environment; they create chemical, noise, and electromagnetic pollution, and they produce so much garbage. So, the environment is becoming toxic to so many living beings in the world.

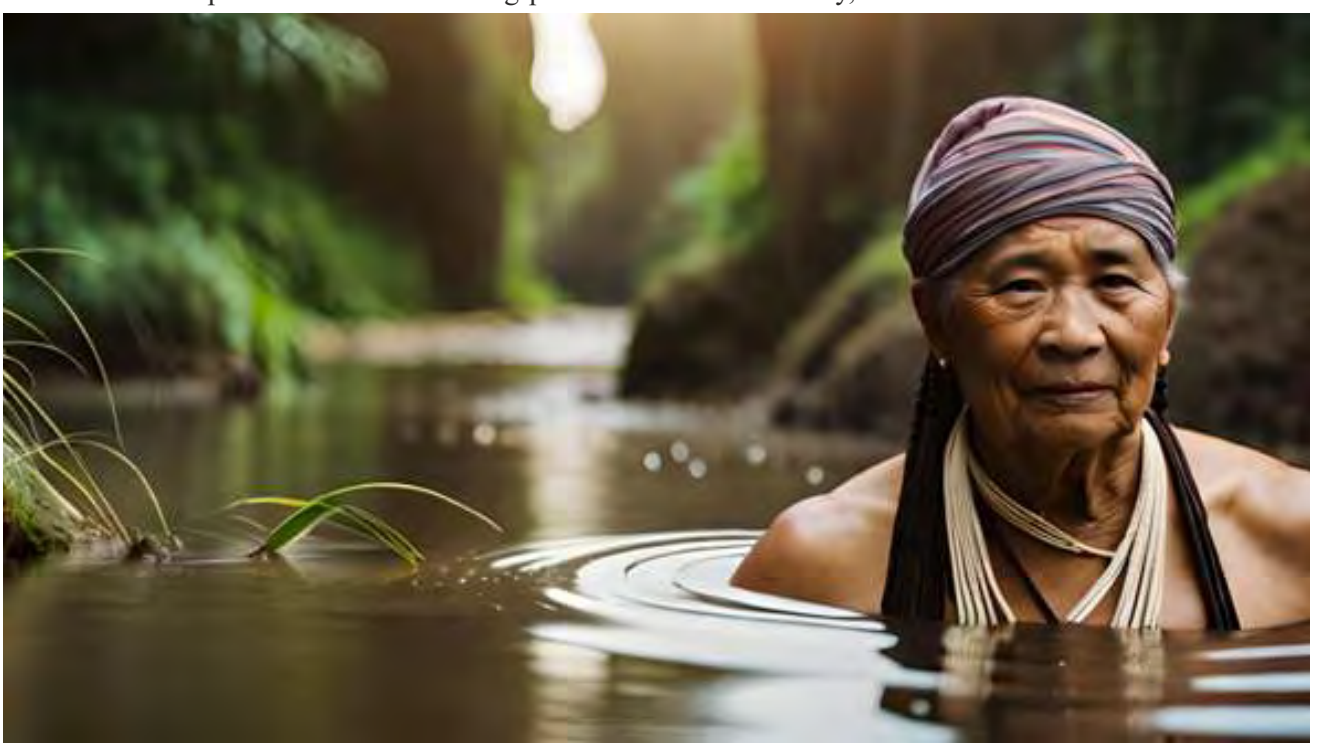
When technology is applied in the service of materialism, when it serves our misplaced desires to have more and more physical possessions, more and more pleasures, and more and more disassociation from this natural world, then people become isolated in their wealth and luxury. They become isolated from the natural rhythms, from all the living beings with whom they share this planet and isolated from each other. They do not learn how to rely on each other, how to care what happens to others, how to live together and care for a family.

People with fine cars and nice homes have many ways to entertain the mind, they have prestigious jobs, but they do not have love. They do not have the feeling of caring for others, of being a part of a community, of being part of an extended family, of being part of the rhythms of the earth. They are disconnected, disassociated, and this condition leads to a feeling of alienation, isolation, and depressed mood.

There are now many people who are despondent. It is an epidemic. This despondency is due in large part to their lack of interconnectedness with plants, animals, and other people. People think, "What is wrong with my life? I have many fine things. I have a good job. I'm an important person. I have lots of money. Yet I feel there is no purpose to my life. Why am I unhappy?"

What is the main reason for their despondent mental condition? It is that they have become the slaves of materialism and of the technology which serves it, and through this, they have lost their interconnectedness, interrelatedness with life. This is the main cause of their sorrows. It is in a society which has lost its balance that we find this unhappy, alienated condition to people's lives. Not to all, but to so many. And it is spreading.

In this disconnected life of



"Water was spirit, for it was essential to all life." Image courtesy Neo Humanist Review

material comfort, people cannot find the source of their problems. But they feel the pain. Though they may appear wealthy compared with those who have little, if we compare their inner lives with those having little, we find that the ones with little are often happier than the ones with so much. What for is material luxury without happiness?

There is a lack of balance in the human society and in human life. Human beings have a natural need to be connected, to have family, to have love about us, to share a common ideal and goal, to have association with the living beings of the natural world. These things are essential to real happiness, and any joys they may get from possessing material luxuries are superficial by comparison.

A Return to Balance

The problems that the world faces today will be resolved sooner or later, for by the law of nature all returns to a state of equilibrium. This is a natural law, and one way or another balance will return. A time will eventually come when our technology will become more subtle and no longer pollute the planet. Our technologies will be refined, and people of high technological development will live amid the trees and the natural lands, and their footprints on the earth will barely be noticeable. Their technologies will leave no trace upon the earth, and their cities will blend into the natural order of the world.

Such a harmonious way of living will evolve as balance is restored to human life and human society. Sooner or later, people seek that which is missing in their lives. The chains of materialism cannot bind the human heart forever. Our yearning grows to feel our inter-connection with the natural world and with our fellow humans. We feel the longing to reestablish community and family, to feel a part of something greater than ourselves, to have a purpose that is beyond enjoyment of possessions. Many cannot yet identify this longing, but it will come. Inevitably is will come; it cannot be forever suppressed.

When people come to see they are a part of all, that there is an interconnected association between them and rhythm of the rising moon and setting sun, when they see that they are no island but that we all need each other and desire closeness to each other, then they will begin to feel part of something larger than themselves, a part of a whole, and their hearts will find satisfaction. This is what uplifts the human spirit to its fullness. Feeling themselves to be part of the whole, people's woes and sufferings are transformed in the inspiration of the human heart, in giving each other hope, in giving others ways to interconnect, and in finding ways to associate with the larger environment so that they may feel that they are part of something greater than themselves.

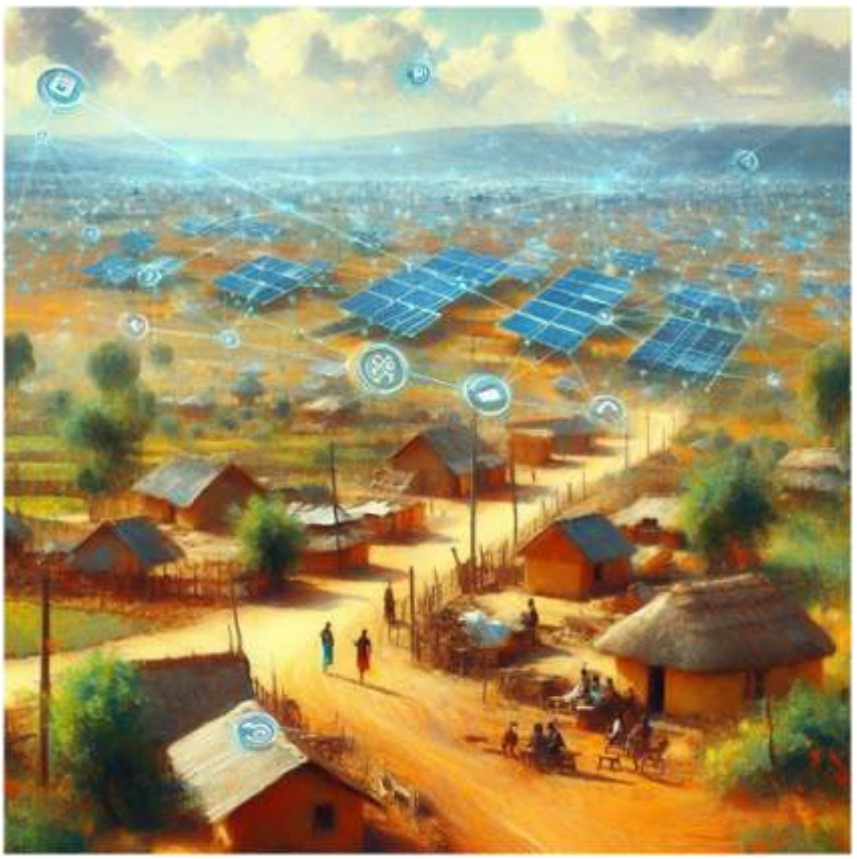
The aspirations of materialism have led us astray, have disconnected us and deprived our hearts of natural joy. The aspiration to associate with the Great is the panacea to the alienation of materialism. ●

Decentralized And Integrated Energy Systems

ENERGY FUTURES IN TRANSITION

Sohail Inayatullah

The question for energy providers is, as the market changes, who should they be in this new future?



The new connected grid

Electrifying a Continent

Nine years ago, while working for a large African national energy supplier, participants imagined a unique future for the continent. In their vision, every village would use solar with artificial intelligence and peer-to-peer energy networks to create a decentralized grid. Each village would have a storage battery. The energy company would become the platform connecting and electrifying the continent. They would move from being engineers to platform designers. Africa could become energy abundant, they believed. Traditional forms of energy would still be there, as needed, for backup. However, when they looked at who they were – traditional engineers – they realized they did not have the experience or capability to design such a system. They needed to develop new capabilities. But all believed that that this future could be realized.

They asked if we could now run a similar process with the CEO, the Board, and stakeholders. I (Inayatullah) agreed. However, prior to the workshop commencing the CEO was indicted for corruption, it appears for accepting bribes for the national strategy to move toward nuclear energy.

The Project Was Dropped

It would not be until three years later that the first peer to peer energy network at the village level would be created. This was to be in Bangladesh (Peters, 2018). As rural Bangladesh was not tied into traditional energy systems, as with the landline phone system, they could leapfrog the current energy infrastructure (Sheraz, Inayatullah, and Ali, 2013).

The tension between traditional systems and novel systems is not just true for the South. In over twenty years of work in Australia, I have found similar concerns and a similar design for transformation.Having worked with dozens of utilities and private corporations, a clear theme has emerged. Energy retailers wish to move from merely "keeping the lights on" to "become the connectors." As the system, irrespective of the politics of any national government, moves toward renewables, they wish to be front and center of the revolution. For them, the writing is on the wall: climate change, cheaper products, and a desire for citizens to make a measurable

difference have moved renewable strategies from the dreams of the 1960s counter-cultural generation to the core and key topic in every boardroom.

