

The Journal of Governance

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IC Centre for Governance
NEW DELHI

The Journal of Governance

IC Centre for Governance

Niryat Bhawan, Rao Tula Ram Marg, New Delhi-110057

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The IC Centre for Governance has been set up in with the objective of collective thinking and acting, on important issues of governance. It believes that public governance is too serious a matter to be left entirely to the state and that the involvement of the Civil Society is not only desirable but also essential. The centre seeks to strengthen the capacity of Civil Society and government for ensuring good governance.

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Please address all correspondence to IC Centre for Governance at Niryat Bhawan, Rao Tula Ram Marg, New Delhi-110057
e-mail:iccfg@yahoo.co.in

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EDITORIAL

*If you do not change the direction, you may end up where
you are going*

Lao Tze

It is heartening to note that the first issue of the journal has been received by the readers quite positively as the number and tone of the responses indicate. Some of the responses have been included in the mail box in this issue. We are grateful to the readers who have commented - positively or negatively – on the quality and content of the articles. Needless to say, we have been encouraged to improve the journal with every succeeding issue.

It was suggested by some well wishers that each issue of the journal should preferably be devoted to a particular topic of current relevance to governance. The Editorial Board endorses the suggestion but expresses its inability to presently accede to the demand, because a large number of articles have already been received and it is not possible to defer them. Besides, a topic specific issue has to be planned much in advance, a luxury not available to us at present. It may be possible to consider the suggestion in the future.

As seen in the print and electronic media, internet as well as in the conferences being regularly organized across the country, the flavour of the season appears to be corruption. It's been talked about in universities, work places and drawing rooms. Eminent persons are busy writing letters to the policy makers initiating a debate on the need for a more stringent legislation to deal with acts of corruption in high places. People have started approaching the court for prosecuting ministers and chief ministers for alleged abuse of authority. Dead scams are being resurrected. The voices of the civil society have finally found an issue to rally round.

A remarkable thing in these public discourses is the absence of helpless cynicism so characteristic of 'argumentative' Indians. No longer is the malaise of high denominational malfeasance or customary 'facilitation fee' accepted as the order of the day. In a suburb of Delhi, the local people revolted against the age old custom of paying a fixed sum of money for registration of documents. We hope that the newly found activism does not die down like moths during the monsoon.

It is hard for the IC Centre for Governance to remain unconcerned with the gathering movement. The Centre, therefore, organized a day long seminar on the effectiveness or otherwise of the existing anti-corruption agencies of the government. The well attended and hotly debated deliberations ended with the conclusion that a new and more effective institutional framework was required for tackling the growing menace of corrupt practices in transactions with governments.

Francis Fukuyama says that the four nested aspects of 'stateness' are organizational design and management, political system design, basis of legitimisation and cultural and structural factors. He further says that the systemic institutional design goes beyond functionality and has to be perceived as being legitimate by the underlying society.

Since laws with best intentions are often not enforced effectively, the ultimate outcome of the battle for cleansing public affairs of questionable acts would depend on the strength of the State institutions. It has been witnessed in a number of cases that the state institutions like Police and other law enforcing agencies do not have requisite powers and freedom to withstand political pressure or to resist temptations.

The resurrected official Lokpal Bill appears more like a farce being enacted by the government of the day on unsuspecting people. The proposed Lokpal would not have the powers to initiate an inquiry against MPs on its own but would have to wait for reference from the Parliament. It would not have its own investigating agency and would be recommendatory in character. What is needed is a strong institution which should combine the roles of CVC and CBI related to offences of corruption. In this context, it is worthwhile to note that similar institutions have proved effective in dealing with the menace of corruption in several countries including South Korea, Indonesia, Hong Kong and New South Wales (Australia).

A proposed Indian Commission Against Corruption Bill was drafted by civil society activists and sent for the consideration of all national political parties. A copy of the draft bill can be obtained from the office of the Centre.

Prabhat Kumar

Rangan Dutta

***Science and Technology for Rural
Development - Need for
systemic reform***

The World Development Report 2010 has placed India firmly in the category of lower middle income countries as the nation's per capita Gross National Income was placed at US\$ 1070 (2008) – well above the cut off figure of US\$ 950 for getting out of low income countries. This is an achievement for a country that has seen over three fold increase of the population since Independence in 1947 when the per capita income was a little above US\$ 100 and India's population is yet to stabilise. The statement of US President Barack Obama during his visit to India in November 2010 that India is not “emerging but has already emerged as a great power” has been well received and caused an euphoria. What, however has been missing in the public discourse is a concern about the declining share of agriculture in the GDP which is about 16% now having fallen from 24.02% in 2000-01 when the 10th Plan was launched, shared by about 70% of population and its socio-economic consequences in terms of huge urban-rural income disparities, shrinking markets and low levels of consumption, savings and investments and social unrest caused by a seemingly inexorable process of immiserisation of small and marginal peasantry who constitute the vast majority of the farming community.

The ranks of rural landless population of about 10 crores are steadily increasing as more and more marginal farmers find themselves relegated to landless status due to fragmentation of holdings and unviability of farming on small plots. The fall in share of GDP also means a huge divide in rural and urban social and physical infrastructure, quality of life and consequently in human 'capabilities', and entitlements. The phenomenon of sluggish growth of rural economy has been the 'outcome' of a complex set of adverse factors still to be adequately addressed. Even in

a fast growing State like Tamilnadu, the proportion of farm households that do not own land other than homestead land or cultivate only on homestead land is 55.43% the highest in the country against the All India average of about 31% and declining returns from small farm agriculture have compelled farmers to seek employment in urban centres. Much of the cash flow of such farm families is derived from urban or rural non farm sector. (In Tamilnadu 40% of rural male work force is employed in non agricultural sector.) However as the migrant labour from rural areas is usually unskilled, the urban labour market operates to their disadvantage because of low wages and debilitating living conditions and miserable conditions of work.

While the 11th Plan and the approach to the 12th Plan underscore 'inclusive growth', the development experience of a mainly urban and technology led growth model in the post liberalisation period has caused what economic historians called 'scissors crisis' that the fledgling Soviet Union faced in mid 1920s by the analogy with a pair of scissors, one blade representing industrial crisis moving up faster while the other blade representing agricultural prices moving down. It was a crisis that impoverished the rural masses where the vast majority of the population lived and the surplus extracted from the rural sector in various forms such as lower prices paid to farmers for food, cash crops and other agricultural produce, was used to promote industrial growth. In a way this is happening in India as rural produce fetches lower price even in value added form compared with urban products and services. Thus agricultural prices have relatively declined while industrial prices are steadily rising. And, the increasing rural consumption of urban products and services in medicines, teleservices, consumer durables etc. has had the effect of reducing the demand for rural value added products even in rural markets. This ensures a rapid transfer of resources from rural to urban areas. In fact, the organized sector's penetration of rural markets has been growing at 11% annually replacing a number of products made by rural artisans.

As there is no sign of improvement in the terms of trade of rural producers, small and marginal farmers in States like Tamilnadu have been found to be willingly selling their lands for industrial use especially in Districts where industry and service

sectors are progressing fast and need land close to roads for expansion or setting up of new units. The farmers distress is more acute in unirrigated or dry lands which cover about 60% of India's total agricultural land and where the crop yields are low and affected by recurring spells of drought. The fact that an estimated two lakhs farmers have committed suicide in the last two decades due to crop failures points to the seriousness of rural distress.

In this backdrop, the projection of the planners that by 2050 half the population of the country will live in urban areas from the present level of 30% is problematic because implicit in the projection is a perception that this would be a move in the right direction. This is open to question given the fact that the hi-tech and capital intensive industrial growth implies largely jobless growth and unskilled rural migrants in service sector are always placed in low wage unorganized segments and condemned to live in slums facing severe hardships and shortened life expectancy. Not with-standing the work of the National and State Skill Development Missions for expanding the skill base of the work force initiated in 11th Plan, the sheer size of the rural migrants and the efforts needed to impart skills might perpetuate the mismatch between skills in demand in urban sector and huge presence of unskilled rural migrants. This will make a mockery of the idea of inclusive growth by disrupting the rural as well as the urban societies. An alternative to this approach propounded by Late Shri Nanaji Deshmukh, noted nationalist and social thinker is to view the rural population as "the custodian of natural resources" which exist only in the rural areas and to create jobs by developing a rural production function that increasingly applies modern Science & Technology in a sustainable manner to impart skills to produce value added products and services for rural as well as urban markets. The core of this thought is Gandhian and accords a strategic role to the rural sector which has a new meaning today as the country is faced with challenges of climate change and degradation of environment.

A revitalised rural economy could reduce urban rural imbalances, check migration to urban areas by establishing a stronger rural urban linkage in place of existing relationships that turned rural economy into a 'feeder sector' for urban economy.

This would require a paradigm shift in planning and massive public investment in irrigation and productivity increase of dry land agriculture. No doubt 'hard, ware' of development efforts like those under 'Bharat Nirman' and 'PMs Gram Sadak Yojna' (PMGSY) and other initiatives in Health, Education and Agriculture will facilitate greater access to markets, inputs and thereby upgrade the 'capabilities' of the rural people backed up by revamped Panchyati Raj Institutions. This paper contends, however, that to derive optimum benefits from these initiatives, it is imperative to look at the 'software' aspects, i.e. the present system of development and dissemination of rural technologies, and to identify systemic deficiencies, with a view to putting in place a 'reformed' S&T system for rural development with full participation of all stakeholders to respond to development challenges. The succeeding paragraphs will therefore deal with first, a quick appraisal and then suggestions for re-structuring the system for technology development and dissemination. The international experience supports that high priority be accorded to technology. To quote Jeffrey Sachs "I believe that the single most important reason why prosperity spread and why it continues to spread is the transmission of technologies and the ideas underlying them."

To construct a sensible organizational chart of Rural Technology System would be a near impossibility because it has grown horizontally and vertically without any convergence. The system consists of the following:

- The Labs under the CSIR System especially RRL network whose charter includes developing technologies for rural application i.e. to meet technology needs of rural production function . The specialized Labs like NCL, NPL deal with more complex needs of industry while CLRI, CGCRI have interface with rural or semi rural producers. The technology development Research and Training Centres under KVIC and State Khadi Board and Institutions such as the Indian institute for Handloom Technology are primarily in rural non-farm sector (RNFS) and rural industries under household, tiny and small sector engaged in value addition activities.
- District Industries Centres (DICS) were set up to provide

financial and technological support including training and to coordinate their activities with KVIB and State Small Scale industries Corporations. However, success has been limited because of lack of concerted efforts.

- The ICAR system- It has developed a national grid comprising 46 Institutes including 4 deemed universities , 4 National bureaux, 81 All India Coordinated Research Projects (AICRP), 31 State Agricultural Universities and a Central Agricultural university at Imphal. ICAR is engaged in strategic research, location specific agricultural research e.g. NE Hill Complex at Shillong, Vivekananda Institute for Hill Agriculture at Almora, etc.
- The university system in states set up with support from UGC and the state governments are also equipped with capacity for basic, applied and adaptive research; much of this capacity is unutilized for lack of any linkage with state Agricultural Universities and the concerned faculties. Only in some cases, field - evaluation of work in agriculture or forestry related development is being done by these universities for the State or the Central Govt.

If one works out the total S&T manpower deployed and the physical facilities created over the years in these three wings, it would be very impressive and the recurring and non- recurring costs to the Exchequer are also huge and merit serious study and research. The output and findings of the system and the man-power trained at these three wings are logically meant for supporting the rural work force and the communities engaged in farm and non-farm sectoral activities who constitute the major stake holders. However, since researchers are not always the best people for technology dissemination, every state has a departmental network for each developmental activity basically geared to motivate and assist 'the stake holders' to adopt innovations, processes and practices of various types. Though the word 'extension' is associated with agriculture, every development department is engaged in some kind of 'extension' activity through means such as training, demonstration, subsidization of new technologies, and inputs, introduction of innovations in housing, construction

technology, drainage, sanitation, fruit processing, post harvest technology, economic development etc. In fact, most “yojnas” launched by the centre and implemented by states have strong ‘technology content’. The cost of maintaining these technology transfer agencies is vast and increasing. They are in theory at least required to work in close coordination with the researchers in the three wings- to generate demand driven technologies and to put in place policies and incentives conducive to their adoption. The crux of the problem is that it has so worked only in respect of some technologies and produced isolated pockets of success i.e. green and white revolution in some parts . And because of lack of creative synergy at the cutting edge level, the rural work force is unable to get the technology service it deserves as taxpayers. Before we examine the reasons, it may be useful to bear in mind the view taken in the Tenth Plan document that “lack of linkage with industry has resulted in R&D being largely academic in nature with very few applications, commercialization and patenting; similar opinions have been expressed candidly in the Mid Term Appraisal (MTA) of the Tenth Plan and the Eleventh Plan. The MTA cited unabated degradation of natural resources, unresponsive agricultural research, nearly broken down extension and failure to carry out essential reforms to conserve water and soil as major supply side issues for agricultural development. Thus, even the assessment that about 10-15% of technologies developed have reached the field is doubted by some observers.

NSS data of 1999-2000 indicate that the growth of rural industries and rural non-farm employment have been sluggish; the growth rate of employment in RNFS, during 1993-2000 was 2.14% as against 3.28% in 1983-93 period, and the share of manufacturing employment was only 27% indicating low-growth of rural manufacturing largely due to low level of technology inputs that goes into the production function of 77% of the enterprises categorized as ‘own account enterprises’ which do not engage hired labour. The MTA has recognized the need for technology upgradation of village and small enterprises.

On the basis of ground reality it appears that the reasons for a grossly inadequate level of technology dissemination are not managerial but systemic as detailed below:

- S&T System is Central Government driven as practically all major institutions of S&T Education, Research and Training are funded and managed by the Central govt with little S&T capacity in the states both at the departmental and State university levels .The State institutions are alienated from the Central S&T and Research efforts, there being no real forum to achieve coordination.
- Scientific Research is being taken up at the Central S&T system on its own volition and priorities as few local research needs are identified and referred to research by state technical departments even where systems have been put in place precisely for such interaction as for example in forestry research at FRI, Dehradun. Thus, S&T work at Regional Research Laboratories (RRL) established to develop technology solutions to meet the local needs is not really demand driven due to near absence of interface with states.
- State S&T Councils are mostly ineffective except in a few states such as Madhya Pradesh, Uttrakhand and Tamil Nadu and are not geared to integrate S&T system into the 'development' activities and to create state or region specific S&T capability which is so vital for a country of India's size & diversity. The S&T Departments in the States are ill equipped to provide leadership in S&T sector and possibly Tamil Nadu is the only state, which has formulated its own Science and Technology Policy.

A kind of central technology dependence syndrome is prevailing because the line departments of the states implement only those technologies which are sponsored and built into the Plan/Central Sector/CSS or externally assisted programme and lean on the central nodal ministries for technology. The established technical departments like Forests, PWD, Agriculture, Irrigation etc. are administered by strong organized services who are also responsible under the state rules of executive business to carry out modernisation and development work in their

respective areas. Even the concept of the District Plan embodied in the revamped PRI system established under the 73rd amendment to the constitution has not taken a shape because of lack of capacity within the Zilla Parishad to carry out technology based planning for upgrading production function, natural resource use and conservation or skill development.

The various coordination committees at the district level deal with sectoral implementation issues and not technological issues and do not add up to a District level S&T forum capable of taking a view on technology gaps and needs of the district in a comprehensive manner. This departmentalism obstructs growth of decentralized, community and area centric S&T capability essential to meet the challenges of modernization of rural economy, climate change and such other activities, which critically depend on people's participation for success; creativity is thus lost in the dissemination process as little or no effort is made to adapt the technologies to local situations which has been the cause of 'technology failures'. (In tree plantation drives, there are many cases where tree species were planted disregarding local soil-water regime or eco-system). The university system in states has long ceased to be provider of technologies or partner in development; societal S&T capacity at the district level and below at the community level is virtually absent primarily because the civil society has been weak in S&T and has not forged a partnership with S&T institutions located in the state except in few areas. Thus the fact that the number of S&T NGOS is about 100-125 in all shows the slow spread of civil society in S&T field. There are, however, many environment, wild life, conservation oriented voluntary organisations working on specific issues like deforestation, water use or 'displacements' caused by state or private corporate intervention and have the potential to develop into S&T voluntary organisations capable of addressing technology issues of rural life and economy.

Even centrally - funded agencies like the District Rural Development Agencies (DRDA) set up in every district for carrying out poverty alleviation programmes have not been provided with S&T back up to look into the technology aspects of anti-poverty programmes. This applies equally to Urban Local Bodies who mainly implement projects and technologies 'given'

and have not acquired the capacity to identify technology gaps and make appropriate choices or even to draw up a R&D proposal on their needs. It is interesting to note that the issue of technological empowerment of self governing institutions is rarely mentioned though experience suggests that unless the local communities acquire capacity to appreciate technology issues involved in development projects and are empowered to make choices of their own, the devolution of powers and responsibilities will have little meaning. This is the lesson of the agitations of tribals and forest dwellers in Odisha against bauxite mining at Niyamgiri Hills and the location of steel plant by Posco for violation of rights of villagers enshrined under the Scheduled Tribes and other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest rights) Act, 2007. In both these cases, neither the Odisha State Govt. nor the concerned Central Ministries cared to make a proper scientific assessment of the environmental and social impact of the projects and especially the impact on the livelihoods of the tribals and tried to impose the decision to suit the needs of the corporates in violation of law as pointed out by the committee appointed by the National Advisory Committee. The point to note is the lack of an institutional capacity at the State, District and grassroots level to address S&T issues objectively and more significantly ecological issues in development interventions. Thus, time and again the State's perception of what constitutes public purpose or a public cause comes into conflict with the interest of the local communities with no credible mechanism in place to resolve the conflicting issues. The appointment of a Central Empowered Committee by the Supreme Court to deal with forest and environment issues as a standing arrangement supports the view that there exists a grey area in the scientific system.

This summary appraisal will be incomplete unless it recognizes the success of the system in spreading 'catalytic' technologies which resulted in green, white and blue revolution in some parts of the country with remarkable success. This was due to strong policy focus with measures to provide credit – inputs supply, free or subsidized electricity and irrigation and price support operations in wheat and rice specially and storage, transport and marketing facilities generally which made

technology transfer possible. This approach cannot be replicated in all other important areas. Thus, on the whole the system appears to be well spread out, but lacks synergy at the State level. At the field level societal participation is not 'demand driven' but given, directed and incentivised. This is further compounded by the rigidity of the departmental structure as government rules do not allow creation of multi disciplinary teams and hiring of short term consultants which are increasingly needed in the complex environment today e.g. in climate change initiatives. This lack of 'convergence' at state and district level was probably responsible for failure of ICAR's scheme of appointing District Scientists in some states under IDA projects.

Looking objectively, therefore, the aforesaid review suggests that the main issue is gross under-utilization of the enormous creative potential of S&T institutions to respond to varied S&T needs and to empower the community for want of a synergistic mechanism in the field. A framework for reforms is suggested below:

Given the structure of scientific departments and the autonomy granted to the departments and institutions, the existing coordination arrangements at the central level have their own rationale and are not amenable to change. At the state level, the S&T Council should be restructured to function as the Science and Technology Advisory Group (STAG) responsible for integrating S&T inputs from all S&T institutions located in the state by making them partners and developing what Dr. R. Chidambaram, Principal Scientific Advisor to the Govt. of India conceptualised as 'technology foresight' for the State. In smaller states, STAG may be constituted for the region with appropriate changes. STAG could be formed on a partnership mode to cover all sectors and identify technologies developed already for dissemination, and prioritize research work with emphasis on problems emerging from the field and introduction of innovations.

STAG must try to induct local technology solutions by projectisation under state plan /CSS/CS. It will oversee the S&T work at district level and serve as a platform in which S&T institutions, development departments, S&T capable NGO's will be represented to work out a state S&T Plan. With some financial support for logistics and additional posts the existing state DST

could be equipped to serve as the secretariat of STAG. Initially, an officer from the I.A.S or Indian Forest Service with scientific background and aptitude may be appointed as State Secretary DST (which is not the case now), who could also act as Member Secretary, STAG till a scientific adviser with the multi-disciplinary/integrated S&T background and administrative experience is appointed. The CM and the Minister, Planning may act as Chairman and Vice-Chairman and the State Chief Secretary as 'Co-Vice Chairman of STAG.