The question for energy providers is, as the market changes, who should they be in this new future? That said, not every provider believes the shift will occur. At one board meeting while they were ready to fund reports on the energy transition, they were far less willing to put their money where their mouth was and fund the innovation needed. In one meeting, when I queried why this was the case. They answered with transparency. "We really do not believe we will lose our energy monopoly," the Board Chair asserted. Our metaphor is the large tanker, which is impossible to move. Large scale change was impossible, they argued. We thus shifted the narrative from the tanker to tugboats, with each boat becoming a fundable innovation. Some of these next steps included smart apps to monitor real time energy use in the household; solar energy farms; using sewage to power cars, and so forth. These smaller projects they could see, the larger shift was harder for them.

However, other companies are not interested in marginal change but because of rapidly changing markets, with creating the future.

Using Causal Layered Analysis, energy futures can be deconstructed and reconstructed from the present to the medium term (2033) to the longer term (2043). (Inayatullah, Mercer, Milojevic, Sweeney, 2023). This chart (Table 1) shows the shift i.e., moving from keeping the lights on to the energy connector to eventually, with full decentralization and personalization – the personalized energy experience /adventure. In each case, the narrative shifts as does the accompanying systemic strategy as well as the visible results.

	Current Trends	Preferred Reality	Reconstructed Reality
Litany	Cost of living and sustainability concern growing. Customers are more empowered	We are all customers and producers of energy	Households collaborate with retailers to manage their energy where and when they choose
Systemic	Increasing energy usage is contributing to higher costs and pollution. Technology is helping customers and competitors	Households control their energy usage, cost and environmental impact through smart digital systems. Energy is integrated beyond the home to the community and beyond	The technology, products and solutions are available to make choices about energy production, usage and consumption
Worldview	Supply energy as a basic essential service, with price the key differentiator	Energy is a decentralised and integrated ecosystem	Energy centralisation and decentralisation occur in harmony
Myth & Metaphor	"Keep the lights on at the lowest cost"	"Connect your home and community"	"Choose your own energy adventure"

The main challenge is to ensure the stability of the system – that the gains of decentralization are not lost due to lack of regulation – the system over time needs to centralize – in novel ways -and decentralize at the same time. Citizens and retailers need government regulation to ensure reliability and safety.

Energy Systems CLA from Henshaw and Cameron with Sohail Inayatullah from the work by participants at numerous workshops.

What was clear from this analysis is the system would change and consumers would gain agency in how they receive and not just use but create energy.

To 2050

Other international companies have gone further. They mapped their immediate concerns with trends and then emerging issues that would challenge the entire energy infrastructure. This figure using Graham Molitor's Emerging issues analysis s-curve represents this shift.

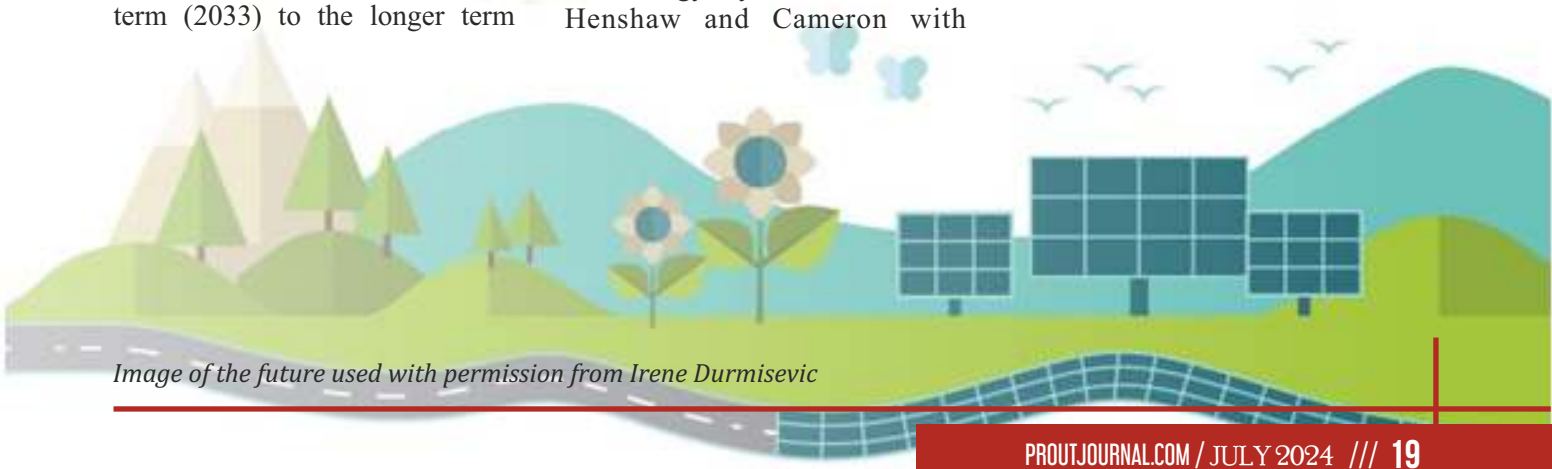
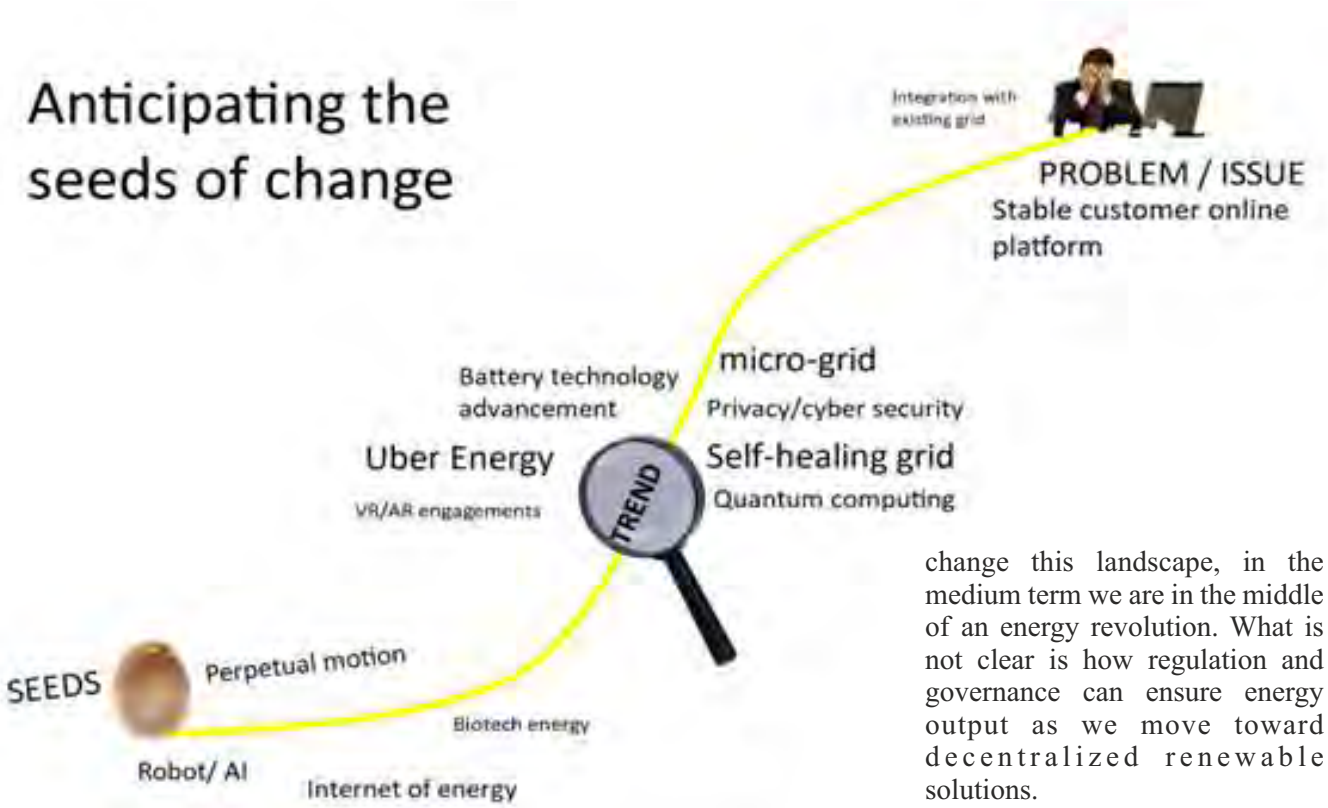


Image of the future used with permission from Irene Durmisevic



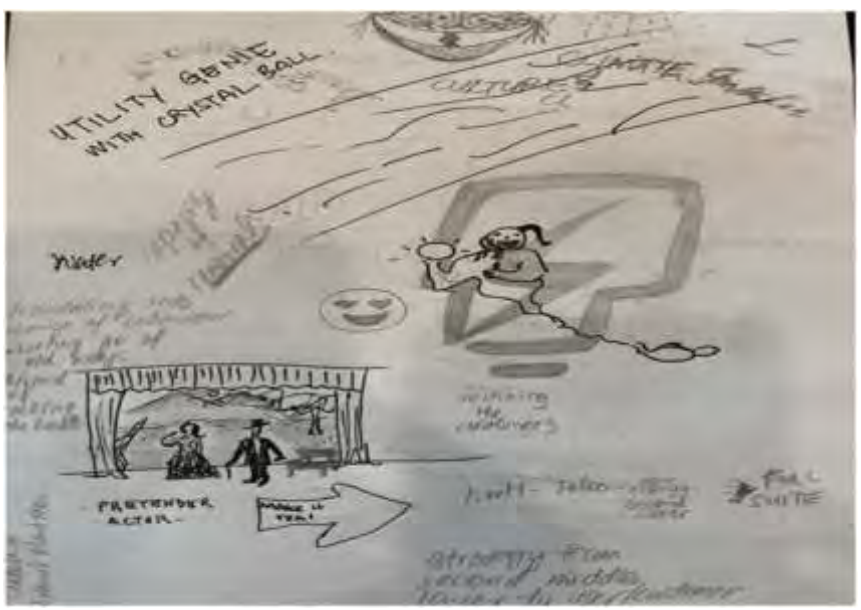
By participant at a course on Futures Thinking and Strategy Development. September 2017, Melbourne

The current issue was that of a stable online platform. Trends to 2030 was the development of an uber of energy. The long term of the singularity is a fully AI energy system led and designed by AI (by 2050).

Another group imagined the energy genie. – providing personal energy solutions locally and globally.

The genie would provide:

- Real time energy information
- Real time energy forecasts
- Eventually providing energy for the customer, anytime and anywhere.
- They thus saw the future disruptions quite dramatic; indeed, even seeing the possibility of wireless energy. While tabletop fusion may change this landscape, in the medium term we are in the middle of an energy revolution. What is not clear is how regulation and governance can ensure energy output as we move toward decentralized renewable solutions.



By participants at a Futures Thinking and Strategy Development Course, Kuala Lumpur, 2018

That leads us to the present – right in the middle of an energy transition.

Instead of a top-down market-forces approach to electricity, an alternative perspective that could bridge the gap between centralized and decentralized power generation is that of integrated energy for self-sufficiency. No person is an island, so this is not to say that everyone needs to be completely off grid and take care of themselves (except where required in rural/remote areas); rather, to create an interconnected self-sufficiency via a nested eco-system. This is in the same way that small ponds and streams sustain life in their immediate area but the excess water feeds into larger rivers and lakes.

From the perspective of residential electricity this means self-sufficiency of the home, followed by the neighborhood, the region, and the nation where each level trades its excesses with its most immediate "neighbor" in need. It points to the excesses of rooftop battery and solar cooperating with community storage and generation, cooperating with regional storage

Ordesa Valley Glacial Pond, Les Haines, CC 2.0

and generation, cooperating with national storage and generation.

One way to visualize this could be that when the home produces excess electricity, the consumer/producer or prosumer might, in order of priority, sell it to their neighbor via a micro grid, followed by the community battery, followed by utility batteries and so forth. And likewise for the purchase of electricity.

Where there is too much electricity being produced for the grid to use, instead of being curtailed and forced to buy mains power, home systems might instead divert excess electricity to home storage, run appliances, and heat hot water. Likewise, utility scale renewable power generation should store its excess when there is more supply than demand. When there is instability in the grid, the home and community battery can be used via a virtual power plant to help stabilize the grid. Rather than winners and losers in the production and selling of electricity, we move to cooperating energy producers that maintain a level of autonomy yet support each other. Everyone can become a winner.

Imaginations of a planetary connected grid toward a type 1 civilization.

Conclusion

Working with a dozen plus energy providers and regulators across the world suggests that we are in a dramatic transition to a different future. The used future of fossil fuel and nuclear fission remains current, however. That said, there is the real possibility of moving toward a new energy cooperative model - integrated and decentralized - where all can be winners. This is very much in line with the image of the future by the world philosopher Shrii P.R. Sarkar, who imagined decentralized economics. The energy transition allows the creation of energy cooperatives with a larger independent energy peer to peer platform supported and created by independent national and global agencies. They integrate the systems ensuring stability.

Taking a macrohistorical perspective, using the works of Nikolai Kardashev (1964), if humanity does not resolve the contradictions between global governance and energy, we will not make the transition from a type 0 to a type 1 planet. We will doom ourselves through climate change and nuclear war/accidents, as with other type 0 planets. The shift to renewables is not just for the sake of efficiency but necessary for planetary survival. A new model of society and energy – decentralized and integrated - is critical for the transition. This short essay suggests steps forward. ●

The author is UNESCO chair in Future Studies IIUM, Professor, Tamkang University. Editor, the Journal of Futures Studies, and researcher, www.metafuture.org.

Can the New Government SOLVE THE Burning Issues

Ganesh Bhat

NDA with a thin, vulnerable majority has come back to power, giving a third term to Shri NarendraModi as PM.

Despite a pre-planned marathon election campaign for almost 3 months and, the use of many tantrums and tactics, BJP the ruling party could not get the magic number to form a government on its own; but had to depend on other parties to retain the power.

India witnessed the worst scenario of a low-level blame game during an election campaign by political parties and leaders without bothering to put forth their plans and proposals for development. Speeches spreading hatred, dogma, and religious as well as other sentiments were in abundance. As the BJP candidates were requesting voters to cast votes for him/her to make Shri Modi PM for the third term as if this was the sole reason for the contest, was commented as pathetic and heights of psycho fancy. Many of the BJP candidates behaved as if they had no independent existence; while their leader was declaring himself as God incarnate. Congress banked upon the bait of doles and impractical freebees which would make people lazy and dependent on government.

PROUT proposes demarcation of the country into self-sufficient socio-economic zones

The results of the Indian Parliamentary elections 2024 have proved the Marathi proverb, "*Pahale potobananthar Vithoba*", which means 'food first and God later.' Though voters were swayed

by the cast, creed, and money factors, they still expressed their anger against the ruling party for their failure to address the burning issues of unemployment, agrarian crisis, rising prices etc. There are also clear indications that a campaign of pseudo-nationalism cannot suppress people's desire for regional identification.

The parties with a small number of representatives have started demanding particular portfolios in the ministry, being aware of the importance of their support in forming the NDA government. It is an open secret that these demands are not based on the expertise of their members or that they have solutions for the burning issues of the country, but because these are fertile fields of making money.

Hypocrisy of Political Parties

Liberalization, Privatization, and Globalization (LPG) adopted by Congress during the 1990s was opposed by the BJP. However, the BJP government has been pursuing the LPG policy with more fervour and zeal. While both these parties are blaming each other, neither the Congress has admitted its folly or expressed its regrets for introducing LPG nor has the BJP the guts to give the credit to Congress for this policy by expressing the mistake of opposing it in the beginning. Not only these two parties, but all the other parties having their allegiance to NDA or I.N.DI.A. or remaining aloof, think that LPG, FDA, etc., are inevitable for development.

The LPG policy has resulted in creating a creamy layer in society that forms little less than one per cent of the population but owns and controls more than 50% of the nation's wealth. The gap between the haves and have-nots is widening and has reached an inhuman level. Intellectuals purchased by the crony capitalists propagate by using the media that rich people are fortunate and the poor are lazy and the cause of their suffering.

Chanakya, a legendary personality and accredited as a great revolutionary and economist, who lived 2300 years ago, advised that if the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few capitalists remains unchecked they will take over the political arena to exploit the masses and hoard more wealth. And that is exactly what we see happening today. The common people cannot get health care; wages are stagnant; poverty is rampant; housing costs are skyrocketing; university education is unaffordable, verily every fundamental aspect of daily living is beyond the means of ordinary citizens. Every aspect of the socio-economic field is infested with corruption and crisis.

Regional disparity in development, agrarian crisis, heavy dependence on the agriculture sector, unemployment, shrinking manufacturing sector, and unfair competition in the market, are a few of the major problems that need immediate attention and action for solution.

Regional Disparities

Employment opportunities, level of income, and living standard of people in some parts of the country are so low that people are forced to migrate to far-off places to make a living. The root cause of the problem is the way socio-economic development plans are drawn and implemented.

Any attempt to develop an area economically must start at the grassroots level. That is, the direction of economic development should be from the bottom to the top, not from the top to the bottom as followed now.

To facilitate socio-economic development PROUT proposes demarcation of the country **into self-sufficient socio-economic zones** so that effective socio-economic plans are drafted based on the locally available resources and implemented effectively. At the moment, there are various

Fields in Punjab

Fields in Bengal

economic units with different economically problematic areas within the same political zone. That is why, considering the economic problems and for the welfare of people different socio-economic zones should be created. There can be more than one economic zone in a political unit.

Criteria for Groupifications

While forming socio-economic units, several factors like the same economic problems, uniform economic potentialities, similar geographical features, ethnic similarities and the sentimental legacy of the people etc., should be considered. Based on these factors, **PROUT** recommends reorganizing the whole of India and the entire world into **44** and **243** socio-economic units respectively.

A sound ideological base is a prerequisite for socio-economic groupifications. **Such a foundation is provided by universal humanism, which has the potential to unite all humanity.**

Implementation of a Decentralized Economic system is a must to make each socio-economic unit self-sufficient. This involves **block-level planning** based on the principles of **a balanced economy** and **a three-tiered ownership policy in the industry.**

To arouse the cooperative spirit among the people, there should be extensive training and education, but moral education must take precedence over everything else so that people do not give greater importance to individual interests at the expense of the collective interest.

The above steps cannot be expected from the present government. Granting **special status to the backward state or area** by giving extra grants is the solution proposed by economists and politicians. These steps, rather than solving the socio-economic problems of the area have aggravated them along with rampant corruption. To achieve the twin ends of removing the economic disparities and increasing the collective wealth the present **economic system is to be thoroughly overhauled.**

Industrial Status to Agriculture to cure agrarian crisis

According to PROUT, agriculture should be given the status of industry. In industry raw material costs, labour costs, interest on loans, depreciation, maintenance costs, profit, the rate of outturn, etc. are calculated and included in costing. In agriculture, this has not been done, so produce is usually priced uneconomically. Farmers are forced to sell their produce at low prices due to the pressure of circumstances. (This is known as a "distress sale".) If agriculture is treated as an industry, all the conditions of industry should apply to agriculture. When this occurs farmers will not be neglected and there will not be any differentiation in the style of development and costing of agriculture and industry.

Industrial status to Agriculture does not mean tolerating inefficiency or giving doles to that sector. It means making the agriculture sector more strong and competitive and putting an end to the exploitation and suffering of the farming community including agriculture labourers.

Scientific land use planning, crop planning, cooperation in cultivation, marketing of agricultural produce exclusively through cooperatives, and starting of processing units are a few of the prerequisites to get the industrial status to agriculture.

Waiver of agriculture loans, announcement of unscientific MSP, illogical procurement rules and procedures, and encouragement of the private sector in procurement and distribution of agricultural produce are the policies of present and past governments. These policies could not solve the agrarian crisis in the past nor can solve it in the future. The capitalistic mindset of the politicians and the bureaucracy will not accept the right solutions, and hence there is every possibility of deepening the agrarian crisis.

100% Employment Opportunities

A socio-economic system where people will not be searching for

jobs, but jobs will be searching for people is unimaginable in the present set-up. Economists justify the unemployment rate of 8 to 10% as normal and acceptable. While the experts and leaders avoid the issue of 100% employment opportunities, **PROUT** asserts that it is not only possible on the hard crust of the earth but should be mandatory in every country/ society.

Ensuring 100% gainful employment opportunity (that is earning opportunity as a self-employed or as a job holder) to every able-bodied person, so that the earning member is capable of fulfilling the basic needs of himself/herself and dependants with ever-increasing purchasing capacity, is beyond the concept of leaders and economists.

According to **PROUT,** the question of unemployment arises only in the capitalistic framework where industry is for profit. In the collective economic structure, **where industry stands for consumption and not for profit,** the question of unemployment does not arise.

The centralized economy can never solve the economic problems of common people. All types of economic problems can be solved only when economic structures are built based on a decentralized economy.

Economic decentralization means economic power to the people. This means each sector of the economy must strive for maximum development, and all sectors must strive for maximum decentralization.

Unfair competition in the market

Fair and free market conditions are possible after PROUT's **Three-Tier Industrial System** is implemented. **PROUT** divides the industrial structure into three parts – key industries to be managed by the immediate or local government, small-scale industries to be run on a cooperative basis, and the small industries which cannot be managed by cooperatives should be left to private enterprise.

This system will eliminate confusion regarding whether or not a particular industry should be managed privately or by the government and will avoid duplication between the government, cooperative and private enterprises.

Such a revolutionary step cannot be expected from the present government that follows LPG policy. The BJP when in the opposition bench opposed the FDA and the entry of multinational companies in the retail sector, took a **turn** when it came to power in 2014.

Speculative Economic Activities

Speculative activities like lottery, horse race, stock trading etc., are nothing but gambling and need to be banned. Can we expect the BJP to do this?

The Situation will continue to worsen

Assuming that all the parliament members are sincere in serving the people, are committed to social welfare and have solutions for the problems of India, their plans and programmes cannot yield the expected results; because irrespective of the party affiliation, the solutions they propose are within the framework of capitalism which is the root cause of all problems.