As there are about 50 District level Committees on an average already existing under the District Collector/Dy Commissioner, adding one more would not help because of the complex scientific field work involved though the Collector might be asked to oversee and support the activities. This will include sector wise study of technologies under application, felt need for upgradation of technologies and technology gaps and scope of projectising technologies developed for the production function which have not reached for want of support. This will mean a kind of technology profiling and analysis of resource endowments, area specific problems e.g. floods, erosion, pest management rural product upgradation, habitat development, conservation of land, environment and water resources, livestock & poultry management and processing and skill teaching in income generation. The objective is to technologically empower the communities to assess their problems and participate in the process of making 'choice of technologies' in the areas mentioned above. For this, a consultative Group of Local S&T institutions comprising concerned departmental officials and S&T capable NGOs may be formed by the Collector with the involvement of Panchayati Raj Institution's; one of the S&T institutions may be selected as the nodal agency. In line with the concept of Mother NGO, (MNG of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and a lead S&T NGO may be selected to take up following functions:

- (i) Conduct a survey of S&T needs and gaps, sector wise especially non-farm sector and identify areas for entrepreneurship development.
- (ii) Assess need for field trials and adaptive research.
- (iii) Select field NGOs who could be trained and supported to develop competence in S&T intervention and to act as incubators for enterprise growth.

- (iii) Arrange training for NGO partners in project activities in the area.
- (v) Collaborate with the nodal S&T Institutions and to act as a clearing house for rural technology related information and also with NABARD and institutional financial agencies.
- (iv) Mobilise expertise from the state S&T system including universities on consultancy basis for S&T intervention and to provide S&T support to District Plan.

Thus, the consultative body with three bodies- nodal S&T agency, local Departments and the Lead S&T capable NGO backed by a network of field S&T NGO's will emerge as Technology Coordination and Action Group. (TCAG) and serve also as a Scientific Advisory Body to the Collector and the Zilla Parishad. There will be some incremental non-recurring and recurring costs in setting up of TCAG in the District, which will need financial support of the state DST. As it will operate under the State S&T Council, a local official of DST may be nominated as Member Secretary. TCAG may be registered as a society to give it the necessary authority and flexibility with a broad charter so that it could lead all S&T interventions and bring the Departments, S&T institutions and the committees under one forum which does not exist now. These measures may also bring about 'democratization' of science and technology delivery and a synergy in the work of the Central S&T system and the S&T institutions and capacities existing in the States. In the process the States and the Communities will be technologically empowered to participate in development decisions which is one of the foundations of autonomy and freedom and will meet a major objective of S&T policy 2003 of "promoting close and productive interaction between private and public institutions in S&T".

The institutional reform proposed here could be a means towards achieving the national goal of "harnessing S&T for improvement of livelihood, employment generation, environment protection and ecological security" (Tenth Plan). To conclude, our S&T system is not, as the cliché goes, a giant with a feet of clay, but is rather like giant with a strong feet but suffering from weak joints which could be remedied to enable it to take India to a peoples science based development path.

Yogendra Narain

A Critique of Governance Based On the Precepts of the Constitution

Evaluation of governance has necessarily to be viewed against certain benchmarks. While people may argue for and against the governance of a country from various view points, it is like talking in a vacuum. The real question is what are the benchmarks on which the administration of the country should be judged? This issue should be of vital concern not only to the political executive but also to the civil servants who run the administration in any country.

In India public opinion on the functioning of the government may vary with the views expressed in the media and propaganda consciously unleashed both by the ruling and opposition parties. The same government may be called extremely efficient and progressive by a certain section of the media and the public while it may be called regressive, authoritarian and anti people by others. How then should we judge the functioning of administration?

Growth cannot be the ultimate objective of governance; reforms aren't either. Both are means to an end. As the Commission on Growth and Development stated, reforms may be admirable and represent major achievements, but if growth does not accelerate, or if large numbers of people do not feel any improvement in their circumstances, then there is more work to do.

In this paper, it is proposed to judge governance on the criteria of what is laid down in the Constitution. There are three segments in the Constitution against which the progress of governance should be judged.

- (1) The Preamble of the Constitution
- (2) The provision of Fundamental Rights as enshrined in the Constitution and
- (3) Directive Principles of State Policy

The Preamble to the Constitution says that “We, the people of India having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a Sovereign, Socialist, Secular Democratic Republic and to secure to all its citizens:-

Justice, social, economic and political

Liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship

Equality, of status and opportunity and to promote among them all

Fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual

Similarly the Chapter on Fundamental Rights identifies the basic freedoms that the country should ensure to its citizens and it interalia include the following

1. Equality before Law (Article 14)
2. Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth (Article 15)
3. Equality of opportunity in matters of public employment (Article 16)
4. Abolition of untouchability (Article 17)
5. Protection of certain rights regarding freedom of speech, etc. (Article 19)
6. Protection of life and personal liberty (Article 21)
7. Protection against arrest and detention in certain cases (Article 22)
8. Right against exploitation (Article 23) - 24
9. Freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion (Article 25) - 28
10. Protection of interest of minorities (Article 29)

In a similar manner, the Directive Principles of State Policy clearly lay-down what the nation should strive for and the principles that should be followed in the governance of the country.

The Constitution is the “Cornerstone of the Nation”. It is a template for national administration and it clearly lays down the goals the administration should strive for. The failure or success of administration would depend on the achievement of these goals. Let us analyze the success of governance against these benchmarks.

At the outset, it should be clarified that it is the responsibility of the administration (which is synonymous with the executive mentioned in the Constitution) to ensure proper governance. Now let us examine whether administration has been able to secure to all its citizens what has been mentioned in the Preamble, the Chapter on Fundamental Rights, and the Directive Principles of State Policy. With the population of people living below the poverty line being anywhere between 27% to 40% (as per available definitions) can we really say that we have given economic justice to the people? The number of unemployed youth has also gone up despite jobs being created in new sectors like Information Technology (IT), Bio-Industries and the Energy Sector. Workers in the unorganized sector continue to account for more than 90% of the total number of workers. Government's attempts to provide food-grain to those living below the poverty line has been quite praiseworthy but almost 45% of the food-grains meant for such distribution is being siphoned to the market. Can we really say that the administration has been able to ensure food security for the poor? Even in the area of caste discrimination, though the Government has brought forward several reform legislations to help the disadvantaged classes, caste discrimination remains firmly embedded in the minds of the upper castes dominating the Panchayats. The Dalits continue to exist as a separate class and despite reservations in jobs and in schools and colleges, their lot has improved only partially. Even within the administration there is a tendency even by senior administrators to disparage and criticize the quota given to the Dalits, both in recruitment and promotion. Even though legislation has been enacted to penalize those who practice discrimination, we hardly see any effective follow up by the Police and the District Administration in such cases. Social justice, in the real sense, remains a chimera.

When we hear of farmers suicides it reminds us that the experience of equitable distribution of economic justice is a big challenge for policy-makers. Even in education the percentage of increase at secondary level for SC and ST households is about half that of the non SC and ST households; thus the administration has failed to ensure adequate opportunity to the SCs and STs. Figures also show that education beyond primary level is available only to 15 - 20% of SCs and STs.

As far as political justice is concerned, it is true that with the reservation of seats in the legislature as well as in the local bodies for the backward and the scheduled castes, political justice has certainly been extended. But political justice, without economic and social justice is meaningless. 60 years have elapsed since we adopted this Constitution, but the administration has failed to ensure adequate justice to the disadvantaged..

We next come to ensuring liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship which is part of the Preamble to the Constitution as well as Fundamental Rights. The Administration has by and large been able to provide this environment which is laudable. The judiciary also has played a major role in supporting these liberties. People have full freedom to pursue their religious customs and rites and can openly worship in their chosen religious places. The Press is also free. When an attempt was made by the administration i.e. the government to suppress this freedom during the emergency the people gave a thumping “no”. Media, expressing the will of ordinary citizens, showed that any step taken to prevent liberty of thought and to suppress fundamental rights would be challenged by the people.

It is because of this freedom of thought and expression and the desire to give equality of opportunity through education that we stand tall as a nation with a young and vibrant work force. The IT sector is a testimony of the achievement of young India.

In the arts, Indian writing, Indian art and Indian films have established their identity in the world. The ill treatment meted out to M.F. Hussain however has drawn flak on the government and the administration. However, permission given to Taslima, the Bangladeshi writer to continue to stay in India is another example in contrast where the administration has adhered to the basic philosophy of ensuring freedom of thought.

As far as promoting Fraternity and assuring the dignity of the individual and the integrity of the nation is concerned, what is assured in law is not practiced in governance. Prisoners under trials remain in jail as there is no one to obtain bail for them. The treatment meted out to suspects in the police thanas of pre-independent India as well as post-independent India in no way assures the dignity of the individual. Increasing number of

custodial deaths is also a reflection of the poor governance. Setting up of Human Rights Commissions both at the Centre as well as in the States is a response to the criticism of the executive on matters of human rights violation but in every fresh case of violation, the executive tends to defend its stand rather than acknowledge failure. Governments Servants, by and large treat the ordinary citizens in the same way as the British government used to treat the native Indians. Those in government are yet to be trained to treat the citizens with dignity.

Now let us analyze governance from the view point of the fundamental rights as provided in the Constitution. Governance of the country requires conformity with the enforcement of fundamental rights for the citizens.

Equality before Law (Article 14)

The Constitution says the State must not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India. In words and form every person in India is equal before the law; in actual practice however people who form a part of the machinery of governance have managed to avoid this by wrapping themselves with unique privileges. The distance between the State and its people is increasing all as three pillars of the State, the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary have given unto themselves privileges which are not shared with the common man. Article 21 of the Constitution, for instance, says that State cannot deprive any citizen of life or personal liberty except through procedure established by law. But we have laws like the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, which allow army personnel to open fire indiscriminately and kill people without being accused of murder. Again as far as corruption is concerned officers of the level of Joint Secretaries and above in the government cannot be investigated upon without permission of the competent authority within the government which places them on a pedestal higher than the ordinary citizens. People can be kept in jails for days without due process. Police officials behave like feudal lords and are prone to harassment and intimidating citizens without fear of the law. Those in power behave as if they are above the law. The law does not treat an offence committed by political leaders or bureaucrats in the same way as it treats

tribal persons in Bastar and Jharkhand or an illiterate Dalit for the same offence. The government from time to time has enacted a large number of draconian laws which push the principle of equality before the law to oblivion; for instance laws, like TADA or POTA, give the power to the government is to punish people for any act which in the eyes of the government is a threat to internal security. Some of the laws also have negated the concept of rule of law and instead of following the principle that an accused is innocent till proved guilty, have changed the principle to an accused being guilty unless proved otherwise.

On a closer examination we find that inequality continues in day to day governance. For example the liability of the State in tort even today is not necessarily the same as the liability of any private employer. No action can lie, even today, against the Government for any injury in the course of the exercise of the 'Sovereign' functions of the Government. Similarly for filing a suit against the Government or against a Government Officer for an act purporting to be done in an official capacity, a two month notice is required under Section 80 of the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908. Similarly, when a public servant is accused of an offence committed by him while acting or purporting to act in the discharge of his official duties, criminal courts are banned from taking cognizance of such an offence without previous sanction of the Central Government or the State Government under Section 197 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973.

In actual exercise of powers, we have also seen how powers are exercised arbitrarily. In matters of parole, governments are often seen to act with political bias e.g. in the recent Manu Sharma case. In matters of parole, there is no equality in practice, though there is equality in law.

This raises a disturbing aspect as to whether the due process of law can actually lead to violation of the fundamental principle of equality before law.

The working of the Police is constantly a matter of concern. The tyrannical methods adopted by the police in the British period continue till today, specially in rural areas. The way the Thanas are functioning in rural areas and the fear that is caused by their actions is a living proof of the absence of equality before law and the ineffectiveness of the legal system.

PROHIBITION OF DISCRIMINATION ON GROUNDS OF RELIGION, RACE, CASTE, SEX OR PLACE OF BIRTH (ARTICLE 15)

We next come to another fundamental right which prohibits discrimination on ground of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. This fundamental right gives access to any public place and prohibits any restriction based on any of the aforesaid provisions. However a recent survey carried out on the Dalits of Madurai confirms the stark reality of “Hidden Apartheid against Dalits” and the prevalence of untouchability in several villages. The Report confirmed the truth about segregation and it found that even in slums that have mixed population the dwelling units of Dalits are restricted to clearly demarcated streets. Some public distribution outlets have been named “Harijan Cooperative Fair Price Shops” as mentioned in the family cards. In a recent report of the United Nations, discrimination on caste has been treated as a form of human rights violation.

However, despite many failings, the State in India can take credit in this area, as it was for the first time in India’s history that a Constitution abolished un touchability. It took another five years subsequently to back the abolition with a law that penalizes various manifestations of untouchability. Another progressive measure taken by the State was to enact the Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribes Prevention of Atrocities Act 1989 to deal with caste violence. On this point, therefore governance has been praiseworthy, at least in policy making.

As far as discrimination on grounds of place of birth is concerned, it must be said to the credit of the governments in power that they have strongly resisted such moves even if there was strong public pressure for this, as in the case of Maharashtra.

Let us now discuss the Directive Principle and its implementation.

Article 38 lays down that the State has to secure a social order for the promotion of the welfare of the people in which justice : social, economic and political shall be guaranteed and the State should strive to eliminate the inequalities in status, facilities and opportunities not only amongst individuals but also amongst groups of people residing in different areas or engaged in different vocations.

How far has the governance succeeded in India in achieving this objective? 35% of the population is still illiterate; the inequality in income between the rich and the poor has increased; the infant mortality rates vary from state to state and there have been starvation deaths in some parts of the country.

The inequality in health services remains a matter of concern. There are inter-state differences, income based variations and caste and gender based differences in the availability of health services throughout the country. Even on the issue of life expectancy, while certain States like Kerala, Punjab and Maharashtra have a life expectancy of more than 65 years, other States like Uttar Pradesh, Odisha are yet to cross the 60 years mark.

The policy of the administration of encouraging private sector both in health services and education sectors is welcome but the administration has failed to realize that these private services are available only to those who can afford to pay. The common man cannot avail of the privately provided services. The Administration must come up with some solution either in partnership with the private sector or otherwise so that these basic services are provided at public cost to all.

On the other hand, it is true that governance in India has successfully brought down the crude birth rate per thousand people from 29.5 in 1991 to 22.8 for every one thousand people in 2009. The economic survey of the Government of India itself admits that India's progress in most health indices has been quite varied across regions, gender as well as race.

One measure which can testify as a measure of good governance is the coverage in education. With the passing of the Right to Education Act and the success of Sarvasiksha Abhiyan, around 96% of all children in the age group of 6 to 14 are now enrolled in schools. The introduction of continuous and comprehensive evaluation as part of the reforms of the secondary education is also a creditable landmark.

However, in the agricultural sector, on which more than 60% of the people depend for their livelihood, governance has been poor. The agricultural dependent sector is going through a severe crisis. The mis-management on the agriculture and food front over the past few years has led to inflation in food prices. Mis-management of the government in this sector is evident from

the fact that the hike in food-grains prices has led to non-availability of food in the domestic market for the poor.

Article 39 of the Constitution mentions interalia that the operation of the economic system should not result in the concentration of wealth and the means of production. Citizens should not be forced by economic necessity to enter vocations unsuited to their age or strength. However, what we have seen in India is that in a market economy there has been concentration of wealth in a few families only. In spite of all the talk of abolition of child labour, children at a tender age are still forced by economic necessity to be engaged in unsuitable pursuits . When economic necessity dictates, that they take to employment to support their families, and takes away from them the time which they should have spent on their education.

Article 41, also under the Chapter on the Directives Principles of State Policy talks about making effective provisions for securing the right to work and to public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement. However, till date we have not been able to give our citizens the right to work; there is no public assistance in cases of unemployment and sickness. The old age pension given by State Governments is too meager. The last Economic Survey had pointed out that there are more than 60 million well educated youth who are unemployed.

The launch of the National Employment Guarantee Scheme however has been a very progressive measure in ensuring employment on a limited scale. The guaranteed period of work however needs to be increased.

Where governance has been effective is labour legislation and creating humane conditions of work; enacting legislation to ensure living wages for workers; promoting cottage industries and creating the right conditions of work through labour laws.

Article 44 talks about prescribing a uniform Civil Code for the citizens. It is true that the government have repeatedly endeavoured to provide a uniform Civil Code. But in a pluralist society like India, in which people have faith in their respective religions, beliefs or tenets propounded by their religions, these attempts, so far, have not been successful.

Overall the State has done well in implementing the policies and principles laid down in Article 45 (provisions for free and compulsory education for children), and Article 48 (a) protection and improvement of environment and safeguarding of forests and wildlife. Where it has not done well is Article 47 which talks about the duty of the State to raise the level of nutrition and Article 39 (a) which talks about equal pay for equal work for both men and women. This is clear from the fact that in gender development, India stands at a position of 114 out of 155 countries though in gender development India has gone up from 0.514 in 1996 to 0.594 in 2009. The position continues to be bad in the Human Development index where the ranking of India stands at 134 amongst 184 countries.

Summary

An overall assessment of governance in the country has to necessarily be based on the policies initiated (which could show the intention of those who govern) and the actual implementation and execution of these policies (as perceived by the people). As far as policy making is concerned, governance has moved forward with the enactment of the Right to Information Act, The National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme or the setting up of National Human Right Commission. Government is now arming itself with an appropriate Food security Bill which will be placed in the public domain very soon. Another welcome initiative in the policy sphere has been the Prime Minister's Council on National Skill Development which lays down the core governing principles for strategies for skill development. The Council has a mission of creating 50 crore skilled people by 2022.

Another welcome initiative in the policy sphere has been the announcement of setting up of an Independent Evaluation Office to undertake an impartial and objective assessment of the various public programmes and to improve effectiveness of public intervention. This office would evaluate the impact of flagship programmes and place the findings in the public domain. The policy aspect of governance has been full of new initiatives and full marks need to be given for pursuing in a democratic path to meet the demands of the nation and its people from time to time. In the financial area also the setting up an Apex level Financial

Stability and Development council would help in monitoring micro provisional supervision of the economy including the functioning of large financial conglomerates. In fact, in every sphere, whether it is agriculture, environment, the unorganized sector, rural development, transparency in public or accountability, the policies have been well enunciated.

One of the biggest successes of administration, and inconformity with the Constitution is the regular holding of elections every five years on the basis of adult franchise: as many as 60% people went to polls recently and the administration has ensured that transfer of power was strictly in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.

It is, however in the area of execution and implementation that governance becomes weak. The delivery systems do not live up to expectations. Corruption is prevalent in almost every sphere of the administrative system, be it the public distribution system, hospital services, electricity, judicial services, water supply or other services. A survey carried out by Transparency International in July, 2008 of the people living below the poverty line found that in rural areas 7% of people living below the poverty line paid bribes to avail the benefits of the National Rural Guarantee Scheme in one year. The bribe itself was estimated to be Rs.71.5 million.

The Study also found that around 2.5 million people living below poverty line paid bribes to the Police in one connection or the other. The bribe paid was estimated to be Rs.2148.2 million. Even in Parliament, as per the Citizens' Report on Governance and Development in 2007 the "cash for questions" controversy showed rampant corruption even amongst the law makers.

The judiciary has also not come upto expectation. With a backlog of 3.2 crore cases, people have to wait for justice for twenty five to thirty years, if not more.

Even though the government has injected large funds for various projects and schemes for furtherance of it's policies, the capability of the delivery system to appropriately utilize these funds and achieve sustainable outcomes on the ground, remain questionable. There is substantial evidence to prove that basic

public services and programmes (such as those meant for the poor and weaker sections), function relatively inefficiently in the poorer and less well governed States.

Despite more than 60% of the people of India being in the rural areas, the administrative machinery there has been weak, corrupt and exploitative. There is, therefore, a strong ground for setting up a well trained Rural Administrative Service for administering these areas. Credibility of the public institutions has to be restored especially in the rural areas.

At another level, public servants implementing the delivery systems should also be paid well and provided security of tenure. While the 6th Pay Commission has given enough money in the pocket of civil servants, frequent transfers and postings at the behest of the politicians in power makes the civil servants inefficient and in-effective. Even in procurement through open tenders, political interference is in abundance.

Civil Society has an important role in supporting good governance by subjecting government action and decisions to continuous scrutiny and pressure. The pace of improvement in governance would accelerate only when countervailing forces in society develop sufficient confidence to oppose inefficiency and corruption in government. The state, should, therefore, not just tolerate but actively encourage credible civil society organizations.

Having said this, the question that we have to answer is whether in India we have been able to provide good governance to the people. As far as the policy sphere is concerned, whether it be enactment of laws for the implementation of the ideals laid down in the Preamble to the Constitution, the enforcement of Fundamental Rights, and the Directives Principles of State Policy, governance should be given a creditable rating of Very Good. However, as far as implementation and delivery systems are concerned, a "Good" rating mark would be more than enough. This 'Good' rating may be reluctantly awarded because whatever we might say about the administrative malaise the country has been able to achieve a rapid growth rate and improvement in our economy.