The crony capitalists will get ample opportunities to fulfil their greed (as evidenced by the stock market behaviour during and after election results) during the tenure of a present regime whose sole aim is to stick to power at any cost. Under the present circumstances, it is quite natural that the socio-economic-cultural subjugation and exploitation will continue paving the way for the **shu'dra revolution** which is overdue. ●

STUFFED GRANARIES AND EMPTY STOMACHS

HUNGER IN INDIA

Ubaid Sidique

India ranks amongst countries where hunger is widespread even with high agricultural yield. Why despite several government and private initiatives, chronic structural flaws alongside corruption and the impact of global events is hindering India's aim of achieving zero hunger for her people.

India, home to more than 1.39 billion people is one of the top food-producing nations in the world. The production of food grains has been increasing continuously from the 'Green Revolution' of the 1960s, and today India is one of the leading producers of rice, wheat, pulses and cotton. She ranks first in the production of milk, and second in production of fruits and vegetables.

But despite agricultural self-sufficiency, a steadily increasing GDP, and increased per capita consumption, India finds itself engulfed in a serious hunger crisis. This is discernible by the continuous downslide on the Blobal Hunger Index (GHI), India ranked 107th out of 121 countries in 2022. With a score of 29.1, India lags behind its neighbours Sri Lanka (64), Nepal (81), Bangladesh (84) and Pakistan (99) in addressing hunger.

Hunger in India

Despite India's rising per capita income, millions of children and women suffer from 'hidden hunger'. According to the UN's Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) 'The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World, 2022 Report', 224.3 million people, or 16 per cent of India's population, are undernourished with 53 per cent of reproductive-age women also being anemic. More than 17.3 per cent of children suffer from child-wasting, and more than 30.9 per cent are stunted, exposing them to

common childhood diseases like malaria, pneumonia, diarrhoea, etc., which are leading causes of child mortality in India. Even though India's child mortality rate fell from 2.5 million per year in 2000 to 1.2 million per year in 2015, it still remains the world's highest number for mortality for children under 5 years.

Poverty is the leading cause of rising hunger in India. While poverty has fallen from 21.9 per cent in 2011 to 10.4 per cent in 2017–18, even then, more than 150 million people live below US$1.90 per day on PPP (Purchasing Power Parity). National Statistics Office (NSO) survey data shows that rural consumer spending (a proxy for income in India) fell by 10 per cent each year, and by 4 per cent in urban areas. This affects food quality and quantity for a vulnerable population.

With 65 per cent of the population rural and 54.6 per cent of the workforce in agriculture and allied activities, poverty and hunger in India are significantly reliant on agriculture. Reduced land ownership, reliance on monsoons, limited irrigation infrastructure, low agricultural financing, and minimal government initiatives are serious and chronic problems in agriculture. The situation is worrisome, affecting the availability of healthy food for all. In their book Poor Economics: A Radical Rethinking of the Way to Fight Global Poverty (2012), economists and Nobel Laureates Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo discussed the question of hunger in India, blaming the fall in non-market food sources and luxury expenditures.

Other reasons that directly or indirectly exacerbate India's hunger problem include joblessness, social and gender inequities, lack of awareness about health and hygiene, etc. Climate Change and wars with global impact also affect India's food security, as does low investments in the social sector. It makes the poor vulnerable to market volatility in non-food essentials like healthcare, education, etc., which squeezes food budgets and worsens famine in India. Seasonal movement of temporary labourers in pursuit of livelihoods exposes them to unhygienic situations which affect their health, particularly that of the women and children accompanying them. All this is in addition to the already present large numbers of hungry and malnourished people, due to a lack of purchasing power and distributive fairness.

The principal issue is not a shortage of food production but a dysfunctional food delivery and distribution system that is driving millions to starvation in a world with sufficient food for everyone. According to Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (Government of India), since independence in 1947, food grain production in India has risen from 51 million to 272 million tonnes. FAO estimates that about 40 per cent of India's food is wasted: 30 per cent of vegetables and fruits expire owing to lack of cold storage, and hundreds of tonnes of food grains rot in unsafe warehouses. According to an Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) assessment on post-harvest losses, India loses ₹92,651 crore per year due to inadequate agricultural logistics, which primarily includes poor storage infrastructure and transit facilities. This inefficient supply

chain management wastes an enormous volume of foodgrains in a nation which has 28 per cent of the world's impoverished population. These shards of data show that the world and India are far behind in attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG-2) which aims to end global hunger by 2030.

In an already unequal world, Covid-19 exacerbated the problem by pushing millions into food insecurity due to sudden unemployment and economic disruption. The pandemic not only disrupted the supply chains, hampering the movement of food but also led to labour shortages once the country went into lockdown, thus pushing up the prices of essential commodities.

Government Initiatives and Bottlenecks

The Government of India has undertaken several policy changes and social initiatives to attain a hunger-free society and enhance the nutritional level of its peoples. These include providing subsidised food through the Public Distribution System (PDS) and Targeted PDS, and targeted supplementation (through the Integrated Child Development Services Scheme, Mid-Day Meal Scheme for school children,MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005), AAY (Antyodana Aana Yojana) aimed at reducing hunger in the poorest of the poor, and the National Food Security Act (National Food Security Act of 2013. In 2018, the Indian government launched PSHAN Abhiyan (National Nutrition Mission) to improve nutritional outcomes for children, adolescents, pregnant women, and breastfeeding mothers.

There are a number of operational issues and challenges that prevent such policies from producing its desired outcomes. The conventional PDS has leaks, exclusion errors and considerable administrative expenses. A number of reports claim that about 30–58 per cent of food grains do not reach the targeted households owing to methodological flaws in compiling beneficiary data or lack of sustainable agricultural and logistical infrastructure. In a country as vast and populous as India, such a system of food distribution on a large scale is a logistical challenge. These initiatives also face lax administrative behaviour and lack of political will to execute them, alongside corruption and leakages at the ground level.

The NFSA is another crucial legislation of food security. The act provides 5 kilograms (kgs) of subsidised food per individual every month (wheat at Rs 2 per kg, rice at Rs 3 per kg and coarse grains Rs 1 per kg), with intended benefit to 75 per cent rural population and 50 per cent urban population. The legislation has great potential to promote food security but it confronts several problems, including high administrative expenditures, anomalistic centre–state relations, and an inefficient social protection system in India. India has achieved

food self-sufficiency and reduced poverty, but combating hunger and its underlying diseases is daunting, owing mostly to the short-term, ad-hoc, populist political-administrative approach of the government.

Way Forward

Hunger is more about the distribution of food than its unavailability. Also, hunger is a complex issue that requires a multifaceted approach. First, India's agriculture sector, which supports more than half the population but contributes only 14% to the national GDP, needs overhaul. Agriculture should be promising for India, but fragmented landholdings (80 per cent of farmers operate on small holdings of less than 2 hectares), inadequate supply chain infrastructure, insufficient social security, and Climate Change undermine its effectiveness. Tackling these issues demands the use of state-of-the-art and sustainable agriculture techniques to manage food production fluctuations. Equally important is limiting non-agricultural use of agricultural land.

Second, public distribution schemes need fixing to better target food distribution. For schemes like Mid-day Meals, India could go local for procurement of food grains from small farmers. It would not only address transportation costs and wastage but will allow for the doubling of farmers' income. Third, Climate Change, which threatens global agriculture and food production could be tackled using Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) to reduce its impacts, benefiting farmers financially and nutritionally. Fourth, we need to reduce food waste. According to the FAO, more than a third of the food produced is wasted. It requires a concerted effort by the government, non-profit organisations, civil society, and individuals. For instance,

Roti Bank Mumbai

Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation's 'Feed The Need'' initiative and 'Community Fridges'' in Gurugram (Haryana) have been helpful. Individual efforts like the 'Robin Hood Army' (in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu) and 'No Food Waste' are noteworthy. While the former gathers restaurant leftovers and gives them to the needy, the latter collects food from weddings and other community events. A community collaboration like 'Roti Bank' in Mahoba (Bundelkhand, Uttar Pradesh) addresses local hunger. Here, homeowners make surplus food that is collected by volunteers and given to hungry and homeless persons free of charge.

However, any endeavour to eradicate hunger must include gender equity and justice, since women are more likely to be hungry in two-thirds of the world's nations. If women farmers had equal access to resources, agricultural productivity would rise by 20–30 per cent, eliminating hunger by 100-150 million. Additionally, India must invest in disaster risk reduction to reduce shocks of natural and man-made calamities.

Conclusion

On Earth, people fight to feed themselves and their children. With enough food to feed everyone, 690 million people go to bed hungry, including 189.2 million in India. Malnutrition caused 69 per cent of child deaths in India in 2019-20. The pandemic exacerbated the crisis, revealing India's stern inequality. Key flagship projects failing to deliver due to administrative constraints at different levels intensifies the problem further. The policy formulation-implementation gap results in low social performance.

Complexity and micro-level participation are needed to end hunger in India. The aim should be to learn from past errors and promote measures that enhance equitable access to food, relieving millions of India's hungry. With ample resources at the helm, we need to invest money and people wisely. Governments, NGOs, people, and communities must all work together. Everyone has a moral, if not legal, obligation to ensure that no one goes to bed with an empty stomach when there is enough food for all. ●

WORLD'S FORGOTTEN TRIBES

Nand Varma

People from Brazil's Guaja tribe

The world over, there are 5,000 distinct indigenous peoples having a population ranging from 250 million to 600 million. They are spread across every inhabited climate zone and continent except Antarctica. Some of them practically have had little or no human contact with others. This is their brief story.

Alex Golub, a noted anthropologist at the University of Hawaii at Manoa said: "Almost all human communities have been in some contact with one another for as long as we have historical or archaeological records. Human prehistory is not like that game civilization where you start with a little hut and the whole map is black." Today's so-called uncontacted people all have a history of contact, whether from past exploitation or simply seeing a plane flying overhead. The vast majority of an estimated 100 or more isolated tribes live in Brazil, but others can be found in Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and northern Paraguay. Outside of the Americas, isolated groups live in Papua New Guinea and on North Sentinel Island of India's Andaman Islands, the Jarawas of Andaman and Shompens of Nicobar etc.

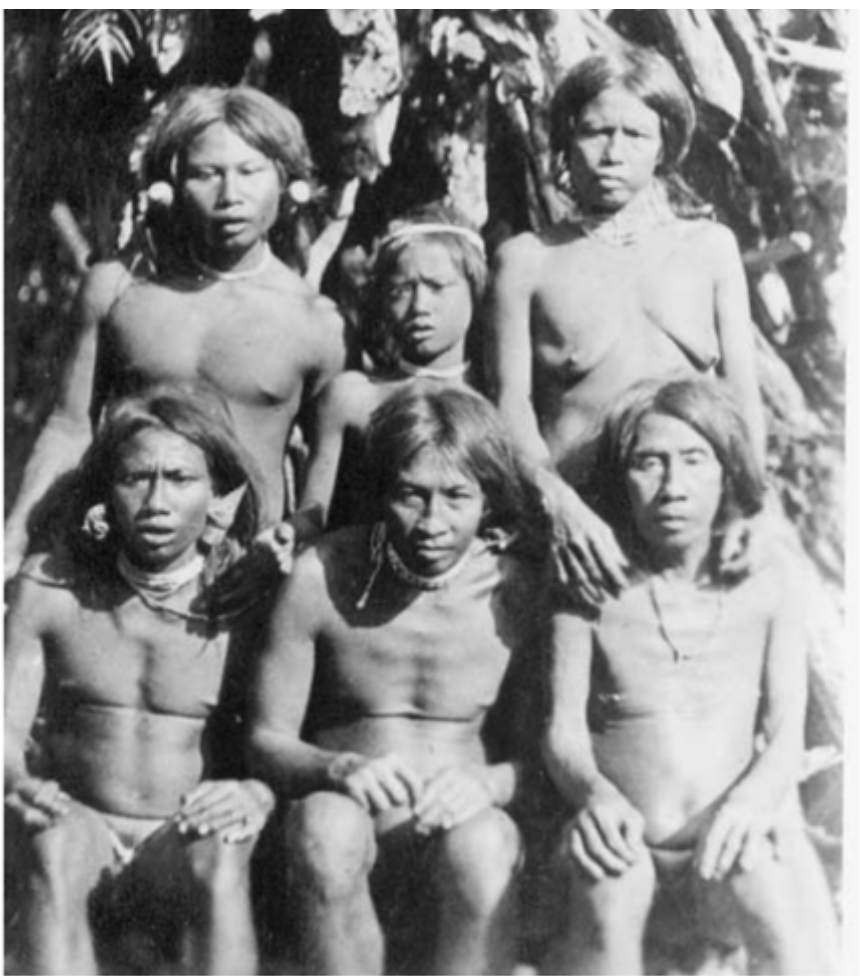
> Isolated tribal people have no immunity to some bacteria, which have wiped out up to half of a village's population in a matter of weeks or months.

It is mostly fear that causes such hostilities and keeps isolated groups from making contact. In past centuries and even decades, isolated tribes were often murdered and enslaved by outsiders. From the time white Europeans first arrived in the Americas, indigenous peoples learned to fear them, and passed that message down generations through oral histories. "People

have this romanticised view that isolated tribes have chosen to keep away from the modern, evil world," says Kim Hill, an anthropologist at Arizona State University. But when Hill and others interview people who recently came out of isolation, the same story emerges time and time again: they were interested in making contact with the outside world, but they were too afraid to do so.

Some have personal memories of traumatic encounters with outsiders. In the 1960s and 70s, Brazil largely viewed the Amazon as an empty place in need of development. Indigenous people who stood in the way of that progress were given little or no warning before their homes were bulldozed over – or they were simply killed. In one case in Brazil's Rondônia state, a single man, often referred to as "the last of His Tribe", remains in a patch of forest surrounded by cattle ranches. His people were likely killed by ranchers years ago. When he was discovered in 1996, he shot arrows at anyone who dared to approach his home. Officials occasionally check up on his house and garden, and, as far as anyone knows, he's still living there today. "It's a really sad story of this one little pocket of forest left where this one lone guy lives," says Robert Walker, an anthropologist at the University of Missouri. "He's probably completely terrified of the outside world."

In the 1970s and 80s, the Brazilian government did try at times to establish peaceful contact with indigenous people, often with the aim of forced assimilation or relocation. They set up "attraction posts" – offerings of metal tools and other things indigenous Indians might find to be valuable – to try and lure them out of hiding. This sometimes led to violent altercations or, more often than not, disease outbreaks. Isolated people have no immunity to some bugs, which have been known to wipe out up to half of a village's population in a matter of weeks or months. During those years, missionaries venturing into the jungle along with Bibles also delivered viruses and bacteria, killing the people they meant to save.



A mixed group of Shompens circa 1881

In 1987, they decided that the current way was unacceptable. After seeing tribe after tribe demolished by disease, he concluded that isolated people should not be contacted at all. Instead, natural reserves should be placed aside for them to live on, and any contact attempts should be left up to them to initiate. "Isolated people do not manifest among us – they don't ask anything of us – they live and die mostly without our knowledge," says a senior government official for unknown tribes. "When we do contact them, they very often share a common fate: 'desecration, disease and death'". Surprisingly, no international protocol exists that outlines how to avoid this predicament. Every government and group involved in making contact just do as they wish according to their own resources and experiences.

The situation in Peru, is worse. To ensure isolated groups have a future, both Brazil and Peru might need to become more transparent as well as more proactive about protecting them. No matter how remote the Amazon might seem, unlike the Sentinelese, South America's isolated groups do not live on an island cut off from the forces of mainstream society. Everywhere

one looks, there are these pressures from mining, logging, narco trafficking and other external threats. The worry is that this 'leave-them-alone' strategy, at the end of the day the external threats will win. These indigenous people will just go extinct."

In the above backdrop let us look at our own tribes, some 705 ethnic groups listed as Scheduled Tribes with a population of around 10.5 crores which is 8.6% of the country's population have been living lives very different-far away from or even within the same physical spaces-from the rest of mainstream India. Their histories have seldom been told. Besides as mentioned before; the Sentinelese, Jarawas and Shompens restricted to India's island territories of Andaman and Nicobar, we have the Halakkis, Kanjars, Konyak. Nagas, Changpas, Alu Kurumbas, Khasis, Hill Marias, Meos and the Bhils.

First the Sentinelese - Frequently considered "the most isolated people in the world", the inhabitants of North Sentinel Island in the Bay of Bengal are intensely reclusive and known to respond violently to visitors to the island. Although referred to as Sentinelese or North Sentinel Islanders, we don't know what they call themselves; their language is unknown to outsiders, even to the Andaman tribes on neighboring islands to whom they are related. Their numbers are between 50 to 200, and they support themselves with a hunter-gatherer lifestyle: building canoes for fishing and crabbing, and hunting small game with bows, arrows and spears. The Sentinelese, like so many isolated Indigenous people, are vulnerable to many diseases that a visitor might introduce. Visitors in turn face arrows, which the Sentinelese are known to shoot at approaching boats and people. The island made headlines around the world in 2018 when an American missionary traveled there illegally. He was killed soon after by members of the tribe. Next - the Jarawas are also indigenous people of the Andamans who live in parts of South Andaman and Middle Andaman Islands, and their present numbers are 250–400. Another vulnerable tribe is the Shompen in Great Nicobar. Shompen is perhaps an English mispronunciation of "Shamhap", the Nicobarese name for the tribe. The Shompens living on the western side of the island call themselves Kalay, and those on the eastern side Keyet, with both groups referring to each other as Buavela. In 2011 the population was estimated to be 229.

The Halakki are an indigenous tribe of Karnataka, India. They are found predominantly in Uttara Kannada district. This 400 year old tribe has a population of around 2 lakhs. Their way of living has hardly changed. The Kanjari are a tribe with significant populations in India and Pakistan. The Kanjari language is spoken mostly by the Kanjari people living in Punjab. Kanjari is a lesser-known Indo Aryan language, but almost all also speak Punjabi. The Kanjari speak 4-5 languages along with their native language, called Charsi. The 2011 Indian census showed a Kanjari population of 115,968.

Konyak Naga numbering 320,000 are a major Naga ethnic group native to Nagaland in North East India. They inhabit the Mon district.

A Shompen voter poses for a photo after casting his vote in the first phase of the Lok Sabha election in Andaman and Nicobar Islands 2024

Konyak chief in traditional dress

The Changpa, or Champa, are a semi-nomadic Tibetan people found mainly in the Chantang region in Ladakh, India, their population is 2661. They mostly live in the mountains, a smaller number live in the western regions of the Tibet Autonomous Region of China and were partially relocated for the establishment of the Chantang Nature Reserve.

A young Changpa girl

Kurumbas are a recognised scheduled tribe in Kerala and Tamil Nadu. They are one of the earliest known inhabitants of the Western Ghats, collecting and harvesting forest produce, primarily wild honey and wax. They have traditionally subsisted as hunters and gatherers. The Khasis inhabit the eastern part of Meghalaya, in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. Khasis residing in Jaintia hills are now better known as Jaintias. They are also called Pnars. The Khasis occupying the northern lowlands and foothills are generally called Bhois. Population 1.4 million. The Khasi language is classified as part of the Austro-asiatic language family. The Khasi people are related to the Mon-Khmer people of South East Asia. They first came in contact with the British in 1823, after the latter

conquered Assam. The area inhabited by the Khasi became a part of the Assam Province after the Khasi Hill States (which numbered to about 25 kingdoms) entered into a subsidiary alliance with the British.

Among hills spread over 3,900 sq km in Bastar district, the Hill Maria tribals of Gond stock - who call themselves Meta Koitor or simply Maria - have, lived in splendid isolation. They inhabit a region aptly named Abujhmarh, the 'unknown highland'. Surrounded by dense forests, Abujhmarh is inaccessible terrain, cut off from the rest of the world for nearly half the year due to weather conditions, numerous streams and lack of roads. The area's 19,910 tribals (1981 census) - of which about 15,500 are Hill Marias live in 236 villages. As of now the Hill Marias don't attach much importance to private property and the land which they cultivate is collectively owned. Because an entire village moves every two or three years, the task of planners and surveyors and researchers is made doubly difficult. They move when the land becomes infertile, because of epidemics, and the menace of man-eating tigers and panthers.

Meo Tribes, the term "Meo" correlates with the historical region of Mewat, which consists of the Nuh district of Haryana and some parts of adjoining Alwar and Bharatpur districts of Rajasthan and Western Uttar Pradesh. The term Mewati, in terms of use for ethnic classification, is also interchangeable with Meo Population which is roughly estimated to be around 10 million; living in India and Pakistan. They have been living there from more than 10,000 years. They speak Mewati, a language of the Indo-Aryan family although in some areas the Urdu and Hindi dominate.

The Bhils are inhabitants of Dhar, Jhabua, Khargone and Ratlam districts of Madhya Pradesh. Bhilai a city in Durg district of Chhattisgarh is named after Bhils which signify where the Bhils came from,. A large number of Bhils live in the neighbouring states of Maharashtra, Gujarat and Rajasthan. Bhil or Bheel is an ethnic group in western India . They speak the Bhil language, a subgroup of the Western Zone of the Indo-Aryan language. Bhils are members of a tribal group outside the fold of caste system. Bhils have a rich and unique culture. The Bhilala sub-division is known for its Pithora paintings, Ghoomar is their traditional folk dance. Ghoomar is the symbol of womanhood. Young girls take part in this dance and declare that they are stepping into the shoes of women. ●

Ms Minu Mohanta with MD, Jindal Stainless, Abhyuday Jindal

WOMEN BREAKING INTO MALE BASTIONS

In the previous (June) issue we saw the great strides made by women seafarers of India. This time let us see how women are breaking other traditional male bastions operating huge cranes and working as Fork Lift operators and working in Steel Plants.

On November 7, 2023: The Indian Steel Association (ISA) conferred its 'Wings of Steel' award to Jindal Stainless' first woman overhead crane operator, Ms Minu Mohanta under the 'Gender and Diversity' category. Steel Secretary, Mr Nagendra Nath Sinha, presented her the award for "perseverance and steely resolve"

Karunakshim Vatsalam

Few years ago it was unknown for women working on the shop floor of a Steel Plant doing tasks that were the monopoly of men.

in overcoming challenging circumstances and for being an inspiration for many. She was born to a mason father, married at the age of 14 and widowed at 25.