Rakesh Hooja

***Governmental Reforms at State
and Lower Levels:
Prescriptive Comments***

The objective of any administrative reform, or reform in the administrative system of government, should be to enable the state (and its government) to play its role(s) in a manner better than before. Such role can be as a regulator, or facilitator, or that of a promoter, or a transformer, or preserver; it can be developmental, arbitrational, defence and security oriented, as service - provider, benefit deliverer, welfare - oriented, as a growth stimulator, and the like.

Administrative reforms can involve procedural and structural changes, or recourse to e-governance, but, given various governmental objectives, often it may need to go much beyond mere procedural change or simply a recourse to technology, computers and e-delivery, and look at the complex use of a combination of policy and implementational interventions as well as modifications in government structures and processes, and the optimal use of government personnel who accordingly need to be put through appropriate capacity building.

It has often been commented, and amongst the recent in the line of such comments is the Theme Paper for the Fifty Third Members Annual Conference of IIPA New Delhi (entitled 'Reforms in Governance : Six Decades of Administrative Reforms' by Sujata Singh, 2009), that the various Committees, Commissions, bodies, and experts commenting on administrative reforms in the Indian context over the last 60 odd years have raised the same or similar issues again and again. That the same themes recur in various suggestions made over time on

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administrative reforms suggests that the powers that be have been unreceptive to the suggestions however meritorious they may have appeared to those tasked to make the recommendations. An example is suggestions regarding norms for transfers of government servants that reduce political discretion and ensure postings and transfers on the basis of objective criteria ensuring fixed minimum tenures. Advantages of such a suggestion have been emphasized and re-emphasized time and again, and may again be raised whenever another body is asked to consider administrative reforms. However the suggestion never goes through.

This brings us to another aspect regarding administrative reforms. Suggestions should not be totally idealistic, but should be made keeping in mind what is likely to be accepted. However, idealism cannot be completely given the go-by as then we may be left with continuing the status-quo and no reforms may get effected. Thus administrative reforms suggested need to be based upon a judicious blend or mixture of both practical and idealistic considerations, weighing both the desirability on merits of the recommendation and the possibility of acceptance based upon existing conditions and situations.

In the above context, it is proposed to briefly flag some suggestions for administrative reforms that relate to State or lower levels on which State Governments in India would need to take a view.

Not too many departments of the State Government have their field staff at the village level. Thus they either rely on the (land revenue) Patwari or the Gram Sevak (Village Level Worker of panchayati raj) or local government school teacher for village level work related to their departmental programmes, or alternatively someone from a higher level in the departments occasionally visits the village. However, villagers require a lot of handholding by government personnel and the present system places too much pressure on the overworked Patwaris and Gram Sevaks. Accordingly, Government could consider placing 3 or 4 multi-purpose workers in each village and allotting work related to 5-6 government departments who do not have their own workers at village level to each such multi-purpose worker. Thus

all departments having significant programmes to be implemented in rural areas would have their representative in each village.

A similar situation exists in school education. A lot of non teaching work has to be got done in the school education sector including getting constructions done of school buildings, managing mid-day meals, conducting various drives, etc. Such non-teaching work is got done by teachers who thus become unavailable for teaching in class. Posts of teachers are sanctioned as per teaching workloads and not keeping in mind their non-teaching work. Vacancies in posts of teachers further reduce the persons actually involved in teaching work. There is need for the school education department to have separate cadres, of education support staff and of teachers, so as to ensure that sufficient teachers are actually present in class to interact with the students.

On the issue of vacancies, this is a common problem of all government departments especially in rural areas and more so in remote rural areas lacking in facilities and amenities like tribal areas or desert areas. The system of blanket bans on recruitments followed in many State Governments should be done away with. On the one hand retirements occur at a regular pace, on the other many new government programmes and schemes are introduced and a number of new field units are created each year. Naturally no government department can have sufficient persons to perform all the required work unless regular annual recruitments are taking place. Thus blanket bans on recruitment need to be done away with.

A judicious blend of some regular recruitments made each year and of retaining older experienced personnel till a higher age through late retirements and increasing the retirement age, or through re-employment of retired personnel, may help solve the problem.

An attempt should be made to ensure that existing vacancies are distributed in equal proportion amongst all districts in the State and between urban and rural positions as also between postings in remote areas and in well connected places. A law could be enacted for this that while effecting transfers the

vacancies should be equally distributed between (i) tribal, desert and other remote rural areas, (ii) well connected rural areas where facilities/ amenities available are somewhat better, and (iii) towns and cities- though the chances of a democratically elected State Government accepting this suggestion are not at all high, since State Governments are likely to want to retain unfettered rights of transfers and postings as per its will. It however may be possible that a measure may be accepted to ensure that all fresh recruits to State, Subordinate and Clerical Service cadres spend the first two years after completion of their compulsory induction training in rural postings. This would partially address the problem of vacancies in rural areas.

Government, as well as society as a whole, has huge expectations from the office of the District Collector. Keeping in mind what all the Collector is expected to do and to achieve, the district Collectorates and the number of officers and staff provided to support the Collector are relatively small. This needs to be seriously reviewed and the situation rectified. In addition two additional officers - an Executive Assistant to the Collector and a Technical Assistant to the Collector - who have no other responsibilities besides what the Collector asks them to do, should be provided in each Collectorate in addition to the officers and staff that it is decided to provide each district Collector after the proposed review. The district Collector should also be able to easily access persons possessing skills and knowledge of project formulation and developmental planning to help in the preparation of proposals for development and better service provision in the district. An officer who could help the Collector in attracting and setting up Public-Private-community group partnerships within the district would also be a major asset.

Each Collector along with Sub Divisional Officer and the District Level Officers (DLOs) of those departments that have significant public dealing should spend one day each month at the head-quarters of each Tehsil dealing with public grievances, land revenue matters and issues of service delivery of the concerned departments. Similarly each SDO and Tehsildar should visit each Girdawar (Inspector Land Records) headquarters on a fixed day each month, which is known to all in advance for dealing with the above mentioned matters.

The SDOs office needs strengthening in view of the various expectations from the SDO of today, with at least one officer (Assistant Collector) and some additional supporting staff being provided to each SDO.

The Sub Divisional, Tehsil/Taluka, and the Deputy Superintendent of Police Circle boundaries need to be made coterminous where they are not already so.

Supervision and guidance of district officers and Collectors through specially designed Principal Secretaries/Secretaries made in-charge of a district should be done away with. Instead, this should be left to the Divisional Commissioners and the Chairman and Members of the Board of Revenue, who in any case carry out inspections of offices at various levels in the districts. The Principal Secretaries/Secretaries should be able to concentrate on the affairs of their Secretariat or Administrative Departments rather than getting involved in repeated visits as Secretary in-charge of a district and in implementation of government programmes of all the various departments in a district. The Collectors shall thus feel responsible and show greater initiative in their work rather than waiting for guidance and instructions from the Secretary in-charge of the district.

A system of planning by panchayat bodies especially of activities to be carried out by Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) is now in place in each State following the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. However what is required are Comprehensive Development Plans of the district covering not only what is proposed to be done by the PRIs, but also what State Government bodies and their agencies (Collector, District Level Officers) in the district, and the private sector, should undertake. This implies that at the State level the State Planning Department, and not the State Panchayati Raj and Rural Development Department, should coordinate district planning work in the State. This would also result in techno - economic aspects of planning receiving equal importance as participatory planning in the district plan exercise, where the PRIs, municipal bodies, DLOs, and the District Collector, all have to be actively involved in the exercise. Further since the State Planning Department coordinates preparation of the State Plan and also regularly interacts with the Planning Commission of India, this

would strengthen the multi - level planning framework of National Plans, State Plans and District Plans complementing each other in a coordinated manner.

Many States need to strengthen the institution of the Divisional Commissioner as the link between the State headquarters and the districts and the coordinator of the working in the districts under his jurisdiction. Such Commissioners could also double as Desert Development, or Tribal Development, or Irrigation Command Area Development Commissioners.

Now to turn our attention to the State level.

The role of the Secretariat or Administrative department and the Executive department at the State level should be clearly defined and kept separate. For the Secretariat department policy making, in - principle approvals of major schemes and programmes and fixing of objectives to be achieved, inter-departmental coordination, cadre management of the very senior officers, macro-monitoring, and providing advice to Ministers and to the Cabinet or Council of Ministers should be the main focus. Some observers, especially amongst bureaucrats, have advocated use of a single file system with both Secretariat or Administrative department and Executive department using a common or single file for their file noting and decision - making. This should not be permitted. Ministers and many a Principal Secretary/Secretary to Government would be happy to get involved in detailed field implementation issues, micro-monitoring, and transfers and postings of even the lowermost staff - things best left to the Executive department and its regional and district offices. If the Secretariat department involves itself in the nitty-gritty of implementation, then there would be no one to apply themselves seriously to policy issues and to the appraisal and evaluation of government programmes.

Each government policy once adopted should have a prescribed maximum time frame after which it would automatically lapse, unless reviewed in detail and consciously continued with or without modifications.

Similarly the mandate and work, activities or subjects assigned to any Secretariat department should be reviewed once every 6 to 8 years as the society, the economy, the peoples'

expectations, and technology undergo change. Some activities may have become redundant, while some other new activities may need to be assigned to a department. Whenever the mandate and subjects assigned to a Secretariat department are modified following such a review, it would have a corresponding impact upon the related Executive department. Separate departments should not be created merely to accommodate a large number of Ministers or senior officers at Secretary/ Principal Secretary level, but this should be done as per functional requirements.

There is similarly a need for the review and revision of Secretariat Manuals, Departmental Manuals and the District Manual which often remain unchanged for years to the extent of becoming out of date and useless for consulting for guidance or following during work.

The management of files and records in State, regional, district or sub-district offices is inadequate. It needs to be both improved and transformed from a storage oriented system to a retrieval oriented one.

The tracking of the movement of files within each office has long been prescribed for all government offices. Yet so rare has its practice become in most offices that the restoration, or reintroduction albeit in modern form with use of technology like bar-coding) of a system of tracking the movement of files within offices (the state secretariat, the collectorate, etc) may be deemed to be an administrative reform. Similarly the prescribed system of each government office, section or cell being inspected twice a year by its own officer-in-charge (OIC), which has all but died out , should be revived and made effective as a means to improve the working of each such unit.

The Chief Secretary and Additional Chief Secretaries are often over worked and reduced to a large extent to merely responding and reacting to files received from Administrative departments. They each need to be provided with bright officers to work as their executive assistants to conduct small studies, check out data and otherwise assist the Chief Secretary/ Additional Chief Secretary in his/her work. This should be in addition to the personal staff presently attached to the Chief

Secretary/Additional Chief Secretary. Such a system of an officer being attached already exists with each Minister, and the Chief Minister (as well as the Governor) have full fledged mini-Secretariats attached to them.

For better coordination, the old traditional system of quarterly State Level Planning and Coordination Committee meetings for groups of inter-related State Government departments should be revived.

In addition each Additional Chief Secretary should be assigned a group of departments to coordinate and provide broad supervision to. This would decrease the excessive pressure and work -overload that today's Chief Secretary faces. The Chief Secretary/ Additional Chief Secretaries, and even the Principal Secretaries, who head individual Secretariat Departments, should each get some time to think, plan ahead, and to come up with new and relevant ideas, rather than being swamped with a never ending flow of routine files.

The State Economics and Statistics Service should be renamed as State Planning, Economics and Statistics Service and the State Accounts Service should be renamed as State Financial Management Service. This would give a signal to each member of these two Services about the role that they are expected to perform, as also to the Principal Secretaries/ Secretaries and departmental heads who are provided with officers from the two Services about the type of use that can be made of them.

There is a need for strengthening each Secretariat or Administrative department's capacity for planning, budgeting and conducting internal audit rather than it being considered that it is for the State Planning and State Finance Departments to be responsible for proper planning, budgeting and internal audit. In fact internal audit parties should be placed under the administrative control of each Secretariat department rather than that of the State Finance Department so that the Principal Secretary/Secretary can use them as a means to improve the administration and management of the activities of the department.

The Central Government's Integrated Financial Advisor system needs to be emulated in the State Government to obviate

the necessity of every matter having a financial implication being referred to the State Finance Department (and also to the State Plan Department if Plan funds are involved.).

The present system of Budget Finance Committees (BFCs) of each Administrative Department being held separately for Plan funds and non-Plan funds once each year is unsatisfactory as changed circumstances during the course of the year cannot be adequately responded to till the next annual BFC. Something which was tried out in one State for a multi-department World Bank project should be made applicable to all Departments- that is having a system of 2 or 3 BFCs each year where the Administrative departments concerned as well as State Plan Department and State Finance Department come together to discuss modifications in the budget and financial approvals/sanctions every 3 to 4 months on the basis of up-to-date feedback.

Also a single BFC should discuss Plan and non-Plan matters so that an integrated overview can be taken of the Department concerned rather than the Plan and non-Plan BFCs for each department being held separately.

The State Plan department, which is already quite strong in many States, should be further vitalized and strengthened. It should comprise of separate divisions for (1) policy and perspective planning (2) multi-level and district planning (3) an operations division to deal with day to day planning decisions, issues related to formulation and implementation of the annual plan of the State, inter departmental coordination, and the various Secretariat department's Plan related files referred on a regular basis to the plan department, (4) relations with Planning Commission and Government of India and multilateral and bilateral foreign aid agencies, (5) statistics, monitoring and evaluation, (6) Cadre control and management of State Planning, Economics and Statistics Service which is under the direct control of the State Plan Department. The State Plan Department also needs to work as the development related think tank of the State government. With such a State Plan Department, there is no need for a separate State Planning Board. Instead a State Planning Advisory Council could serve the purpose. Also the practice in some States of designating a

separate officer as Secretary/Principal Secretary for Policy Planning should be dispensed with.

Each Secretariat ' planning capacity should be enhanced. Compact policy and planning cells working under the supervision of the departmental Secretary should exist in each Secretariat department with links to relevant experts inside or outside government.

States which do not have Subordinate Selection Commissions should constitute the same immediately as otherwise the State Public Service Commission cannot cope with all the recruitments required in the State, nor are individual departments equipped to conduct the large examinations required these days for all government recruitments.

For field staff and for clerical and lower level recruitments , the recruitment should be carried out on district wise or division wise basis and not on a state wise basis, since then persons from big cities tend to proliferate amongst those selected and then, once appointed, try to avoid being posted in smaller districts. In any case many of these cadres are not statewide cadres, but are either district or division based. Hence selection should also be done district wise or division wise by the Subordinate Service Commission.

The governmental procurement system needs a total revamp so that rather than the cheapest or lowest bid, the most appropriate bid for the good or service to be procured can be accepted. The tyranny of the lowest bid in procurements must be ended so as to be able to ensure procurement of goods and services of appropriate quality as per the actual requirement. The system needs to be transparent yet optimal procurement decisions should be possible.

The redressal of public grievances and of employee grievances should be monitored and dealt with separately to ensure that redressing employee grievances is not done at the cost of dealing with public grievances since employees tend to submit their grievances in both employee grievance and public grievance forums.

Systems of tracking the movement of grievance petitions and applications have improved significantly over the last few

years, and paper compliance is by and large being ensured; but there is no short cut to examining and understanding each individual application, taking an appropriate decision, and ensuring its compliance.

Citizen's Charters were formulated for various government agencies with much fanfare a few years ago - but they are normally not being updated periodically as circumstances, rules and Acts, and technology, and consequent work procedures undergo change. There is a need for regular updating of Citizen's Charters and the continuous monitoring of their implementation. Also the charter-mark system of United Kingdom where each government agencies' performance vis - a - vis its approved Citizen's Charter is assessed each year to determine whether the agency deserves to be granted charter mark status for that year should be adopted in India.

The system of dealing with departmental disciplinary enquiries (DEs) needs a thorough review regarding rules, procedures prescribed, existing practices, and the like to ensure speedy and correct decisions and awarding of effective punishments when required, while giving appropriate opportunity to the concerned to prove their innocence. The tendency of increasing the number of very senior Commissioners for Departmental Enquiries is no solution, since the bulk of the exceedingly large numbers of DE cases are pending in the district administration as also in the executive departments at regional or district level.

Improved supervision over public prosecutors by the district Collectors, and a thorough review of the procedures of appointment and supervision of government advocates so as to give the concerned government department contesting individual court cases on behalf of the State some say or control over the advocate representing them, are other aspects which require greater attention.

The State Administrative Training Institute (ATI) which is the State Government's apex training institute should invariably host a Centre for Good Governance and Administrative Improvements to provide advice to the State Government.

This listing of some prescriptions for administrative reforms at State and lower levels may be concluded with the suggestion

that each State Government Department should have its Departmental Training Policy based on criteria of “appropriate training for all” and “life-long (career-long) training”. Similarly there is need in each State for a State Government Training Policy encompassing all State Government Departments and governmental training institutes in the State.

Pradeep Singh Kharola

***Fighting Corruption through
Systemic Reforms -
Experience of three case studies***

Why Systemic Reforms

As the term itself suggests systemic reforms include all those measures which change the system of working within an organisation. Every organisation, has its own internal systems and procedures. Bigger an organisation more rigid are these systems and procedures. These systems and procedures get established at the initial stages of the organisation and once established, they seldom undergo a change. But the external environment of an organisation undergoes a constant change. For example, peoples' awareness of their rights has increased; the increasing population has put very high strain on the availability of resources. As a result there are many competing demands; technology has brought in new tools which can make internal procedures very efficient etc. In spite of this dynamic nature of the external environment the internal systems of government organisations have remained rather static.

Systemic changes are required within an organisation not only to enable them to adapt to the changing external environment but also because the organisations can restructure themselves so as to meet their objectives better. They can bring in simplicity in internal working, they can evolve better and more efficient ways of performing their tasks, they can adopt mechanisms to bring transparency and accountability and above all, they can change the ethos and culture within the organisation. All these changes can ultimately transform an ordinary organisation to a 'performing organisation'.

Corruption in an organisation is dependant on various factors and an important factor is the structure and internal working of an organisation. Cumbersome procedures, lack of transparency, over centralisation, too many levels in decision

making, decisions based on subjective factors, lack of accountability, low capability and demoralised employees etc. all provide a fertile ground for breeding corruption. Therefore, systemic reforms which seek to eliminate or decrease the impact of these factors go a long way in minimising the scope for corruption.

The traditional approach to fight corruption has been to 'fight corruption'. This takes the shape of creation of new vigilance organisations, tighter laws and more powers to investigation agencies, tighter controls and more rigid procedures. While these measures are required, they cannot eliminate corruption.

A fallacy by some is that one 'fights corruption by fighting corruption – through yet another anti corruption campaign, creation of more anti corruption agencies, incessant drafting of new laws and code of conducts. Overall such initiatives have little impact and are often politically expedient, substituting for the need for fundamental and systemic governance reforms – Important Monetary Found.

The Second Administrative Reforms Commission in its Report on 'Ethics in Governance' has stated:

A holistic approach for combating corruption would require an optimum mix of punitive and preventive measures. Punitive measures act as a deterrent whereas preventive measures reduce opportunities for corruption by making systems transparent, increasing accountability, reducing discretion rationalising procedures etc. Better preventive measures act as 'Systemic Reforms' as they seek to improve systems and processes.

Literature is replete with studies which bring out the different causes of corruption. These causes range from external environmental factors like decline in value system of the society, materialistic way of life, shortage of economic services, monopoly of services to organisational factors like cumbersome procedures, unlimited discretion, opaque systems, defective structures, diffused responsibility and so on. The impact of these factors on corruption can be combined into an equation as follows:

¹ This equation was given by a famous American Economist Robert Klitgaard

Monopoly + Discretion – Accountability = Corruption¹

Thus, if corruption has to be reduced then monopoly over services must be done away with. Secondly, discretion – wherever possible – should be reduced. Thirdly the accountability mechanisms for individuals as well as organisations should be made more powerful. A large number of measures are possible that may affect one of the above mentioned parameters. Most of these measures form a part of systemic reforms. Some of these are listed below:

- *Promote competition* – this leads to elimination of monopoly so that citizens have choice and they cannot be held to ransom by a single service provider.
- *Simplify Transactions with people* – this reduces discretion on the one hand and brings in enhanced accountability.
- *Use creativity to reduce scope for corruption* – innovative procedures and systems may reduce discretion
- *Use Technology-* computer and communication technology places immense capability in the hands of service providers.
- *Reduce Discretion with individuals* – wherever discretion is necessary it may be vested with a group rather than an individual
- *Promote Transparency* – this perhaps is the most important tool in increasing accountability of government agencies.
- *Build capacity and increase morale of employees* – these are perhaps required for any reform.