She was also conferred the Jury's Special Award for showing determination and resilience in the face of adversity at the 4th edition of the ISA's Steel Conclave held in New Delhi. Ms Mohanta, started working as a stone crusher in a quarry for six years before joining Jindal Stainless — India's largest stainless steel manufacturer — as part of its housekeeping team for the steel melting shop in 2011. Driven by her inquisitiveness and a desire to learn machine operation, she quickly adapted to managing engine-powered cleaning vehicles.

She took inspiration from her supervisor and fellow women colleagues and expressed her interest in tackling one of the most demanding plant operations, the management of overhead cranes within the plant, which was traditionally dominated by men. Remarkably, she mastered the skill of operating overhead cranes in just one month and dedicated the

subsequent months to perfecting it, shattering gender stereotypes.

On receiving the award, Ms Mohanta said, “This is a big day for me…. I just want to say that there is no alternative for women but to be brave. I am thankful for the opportunity I have been given at Jindal Stainless and I am committed to creating an army of women who choose courage over fear.”

Managing Director, Jindal Stainless, Mr Abhyuday Jindal, said, “It fills me with immense pride that ISA has identified the resilience and courage that Minu exhibits. Hers is a story of enormous strength and unparalleled dedication towards her work. At Jindal Stainless, we aim to encourage more women to sign up for such challenging tasks, defy conventional norms and serve as shining example of inspiration for others.” Ms Mohanta has a daughter and a son in their 20s and married. Currently, she lives with her in-laws and son. She provides training to other women at the plant and encourages them to opt for jobs that have traditionally been male-dominated.

Few years ago it was unknown for women working on the shop floor of a Steel Plant doing tasks that were the monopoly of men. The scenario, however, has changed now for the women employees of the Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) with more and more women employees voluntarily opting to take up challenging roles of Frontline Operations. After effectively managing the family, household chores, and technical office works, women are now breaking the barriers, taking command of critical industrial operations. One eloquent example can be seen in the Hot Strip Mill-2 (HSM-2) of SAIL, Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP), where women are operating Electric Overhead Travelling (EOT) Cranes. The trio of Ms. Prema Kanti Bilung, Ms. Nilima Tanty, and Ms. Reena Mundari, from HSM-2 have set examples worth emulating in the traditionally male-dominated realm of steel production.

Veeranganas in Steel Plants

With the launching of RSP's project 'Veerangana', women employees are being motivated to take up challenging tasks. The Personnel Department initiated the project by identifying suitable women employees and zeroed in on 'crane operation' as the first job for them. For launching this novel idea, a new state-of-the-art plate mill provided the right ambience. Next step was to identify a suitable trainer for them, who not only had the expertise in crane operation but more so, had the will and patience to teach the nuances to these neophytes. Krutartha Nayak, Senior Operator (Cranes), Plate Mill who took up the job, says, "These girls are like my daughters and I will make sure that they become competent enough to match any man in terms of skill and expertise."

Special safety training was imparted to the women. Some of them had to be counseled and convinced to wear suitable dresses instead of saris which could prove to be a safety hazard. Safety

Ms Minu Mohanta being felicitated by Steel Secretary, Nagendra Nath Sinha with the ‘Wings of Steel’ award at ISA Steel Conclave

overcoat were also provided to them. Pritilata Karar, has today earned the distinction of becoming the first woman crane operator in RSP. The other three women employees who have been trained in crane operation are Sonam Tiwari, Babita Parida, and Lata Pati, presently deployed in Plate Mill. After undergoing structured on the job training, many other women employees have now started independently handling pulpit operating positions.

Sumitra Badaik, has become the first lady pulpit operator at New Plate Mill of RSP. Bharati Tanty, Mamta Patra, Rajni Kindo, and Pushpshila Kumari have become the torchbearers in learning the nuances of operating Double Side Trimming Shear, Piler and Automatic Plate Marking Machine. Many other departments have also come forward to carry forward this wave of women empowerment. Today Damayanti Tanty, is operating the Drilling Machine while Archana Sahu, is picking up the nuances of operation of Basic Oxygen Furnace in the BOF Control Room.

And thus were born the 'Veeranganas', ushering in a new era in terms of work culture, thereby scripting history at RSP. Another heartening aspect is the attitude of the male colleagues extending their whole-hearted support and encouraging the women without any resentment about their arena being infringed upon by their female counterparts.

Surprisingly, none of these gutsy women possess any formal technical education in crane operation. However, they have fearlessly embraced the role of crane operators after mastering the skill sets, proving that passion and adaptability can be formidable substitutes for formal education in

specific domains. Their journey of operating crane started at Hot Strip Mill -1, where they showed their interest in operating EOT cranes.

Today, these exceptional women navigate the Overhead Cranes in various critical zones of Hot Strip Mill-2 like Coil Yard and Slab Yard. Ms. Tanty boasts of operating cranes over the Furnaces too, which is regarded as one of the most critical hot zones of the plant. From unloading heavy steel slabs to loading coils on the wagons, their roles encompass pivotal responsibilities through different stages of production.

"I feel proud to operate cranes which were exclusively set for men till we started operating it here. After my training at HSM-1, I was called at HSM-2 to operate cranes due to shortage of Crane Operators and since then I have been operating cranes at different areas of HSM-2" says Ms. Tanty. "At first, it looked very dangerous and it felt unsettling to climb the cranes at such height but now it has become a habit and part of our daily job" added Ms. Bilung who learnt crane operation on mono rail cranes. Both of them are operating cranes at HSM -2 since 2020.

Ms. Reena, who joined HSM-2 in 2021 says she feels something extraordinary by doing such challenging job that others think are impossible. Apart from just operating cranes at the department, she has taken the responsibility to provide crane operation training to other female workers. "I am thankful to the department and management for entrusting us with such responsibilities and posing faith on us," says Ms. Reena.

The Overhead Cranes, a pivotal component in the steel production process, are now operated with precision and expertise by these pioneering women, highlighting the industry's shift towards recognizing talent irrespective of gender.

Bleseena, a woman forklift driver, at IKEA's Hyderabad store

The move of assigning female workers the job of critical crane operation aligns with SAIL, RSP's broader commitment to promoting diversity and providing equal opportunities for all employees. This initiative also reflects the narrative of women's empowerment in India, where industries are increasingly recognizing the inherent potential of women and are actively working towards creating more inclusive workplaces.

Women at the Wheel Drive Change

IKEA's upcoming Hyderabad store has eight women forklift drivers Bleseena and Sirisha may come across as ordinary young working women, but if you see them at work, your perception is bound to change.

Godrej Material Handling business of Godrej & Boyce concluded the training of its first batch of women forklift drivers. In 2011, the company under its CSR strategy called "Good and Green" had launched Godrej Disha to ensure employability for one million youth that will enhance their earning potential. It is the flagship skill training program for the under-served youth. The Godrej Disha Forklift Driver course for ladies started as a gender diversity initiative. Women forklift drivers have been non-existent in India and this is may be one of the very first times such training has been conducted by any Indian company. The training will open new career options for these women.

After the training program, these women are capable in material handling concepts, features of the forklift, its performance characteristics, technical specification etc, main parts of the forklift, safety features in the forklift, pre-operational checks, dos and don'ts while operating the forklift - use of the check sheet, practical operation of the forklift like maneuvering the forklift and stacking/de-stacking loads on racks and parking procedures. ●

Godrej & Boyce trains the first batch of women forklift drivers

Iranian Nationalism
COMMENT AND DISCUSSION

Taraka Ghista

The Allies won the Second World War on Iranian oil for which they paid next to nothing

The Article "Iranian Nationalism versus Political Islam by Arunansh B Goswami (Prout June issue pages 28-30) does not reflect properly the history of Iran. To put things in the right perspective below are brief comments from personal knowledge.

To support the Shah is a betrayal of the Iranian people of the thousands tortured and murdered by both father and son. Under the son, Iran was rated by Amnesty International as the number one most brutal torturer in the world. I was in Canada and met many refugees from Islamic Iran. All of them were against the Shah except one whose father worked in the Shah's police. He used to openly admit the torture and said they were communists who deserved it. The reality was different.

Like today countless innocent people are routinely tortured. The techniques of Torture (originating from the CIA) were very sophisticated. The Ayatollah's have continued in their footsteps - the same Evin Prison is doing what was done nearly 50 years ago.

Firstly Reza Shah was an ordinary soldier made into Shah by the British invaders. They did the same in princely states in India. This was how the Allies won the Second World War on Iranian oil for which they paid next to nothing. Maybe Reza Shah gave honour to Tagore but that is about it as far as his positive contribution.

The original dynasty was the Qajar Dynasty. There was a Didi who was from the family of the Qajar Dynasty. Amir Kabir was the person who had a detailed plan for modernizing Iran based on the West. He is a hero for the Iranian

Diaspora in the West. Details may be seen at https://en.wikipedia .org/ wiki/Amir_Kabir

Modernization should not involve forcibly stopping religion. This leads to a backlash. The first Reza Shah punished women for wearing a veil. This was very traumatic experience for older women. The creator of the first human rights organization in Iran wrote in her autobiography about this. She was against this because of the trauma felt by her own mother. Many women's human rights activists were punished by the Shah.

The article in Prout June issue (pgs 28-30) fails to mention the modern hero of both Islamists and Iranian nationalists refugees whom my father Acarya Dhanjoo Ghista used to be in contact with. Mossadeghwas a hero (details at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohammad_Mosaddegh0. He was overthrown by the British and Americans (this is openly admitted nowadays in the US and UK). This was because he wanted to nationalize Iranian oil and stop the looting by the west.

Ayatollah Khomeini came to power because of this issue, the issue of land reforms (which the last Shah refused to do) and other basic issues. The first major government of Khomeini was with the communists (whom he later murdered). Khomeini was a great murderer and destroyer of Iran. But he kicked out all foreign corporations out of Iran except BP-AMACO. He also gave women full education - unlike his counterparts in India. There are more women than men in many Iranian universities. Also land reforms were done. Iran created the model of Theo-democracy - only certified good Muslims have the right to vote and the right to run in an election. My mother Garda Ghista wrote a good article on Theo Democracy many years ago which I think was published in PROUT magazine. Still Khomeini was funded by the British in Paris. That is what Iranian refugees used to say — underneath every Ayatollah's beard it says "Made in Britain". My father's friend as a refugee in London found a book about how Britain was behind this. Later he went back to the bookstore to buy the book. Then he was told the store no longer had any copy of the book. He asked them to order a copy. They told him the book was banned in the UK.

The British were also trying to control the Green Movement of Mousavi against the Ayatollahs. As usual they have bought up many so called liberal Iranian leaders in the West. This is the great, terrible choice of the Iranian people — remain under Ayatollahs and remain free or live under of western puppet or worst of all - live under the British Shah once again. ●

There are many books which tell Iran's history which may be read. Links to some are:

https://www.amazon.com/Iran-People-Interrupted-Hamid-Dabashi/dp/1595583335

https://www.amazon.com/Persepolis-Childhood-Pantheon-

Sandeshkhali and the Exploitative Aquaculture of the Bengal Delta

Ambar Kumar Ghosh and Sayanangshu Modak

Problematic switches to shrimp farming in areas of rising salinity in India and Bangladesh underline the need for political reform

The Bengal Delta is undergoing significant changes, characterised by rising salinity levels. As the world's largest delta – and home to over 100 million people across India and Bangladesh – these changes have large social, economic and political significance. And India's recent political controversy in Sandeshkhali, West Bengal, highlights how adaptation to deal with rising salinity can go badly wrong: alleged landgrabs, economic oppression, and abuse.