Three Case Studies

Three case studies wherein systemic reforms brought in substantial decrease in scope for corruption are analysed in this article.

- *Recruitment of Drivers-an idea that brought in objectivity:* a new testing procedure was evolved which made evaluation of testing skills of a driver totally objective and transparent.
- *Issue of Statutory Forms – Technological intervention brought an interface that eliminated scope for*

corruption: In tax administration, computer and communication technology was used to enable taxpayers to obtain certain forms (which have security features) at their doorsteps while at the same time the tax administration was enabled to capture vital details of the transactions.

- *Easing traffic flow at check posts- an idea implemented through technology - a paradigm shift in tax administration which moved from regulation by the tax department to self regulation by the tax-payers leading to much less hardship at the check-posts on highways.*

Case I - Recruitment of Drivers- an Idea That Brought in Objectivity²

- ***The old process and its shortcomings***

The Public Transport Undertakings have to recruit drivers in large numbers. The performance of the bus and the safety of the passengers hinges around the capability and skills of the driver. The selection process of drivers is therefore vital to ensure that only candidates with appropriate driving skills are selected. At the same time as there is a huge premium attached to a government service –most bus transport organisation are in the government sector- it is important to ensure that the recruitment process does not leave any scope for nepotism or corruption.

In the conventional way of testing driving skills, an officer would take a batch of candidates in a bus for a test. Each candidate would be given a chance to drive the bus where his ability would be assessed. Then he would be asked questions orally and depending on his answers and the driving skills he would be rated on a 25-mark scale. The procedure narrated above suffered from several shortcomings.

- i) The element of subjectivity was present to a large extent giving scope for corrupt practices. There were several instances of collusion between the candidates and the Testing Officers.
- ii) The driving skills of the candidate were not evaluated properly.
- iii) Supervising the testing procedure was difficult.

- ***The new method of testing***

Developing the new method: The problems of the old testing process were discussed with some senior drivers and officers. They all accepted that the old testing procedure needed to be revamped. Several ideas were thrown up by the employees. One suggestion was to simulate different driving conditions on a 'test track'. This idea was further developed and refined with repeated testing and iterations. After six months of intense work on the part of the drivers, mechanics and officers the new test was ready. The test involved laying a test track that would objectively and transparently test the candidate. Here once again care was taken to prevent observation and assessment being left to the testing officer, as subjectivity would creep in. The awarding of marks was automatic and left no discretion in the hands of the testing officer. Every candidate would in fact assign marks to himself. The test had the following five components.

- Starting and moving the bus on an up gradient.
- Negotiating the bus in a curve shaped '8'.
- Negotiating an 'S' shaped curve in the reverse direction.
- Reversing and parking the bus into a prescribed slot.
- Identifying the traffic signals.

Starting and moving the bus on an up gradient: Here the candidate was asked to keep the bus at the starting point on an up-incline. Then the candidate had to release the handbrakes, start the engine, engage the gear, and take the vehicle forward without allowing rollback. Parallel lines were marked behind the starting line at a gap of 4 inches to measure the rollback as shown in Figure-1. Marks were assigned to the candidate based on the following.

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------|
| i) No rollback | 5 marks. |
| ii) Engine switches off | 0 marks. |
| iii) Rollback up to 4 inches | 4 marks. |

¹ Extracted from a paper: Pradeep Singh Kharola, Bipin opalkrishna, S.S.Sohrab and Hemaraju; *Evolving a Transparent Procedure for Recruitment of Drivers*; *Indian Journal of Transport Mgmt.* Vol. 24. No.7. July, 2000.

- iv) Rollback up to 8 inches 3 marks.
- v) Rollback up to 12 inches 2 marks.
- vi) Rollback up to 16 inches 1 mark.
- vii) Rollback beyond 16 inches 0 mark.

The capability of the driver in using the clutch, gear and the brakes was judged in this test.

Negotiating the bus

on an '8' curve: A curve as shown in Figure 1 was marked on the ground and wooden stumps 1 metre tall were placed around it at regular intervals as shown in

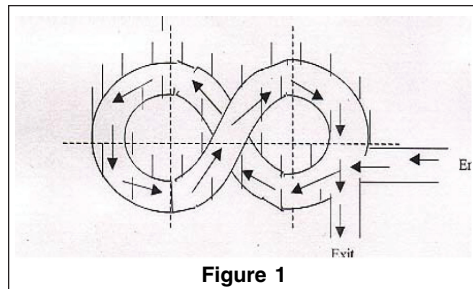
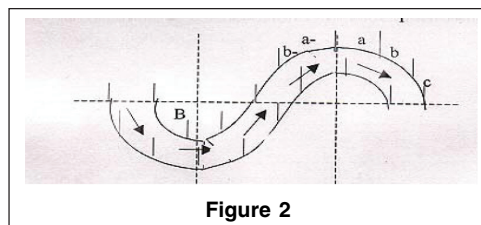


Figure 1. The candidate had to negotiate the curve within a minute without toppling or displacing any stump. If the candidate completed the exercise within a minute without toppling more than a pole he was assigned 5 marks. For every additional pole toppled a mark got deducted. Similarly for every additional minute taken or part thereof the candidate lost a mark. If the candidate got stuck in the curve then he was permitted to reverse the bus but for each such reversal he lost a mark. The capability of the candidate to manoeuvre the bus in the forward direction was put to test here.

Negotiating the bus on an 'S' curve in the reverse direction: Here the candidate had to manoeuvre the bus

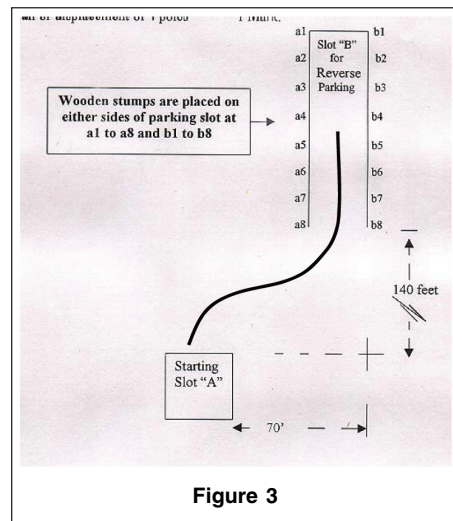


on an 'S' shaped curve in the reverse direction. A curve was marked on the ground and stumps placed around it – Figure 2. The candidate was first asked to take the vehicle from 'A' to 'B' in the forward direction so that he got a feel of the curve. Then he had to reverse the vehicle in the curve and complete within 3 minutes. If he succeeded without toppling

more than a pole then he scored 5 marks. For every additional pole toppled he lost a mark. For every additional three-minute or part thereof the candidate lost a mark. In case the candidate got stuck then he could move the bus forward, but for each such forward movement a mark was deducted. The capability of the driver as well as his judgement, while reversing the vehicle was tested here.

Reversing and parking the bus in a prescribed slot:

A starting point and a parking slot was marked on the ground as per dimensions shown Figure 3. The candidate was required to start the bus in the reverse direction from point 'A', and to bring the vehicle in the parking slot. There was no time limit prescribed



but for each stump toppled a mark was deducted and for each corrective forward movement also a mark was deducted. This test adjudged the skill and judgement of the candidate in reversing the vehicle and parking it in the correct position.

Knowledge of the traffic signals: All the traffic signals were displayed on a board and a serial number was given to each. The candidate was asked to explain five of these signals. In order to avoid any type of bias, the candidates himself chose the number of the signal he was required to explain by draw of a lot.

- **Ensuring Complete Transparency:**

The administration of the test was so organised that it left no scope for any discretion, collusion or any other malpractice. The following were the steps taken for that.

- a) Each candidate was administered the test twice by two independent officers. The candidates were assigned to the testing officers by a senior supervisory officer. The supervisory officer for each day would be selected on the previous night through draw of lots.
 - b) The testing officers were drawn from a large pool and they were asked to be ready. But they were assigned duties on the previous night only.
 - c) The testing officers were asked to fill up the marks immediately after the completion of each test, and show the marks to the candidate. After completion of all the five tests the candidate signed the mark sheet. .
 - d) Two video cameras were deployed, which were manned by the vigilance wing of the Corporation and they would record the testing process at random.
 - e) Each day about 150 candidates would be called for screening. After verification of their records they would be brought to the test track. The procedure would be explained to them and then the candidates would be put through the test, with all other candidates watching. (The traffic signs were however kept out of the view of the other candidates).
 - f) The testing process was thrown open to media. The media highlighted the advantages of the new testing procedure.
- ***Nothing succeeds like success*** – It was observed that after the induction of drivers recruited through the new procedure the accident rate came down. This became the strongest point in favour of the new test.

Case – II : Issue of ‘C’ forms

- ***Introduction – The Problems of Inter-State Sales***
India is a federal country and the Constitution ensures free movement of people and goods between states. Taxation on sales of goods falls within the purview of the states, and each state has its own law to levy this indirect tax. The law provides that in case of movement of goods entailing

movement across states, the state in which such movement originates is entitled to levy tax on the person (dealer) who despatches the goods. Since an indirect tax is ultimately borne by the consumer, there could have been a tendency on the part of states to levy a very high rate of tax on inter-state sales of goods with an intention of mobilising higher revenue, since any such levy would have impacted the persons in other states and persons residing in the dispatching state would not have been put to any hardship. In order to obviate any such possibility, the law has prescribed a very low rate of tax (or concessional rate of tax) on inter-state sales. But there was also a threat that this concessional rate of tax might be misused by dealers by disguising intra-state sales as inter-state sales. Therefore it was necessary to have a mechanism to ensure that sales shown as inter-state sales actually reach the dealer in the destination state. Therefore, the law has prescribed that the receiving dealer has to confirm that such a transaction has taken place by giving a declaration that he/she has received such a consignment. In order to ensure that such declarations are accounted properly, the declaration has to be furnished in a pre-printed form supplied by the government. The declaration has to be filled in properly, giving all details, and dispatched by the consignee to the consignor (it is filled in triplicate). The consignor then furnishes this declaration to the office of the Commercial Taxes Department and avails the benefit of the concessional rate of tax. The assumption is that once such a form is filled up and deposited by the consignor in the Commercial taxes office, both the consignor and consignee would account the transaction and there would be no possibility of either evading the tax, as the Commercial Taxes Department could verify the details filled in the form with actual transaction. Thus two purposes were intended to be served – firstly to give concession on tax on inter-state sale and secondly to reduce evasion of tax.

- ***The Problems with the Old Process***

The blank declaration forms (C forms)- which have some

security features – were issued by officers located all over the state in pads containing 10 forms. There is a huge demand for such forms throughout the year. The magnitude of the demand can be judged from the fact that in a state there are about 25000 dealers which have inter-state transactions and the number of lorry loads each state despatches for inter-state sales range from 5000 to 10,000 per day. Since these forms had certain security features, their distribution was regulated. As a result, the dealers had to spend long waiting hours in the offices of Commercial Taxes and sometimes had to offer bribes. Moreover, the idea of issue of these forms was to ensure that both the consignor and consignee would account these transactions and the states would get their dues on these taxes. But in practice, the magnitude of physical work involved in any such cross-verification was so high that such cross-verifications were seldom resorted to. Thus, the existing system put the dealers to hardship on the one hand and also did not help the department in preventing tax evasion.

- ***A Web Enabled System for Monitoring Inter-state Transactions***

In Karnataka, a web enabled system was designed, wherein each dealer was given a unique username and password. Apart from a Centralised server, offices in all important cities were networked. The dealer would access the Commercial Taxes Department server through the internet and fill all the particulars which were required to be filed in the 'C form'. The server would redirect the request to the concerned officer. On receipt of the information on his/her computer, the officer would scrutinize the request, and if all requirements are complied with, the officer would give permission to issue the form. The permission would enable the dealer to print the 'C form' at his/her place. This 'C' form would have all the data pre-filled and the Commercial Taxes Department would have captured all the details of the transaction thus forcing the dealer to account them accurately.

- ***Issue and Verification of Forms Became Automatic***

While the server would allow the dealer to print the form, it would also transfer the particulars of the transaction to the account of the dealer. Thus, the dealer would have no choice but to account the transaction thereby totally ruling out any chance of tax evasion. Moreover, all details of the 'C form' thus registered would be placed in the public domain. As explained earlier, the 'C form' has to be dispatched by the consignee to the consignor. If the Commercial Taxes Department in the consignor's state had any doubt about the 'C form' they would easily log on the web-site of the Karnataka Commercial Taxes Department website, and verify the veracity of the 'C form' submitted to them. In the past when the conventional system was in place, any such verification of 'C-forms' submitted by the consignor would have required dispatching a team of officers from the consignor's state to the consignee's state who would then go to the office which issued the form, or contact the consignee to verify the correctness of the form. All this being time and resource consuming was hardly resorted to.

- ***A Win-Win Situation***

The system has been in place for 4 months and already the number of forms issues per day has reached 4000. The taxpayers' communities have received the system very well.

Benefits to tax payers

- i. The tax payers do not have to make rounds of offices of the Commercial Taxes Department.
- ii. There is no question of bribing any one or giving 'speed money'.
- iii. Loss of C-form does not entail any hardship as another copy can be obtained easily. (in the earlier system, loss of 'C-form' had to be addressed with a very laborious and elaborate procedure.

Benefits to the Commercial Taxes Department

- i. The accounting of transactions is automatic.

- ii. Pre-printed 'C-forms; are totally dispensed with. No need to keep stock of such forms, no need of physically accounting them.
- iii. No possibility of tampering with the 'C-forms'
- iv. Cross verification of 'C-forms' is a desk exercise rather than an elaborate exercise as in the past.

Future course of action-‘dematting of C-forms’

At present the C-forms have to be printed. But since the details are captured in a centralized server, printing of forms may be dispensed with. But this requires that all states reach the same level of e-preparedness. With other states catching up on computerization, this system may well be the pre-cursor of electronic recording of all inter-state transactions.

Case – III Easing traffic flow at check posts- an idea implemented through technology

- ***The problem – harassment at check-posts coupled with loss of revenue to government***

Tax on sales of goods (VAT Value Added Tax) is a major revenue source for state governments. At the same time, tax evasion continues to be a major problem. While some unscrupulous traders invent methods for circumventing laws, the tax authorities react with more controls. These controls are effective to some extent, but they hinder trade and give scope for corruption. VAT is levied on all sales. In order to ensure tax compliance it has been mandated that all sales shall be accompanied by an invoice. It was experienced that some traders used 'duplicate' invoices – one for the buyer and another for the tax authorities. To overcome this, the law was changed to provide that the invoice books to be used by the traders would be printed and issued by the government (these printed forms are called delivery notes). It was further stipulated that all movements of goods in trucks shall be accompanied by a delivery note (underlying assumption was that all retail sales have to be preceded by bulk sales and if bulk movements are regulated the retail sales would take care of themselves). To make the system fool proof, check posts were set up at vantage locations.

At the check post, the accompanying delivery note would be verified with the goods in the truck and a copy of the delivery note would be collected. The intention of collecting the delivery note was to put moral pressure on the trader to account the transaction properly in his/her books of account and remit the tax due to the government – the document could be referred for cross checking with the books of account.

The aforesaid system appeared good but had limitations. Each trader had to wait in the tax office to collect the blank invoice booklet (delivery notes) and this often was a harrowing experience for each of the 400,000 traders. The number of vehicles reporting at some check posts were about 3000 per day and collecting and keeping a record of the delivery notes was a cumbersome process leading to long holdups. Furthermore, the sheer number of delivery notes collected made any cross checking nearly impossible. The traders soon understood these limitations and the unscrupulous ones did not account even after the delivery note was collected. Above all, the check posts became fertile grounds for corruption, delay of trade and harassment to truckers.

Attempts were made to computerize all check posts and feed these delivery notes into computers. But this involved massive data entry operation preceded by large scale codification, deployment of large number of staff at check posts. In spite of these technological interventions, there were data entry errors, invoices not having proper details, traders disowning the invoices and above all, no one knew what needs to be done to the voluminous invoices collected. Thus adoption of mere Information Technology did not solve the problem.

- ***A new idea- a paradigm shift***

The sales tax administration is based on the philosophy that a trader would issue an invoice and afterwards duly reflect all these invoices in his/her accounts. The entire tax administration is geared towards making the trader issue the invoice first and then see that the invoice gets honestly reflected in the books of accounts, finally ending up in remittance of tax to Government. ***If somehow it could be***

ensured that a trader, before despatching goods by a truck, first informs each transactions' details³ to the tax department, obtains an acknowledgement for having thus informed, and then uses this acknowledgement as a valid document accompanying the truck, this would ensure that all sales would be properly accounted and the problem of tax evasion would not arise. This idea would have appeared to be a dream a few years back. But with internet penetration, this became a possibility. If the trader could be made to upload the details of each bulk transaction to a central 'Server' through the internet, and once uploaded the 'Server' would automatically generate an invoice with a unique number, then this invoice or the unique number could accompany the goods vehicle as a proof of having uploaded the transaction. Such a system would by itself guarantee that once an invoice is issued there could be no possibility of non-accounting by the trader.

- ***Putting the idea into practice***

This required changes in statute and rules, changes in the mind-set of traders and the officers of the department and above all a strong technological support. A dedicated team of officers from the department and the National Informatics Centre (Bengaluru) developed the solution. All the check posts were connected through an optical fibre network and, an efficient software was developed by NIC. All the 400,000 traders were given a unique identity through which they could upload their transaction on the central 'Server'. The task of the check post was only to capture the unique number displayed on the invoice, and upon doing so the entire details of the transaction would be flashed on the screen. A massive capacity building effort was undertaken for the traders and also for officers within the organization.

- ***The Technological Intervention***

The technological intervention was required on three fronts. First, a web based system was to be created which could

³ Such details would include names of the seller and the buyer, the name of the commodity being sold and its value

be accessed by the traders. Second, a system was to be created where the check posts could access the central database and verify the details of a transaction when a goods vehicle would report. Third, as it is not possible to have static check posts on all roads, the mobile check posts also were to be extended the facility of verifying the genuineness of transactions.

Web-based system to capture to facilitate uploading of transactions by the dealer: All the 400,000 registered traders were given a unique identity through which they could upload their transactions on the central 'Server'. The access to central server was controlled through a user name and password assigned to each trader. A user friendly uploading screen was designed for use by traders – the screen captured vital details of each transaction like details of buyer, value of transaction, name of commodity etc. On uploading the data, the central server would store the data and generate a unique number for each transaction and relay it back to the trader. This unique number would serve the purpose of acknowledgement. The central server was linked to all the 130 field offices (LVO-Local Vat Office). All the traders are distributed among these field offices based upon their geographical location. The process of issuing the username and password, guiding the traders, monitoring the uploading operation, trouble shooting etc was carried out by these LVOs. To begin with, the connectivity was provided by using VSAT terminals. But as data traffic increased the connectivity was improved by having a CTD-WAN (Commercial Taxes Department - Wide Area Network). All the field offices i.e. the LVOs and the regulatory offices were connected to CTD-WAN. Besides, 20 check posts were also connected to this WAN. In all 1000 computers were connected to CTD-WAN. The CTD-WAN had a capacity of 44 Mbps bandwidth. The project was named SUGAM (*Simple Uploading of Goods Arrivals and Movements*).

Enabling check posts to verify transactions based on the unique number: Mere creation of a system to upload the transaction by a trader was not sufficient. The system

should also ensure that the traders are uploading the data accurately and honestly. Here the check posts would have a role to play. At the check post the officer should be able to compare the details uploaded by the trader with the actual consignment. This would require that each check post be given access to the central database. At the check post, the truck driver would just intimate the unique acknowledgement number. The check post officer was provided the facility to get the details of the transaction based on the unique number. The check post officer would then summarily examine whether the actual consignment is the same as has been uploaded by the trader. After examination, there was no need for collection of any document. The SWAN was extended to all the check posts. The software, also provided another feature. Just like traders, each officer was also provided with unique identity with a username and password. Whenever, a check post officer wanted to get details corresponding to the unique acknowledgement number, he would have to log on to the system through his unique identity. Whenever he would key the unique acknowledgement number, his own identity would also be captured by the database. Thereby, now it would be possible to verify at a later date, as to who was the officer who verified the goods vehicle. This brought in total accountability on the part of the checking officers.

Working of the New System: All registered traders have been given a username and a password. Whenever a dealer has to despatch goods, he goes to the tax department's website and chooses 'e-SUGAM'. The central server prompts him/her to give his identity and if found correct, the uploading screen is opened. The trader feeds the details of the transactions and submits the information to the central server. The server immediately responds by assigning a unique number to the transaction and relaying it to the trader. The entire process takes 15 to 20 seconds. The trader gives this unique number to the truck driver. When the truck reports at the check post he simply informs this number to the check post officer. The check post officer just feeds this number into his computer. The computer immediately responds by displaying all the details which the

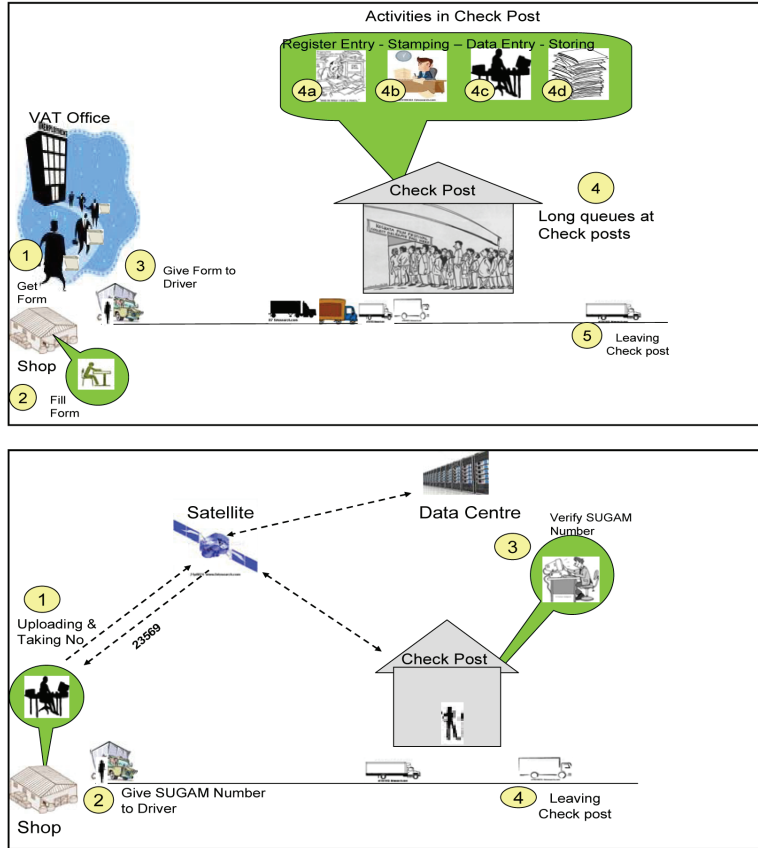


Figure 8 Processes at the Check-post Before and After Sugam

trader had uploaded. The check post officer can then compare the information uploaded with the actual physical situation in the truck (normally the name of the commodity, the approximate quantity and rough values are verified). If there are no variations, the check post officer allows the truck to proceed. In case of discrepancies, the process for imposition of penalty is set into motion. In case of a mobile check post, the checking is done by sending the unique number through SMS. A return message gives the details of the transactions.

The Outcomes

Automatic capture of voluminous transactions- which

hitherto was impossible : As stated earlier, VAT being a tax on sales of goods, in order to ensure that taxes are collected and being remitted on each event of sale, each such transaction needs to be captured. This was impossible in the old paper based manual system. With this paradigm shift, all transactions (bulk – with value exceeding Rs 20,000) were captured accurately. The more important aspect being that these transactions were uploaded by the dealer himself/herself thus totally eliminating chances of mistakes. Thus, without intrusive checks and controls by the commercial taxes department it brought in a **system of self policing by the taxpayers**. The number of transaction being uploaded per day started with a small number but by the end of one year it touched almost 40,000 per day with a total turnover of about Rs. 500 Crores and a tax involvement of about Rs. 50 Crores. In the old system such capture of authentic data was just not possible.

The system was dealer friendly as he did not have to approach the department to obtain pads of delivery notes: The system was very dealer friendly. In the old system the dealer had to approach the department every time he wanted to have a pad of delivery note. **This apart from being time consuming was also, at times, vulnerable to corrupt practices.** Under the new system all dealers were given a username and a pass word with which they could access the department's server through the internet. Anytime they wanted to despatch goods they just had to log on to the system, feed in the required particulars of the transaction and instantaneously they would get the 'e-sugam-form' and the unique number. They were given the liberty to use either of them.

The problems of truckers at check posts were reduced: The one thing that the taxpayers were unanimous about was that their experience at the check post has normally been harrowing. It was the long queues, rough treatment, non transparency, detention of vehicles for technical reasons and un-necessary levy of penalty. Under *e-sugam*, it was stipulated that no document was required to be carried along with the goods consignment in the vehicle and only the unique number should be informed to the check post officer. The check post staff would just type the unique number, and the details of the transaction would be

flashed on the screen. It would take 30-40 seconds for the entire exercise. The number of trucks reporting at the check posts with *e-sugam*, per day has already reached 4000. The commercial taxes department did a comparative study to determine the average time taken for clearance of a truck at the check post in the old system and the new system. The findings were startling as the average time per truck reduced from 7 minutes to less than a minute.

The revenues went up: With accurate and reliable capture of information about sales transactions, the amount of tax collected increased. It is very difficult to estimate exactly as to how much increase in tax could be attributed to *e-sugam*, but it was noticed that there was a constant increase in taxes ever since *e-sugam* was introduced. The process of uploading by the dealers started in January 2009. Since then there has been an increasing growth rate as compared to the corresponding month of the previous year.

It was environment friendly: The new system led to a substantial saving of paper. The number of documents uploaded per day has reached about 40,000. Earlier, each one of these transactions would have required several copies of invoices/delivery notes. Now there is no such requirement. Also the check posts have been strictly instructed not to collect any document from any truck which is carrying an *e-sugam* number. Converted into quantity of paper, it translates into a saving of 1 ton of paper per day.

There was a marked job enrichment for the officers and officials of the department – no longer a monotonous work.

The accountability of officers increased: In the earlier system there was a procedure to affix a check post seal on each document which had been verified and collected by the check post. On many occasions, it was observed that fake seals were used by some dealers to stamp their documents in order to prove that their vehicle had been checked at the check post. Also, looking at the seal one could not make out as to which officer or official checked the vehicle. In *e-sugam*, when the unique number is fed at the check post, the identity of the person doing the feeding is captured by the central server-each officer has

been given a username and password to log into the verification system. With this, the verification officer became 100% accountable.

Lessons-Several important lessons can be drawn from these three case studies:

The starting point -Acceptance of the fact that problems exist- This perhaps is the most important step in the process of systemic reforms. The organization should accept that there are problems that need to be addressed. On several occasions, it has been found that organizations are in a denial mode and work on the presumption that nothing is wrong internally.

Systemic reforms – better home grown than imposed from outside: In all the three case studies, the reforms were conceived and implemented by personnel working within the organization. This gives a sense of ownership to the entire reforms process and is a major contributing factor towards the sustainability of the reforms.

They require a thorough understanding of the problem and an in depth knowledge of the internal procedures: Systemic reforms can be initiated only after the problem has been analysed very well. This would mean that the modus operandi of the corruption needs to be understood. This would often mean getting feedback from the persons who have suffered because of corruption or even involved in corruption. Furthermore, the existing business processes need to be studied thoroughly and the logic behind each step is required to be gone into. External experts cannot have the domain knowledge which the persons within the organization would have.

It requires an integrated approach. Systemic reforms are thought of as merely being improvised procedures or adoption of new technology. But in real terms, they involve much more. The attitude of the personnel within the organization and even the citizens need to be changed, their capability needs to be enhanced, the new processes need to be monitored and improved continuously, the vested interest in the old systems need to be tackled,

Systemic reforms are sustainable only if the citizens derive direct benefits from them: Changes in systems should not be carried out for the sake of them. Often, in cases of adoption of

technology, it has been observed that technologies are adopted just because they exist. Such 'vendor driven' reforms do not keep the ultimate clients in mind and are therefore shortlived. If systemic reforms are designed to facilitate the clients and if they succeed in their objective then the clients would ensure that the changes are not reversed.

If the systemic reforms depend on technology, it is necessary to integrate domain knowledge with technological knowledge. This indeed is a great challenge. Technological capabilities and knowledge exists outside an organization – this is more so in the case of a government organization. But the external agency which has the technological expertise does not have the expertise of the domain relating to the government organization.

Adoption of new technology requires certain pre-requisites – before adopting new technology the internal working as well as structure within an organization needs to be restructured. Introduction of technology necessitates certain changes within an organization. Thus, creation of these pre-conditions before recourse is made to new technology is very essential.

Conclusion

The paper has analysed three different cases. One case pertains to a public transport organization and the other two in a tax collection department. The common thread running through these cases is the strength of systemic reforms, which when properly implemented can eliminate corruption. But at the same time it has been brought out that systemic reforms are complex and challenging. Systemic reforms are not available in the form of a standard package which can be applied straight away to any organization. Each organization would have to evolve its own systemic reforms and that too each problem may warrant an altogether different approach. Systemic reforms cannot be taught and external expertise does not seem to have a major role in bringing about systemic changes in a government organization. Last but not the least, those systemic changes which lead to a win-win situation both for the organization as well as the citizens would be sustainable.

Prem Shankar Jha

The Afghan Crisis
Where half a loaf is worse than none

On December 1, 2009 President Obama unveiled his long awaited policy for Afghanistan. After a lull for digestion that speech has set off a chain reaction of events on the Indian subcontinent that have broken the calm that had prevailed since the 26/11 terrorist attack on Mumbai. There have been two attacks on Indian targets, in Pune and Kabul, both of which seem to have been initiated by the Lashkar-e-Tayyibe; a renewal of open threats against India by the chief and deputy chief of that organization, the latter Abul Makki having actually forewarned India of the Pune attack; and a fresh influx of even more highly trained terrorists. All this has surrounded what was the era's least productive meeting of foreign secretaries of the two countries on record. But the importance of all of these was dwarfed by the press conference given by the Pakistan army chief General Kayani on February 1 where in it he virtually told US and Europe that Pakistan could take over the management of Afghanistan for the west, if some of its basic requirements were met. These were the diminution if not removal of Indian influence from Afghanistan; handing over of the training of the Afghan army to Pakistan (and exclusion of India) and most important of all although unspoken, a gradual purging of the ranks of this army of its non-Pushtoon elements to make place for Pushtoons

Pakistan's gambit has not been rejected by the west, but it hasn't gone down very well either. Karzai has stoutly opposed involving Pakistan in the training of the NAN; and while Whitehall and the state department concede that the Pakistan army has done well so far in the border regions of the country, there is considerable skepticism about its capacity to even control Afghanistan and keep it free of Al Qaeda elements after the US and the ISAF forces leave. There is thus a sharp rise in the urgency of the search for a political settlement in Afghanistan.

This has gone hand in hand with awareness that India's involvement would be needed to devise such an alternative. This is almost certain, but what role can India play, especially in the face of Pakistan's obduracy. To understand this it is necessary to examine where Obama's strategy is likely to fall short of its objectives.

When President Obama announced his much awaited Afghan policy at West Point on December 1, it was greeted by a marked lack of enthusiasm in the US and consternation in Pakistan. In the weeks that have followed, the skepticism has deepened as it has become apparent that what Obama gave with one hand, he has more than taken away with the other.

The need for a radical change in strategy had been apparent ever since the Anglo-American military offensive in 2006 failed to break the Taliban's grip on the southern and eastern Provinces. The interim policy measures unveiled by President Obama in March last year have visibly not worked. All through the summer and autumn, the body count of both US and NATO troops has continued to rise. The Taliban have grown stronger, and there are no visible fissures in their ranks. Although the Pakistan army has at last joined unreservedly in the war against the Taliban within its borders it has not caught their leaders or broken their chain of command. And it has not come even close to sealing the border with Afghanistan. By summer it seemed that the US had run out of ideas and no longer knew if it had clear purpose in Afghanistan.

McChrystal Proposal

In his September assessment of the situation in Afghanistan Gen. McChrystal outlined a way to break the paralysis. It was important, he pointed out, not to allow the media headlines about Taliban attacks and successes to obscure the immense improvement that had taken place in the quality of peoples' lives since they were ousted. The Pushtoons had not been left out of this improvement. Nor had they forgotten the tyrannical rule of the Taliban. Only a tiny minority subscribed to its extreme interpretation of Islam. But they were reluctant to openly oppose the Taliban because they feared for their lives. If this fear could be lifted more and more of them would openly oppose the

Taliban. McChrystal therefore proposed a radical change in US military strategy, from one that emphasizes hunting down the Taliban to one that concentrates on creating safe areas in which civilians feel protected and are able to lead normal lives. To do this, McChrystal proposed the dispatch of another 40,000 troops to consolidate NATO's hold on the urban centres in the Taliban dominated south and east of Afghanistan, and, judging from his plan for enlarging the Afghan army and police, a minimum additional commitment of three years in which to induct them into a protective strategy. McChrystal pointed out, it would close the distance between the ordinary people and the ISAF and the Afghan security forces, instead of widening it. Given enough time, this strategy would wean away ordinary Afghans from the Taliban. It would also wear down the Taliban as they would find themselves getting no closer to victory. Three years, in his view, was the shortest period for achieving these goals but he warned that it could take a good deal longer.

Obama's West Point statement shows that while he fully understands and endorses McChrystal's strategy he does not intend to give him the means to implement it. Against McChrystal's request for 40,000 more troops and a commitment to stay in Afghanistan for at least three more years, he sanctioned 30,000 and against three years he has given him 18 months. Some of the reasons for his equivocation are obvious: he has to carry a country that is sick of receiving body bags week after week from places it has barely heard of, and a democratic party would rather do anything than be accused of committing America to another unwinnable war.

But a deeper, better founded, reason could be that even if it is implemented in full, McChrystal's proposal will give the US only a slim chance of success. For one thing, it depends too heavily on things going right at the same time in too many areas over which the US has little control. For instance, not only must Pakistan remain stable and committed to a war that still has only limited support among its people, but it must succeed in winning over or destroying all of the Taliban formations within its borders. This is a tall order at the best of times. Success will also depend on the effectiveness and morale of the Afghan police and National army. At present these are being inducted after barely

a month's training. This is a training period that neither Britain nor the US deemed acceptable even at the height of the Second World War. Therefore to pretend that the new Afghan army will be anything but cannon fodder, at least till it has been fully blooded, would be a cruel joke.

Lastly, the strategy expects the Karzai government to do a complete volte face from being a corrupt, kleptocratic government into a modern development minded government that holds itself accountable to its people. This is just too much to hope for.

But perhaps the biggest flaw in McChrystal's strategy is that it is incomplete. It relies almost entirely upon persuading the Pushtoons to take the risk of standing up to the Taliban, and offers them nothing that will make them want to do so, even if it means facing bombs and assassinations in the interim period. All that his plan contains by way of a carrot is an assurance that they will be able to live secure, normal, lives if they co-operate with the ISAF and reject the Taliban. But for the ordinary Pushtoons believing this promise requires a leap of faith because it is what the ISAF has been promising and failing to provide for the best part of eight years. Many Pushtoons might still have been willing to take the risk if they had felt sure that the ISAF would be around for long enough, in sufficient numbers, to keep the Taliban out of the secure areas. But even a commitment to stay in Afghanistan for three years would probably not have sufficed to provide this reassurance. Obama's deadline of 18 months will only send more of them rushing for safety into the arms of the Taliban.

Alternative to War

If Obama seriously wants to leave a stable south Asia behind when US and NATO troops depart; if his policy is not simply a fig leaf for a withdrawal that leaves only a hope and a prayer for the Afghan government and army, then he simply must give McChrystal the time and the forces that he has asked for. McChrystal's proposal is admittedly flawed, because it contains only half a strategy. But if Obama accepts it in its entirety, it can still prepare the ground for the formulation and implementation of the essential other half. This is the offer to the Pushtoons of an alternative to war as a means of acquiring political power.

The Bush administration's failure to do this is the key to understanding the failure to stabilize Afghanistan in the past eight years. It has been apparent from the very first days after the fall of the Taliban that no Afghan government will be stable if it does not include the Pushtoons. But the unrelenting military "clean-up" campaigns that followed the fall of the Taliban, the military offensives of subsequent years, the increasing use of drones to target individuals, (which creates a special kind of fury in those at the receiving end), and the resulting loss of civilian life, has alienated ordinary Pushtoons and marginalized moderate resurgent Taliban.

McChrystal's change from an offensive to a defensive strategy offers a chance of reversing this vicious cycle. But it needs to be supplemented by a political initiative to create a new power sharing agreement in Afghanistan that includes the Pushtoon tribes and leaves the door open to the Taliban, should they wish to join. The way to do so would be for Karzai to summon another grand Loya Jirga with the aim of brokering a new power sharing arrangement.

Loya Jirga?

Would the Taliban join such a Loya Jirga? Despite their loose organisation and frequently conflicting aims they have so far firmly spurned all offers of peace through negotiations. But this could be because they have never been offered the one thing that they cannot refuse without risking a split in their ranks and a sharp contraction in their base of support. This is the offer of an immediate cease fire when the Loya Jirga meets, followed by a phased withdrawal of foreign troops and an augmentation of aid, when a new, inclusive, and, possibly federal government is formed in Afghanistan.

The holdouts will be the leaders of the Taliban factions, who will see any move towards such conference as a direct attack on their ascendancy and power. But even these leaders are not a single unified group or part of a single, monolithic, command structure. All factions are unanimous in their determination to oust the US and NATO from Afghanistan, but they have little else in common. Only a minority subscribes to the hard line Islamism of Mullah Omar. Still fewer have any interest in waging a

perpetual Jihad against the west. The vast majority of the fighters would like to go back to their old lives once peace is restored. Indeed they will find it hard not to do so because of the pressure that they will come under from their families once the over-riding goal, of ridding their country of the foreigner becomes attainable by means other than war. Their leaders will therefore hesitate to spurn such an offer, for fear that their cadres might start melting away.

This is not a theoretical proposition, for there is ample precedents from India next door. In its sixty years of independence India has mastered not fewer than four serious insurgencies – by the Nagas and Mizos in the far north-east; and in Punjab and Kashmir. In all of them after fighting the secessionists for a decade or more, New Delhi has been able to restore peace by getting the insurgents to accept a democratic alternative to war. In Kashmir, the indigenous wide-spread insurgency of the early nineties was all but extinguished by the then Prime Minister of India, Narasimha Rao, when he quietly asked the election commission of India to start delineating constituencies for an Election in Kashmir. No sooner did the Kashmiris heard about this, election fever gripped them. Kashmiri political parties that had been dormant during the previous five years suddenly sprang to life promising to wrest genuine autonomy from New Delhi. This put the separatists on the defensive and forced them to start framing counter proposals. In a matter of months the armed insurrection began to die away.

In Afghanistan the need to offer an explicit - *quid pro quo* to get peace talks moving has been apparent for at least the last three years. In September 2007 the New York Times, reported that when the US ambassador to Pakistan asked Maulana Fazlur Rahman, the mentor of the original Taliban, to support a government led by Benazir Bhutto after the coming elections, he immediately agreed to do so provided Benazir committed herself to asking the US to leave Afghanistan. Without such a commitment from Benazir, he said supporting her would turn even him into a target, especially for the new brand of Taliban leaders that had emerged after 9/11.

In the Saudi mediated contact with him a few months later Mullah Omar is reported to have laid down the same condition.

Finally in the 'big tent' meeting on Afghanistan at the Hague in April this year, the Iranian foreign minister surprised the US by offering to promote peace in Afghanistan, but warned that its efforts would come to naught if it could not promise an early withdrawal of US and NATO forces.

The strongest card that the US and NATO have left to play is the offer of withdrawal followed by generous economic aid. But if it is not to be seen as yet another attempt by NATO to get at the conference table what it could not wrest on the field of war, the task of persuading or cajoling the Taliban into joining a Loya Jirga will have to be performed by others than those who are directly at war with it. This needs to be done jointly by a group of countries that has sufficient influence with the Afghan factions to act as both the mediators between them and the ISAF and can muster enough force, if necessary, to ensure that all parties to the new deal honour their side of it. Afghanistan's immediate neighbours, Iran, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan might fill the bill, but they would gain infinitely in strength if they were to be joined by India, Turkey and, in view of the mediatory role that it has been trying to play with the Taliban in recent months, Saudi Arabia.