The key adaptation response to higher salinity in the Bengal Delta has been the transition to brackish water aquaculture, particularly focusing on shrimp-led growth. But the Sandeshkhali situation highlights that, unless we pay attention to the political economy (who has access to resources, and who can allocate them), such adaptation measures may exacerbate existing inequalities and forge an unjust transition.

High Salinity and the 'Promise' of Fish Farms

Sandeshkhali is located north of the Indian Sundarbans region. This landscape is undergoing rapid and irreversible social-ecological change due to an increase in water salinity; the availability of freshwater for human use and

Shrimp farming has often been settled upon as a logical adaptation to the increasing salinity of the waters and soils of the Bengal Delta, in both India and Bangladesh

ecosystems is shrinking. Changes in freshwater discharge from rivers are considered the single most important reason for rising water and soil salinity; the 1975 construction of India's Farakka Barrage across the Ganga River in West Bengal is frequently singled out as a primary reason for these changes. (Other factors also play a role, such as saltwater intrusion due to rising sea levels and cyclone-induced storm surges, though there is little consensus as to what extent.)

With this lack of freshwater availability, agriculture in the Bengal Delta has become both high-risk and non-remunerative; aquaculture has emerged as a promising alternative. Through controlled environments like bheris in West Bengal (shallow fish ponds; known as ghers in Bangladesh), aquaculture presents lucrative prospects, especially for export-oriented shrimp ventures cultivated in brackish water.

Initiated in the 1960s, brackish water aquaculture in the Bengal Delta traditionally involved small-scale farmers relying on natural shrimp delivery during high tides. From the 1980s, semi-intensive and intensive methods were adopted as farmers started to invest in tiger shrimp, followed by white leg shrimp from the 1990s. Unlike earlier methods, which required only suitable land and some effort, intensive practices required fertilisers, higher stocking densities and close management. All of this meant shrimp farming increasingly became the preserve of those with capital and power.

In both India and Bangladesh, the shift to aquaculture is largely seen as a form of successful adaptation. But the difference between traditional and intensive aquaculture – and what that means for the people on the ground – has largely been ignored. According to Indian governmental estimates,

the potential for brackish water aquaculture in West Bengal is among the highest in India. This potential is mainly confined to the districts of East Midnapore and South and North 24 Parganas. Bangladesh has acknowledged its own potential with an action plan to bolster the production and marketability of black tiger shrimp. These broad plans pay little attention to the societal impacts of such transitions, however.

Economies Dominated by Political Allegiance

At the centre of this change are local, village-level elected government institutions, known in India as panchayats. Historically, controlling panchayats has been crucial for anyone with major political ambitions in West Bengal, because they are hubs for patronage and mobilisation – panchayat services like governmental schemes and livelihood opportunities are distributed along party lines, bolstering political dominance. In most cases, the party governing at the state level maintains control of its panchayats using state machinery, resorting to violence to stifle opposition.

In Sandeshkhali, powerful [link behind paywall] local leaders control profitable shrimp enterprises without adequately compensating their impoverished employees. Rural livelihoods heavily rely on government resources and political loyalty is key to accessing them. Political party workers enforce control on behalf of local leaders, which leads to resource-driven violence – especially in poor areas. Rampant rent-seeking [link behind paywall], controlled by the ruling party, grants local leaders control over various resources like land, fishery ponds, brick kilns and sand mines.

Such practices have thrived in the region for decades, cutting across political regimes. Amid West Bengal's industrial decline, these politically connected, rural entrepreneurial figures have become [link behind paywall] primary employers, fostering cronyism across rural and semi-urban areas. This model of local political economy has led to long-term social conflicts in the region.

Road to Emancipatory Water Politics

Earlier this year in Sandeshkhali, a local leader and his associates

orchestrated [link behind paywall] landgrabs for shrimp cultivation without consent. Resistance was met with threats, violence and forced shop closures. This economic coercion compelled villagers to become labourers on seized land under threat of dire consequences. Promised payments did not materialise; control was maintained using violence and sexual harassment.

Similarly, in regions including Gabura in Bangladesh, the so-called "prawn mafia" employs intimidation, violence, and collusion with officials to dominate the industry. The embankments used to keep encroaching waters at bay were weakened by Cyclone Amphan in May 2020, which has left communities vulnerable to further landgrabs. And the proliferation of these heavily fertilised shrimp ponds generates long-term, adverse impacts such as the spread of disease.

The contemporary reality for the Bengal Delta's shrimp farming areas illustrates how climate change adaptation strategies can easily lead to grossly unequal outcomes: marginalised and disempowered locals find themselves trapped in a cycle of exploitation, their right to economic self-determination ruthlessly curtailed. These inequities will only deepen until community-led, inclusive aquaculture collectives and legal reforms are conceived.

Ambar Kumar Ghosh is a PhD scholar at Jadavpur; Sayanangshu Modak is a Junior Fellow at the Kolkata centre of the Observer Research Foundation, a think tank. ●

The consumption of static types of animal protein by human beings is slowly but surely coming to an end because there is a shortage of pasture land to graze animals. Even a few decades ago in India there used to be large open fields to graze cattle. People would collect the cow dung and use it as manure. Due to the increase in population and other natural factors, these vast pasture lands are fast disappearing, so cows and buffaloes are also disappearing. Fish, meat, eggs, milk, cream, butter and cheese are all animal proteins. Milk, cream, butter, etc., contain much fat. If the present trends continue, in the not too distant future animal proteins may not be available at all.

Different countries have different types of staple foods. For instance, rice is the staple food of Bengal; potato is the staple food of Ireland; and bread and butter are the staple foods of some other countries. A time will come when the populations of the meat eating countries will be in great trouble due to the absence of animal proteins. Cows can be tied to a fixed place, but sheep require vast tracts of land. Similarly, in the absence of suitable pasture land, it will be impossible to rear goats, hens and ducks. Naturally, we will have to depend more on pulses as the only viable alternative to animal protein and fats.

- Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar

DHARMA SÁDHANÁ –III

- Shrii Shrii Anandamurti

Inspiration comes from inside. Sometimes we need inspiration from outside; but that inspiration is not lasting. It is momentary. But in order to inspire yourself you have got to know yourself; by knowing yourself you are inspired always. Inspiration from inside will stand for all time; it will inspire you for all time. That alone is going to help you. And by inspiring yourself you are inspiring others. So be an example. Be a true aspirant by becoming yourself what you are; and by becoming what you are, you show others what they have to be. So in order to know everything you know one thing. That one thing is dharma. That one thing is the supreme truth, and that truth is hiding in your heart. You have got to know that truth inside yourself. That is why sádhaná has to be performed.

In order to perform sádhaná you have to observe moral precepts. Without morality, sádhaná is impossible. Morality is given to you; it is for you to follow; it is up to you to follow; by observing morality, you follow dharma. By following dharma you practise sádhaná. By practising sádhaná you know yourself totally. The purpose of all creation, the purpose of all human beings, is to know what we are; that is why we are all born in this world. The very purpose of our human existence is to know what we are. There is no other purpose in this universe – remember this point. Remember always that the very purpose of our creation is to know Him, the Supreme Entity which is in front of you all the time – even if you forget many times because we are not following our true nature.

Having forgotten our true nature, we have strayed away from the path. So we have got to know our nature. We have got to know that inner self. Knowing one's self is the true dharma, our true nature. The inspiration comes from inside, it comes always. So do your spiritual practices. Observe the moral principles. Become yourself an example; and that is possible by doing your spiritual practices in a regular manner, in a regular way. That is why you are all here today. The very purpose of your presence, the very purpose of your action, is to know yourself; is to inspire yourself all the time by your internal entity.

You cannot be inspired by others all the time, you have got to be inspired by yourself. That means you have to follow dharma; you have to follow the path. Because He is always inside of you; He is always outside of you also. The Supreme Truth is hiding; you are chasing Him and He is hiding behind you. And again you are chasing Him and again He is hiding. It is like a hide-and-seek game. And He is happy about that. You are chasing Him and chasing Him and chasing Him and He is hiding from you, and you want to chase Him again. ●

To be concluded

Ph.D. research work on dietary plants recommended for heart disease in Shrii. P. R. Sarkar's Yaogic Cikitsa and Dravya Guna received accolades

Punarnava plant

Kalmi Saag water spinach

Propounder of Microvita theory, Shrii P.R. Sarkar has recommended some plants to heart patients for dietary inclusion such as '*Punarnava*' (*Boerhavia diffusa*), '*Kalami saag'* (*Ipomoea aquatica*) and '*Bethu saag'* (*Chenopodium album*) in his book '*Yaogic Cikitsa and Dravya Guna*'. Dr. S. K. Verma, President, Society for Microvita Research and Integrated Medicine (SMRIM), Udaipur mentioned that the recommendation of Shrii Sarkar is being scientifically validated in Ph.D. work of Ms. Bhavika Kunwar who is a registered scholar of Mohanlal Sukhadia University, Udaipur since 2019. These plants have demonstrated significant *in vitro* clot lysis activity. Clot formation is a major culprit of ischemic heart disease. Some of the results of her study have been published in reputed Journals. Bhavika is doing her Ph.D. under the supervision of Dr. Vartika Jain, Govt. Meera Girls College, Udaipur and Dr. S. K. Verma, Pacific Medical College & Hospitals, Udaipur.

SMRIM Secretary, Dr. Vartika Jain said recently that, Bhavika's research paper entitled '*In vitro* thrombolytic activity of *Boerhavia diffusa* L. leaves' obtained second prize among Best Oral Presentation in National Symposium on Opportunities and Challenges in Contemporary Biological Sciences organized by Dept. of Botany, BN University, Udaipur on Sunday, 26th May, 2024 at Udaipur, Rajasthan.

It is noteworthy to mention here that earlier also Ph.D. has been awarded by Mohanlal Sukhadia University, Udaipur in 2010 on evaluation of cardio-vascular beneficial properties of plants such as '*Semal*' (*Bombax ceiba*) and '*Bhumikushmanda'* (*Ipomoea digitata*) mentioned in '*Yaogic Cikitsa and Dravya Guna*'. That Ph.D. work was carried out under the supervision of Prof. S. S. Katewa and Dr. S. K. Verma from Udaipur, Rajasthan and results were published in reputed National and International Journals. The scientific validation of the plants mentioned for treatment of cardio-vascular diseases by Shrii PR Sarkar in fact, highlights his wisdom on medicinal properties of plant kingdom.

PBI in General Elections 2024: Results and Reflections

Krishna Prasad

Pradip Kumar Singha

Girraj Dhakre

Dolakar Bhoi

Sanjay Singh

Anup kumar

Proutist Bloc, India (PBI) fielded 6 candidates in the General Elections 2024 and 2 in the Odisha Assembly elections. The candidates who participated in the General Elections and the votes secured by them are as follow:

Ramesh Anand (Supaul, Bihar)	–	9451
Anup kumar (Godda, Jharkhand)	–	2007
Girraj Dhakre (Fatehpur Sikri, UP)	–	1564
Vinod Ghodke (Dharwad, Karnataka)	–	411
Sanjay Singh (Kampur, UP)	–	350
Krishna Prasad (Bangalore Central, Karnataka)	–	327

Besides, in Odisha Assembly elections, Dolakar Bhoi, who contested from Deogarh, scored 905 votes, and Pradip Kumar Singha, who scored 303, contested from Jaleshwar constituency of Odisha.

Speaking to PROUT correspondent over the phone, PBI spokesperson Ravindra Singh, PRS (PBI), said, "The election results are not as remarkable as we had expected, and although we had put in a great deal of effort, it's evident that we need to refine our approach and develop a more effective strategy to connect with people. And we'll work on it. Yet Our commitment to success is unwavering. We'll remain proactive, dedicated, and persistent in our efforts until we achieve the victory we are striving for. I believe this journey requires us to stay motivated and diligent at every step of the way, ensuring that we learn from these results and continue to push forward with renewed energy and determination."

He also informed that PBI is going to hold its national convention in Ranchi on 17-18 August 2024. Besides, the party is planning to contest Bihar Assembly elections next year.

Neo-Humanist Education Foundation Hosts Mass-Feeding Program

The Neo-Humanist Education Foundation continues its commitment to supporting the community by hosting a weekly mass-feeding program every Sunday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The initiative aims to serve delicious and nutritious meals to approximately 300-400 individuals from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. This program underscores the Foundation's dedication to addressing food insecurity and promoting well-being among the underprivileged.

All donations to the Foundation are eligible for tax exemption under Section 80G.

PBI Holds Cadre Training Programme in Supaul

On June 15-16, 2024, a two-day long cadre training program was held at Supaul Vyapar Sangh, Thakurvadi, Supaul, Bihar, attended by about 70 dedicated cadres of Proutist Bloc, India (PBI).

The event began with the offering of flowers to the picture of Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar, the propounder of PROUT and founder of PBI. This was followed by a few revolutionary Prout songs sung by senior Proutist Nirala ji.

The first session started with an inspiring welcome address by the party's National Convener, Acharya Santosananda Avadhuta, who welcomed the cadres and party officials. He focused on "The Need of a Proutist Government," explaining that PROUT cannot be implemented by a hostile government. Only a Prout-friendly government under moralist leadership can materialize this sublime theory in letter and spirit. Therefore, PBI needs to organize and unite all moralist forces to wipe out the demonic rule of immoralists. He emphasized that the

cadres' duty is not just to make declarations and shout spirited slogans but to ensure they are moving forward with adequate speed to reach their goal.

Following the welcome address, Proutist Nidhi Sati gave a PowerPoint presentation on "PBI: A New Sunrise in Indian Politics." She elaborated on how and why PBI is different from other political parties, stating that PBI is an unprecedented phenomenon that will rise to prominence. She noted that established parties divide and rule, but PBI aims to unite people based on universalism and anti-exploitation sentiment and to put moralists in power. She criticized so-called charismatic leaders and their successors for failing the country, asserting that only infallible leadership and ideals can save it.

In the second session after lunch, Public Relations Secretary Ravindra Singh gave a PowerPoint presentation on "Amiirii Rekha" (Wealth Ceiling Line). He argued that if the poverty line were rationally determined, about 70% of the population would fall below it. He highlighted shocking facts about economic disparity in India, where just 1% of people hold more than 42% of the country's wealth, while 50% of the population holds less than 3%. Using similar supporting facts and figures, he established how "Amiirii Rekha" can solve problems such as poverty, unemployment, corruption, economic depression, and price rises.

The presentation was followed by a question-and-answer session, featuring interesting questions from the audience and insightful answers from trainers Acharya Santosananda Avadhuta, Nidhi Sati, and Ravindra Singh.

The next day began with Prout songs, followed by a presentation on "Economic Democracy" by PRS Ravindra Singh. Slide by slide, he explained how the Proutist economy differs from today's greed-based commercial economy. He detailed finer aspects of the Proutist economy, including general economy, commercial economy, people's economy, and psycho-economy.

Using analogies, examples, and real-life data, he presented the concepts of Economic Democracy, Economic Decentralization, 3-tier Economy, and Balanced Economy. The session was followed by a Q&A session.

In his address, National President AK Bhaskar stated that human existence is trifarious—body, mind, and soul—which calls for a society that provides sufficient scope for the development of each. He added that the right to guaranteed employment with sufficient purchasing power must be made a fundamental right. "The centralization of political power in the hands of moralists and the decentralization of economic power to the masses is the only agenda of PBI," he remarked.

The trainees, who were asked for their feedback and suggestions, expressed their solidarity with the aims and objectives of PBI and resolved to work for it.

Towards the end, the PBI National Committee felicitated the officials and cadres who worked tirelessly to make the program successful and participated in the General Elections held last month. These included Bihar State Committee President Dr. Tarani Prasad, Proutist Nilu Singh, Organizing Secretary Amod Anand, Godda Constituency candidate Anup Kumar, Proutist Kesar Kalpavriksh, Supaul Constituency candidate Ramesh Anand, etc. The program concluded by 6:30 PM with Proutistic songs and resounding slogans.

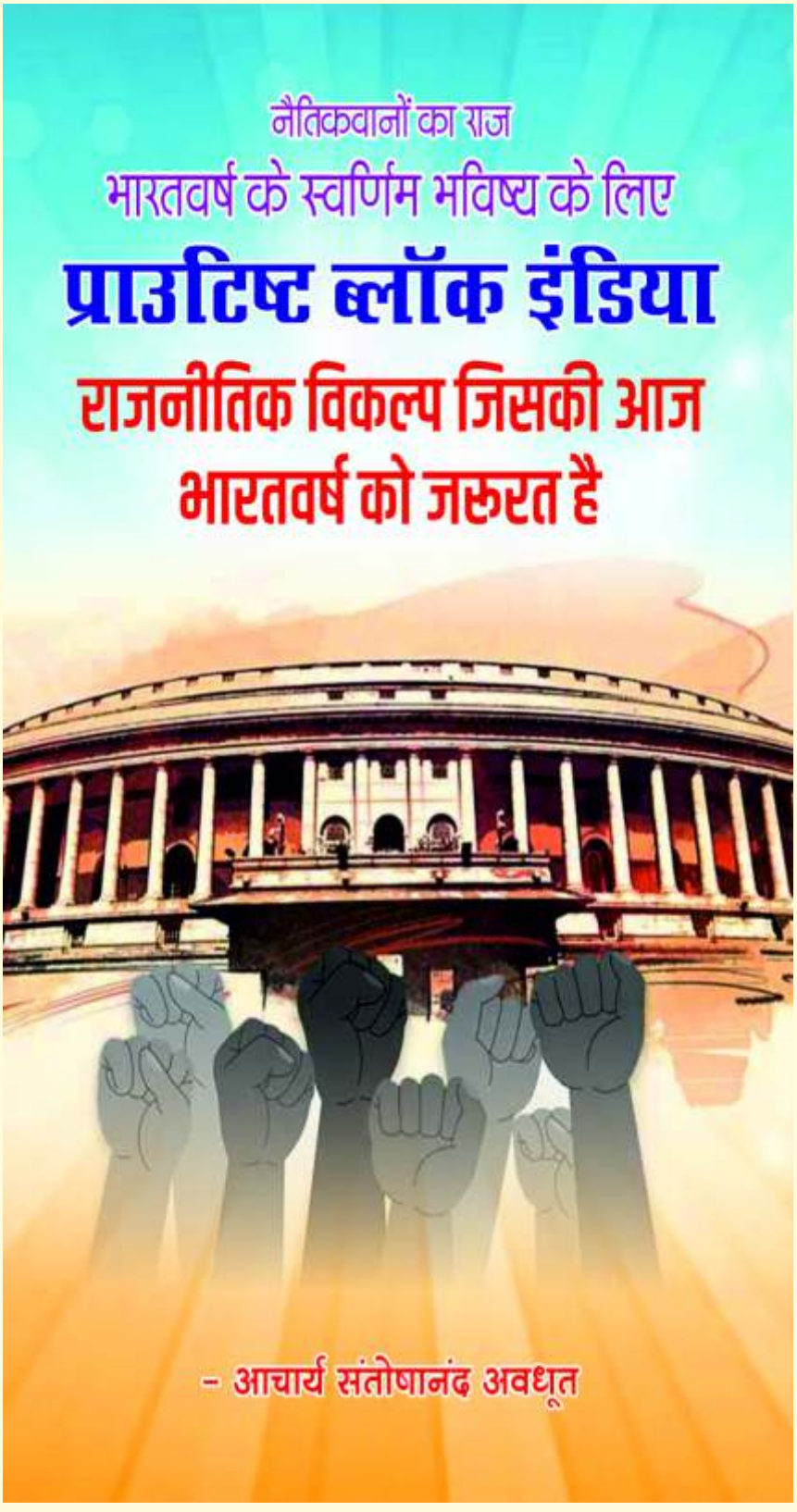
Unveiling the Truth : A New Book on Proutist Bloc, India (PBI)

There has been a lot of confusion among Proutists and the general public regarding the history, role, relevance, and, above all, the validity of Proutist Bloc, India (PBI), a political party founded by Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar, the propounder of the Progressive Utilization Theory (PROUT).

Despite the fact that PBI, since its inception in 1968, has remained active in electoral politics, with verified data about it publicly accessible on the website of the Election Commission of India (ECI), the controversy about it lingers in the minds of many.

To dispel these clouds of ignorance and confusion, PBI's National Convener Acharya Santosananda Avadhuta has written a book in Hindi language titled 'PBI: Ek Rajnaitik Vikalp Jiski Bharatvarsh Ko Zarurat Hai' (PBI: A Political Alternative India Needs), which presents the relevant facts and data about PBI, painstakingly collected from the ECI's archive, website, and other sources. The book puts this mass of information in a surprisingly neat format and lucid language for the understanding of a lay reader, deserving a serious read by anyone who cares.

The book is available at Prout Bhavan, JC-48, Khirki Extension, Malviya Nagar, Delhi. ●



Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar

What secrets You still hold

O GO BANDHU, BOLITE PÁRO
SÁRÁ DIN DHARE TUMI KII KARO

JÁHÁ KICHU ÁSE JÁHÁ KICHU JÁY
TOMÁR CARAŃ TALE SAB KICHU HOYE
TOMÁR MANER MÁJHE SAB KICHU LEKHÁ ÁCHE
ETA KATHÁ MANE REKHE TUMI KII KARO

JATA KICHU SUKHA JATA MADHURATÁ
JATA KICHU DUHKHA JATA VIRÚPATÁ
ETA NIYE LIILÁ KHELÁ KII KARE KARO
BOLO, TOMÁR GOPAN KATHÁ KII ÁCHE ÁRO

O 'Bandhu', can you please tell me
What You keep doing all the time?

All that comes, all that goes,
Everything happens beneath thy feet.
Everything is scripted in thy mind,
However do You keep track of so many things?

All joys, all the sweetness
All sorrows, all the unkindness
How do you manage to
Play divine games with so many entities?
Pray tell me
What secrets You still hold?

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Manufacturing Unit: Plot No. 1D - 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, Sector-7, IIE, SIDCUL, Haridwar - 249403 (UK), INDIA
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