The idea of a neighbour initiative is not new, but it never got off the ground because of the West's refusal to have anything to do with Iran and Pakistan's visceral aversion to an Indian role in Afghanistan. Both these hurdles will have to be overcome if it is to become a reality. Dealing with Iran was unthinkable till President Obama came to power. Getting Pakistan and India work together will prove far harder, particularly after the war of threats and counter threats that has been unleashed by the Taliban and the Indian Ministry of Home Affairs. But the down turn is recent and decisive action by India to understand and address some of Pakistan's fears could reverse it. For the past year Pakistan has been at war with the Taliban. In 2009 Pakistan suffered 87 suicide bombings that took 1300 lives—a tally that has begun to resemble Iraq. Its civil society at least, if not its army, is therefore fully aware of the dire threat that the Taliban pose to Pakistan's very existence. This awareness has begun to permeate the army also. The change was reflected as recently as December 4 in a remark made by the Pakistan Foreign

minister, Shah Mahmud Qureshi, in London, we are facing a challenge but we can not face it alone. We need a regional approach. India is an important regional player and it has to act responsibly". Even a year ago, such an admission would have been inconceivable.

The US can be a catalyst for the creation of such a regional group – indeed it is difficult to see how this will happen without its intermediation. President Obama's decision to talk to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh before announcing his Afghanistan Policy, and Gen Jones' stern admonition to Pakistan to curb the elements in its establishment that still wish to use terrorist groups as instruments of foreign policy, are steps in the right direction.

Mediation Group

But to turn the 'contact group' that he had announced in March into an effective tool for mediation on Afghanistan, Obama needs to drop Russia and China from it and bring in Turkey and Saudi Arabia. Turkey is not a neighbour, or even a near-neighbour. Nor does it have the long standing links with most Afghan factions that India does. But it is a moderate Islamic country that enjoys immense respect in Afghanistan and India, and has very close ties with Pakistan. It is, above all, the country that most Pakistanis want to emulate. Its presence in such a coalition would calm Pakistan's fears of Indian domination, and make it easier for it to cooperate in framing an alternative policy for Afghanistan.

Its inclusion would also solve one of the most difficult problems that such a post-NATO Afghanistan would face: that is of providing a core of a seasoned military force that can help the new regime to deal with the challenges to its authority that it is likely to encounter. Russia's presence in the neighbours' mediation group, on the other hand, would only reopen old wounds. As for China, since it has made building up Pakistan to checkmate India the pivot of its. South Asia policy, its presence in such a group would effectively end whatever slim possibility of cooperation there might otherwise be.

Even a year ago, the peace initiative outlined above would almost certainly have come to grief on the shoals of Pakistani

ambivalence towards the Taliban and the US's complete lack of communication with Iran. But so much has changed in this year that it would be criminal not to even explore the possibility of forging a regional alliance of nations that can fill the gap when NATO and the US leave, by guiding and backstopping the government in Kabul. The above strategy will give the US and NATO a definite purpose for remaining in Afghanistan for some more time. This is necessary because no matter how high the cost of remaining in Afghanistan may be, it will be dwarfed by the cost that the world will have to pay if ISAF's withdrawal from Afghanistan is followed, as has happened twice before in history, by the murder of the ruler in Kabul, and the decimation of the Afghan army and police by the Taliban. Suffice it to say that the ideological impact of Sunni-Wahhaby Islam's second victory over the crusaders and infidels will not be confined to Afghanistan and Pakistan's western border, but will be felt wherever there are large concentrations of Muslims in the world. Far from being denied any space in which to grow, the Taliban will inherit the entire world as its recruiting ground.

Nor may this be the end of the story. Triumphalism in the Al Qaeda camp could become the springboard for an extreme Republican, neo-conservative, backlash against President Obama. This could result in a return to unipolar politics in the US, but in a far more dangerous form than the world experienced during the Bush era. This is not a future that anyone can contemplate with ease.

U.D. Choubey

Corporate Governance and PSE's

Before we discuss various aspects of corporate governance, it would be better to diagnose as to what is “corporate” and what is “governance”? If a corporation is aggregate of stake-holders like customers, employees, investors, vendors, partners, Government and society, then corporate governance is nothing but commitment for enhancement of values to all of them. Therefore, corporate governance is concerned with social environment and economic context and its ultimate objective is to ensure clean and healthy environment, progressive and unified community, motivated employees, delighted customers, satisfied suppliers, willing and happy investors and creditors, confident governments and above all an uplifted and enriched society.

Corporate governance is a systematic process through which corporations are directed and controlled for enhancing long-term value in a lawful manner, courteous behaviour and dignified transparent transaction. Therefore, there cannot be any one single model for best practices in corporate governance. At the same time, structure of corporate governance clearly defines the role and distribution of rights & responsibilities of the Board, its top management and employees, shareholders and all stakeholders. Therefore, it spells out rules of the game of decision making. It sets the objective and also sets the vision of objective and provides a strategy and roadmap to attain them with continuous monitoring. It is based on the principle that every corporate has employed agreement with civil society and therefore, the business of corporate governance is not business only but it extends beyond law on the premises of fairness, transparency, integrity and accountability. This being the reason as to why corporate governance has attracted attention of all stakeholders including Governments, its people and civil society at large all over the world. It is also because the expectations of society has increased substantially and corporate honchos are

being subjected to large many questions from all corners and their actions are being recorded transparently in the annual report and also being discussed at various forum by committees of Government and Parliament for best practices in corporate governance. It has been realized that good government and good business go hand in hand.

The genesis of sudden spurt and growth of concern of corporate governance, probably lies somewhere around liberalized economic, deregulated market and autonomy to conduct business worldwide. The entire market today has become a global 'hatt'. Increased competition and rat race for increased profit every year has sometimes reflected unethical practices in standard of accounting and its reporting to reflect accelerated growth, inflated profit and understated liabilities. Conflicting interest sometimes confront with ethical practices resulting into risk of corruption and misuse of entrusted power. Therefore, it calls for designing and implementing a governance structure which could transform the mindset of the people and develop an organizational culture based on balance between innovation and growth.

Growing concern for adopting best practices in corporate governance and eliminating frauds in corporate sector witnessed a number of innovations and reforms through various committee, laws and regulations. Cadbury Code (U.K.) and Oxlay Act (U.S.) made good entry in the Indian corporate sector by way of various committee recommendations such as reports of Kumaramangalam Birla, Narayan Murthy and others from time to time. SEBI regulation and Clause 49 of listing agreement became a guideline for corporate sector. All such reports and codes on corporate governance had by and large recommended *interalia the* followings :

- a) Board accountable to shareholders;
- b) Set procedure for transparency through disclosures;
- c) Separation of ownership and control;
- d) Independent Directors – Independent Audit Committee;
- e) Annual report to reflect corporate governance;
- f) Managing risk and reflecting transparency, integrity, dignity in business dealing.

Four key areas which have become a concern both for corporate sector as well as the Government are Autonomy, Role of Independent Directors, Succession Planning, & Corporate Social Responsibility.

Autonomy is the key issue in management of PSEs. Ownership should not transgress into the managerial domain. Balance between autonomy and State control is essential with suitable guidelines from Government administrative ministry on the areas in which the Board must seek prior Government approval and areas where it may take a decision on its own. It is also true that PSEs are not utilizing the full power granted to them and knock at the door of the respective ministries before final decision. It also cannot be denied that respective administrative ministry interferes in the Board meetings through Government nominee Directors. The Chairman/CEO of the PSE does not have any control on Government Director or independent Director who are tools for remotely controlling the CEOs! Thus the role of Government Directors may have to be clearly spelt out. Government officers trying to establish clout with companies and interfering in their affairs is also not an unknown feature. The tendency to get involved in actual management of PSEs needs to be revisited by the Government. There is a need of complete separation of ownership of the Government and the Board level management of PSEs.

Even though there has been improvement after institution of independent Directors was introduced in the corporate sector but at the same time, it has been felt that there is also need for developing a special code of conduct for independent Directors. Independent Directors must be persons of high integrity and exceptional track record. Their selection should be based on stringent norms in time bound process. They should be required to join under a solemn oath for being responsible not only to the majority but also the minority stakeholders based on ethics and business principles. Sometimes, independent Directors have been found to be loners in the Board meetings and are not updated on Board agenda. The CEO must get the powers to manage the Board and review the performance of the members including independent Directors and Government nominees through an independent Performance Review Committee of the

Board. Based on the positive or negative performance evaluation, Government should evaluate and examine about their continuance beyond a fixed tenure or even their recall before expiry of the tenure.

Succession Planning is another area which requires immediate attention for public sector enterprises because a long process is required in selection by Public Enterprises Selection Board and large number of posts remain vacant for long time and acting CEOs pursue their own agenda instead of pursuing the vision and strategies for meeting the corporate objectives.

There is also need to reform the process of selection of Directors and CEOs. Several factors play role in selection of CEOs and are not away from being influenced by the factors of human weakness. There is a need for reform through a robust transparent system so that notification of CEOs is made on the same day when they are selected. This will save good time during the period of transition when PSUs are run by a temporary acting-CEO before the permanent incumbent takes over.

The aspect of a two tier board has also been deliberated upon time and again. The objective generally expected from such a structure having a separate Chairman and CEO is said to be clarity of purpose. Such a system may not yield better results in India because of the normal tendency of interfering in the jobs of others and creation of two power centres may even hamper decision making process. Incidentally in India decisions made are based on the aptitudes, attributes, behavior and sometimes whims & fancies of individual CEOs rather than context and system orientation. Therefore, a two tier Board may not be suitable for a long period to come in India and we have to rather continue the present structure of the Board.

One of the side effects of economic growth and development is its adverse effect on the environment affecting the civilized society. The fact remains that corporates have an implied contract with civil society. There is a greater interdependence between business, Government and civil society. There is also a gradual rise in the expectation of society because of better communication and greater awareness and more questions are being raised towards more rights and duties

for the society. Corporates are required to meet society's demand for goods and services, to provide employment and to contribute out of their PAT towards exchequer for the social sector. There is a need for a balance between profit and contribution towards corporate social investment. As per guidelines, 2-3 per cent contribution is being earmarked towards corporate social responsibility but if the public sector enterprises have been made for nation building, there is no harm if larger proportion is allocated for the social sector particularly for achieving inclusive growth.

As public sector, we stand on a premise of economic development with social justice. PSEs have special role for ensuring inclusive growth by all means. Policies announced by the Government from time to time have been large in numbers but it is only the implementation part which has lacked mindset and heart. Transformation of mindset and above all heart is required for best practices in corporate governance.

Shyamal Dutta

North East – A Perspective

The on-going talks between the Govt. of India and the collective leadership of the NSCN(IM) for over twelve years without any break, provides the occasion for a relook at the fundamental features of the mountainous region and assess their fall out in the hilly areas of the North East. The mountainous area of the North East is characterized by features of a long history of conflict, poor infrastructure, backwardness, stagnant agriculture, poverty, alienation and isolation from the mainland. It has an explosive mix of differences and contradictions along tribal, clan, village, cultural, religious and national lines. The region has often failed to sustain on its own, because the real problems were either not properly addressed or resolved before working out a viable political solution.

The British saw the complex nature of the hilly region and their people, and decided not to interfere with their life and their unique culture, customs, and traditions. The well calibrated policy it evolved was to exclude it from the day-to-day administration though the region was badly disturbed by internecine feuds, and frequent outbreak of hostilities between tribes, clans and villages. The “head-hunters” were ruthless and their activities caused considerable panic and concern. There was a genuine fear that any intervention to administer the area would provoke resistance and create serious law and order problems, undermining the focus of the East India Company on the exploitation of resources of tea and oil as the main commercial venture to swell the coffers of the Empire. The strategic designs of the British were, therefore, to leave the people and the mountainous region in a state of unrest and turmoil.

Meanwhile, the Baptist missionaries on their way to Burma met some Nagas and converted them to Christianity. The evangelizing began and as part of this mission, English medium

education was introduced. This was with a view to unifying the sharply divided people of the hills around Christianity, after giving up their faith in animism. The ulterior designs were to insulate the hilly people from the influence of Hinduism and Islam, and divide the plains and the hills on the basis of religion so that with evangelizing gathering momentum, the identity issue would get accentuated and the people of the hilly region would rise in revolt to challenge the government of the day with all their might and force. Eventually, it would become impossible for the government to administer the region. The situation would turn so grave and difficult that India as a nation would fall apart and get balkanized. The “grand designs” ,however, failed to fructify since the Government of India had intervened to initiate the process of engagement, accommodation and rapprochement. Large sections of people reciprocated in ample measure for better socio political cohesion. Later, the British had to describe the development as a miracle. India has thereafter, only become stronger.

The region, however, failed to achieve self sufficiency by exploiting the nature’s bounty with a foresight. It’s limited capacity and capability to administer a modern democratic state, was undermined by the political turmoil and instability. Those opposed to the constitutional path, embarked upon guerrilla movement with a view to seceding from India. Insurgency ensued and soon acquired a status of its own, because of the presence of mineral resources, including the oil and gas in particular. People drawn into insurgencies were reminded of performing the so called historical role of liberating the region from India. The proximity of long international borders helped the insurgents to take refuge and enlist all kinds of help and assistance from forces inimical to India. The difficult hilly terrain, distance from the provincial head quarter, presence of head hunters, and the thin presence of security forces in the hills made contact with people and the region scarce and difficult. The exclusiveness that the British imparted to the region, had otherwise, denied all exposure to external influences and ideas. In their absence, suspicion and animosity that the hilly people nursed towards people of the plains only got accentuated to create greater misunderstanding and hostility. The alienation and isolation became very serious and deep rooted.

For its part, the state put security on top of its administrative agenda. Slowly and surely, problems of the region started getting viewed only through the prism of security. The region got progressively militarized and weaponised with the focus on larger deployment of troops to contain violence. The functioning of civil society and its institutions and systems got stymied under the jackboots of security forces. With frequent interventions of security forces, problems got more complicated and serious because neither the armed forces nor the police were trained to deal with the issues connected with heart and mind. These required greater sensitivity in the handling by the civil face of the administration. When the security forces failed to contain them, problems were declared as intractable with security implications, and the easier option was adopted to fence off the trouble spots, thus, allowing alienation and isolation to fester and turn serious.

The burden of security did not allow the process of growth and development to take root. No wonder, the region remained pockmarked with poverty, low growth, low income, high dependence on import of primary products, mal governance and high incidence of corruption. The profile of poverty differed from that of the plains because the tribal customary arrangements institutionalized with the village and the clan, made provision for supply of food, land and water in the event of people going without these essentials. The villages had land set apart and the granaries of food under respective clans to meet these contingencies. Therefore, alleviation of poverty was never accorded a high priority and poverty also never posed a question of life and death. More important and pressing problem was deep rooted rancour, strife and animosities along tribal lines.

The approach to the problems remained ad hoc and no worthwhile initiatives were taken to study, understand, and appreciate the psychological nuances of the tribal mind. The “best practices approach” was not used as an instrument to bring about systemic solutions and better quality of human life. The security and political issues got precedence over the socio economic needs. The issues affecting the people were addressed in sequence, and not simultaneously with security. Therefore, emphasis of policies was trained on things and not on people. No wonder, the policies failed to touch human lives

and create bonds and equity. People remained passive onlookers and not partners in building their destiny.

The security focused approach did not allow any inter-play of politics, economics and governance. Major gaps remained between what was considered to be economically sound and what was considered to be politically feasible. There was a big mismatch between the macroeconomic policies and actual needs of the people. No broad consensus emerged across political spectrum on objectives, means, instruments, and ends of politics. The politics and governance got controlled by the requirements of special interest groups. The latter did not show much inclination to subordinate their interests to the state. The sole objective was to feather their own nests under the patronage of the party or parties in power. As a result, the lot of the common people did not improve and remained unchanged, if not worse. The limited economic growth did not move in tandem with social development. The benefits were cornered by those closer to power and privilege. A traditional classless society turned into “haves” and “have-nots”. This caused serious strain on the social fabric of society and aggravated the internal fissures.

No attempt was made to manage the adverse image and perception about the region as an unsafe destination for investment. Hence, the attitude of those few who could have made some investment was not leveraged. In the quest for development, the government, under the influence of special interest groups, took up large scale infrastructural projects which suffered deliberate delays, entailing huge time and cost overruns. The benefits were not commensurate with the costs, and often at the cost to nature and environment. This made progress unsustainable. The ad hoc response for want of well conceived and long term policies, failed to bring about synergy of efforts between the govt and the corporate sector which was otherwise not very visible and a reluctant player, being afraid of suffering losses. The insurgent groups remained firmly opposed to any move on the part of the government to try and promote developmental activities exploiting rich mineral resources of the region on the ground that the right to do so only belonged to them, the master of the land.

The huge opportunities in the North East were squandered as the governments often remained a hostage to vagaries of politics and failed to deliver. With every change of government, emphasis changed suiting the interests of the ruling clique. Over the years, numbers of people with unearned riches got proliferated, impeding development and growth. The critical areas like health, sanitation, hygiene, education, and poverty alleviation faced the brunt of bad governance, marked by utter lack of transparency and accountability. The socio economic model flawed for the many and fulfilled for the few. The rampant corruption at every level choked the flow of funds and seriously undermined the implementation of almost all government run projects. What was really corroded was the efficacy of the enforcement and delivery mechanisms of the government. It took a heavy toll of the life of common people.

The “tax holiday”, being prevalent in the region since inception, as an ameliorative measure for the people of the region, failed to create an obligation and capacity on the part of the states to improve living for the community by efficiently utilizing the resources, funds, and aid received from the central government and other sources. The creation of employment opportunities and revenue generation remained tardy. The payments of tax have put the governments under compulsion to improve the quality of goods and services rendered to the people for retention of people’s mandate in the election. In its absence, the type of relationship that grew between the governance and the electorate in other parts of the country, found no echo in the hilly region. This has vitiated the electoral process.

The North East needs an enlightened leadership at different levels like any other state in the country. The lead has to come from the government, and political parties to revive and revamp the institutions, systems, and instruments of governance. Norms and values have to be upheld to enforce transparency and accountability in every sphere of governance. To strengthen ties and bonds across different fault lines, there is an imperative need for greater emotional integration to ensure a human face and personal touch in the implementation of policies and the day to-day conduct of business. In the age of information technology, people of the region have come to realize that they cannot

behave and work in the manner they have done in the past. They have to move and change fast or else they will be left behind and swept off their feet by the currents of globalization, making things more complex and difficult. All these clearly indicate that the sense of alienation is wearing off and people are coming to terms with the reality that their destiny is in their own hands and linked closely and unmistakably to the mainstream of Indian life. India is poised to emerge as one of the first five leading economies in the world in less than fifteen years time. To be an indispensable part of this, peace and development must grow stronger under well calibrated policies with an integrated focus on efficient management of resources and good governance in the North East.

The subtle change in the mood and temper of the people appears to have weighed with the collective leaderships of different insurgent groups. It is reflected in the continuity of the Naga peace process since 1997. Several other groups are also inclined to getting meaningfully engaged with the process of dialogue. What they need to appreciate is that in today's globalised world, integration within the region and with the neighborhood and the mainstream is far more important than the integration of some parts of an adjoining state into another on the ground of common ethnicity. More than land, space has emerged as a better force multiplier. Multilateralism and not unilateralism is today's mantra to resolution of problems. In the current situation, a turnaround is very much possible if the leaderships care to listen to the voice of people and refrain from ruining the life of any further generation by uncertain future. For this to happen, the leaderships have to muster greater courage, influence, goodwill and farsightedness to appreciate that the key to better sustenance is greater devolution of powers and interdependence and not the cry for independence for form's sake.

The fact that the talks have continued for so long, clearly go to show that the time and energy spent on the ongoing peace process has indeed, accrued the dividends of peace to the region. It has given courage to the saner sections of people and the youth in particular, to articulate that time has come for the talks to move from the form to substance. It would be suicidal if

the gains derived from the joint initiatives of the Government of India and the NSCN (IM) are allowed to fritter away for want of wisdom. In this context, it is worth pointing out that democracy is the instrument that does not hesitate and is always willing to consider the idea of giving a larger stake in the political process only if the contesting side is agreeable to play by democratic rules. It takes years to turn enmity into amity. It also takes decades to transform chaos into cosmos. Time has come for the two to herald in the North East to secure a better future for its people.

P.C. Chaturvedi

***Labour Market Governance in
India in the Context of Global
Economic Slowdown***

Globalization

The importance of Labour Market Governance (LMG) in India against the backdrop of global economic slowdown needs to be viewed in the overall context of globalization. Globalization refers to a process of deepening economic integration, increasing economic openness and growing economic inter-dependence between countries in the world economy. Huge expansion in cross-border capital, trade, people, technology and information flows have become a defining features of globalization. The Information and Communications Technology (ICT) revolution, coupled with declining transport cost has made the growth of far-flung, multi-country based production of goods and services both technically and economically feasible. In a way, both capital and labour have become highly mobile, each getting attracted to and adjusting with the other. However, globalization is not an unmixed blessing; while it has benefited skilled and educated personnel especially in IT-related, knowledge-based and service sector industries, it has also enhanced urban-rural job divide causing disenchantment among rural youth, compromised with job security by increasing the contractual and casual workforce, increased job stress and adversely affected employment prospects of unskilled labour. Therefore, mitigating the adverse impact of asymmetric globalization becomes a necessity.

Important Policy Prescriptions

Certain policies that are being propagated internationally so that the benefits of globalization accrue to majority of people across the world. Among the most important policy prescriptions are eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which are indicated below:

- Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Achieve universal primary education
- Promote gender equality and empower women
- Reduce child mortality
- Improve maternal health
- Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- Ensure environmental sustainability
- Develop a global partnership for development

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has emphasized upon promoting 'social dimensions of globalization' and 'decent work'. Social dimensions of globalization are articulated as follows:

- *A focus on people.* The cornerstone of a fairer globalization lies in meeting the demands of all people for: respect for their rights, cultural identity and autonomy; decent work and the empowerment of the local communities they live in. Gender equality is essential.
- *A democratic and effective State.* The State must have the capability to manage integration into the global economy, and provide social and economic opportunity and security.
- *Sustainable development.* The quest for a fair globalization must be underpinned by the interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars of economic development, social development and environmental protection at the local, national, regional and global levels.
- *Productive and equitable markets.* This requires sound institutions to promote opportunity and enterprise in a well-functioning market economy.
- *Fair rules.* The rules of the global economy must offer equitable opportunity and access for all countries and recognize the diversity in national capacities and developmental needs.
- *Globalization with solidarity.* There is a shared responsibility to assist countries and people excluded from or disadvantaged by globalization. Globalization must help to overcome inequality both within and between countries and contribute to the elimination of poverty.

- *Greater accountability to people.* Public and private actors at all levels with power to influence the outcomes of globalization must be democratically accountable for the policies they pursue and the actions they take. They must deliver on their commitments and use their power with respect for others.
- *Deeper partnerships.* Many actors are engaged in the realization of global social and economic goals – international organizations, governments and parliaments, business, labour, civil society and many others. Dialogue and partnership among them is an essential democratic instrument to create a better world.
- *An effective multilateral system.* A stronger and more efficient multilateral system is the key instrument to create a democratic, legitimate and coherent framework for globalization.

The following strategic objectives:

- Promote and realize standards, fundamental principles and right of work,
- Create opportunities for women and men to secure decent employment and income
- Enhance the coverage and effectiveness of social protection for all
- Strengthen tripartism and social dialogue.

Global Economic Crisis

While achievement of economic growth, social progress, reduction of poverty, enhanced employment opportunities, environment protection etc. remain universal development objectives, we are facing a crisis-prone global financial system, which has a negative impact on the pace of economic activity all over the world including India. Internationally, there were several crises since 2007. The sub-prime mortgage crisis adversely affected securities market, increased delinquencies, dried up liquidity, generated exchange rate volatility and created difficulties for a number of large financial institutions. Besides, there was galloping inflation at international level which put the

weakened financial system under tremendous strain. Erosion in consumer demand in developed nations adversely affected export markets of developing countries. It generated high degree of nervousness among investors and uncertainty in the economy which drove every economic agent towards complete risk-averseness.

Two recent papers, one by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on 'The human cost of recessions' and the other by the ILO on 'Building an employment-oriented framework for strong, sustainable and balanced growth' have come out with significant messages. First, the scars of the 2007-09 recession on the world's labour market would last long. Secondly, a right mix of fiscal, monetary and social protection measures needs to be put in place at the national and international levels to ease the pain of unemployment and ensure job-creating economic growth. Unemployment globally has increased by more than 30 million since 2007, taking the overall figure to 210 million. The IMF paper states that the human costs of downturn will have a debilitating impact on the succeeding generation as well. Lower lifetime earnings, health impairment of the workforce and diminished educational attainments of children are three important factors that will have inter-generational consequences. The ILO paper emphasizes that for avoiding recessions, national and global imbalances have to be corrected. In order not to accentuate inequalities, it has to be ensured that employment growth matches with the expansion of labour supply and wages broadly keep pace with productivity. While this could be a long term goal, in the interim, the most important requirement is for governments to implement strong social protection measures that act as a cushion in times of economic adversity. The time has come for a rights-based basic social protection floor for all citizens in both the advanced and developing countries.

Steps Taken Globally

In order to face the economic slowdown, many countries took various remedial measures mainly by way of reducing interest rates, augmenting liquidity and other support measures like bailout and stimulus packages etc. A 'Global Jobs Pact' was evolved during the 98th Session of the International Labour

Conference of the ILO held in June, 2009. It is envisaged as a policy contribution by the ILO to mitigate the impact of the crisis on working families and enterprises, including the informal and rural sectors and to help in shaping a productive and sustainable recovery. Its strategic objective is to place employment and labour market issues, together with social protection and respect for workers' rights, at the heart of stimulus packages and other relevant national policies to confront the crisis, using social dialogue as a key consensus-building tool.

The specific action points in this regard are:

- Ensuring support and credit flows to enterprises, foremost to small and medium-sized enterprises
- Safeguard viable jobs through support for skills development and limit wasteful lay-offs,
- Support jobseekers through well-designed unemployment benefits,
- Reinforce active labour market programmes to avoid the risk of long-term unemployment and social exclusion,
- Employment guarantee programmes are effective, especially in developing countries,
- Young people, and in particular disadvantaged youth, require special support measures,
- Increase investment in employment-intensive infrastructure and public goods,
- Invest in tomorrow's green economy,
- Invest in food security and rural development,
- Introduce or extend social protection to low-income groups and informal workers,
- Support for migrant workers

Besides, social partners should be consulted on recovery policies, workers' rights and international labour standards be protected and promoted and public expenditure be reviewed and reoriented by prioritizing employment, labour market and social protection objectives.

The Indian Situation

So far as the employment profile in India is concerned, according to the 55th Round and 61st Round of the National Sample Survey (NSS) corresponding to 1999-2000 and 2004-05 respectively, the total labour force, on usual principal status basis, increased from 406.0 million to 469.9 million. During this period, total employment increased from 397.0 million to 459.1 million. Hence, open unemployment increased from 9.0 million to 10.8 million and the unemployment rate from 2.2% to 2.3%. During 2004-05, the workforce of 459.1 million consisted of about 260.77 million self-employed (56.8%), 65.65 million regular (14.3%) and 132.68 million casual (28.9%) workers. There are, however, certain areas of concern. An important aspect of the employment profile is that while the employment in the organized sector declined from 28 million (7.05%) in 1999-2000 to 26.3 million (5.73%) in 2004-05, employment in the unorganized sector increased from 369.0 million (92.95%) to 432.8 million (94.27%) during this period. Therefore, while economic growth in India has actually translated into higher employment, it has proliferated in the unorganized sector. Since benefits in terms of wages, social security and working conditions are better in case of the organized sector, how to increase its proportionate size is our first area of concern. High employment base of the primary sector (59.1%) with low (18.8%) share in GDP, compared to both secondary (17.6% in employment, 27.5% in GDP) and tertiary (23.3% in employment, 53.7% in GDP) sector depicts the skew and constitutes the most agonizing feature of India's employment profile. Offsetting the mismatch by shifting a segment of workforce from primary to secondary sector is the second area of concern. About one-third of India's population is young (15 to 35 years). The preponderance of youth, if properly harnessed, can provide 'demographic dividend'; otherwise, it may lead to 'demographic disaster'. This is the third area of concern. There are about 130 million working poor; how to provide them with decent jobs so that their economic condition improves is our fourth area of concern.

India has remained relatively insulated from these crises due to less exposure of our banks and financial institutions to the sub-prime and related assets and India's gradual approach to the

financial sector reforms process. India's economic fundamentals are strong but she could not remain completely immune being part of the global community. As a result, the growth rate of GDP declined from 9.2% in 2007-08 to 6.7% in 2008-09, though it recovered to 7.4 % in 2009-10.

This is corroborated by the job loss situation in India. The Labour Bureau has conducted sample survey for six quarters to assess the impact of economic slowdown on the employment situation in India covering units pertaining to important sectors like textiles, leather, metals, gems & jewellery, automobile and IT/BPO and handloom/powerloom etc. during October-December, 2008 and January-March, April-June, July-September and October-December, 2009 and January-March, 2010. The survey showed that there was loss of job to the extent of 0.5 million during the first quarter, which improved by 0.25 million in the second quarter, declined by 1.31 million in the third quarter, and further improved by 0.5 million in the fourth quarter, 0.64 million in the fifth quarter and 0.06 million in the sixth quarter.

The resilience of the Indian economy was primarily on account of various factors.

- Implementation of various flagship schemes of the Government, namely, the Bharat Nirman for building infrastructure and providing basic amenities in rural areas, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme with the objective of providing 100 days of guaranteed unskilled wage employment to each rural households opting for it and Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission to provide basic services to the urban poor and integrated houses to slum dwellers etc. has helped.
- Implementation of various other Employment Generation Schemes like Swarnajayanti Gram Swaraj Yojana, Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana and the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme also have a positive impact.
- There was surge in rural demand due to farm loan waiver and increase in minimum support prices. The implementation of the Pay Commission's recommendations had a positive impact.

- A lot of investment has been made for development of infrastructural projects like roads, ports, power, airports etc.
- Three stimulus packages have been announced and implemented.
- The Monetary measures taken by Reserve Bank of India for enhancing the availability of credit at lower cost for financing the economic activities proved beneficial.

While the above mentioned measures have helped in overcoming the economic crisis, over a longer time-period, achievement of our macro-economic policy objective of faster and inclusive growth is important. Its connotations in the realm of labour are to generate decent and productive employment opportunities both in organized and unorganized sectors for which a facilitating environment needs to be created. This essentially calls for putting in place an effective system of Labour Market Governance in India.

Labour Market Governance (LMG)

In view of changing global production system, intensified competition and changing pattern of work and employment relations, it is crucial to adopt and modernize labour market governance. LMG refers to legal framework, administrative set-up, institutional arrangements, international standards, structure of authority and means of collaboration that influence the labour market. Its importance stems from the fact that decent work is often constrained by weak labour market institutions and enforcement, low technical capabilities of tripartite partners, limited social dialogue and lack of policy coherence integrating economic and social goals. Hence, LMG becomes a broad canvass covering labour legislations, ratification of ILO Conventions, existence and efficacy of workers' and employers' organizations and creating a dynamic labour market environment through active labour market policies.

LMG in the Indian Context

The essential characteristics of LMG in the Indian context are examined below:

A. Labour Legislations

'Labour' figures in the Concurrent List of the Constitution. Thus, both the Centre and States can legislate in this area. There are 44 labour related statutes enacted by the Central Government dealing with wages, social security, labour welfare, occupational safety and health and industrial relations etc., being enforced either by (a) the Central Government (12 in number) or (b) the Central as well as the State Governments (16 in number) or (c) the State Governments (16 in number). Besides, the State Governments can enact their own labour laws which are applicable in their respective jurisdiction. These laws are about 93 in number . Both Central and State Governments implement the labour laws through their implementation machineries in their respective jurisdiction.

Review/ updation of labour laws is a continuous process in order to bring them in tune with the emerging needs of the economy. While undertaking such changes, overall interests of labour are protected, keeping in view the requirements of the Indian Industry to make it efficient and internationally competitive. This constitutes an essential part of labour reforms which essentially means taking steps to increase production, productivity and employment opportunities in the economy. The required changes in the labour laws are accomplished by the Government after detailed consultation with the stake holders with a view to harmonize their interests.

Accordingly, in the recent past, a new Act, namely, the Unorganized Workers' Social Security Act, 2008 had been enacted to provide social security to workers in unorganized sector. The salient features of the Act include formulation of welfare schemes for different sections of the unorganized sector workers on matters relating to : (a) life and disability cover, (b) health and maternity benefits, (c) old age protection, and (d) any other benefits that may be decided by the Central Government. Besides, amendments to several labour laws have also been carried out and proposals to amend various other labour laws, are at different stages of consideration.

- The Labour Laws (Exemption from Furnishing Returns and Maintaining Registers by Certain Establishments) Act, 1988

to expand coverage of the Act from 9 in the Principal Act to 16, to simplify the forms of registers and returns prescribed under various labour laws and to provide maintenance of registers and submission of returns electronically;

- The Factories Act, 1948 to introduce new terms like 'hazardous substance', 'disability' etc., bring a number of less serious offences under the compounding clauses and amend Section 66 to provide flexibility in the matter of employment of women during night in factories;
- The Mines Act, 1952 to amend certain definition such as 'owner' and extend the applicability of the Act from existing 12 nautical miles up to the Exclusive Economic Zones and Maritime Zone of India;
- The Employment Exchange (Compulsory Notification of Vacancies) Act, 1959, inter-alia, to change the nomenclature of 'Employment Exchange' to 'Employment Guidance and Promotion Centre' to give primacy to employment promotion, vocational guidance and counseling;
- The Minimum Wages Act, 1948 for fixing minimum wages for all employments and to make National Floor Level Minimum Wage statutory;
- The Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970 to change the definition of appropriate government, add new sections one on wages and another where the contract agreements between the Principal Employers and Contractors shall clearly indicate wages and contribution towards social security schemes and other benefits;
- The Employees' Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952 to bring down the threshold limit for 20 and above to 10 and above for coverage of establishments;
- The Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979 to make it gender neutral and provide other facilities; and
- The Apprentices Act, 1961 to change in the definition of 'worker' and to reserve direct recruitment posts for trained apprentices under the Act in the establishment.

B. Ratifications of ILO Conventions

ILO has so far adopted 188 Conventions, of which India has ratified 43 Conventions. 8 out of 188 Conventions are classified as Core Conventions. Of them, India has ratified 4 (Convention No.29 relating to forced labour, Convention No.105 relating to abolition of forced labour, Convention No.100 relating to equal remuneration, and Convention No.111 relating to discrimination in employment and occupation). The four unratified Conventions are:

- Convention No.138 - concerning minimum age of work
- Convention No.182 - concerning elimination of worst forms of child labour.
- Convention No.87 - concerning freedom of association and protection of the right to organize.
- Convention No.98 - concerning right to organize and collective bargaining.

India has not yet ratified the Child Labour Conventions primarily because we are moving in a phased manner. Presently, children upto the age of 14 years are targeted for relief measures as against the definition of child being indicated as under 18 years of age under these Conventions. However, the worst form of child labour are already prohibited under various Acts such as Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976, Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girl Act, 1956, The Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substance Act, 1988 and Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act, 1986 etc. Certain amendments in Child Labour Prohibition and Regulation Act, 1986 are being processed to facilitate ratification of Convention No. 182.

Ratification of Conventions No. 87 and 98 would require giving Government servant the right to strike which the Government is unlikely to allow in view of the existence of alternate grievance redressal mechanism.

C. Tripartism

The Ministry of Labour & Employment has always been striving to promote harmonious industrial relations in the country.

The Ministry, being committed to the ethos and culture of tripartism, continues to have consultations with its social partners, which include Central Trade Unions and Employers' Organizations, to obtain a consensus on all important policy issues. About 22 statutory and 15 non-statutory Committees/Boards function in the Ministry. The V.V. Giri National Labour Institute and the Central Board for Workers' Education conduct various training programmes to promote awareness among and upgrade the capabilities of important stake holders.

D. Dynamic Labour Market Environment

A dynamic labour market environment is a pre-requisite for pursuing active labour market policy for which interventions are required on two important fronts: (i) creating a facilitating environment for generating employment, if necessary by changing some labour laws (demand side); and (ii) developing skilled manpower through vocational training (supply side). Simultaneously, social security has to be provided. It would ensure a right balance between 'flexibility', 'security' and 'stability'. While flexibility (in terms of size and type of workforce, duration of work and location of work place) is required by the employers to adjust to the changing market conditions, the workers need to be provided with basic security (in terms of statutory compensation in the event of closure, unemployment allowance, retraining and redeployment facilities, provision for skill development including on the job training, assistance for job search and access to social security benefits). It is perceived that ushering in labour reforms by way of flexi-security i.e. providing flexibility to employers and security to workers as indicated above may at times lead to a conflict as their interests might collide. In order to avoid such a situation, 'stability' in employer-employee relationship is being insisted upon. Therefore, our endeavour has been to bring about labour reforms by following consensual approach through a process of tripartite consultation with stakeholders and to maintain harmonious industrial relations through effective intervention of Central and State Industrial Relations Machineries. Important parameters of dynamic labour market environment are indicated below:-

Labour flexibility short of hire and fire

In the context of providing labour flexibility short of hire and fire, the perception is that plethora of labour laws and rigidity in some cases [like obtaining permission under Chapter VB of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 and prohibition of employment of contract labour under Section 10 of the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970] discourage hiring and create in-built bias for capital intensive technology. According to the National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector (NCEUS) Report on 'The Challenge of Employment in India: An Informal Economy Perspective', while there is no statistical evidence about this perception, it is possible to undertake rationalization and consolidation of labour laws by preparing an Indian Labour Code or having category-wise consolidation of labour laws pertaining to (i) industrial relations, (ii) wages, (iii) social security, (iv) safety, and (v) welfare and working conditions. It is also possible to bring uniformity in definitions of certain key terms like 'employer', 'employee', 'establishment', 'wages' etc., improve labour administration, streamline inspection etc. So far as steps taken are concerned, the inspection system is being increasingly made complaint-driven to reduce arbitrariness; some States like Gujarat and Punjab have introduced the system of self-certification; and the proposal to amend the Labour Laws (Exemption from Furnishing Returns and Maintaining Registers by Certain Establishments) Act, 1988 to provide relief to large number small and medium enterprises by allowing them to maintain only two registers and send only one return by using soft devices in respect of 16 Labour Laws would help.

Social Security

So far as provision of social security in the organized sector is concerned, unemployment allowance for insured persons under Rajiv Gandhi Shramik Kalyan Yojana @ about 50% of wages and medical facilities from Employees' State Insurance Corporation is made available for a period of one year. To encourage employment of persons with disabilities in the formal sector drawing monthly wage up to the Rs 25,000/-, the Government reimburses the Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) and Employees' Provident Fund Organization

(EPFO) contribution for a period of three years. The functioning of the ESIC and the EPFO is being improved through the use of information and communication technology. The monthly wage ceiling for coverage of employees under the Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948 has been enhanced from Rs. 10,000/- to Rs.15,000/-. A 'Pehchan Identity Card' Scheme for ESIC beneficiaries has been launched which will help them to avail medical facilities in any ESIC hospital through out Country. ESIC proposes to establish 17 Medical Colleges, 12 Post-graduate Institutes of Medical Sciences and 9 Dental Colleges in 16 different States.

Important Social Security related programmes for unorganized sector workers are as follows:

- Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) : The scheme provides smart card based cashless health insurance cover of Rs. 30,000/- per annum to Below Poverty Line (BPL) families in the unorganized sector. About 1.95 crore smart cards have been issued. The scheme is being extended to cover other target groups like construction workers, railway porters, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act beneficiaries who have worked for more than 15 days during the preceding financial year etc. The scheme is being implemented by the Ministry of Labour & Employment.
- Aam Admi Bima Yojana (AABY): Under this scheme, insurance is provided against natural as well as accidental death and partial /permanent disability to the head of the family of rural landless households in the country. The scheme is being implemented by the Ministry of Finance.
- Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAP) All citizens living below the poverty line and above the age of 65 years are eligible for getting pension. The Central Government provides Rs. 200/ per month per person which is topped up by the State Governments. The scheme is being implemented by the Ministry of Rural Development
- Welfare schemes relating group insurance medical cover, scholarship, pension, housing etc. for building and other construction workers, cine, bidi and non-coal mine workers are in operation.
- The National Floor Level Minimum Wage has been revised from Rs.80/- per day to Rs.100/- per day w.e.f. 01.11.2009.

Skill Development

- 100 Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) from domestic resources, 400 ITIs through World Bank assistance and 1396 ITIs in specific trade and skills under public private partnership are being upgraded as Centers of Excellence for producing skilled workforce for world standard.
- Demand driven short-term training courses on Modular Employment Skills (MES) framework under Skill Development Initiative (SDI) scheme for school drop-outs, workers in informal sector etc. are being conducted.
- Employment Exchanges are being upgraded on a mission mode under e-governance project.
- Steps are being taken to establish 1500 new ITIs and 5000 Skill Development Centers in PPP mode in unserved areas. It is proposed to have new schemes for 'Skill training for the youth of left wing extremism affected areas', 'Training of 8000 youth of J&K' etc.
- The National Council on Skill Development under the chairpersonship of Hon'ble Prime Minister, the National Skill Development Co-ordination Board under the chairpersonship of Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission and the National Skill Development Corporation have been established.

New Policies

- The National Policy on Skill Development has been announced and the National Employment Policy is being prepared. Annual Report to the People on Employment has been placed in the public domain.
- The National Policy on Safety, Health and Environment at Workplace and the National Policy on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work have been announced.

Putting in place an effective labour market governance system has helped in overcoming adverse impact of global economic slowdown as well as negative fallout of globalization on Indian labour force.

N. N. Jha

India's Dangerous Neighbourhood

Good governance is an objective which every country aspires to – often in vain. An important concomitant of good governance entails the will to safeguard & defend, if necessary, the external security of the country and to be able to project power beyond its borders in order to protect the national interests of the country. In the present situation India is facing countless challenges in this entire region from Afghanistan, to China, challenges of an unprecedented kind, well beyond anything experienced before, during the entire 62 years of our independence. There are challenges which threaten our territorial integrity and national unity. It is, therefore, incumbent upon not only the government but the people of India also to know what exactly they are up against and, thereafter, take appropriate action. One of them being to ensure that the government acts in accordance with the will of the people

THE CHALLENGES

Afghanistan

A quick look at our immediate neighborhood will indicate the extent of the challenges – indeed threats-prevalent. Afghanistan has been much in the news, particularly since the Obama administration announced a pull out of their forces, by July 2011. This will inevitably be followed by a pull out of the EU forces – perhaps even earlier since their numbers are fairly small. The recent fall of the Dutch government on the issue of sending more troops is a timely reminder of what may happen to other EU governments, if they are to delay in doing so. In this context the recent London Conference went a step ahead and talked about “good” & “bad” Taliban. Our foreign minister who was present was more an observer than a participant. Given India's stake in Afghanistan, the closeness which Afghan people feel for India

and the extent of development aid given to that country, it was incumbent that the international community should have taken cognizance of India's overall interest in Afghanistan. To rub it in further the Turkish government called a meeting, on Afghanistan, to which India was not invited. Before agreeing to attend the London Conference, India should have obtained from the British a copy of the resolution proposed for the conference.

All this clearly implies that the international community is prepared to overlook the fact that Pakistan is the hub of international terrorism in return for vague promises and a show of cooperation against the Taliban. Pakistan is cashing in on this bonanza by getting massive economic and military assistance which will be used, to strengthen itself against India.

Pakistan

A "friendly" Taliban government in Kabul will be beholden to Pakistan for several reasons. First and foremost it will be in power because of Pakistan's skillful use of its diplomatic assets to bring it about. Furthermore, Pakistan will have acquired depth through Afghanistan, something they have aspired for decades. They will then be free to unleash their fundamentalist hordes on India (not only in Kashmir) as well as in Central Asia. Of course, there are several countries in the vicinity of Afghanistan, also who are averse to this arrangement – notably Russia and Iran and it is important that India should be in constant touch with these countries in order, inter alia, to try and pre-empt a Taliban takeover of Afghanistan. Apart from this Indian diplomacy must explore the other options that may be available.

Pakistan will continue to be hostile for the foreseeable future. The threat from that country arises from state and non – state actors. Right now Pakistan's favorite terrorist group appears to be the L-eT simply because it has not carried out any terrorist attacks inside Pakistan. Other non state actors in Pakistan like the Juji, have openly stated that they not only want Kashmir but also Hyderabad, Junagarh, and a "rectification of the injustices of 1947 in the Punjab". They probably have in mind Gurdaspur & Ferozpur districts. Former senior hard-line diplomat of Pakistan have made no secret of the fact, that Pakistan should make its fight against the Taliban, on behalf of the US forces, conditional

upon Pakistan getting Kashmir, unlimited economic and military aid and parity with India (i.e. restoration of the hyphen) and a civilian nuclear deal along the lines of that signed with India, by the US.

On top of all this is the so-called Karachi project, wherein the L-eT, the ISI and the Pakistan army have prepared a plan to bleed India by carrying out extensive attacks all over India, the recent Pune outrage being just an example. In addition, their agents are busy scouting around in Shri Lanka for former LTTE agents to recruit for strikes in South India, since it is assumed, that they would be more familiar with the local conditions. Also, the India Mujahedeen is to be co-opted in a big way for this nefarious purpose. There can be no better example of Pakistan's ill will and hatred for India. Some Indians argue about the need to strength the civilian set up there, by showing "generosity" towards Pakistan.. They have of course never defined what they mean by "generosity".

This may represent a genuine urge and desire for friendly relations with Pakistan. Translating it into a reality seems a well nigh impossible task. Years of people to people contacts and relations have failed to achieve this. Unfortunately, whatever goodwill is generated out of this fails to get reflected in the official policy of Pakistan which, as already indicated, is run by a nexus of the L-eT, ISI and the Army. It must be clearly understood that good relations with Pakistan imply, at the very least, a surrender of sovereignty over Kashmir.

The same group of persons also holds the view that a strong and united Pakistan is in the interest of India. In fact, the contrary is true. If Pakistan implodes it will be for its own meeting as in the case of Bangladesh. It is an intolerant country, caught desperately in a time warp and with a serious identity problem.

Meanwhile, an important barometer of the success of our foreign policy will let in our ability to convince US that pandering to Pakistan demands & blackmail whether on economic or military assistance, will be counterproductive and could rebound on them, apart from hindering the rapidly developing Indo – U.S. relations.

India had a good reason not to resume dialogue with

Pakistan. The mastermind of the 26/11 attacks, the founder of the L-eT afiz Mohd Sayeed continues to be sheltered by Pakistan. No attempt has been made to implement the Islamabad Jan 2004 Joint Statement of P.M. Vajpayee & Musharraf wherein Pakistan undertook to demolish terrorist camps within its territory. Naturally because, Pakistan looks upon terrorism as a strategic asset against India

At various stages India has given the impression of climbing down or compromising. That does us no good and also serves to reinforce the image of a “soft state”. Thus, the joint statement at Sharm al Sheikh and, now, climbing down for the Feb. 25 talks were both ill advised and highly counterproductive. Already Pakistan is talking about water of the various rivers. They would like to secure a larger discharge of water beyond what has already been agreed to in the Indus Water Treaty, signed five decades ago.

China

As though one predatory country on our borders is not enough, India also has to contend with China, which has never been as powerful as now. Its alliance with Pakistan is a historical fact and one can only strongly agree with Army Chief Gen Kapoor that India must be prepared for a two front war. This was a defensive statement and objections raised to it, by both Pakistan and China, should be ignored.

Both countries have notorious records for aiding proliferation of nuclear weapons & violation of MTCR (Missile Technology Control Regime).

In the last two years, especially, Chinese incursions into Indian Territory have increased sharply. India/China has a common border only because of Chinese annexation of Tibet, in the early fifties. Though, the international community has shrugged its shoulders by recognizing Tibet as a part of China, facts indicate that throughout most of its existence Tibet enjoyed independence. A peep into history will assist in debunking the Chinese claim. The British, during their rule in India were obsessed with Tsarist Russia’s expansionist zeal towards the warm water of the India ocean. Therefore, it suited them to play up the “suzerainty” angle in order to keep Russia away from

Tibet. Consequently what was ignored was a Treaty concluded between Tibet & China in 821 AD. The text of the Treaty, was recorded in Tibetan and Chinese languages on three pillars, in the Tibetan capital Lhasa, the then Chinese capital, Chang'an and at the border at Gigu Meru. The text on the pillars say:

“Both Tibet and China shall keep the country and frontiers of which they are now in possession. The whole region to the east of that being the country of great China & the whole region to the west being assuredly the country of great Tibet; from either side of the frontier there shall be no warfare no hostile invasion and no seizure of territory”

The constant Chinese violations of the LAC, rest on the pretext that its precise location is not known. In terms of the high level Agreements signed in 1993 & 1996, however, the fact that the LAC exists is clearly accepted, and mentioned in both documents.

For example, “no fly zone” and “no military activity zones” within 10kms of the LAC, have been clearly stipulated.

Consequently, how can the Chinese not be aware of the exact location of the LAC and, if so, what was the point of including a reference to it in those documents?

There are other instances of Chinese duplicity. For example, the Agreement on the political parameters and guiding principles for the settlement of the India / China boundary signed on April 11, 2005 in New Delhi, is a case in point. Articles IC, V & VI in particular, are of special importance in this context.

Article IC, read as follows “the two sides will give due consideration to each other’s strategic & reasonable interests and the principle of mutual and equal security”

Article V states the following :

“The two sides will take into account; inter alia, historical evidence, national sentiment, practical difficulties and reasonable sensitivities of both sides, and the actual state of the border areas”.

Article VII is vital one and states as follows :

“In reaching a boundary settlement the two sides shall safeguard due interests of the settled populations in the border areas”.

In terms of Article VII therefore, there can be no validity in Chinese claim to Tawang – something which they are trumpeting all the time. Obviously, the due interests of settled population in the border area does not apply in this case, for them & Article VII is violated with impunity.

India’s policy towards China must be guided by the following considerations:-

- (i) India should cease displaying too much concern for Chinese sensitivities; we have to think of Indian sensitivities only. The autonomy of Tibet must be respected and human rights violations there must cease. The Dalai Lamos “middle path” proposal can form a basis for negotiations. Chinese apprehension about the security situation there will stand considerably diluted.
- (ii) In a proper and equitable settlement apart from the “as is where is” formula, that is, the LAC of 1962, the ‘Chumbi valley lying between Bhutan and Sikkim, must be transferred to India.
- (iii) Immediate removal of missiles based in Tibet and pointing at India. It will be conceded that no settlement, whenever it comes, can be fair and equitable with gun pointing at India’s head.

These proposals are made knowing fully well that the current economic and military strength of China is formidable. Recent reports that china is trying to harness and divert some of the water of the Brahmaputra to central China are highly disturbing and need to be taken up urgently. China’s assurances to the contrary cannot be relied upon.

Another area of very serious concern is Nepal. It is a country, with which India shares a relationship of history, culture, religion as well as intimate people to people ties. In addition, the 1150 km long border with India is an open one though it is now manned by the S.S.B.O. Unfortunately, since Dec 1960, after a

prolonged struggle democracy was restored in 1990. Regrettably, what The Nepalese people were looking for did not materialize resulting, inter alia, in a Maoist armed uprising, from 1996. The assassination of King Birendra and the accession of his brother, Gyanendra, to the throne, did not help; it only made matters worse by further strengthening the Maoist movement. The taking over of the government by King Gyanendra in Feb. 2005 rang alarm bells in GOI and it reacted by cutting off all military assistance to that country.

The mistake made by GOI was to overlook the fact that unlike on previous occasions, when the opposition was democratic in nature, this time the strongest opponents were rabid Maoists. It was assumed that once in power the Maoists would become pro establishment and settle down to governance. The GOI, therefore, brokered an agreement between Maoists and the seven party alliance (SPA) of democratic parties in Nov. 2005 right here, in New Delhi, thereby, conferring respectability on the Maoists.

Events moved rapidly, thereafter and the king was compelled to surrender power in April 2006. An interim Parliament was convened, on the basis of seats of the parties in the outgoing Parliament. Elections were held, in April 2008, which resulted in the Maoists emerging as the single largest party and a coalition government comprising the Maoists and the UML, was formed with the full backing of a majority of the Terai (the India origin area) parties, with the Maoists leader (Prachanda) appointed as its Prime Minister. Both the President and the Vice President the prominent Terai personalities thereby, giving the Terai for the first time, an important role in Nepal's government & parliament.

Right from the time of the formation of this government the Maoists were quite clear in their objective, namely, to establish a one party rule in that country.

Obviously, this was in total contradiction to what India had striven for in the November 2005 Agreement. The Maoist dominated government succeeded in getting their own man as the Governor of the Nepal Rashtra Bank, thereby, securing a very important instrument of financial power. Their efforts, however, to place their own man as Chief Justice, fortunately

did not succeed. Nevertheless, since they were keen to control the various levers of power it was their overt desire to control the army, considered their principal adversary that misfired. They dismissed the then Army Chief with a view to place his deputy considered their man, in his place. Fortunately, again for democracy in Nepal, the President Mr Ram Baran Yadav, intervened to thwart this move by directing the incumbent to stay on in his job. The Maoists were keen to have a pliable Chief because they would then be able to include at least some 7000 of their cadres into the army, thus gradually obtaining full control over it. The President's action resulted in the govt's resignation.

Incidentally, on a visit to China, after ceasing to be P.M., Mr. Prachand's action in resigning was termed as ill advised and self defeating by his Chinese interlocutors. A new coalition government was formed led by UML and supported by the Nepali congress and some of the Terai parties.

The present position is that the constituent Assembly has been charged with the responsibility of framing a constitution, by May 28, 2010. So far, the Maoists have not displayed any enthusiasm for completing the task. They have held up the proceeding of the House and not allowed it to function. Their latest demand for cooperating relates to the formation of a national govt. headed by them, which is very unlikely to be agreed to. At one stage the Maoists had also threatened to take to the streets and proclaim a revolutionary government if the constitution were not ready by 28th May. Constant attempts are being made by them to bring the down present government led by Madhav Nepal of the UML.

In case the constitution is not ready by the stipulated date, either of the following can happen:

- a). The assembly can vote to prolong the session. (Presently, it is possible to do so only in the case of a national emergency or a natural disaster)
- b). The 1990 constitution comes into effect and the President forms a national govt. (of course excluding the Maoists) incidentally, it is learnt that legal experts have advised the President to go in for this option. In this scenario the Maoists would resist the govt. by force.

This would, then entail the use of the army by the govt. to, control them. A civil war situation could develop

In either of the latter two developments the GOI should support whatever action the President takes in this regard.

GOI must remain firm in its resolve that the Maoists must not come to power in Nepal. Therefore, its army should receive the full military support & assistance of India.

India must always bear in mind the pitfalls it would face if the Maoists succeed in their nefarious designs.

Secondly, it is well known that Nepal Maoists have been in touch with Indian naxlites including supplying arms. Even before the Maoists took office they had organized meetings of the coordination committee of Maoist parties in S. Asia (CCOMPOSA).at these meetings virulent anti-indian propaganda was the hallmark. One such meeting of the CCOMPOSA, took place even when they were in the govt.

Thirdly, during their brief tenure in office (9 months till May 2009), they permitted the Chinese to open china-Nepal study Centres, all over Nepal. Four of them, infact, came up in the Terai, on the Indian border where incidentally, hardly anyone is interested in studying the Chinese language or their history and culture. This is a part of china's string of pearls tactic to encircle India from all sides.

India must always bear in mind what P.M. Nehru stated, way back in 1951, that India's security frontiers must lie to the north of the Himalayas. Under no circumstances must they be pushed south ways bring them to Raxaul, Jogbani, Gorakhpur, Nautanwa, etc., that is, well to the south of the Himalayas.

To the South, India has another neighbor with whom, also, it has enormous affinities of culture, religion, history, ect. Fortunately, Shri Lanka is a very friendly country and poses no direct threat to India. Unfortunately, however, it has faced an internal conflict for the last 30 years which it was able to bring a successful termination last summer. Though its government has been charged by some quarters of vendetta against the Tamil minority, by and large it is trying its trying its best to resettle the internally displaced persons – though the quantum of rehabilitation be speeded up quite considerable.

The important point to note is that the root cause of the civil war viz. Tamil dissatisfaction with their status and treatment has to be addressed very quickly in order to ensure that their sense of alienation does not fester. Sri Lankan people, who are wise and mature, would realize that even without the threat of conflict it would be highly desirable and advantageous for the country, for both the communities to work together to re-build the country into the island paradise that it has been.

To achieve results in this direction, it is necessary for the government of that country to have a fresh look at the India – Sri Lanka agreement of July 1987, which was a historic document which blended to a very large extent the urge for some kind of devolution of power by the Tamil community and, at the same time, keeping the country united. One of the most important points in the agreement related to the subsequent passing of the 13th amendment whereby the provinces of Sri Lanka were given certain power and traditional Tamil areas namely the northern and eastern provinces were merged into one province, to satisfy long held Tamil aspirations. Subsequently, in two documents signed with the LTTE in 2002 & 2003 the concept of a federal state in Sri Lanka was accepted though never implemented. This is an appropriate moment therefore to have a fresh look at these documents as the basis of discussions and proceed towards a fair, equitable and permanent settlement of this problem. Towards this end the GoI should constantly nudge the Sri Lankan government with e.g. regular discussion on the subject and handsome economic concessions.

Another aspect of the post LTTE situation also demands quick attention of the Sri Lankan govt. There is a suspicion among the Tamils of Sri Lanka that the government is trying to alter the demographic balance of the northern province by resettling there large number of Sinhalese, including from the army. President Rajapakse must be advised that proceeding with the plan would be highly counter-productive for the future of Tamil-Sinhalese relations. One of the fundamental causes of Tamil dissatisfaction has all along been what they perceive as Sinhalese settlers, over the decade altering the demographic composition of the Eastern province where Tamils are presently in a minority.

A somewhat disturbing trend has emerged in Sri Lanka since May 2009, and this relates to the considerably enhanced Chinese presence in that country. Hambantota, strategically located in the S.E. tip of that country is already being developed by them as a major port. Its strategic location is ideally placed for monitoring movements in the Indian ocean particularly ingress and egress out of the straits of Malacca and also movement and development of Indian naval ships not only in the Indian ocean but also from the West to the east coast of India and vice versa. On top of it a number of projects have been awarded to the Chinese including railways lines, roads and a power station in Jaffna which at its closest is only 30kms from the Tamil Nadu coast. Twenty five thousand Chinese workers have already come into Sri Lanka in connection with these projects. The Sri Lanka President only a few days ago, praised the Chinese contribution to the development of the Northern Province.

During the civil war, no doubt, the Chinese supplied weapons etc to the government and, thereby, created a fair measure of influence for themselves in Sri Lanka but, then, so did India provide them with valuable intelligence on the LTTE which assisted them greatly in their conflict.

Therefore India must ensure that in the interest of both countries, Sri Lanka embarks on a policy of devolution of power to the Tamils, so that they feel that they are equal citizens of the country and keeping a watchful eye on Chinese presence and activities in that country so that Sri Lanka does not cross the threshold. These would test Indian diplomacy to the utmost.

Finally, the Chinese will do their maximum to cultivate the Buddhist Maha Sangha in that country inviting them over to China and keeping in regular touch with them and so on. Needless to say the Mahasangha wields considerable influence over the Sinhalese Buddhists.

Fortunately Bangladesh under its current dispensation, presents an entirely different picture in our neighbourhood. The disconcerting thing, however is that the major opposition party the BNP, has already started criticism of the Awami League government on the specious excuse that the P.M. has given away too much to India. Though the Hasina government is

genuinely sincere about cordial relations with India, the Bangladesh bureaucracy could try to do its utmost to scuttle her moves towards India. A few days ago, the press reported that the ULFA, after a brief lull are preparing for attack in Assam. One is confident, however, that given P.M. Hasina's commitment to friendly relations with India, this will not be permitted to happen.

Our other neighbor, Myanmar, it should be noted, despite an overwhelming Chinese presence in that country, is not averse to friendly relations with India. Their cooperation particularly in the field of counter-insurgency in north east of India is especially welcome. They are also cooperating in the development of ports on the northern coastline to enable India to develop the north east. At the same time, we have also been successful in keeping up with Aung San Su Kyi the popular leader of Myanmar. It is suggested that a prominent street in New Delhi should be named after her father, Gen. Aung San who was assassinated before Myanmar become independent. Even the military rulers should not object to this.

Talking about the extent of Chinese presence in that country, it is well known that apart from huge economic investments, including the development of ports, roads etc., Chinese establishment of a monitoring facility in the Coco islands is a disturbing feature because it lies a mere forty kilometres to the north of the northern tip of Andaman Islands.

On the subject of external security, it is worth mentioning that an American think tanker, George Tanham has pointed out, in a study of the Indian war doctrine that, throughout history, India has fought its wars, on its own territory. He has suggested changes in this approach and that India should endeavour to carry its war to foreign territory. India will, therefore, have to be prepared for a two front war (Pak & China), keeping the above in mind, but also use of highly mobile and well armed small groups which can swiftly deal with terrorist groups and their encampments.

Finally, there is yet another aspect of our security that needs urgent attention since we have already delayed its consideration long enough. It is well known that a missile launched by Pakistan

would take a mere four minutes to reach Delhi and a few minutes longer, Mumbai.

No doubt in a retaliatory strike Pakistan would suffer very heavily but that would be a very poor consolation if Delhi and Mumbai are crippled by a nuclear strike.

Therefore, it is necessary not only to prepare an anti missile defence system, but to have in position space assets that can destroy an enemy missile in flight. India already has surveillance satellites in space which can with some re-configuration, be converted into missile killers. The former Air Force Chief Air Chief Marshal Major had announced the creation of a aerospace command, but nothing has been heard about it. India should take this up with immediate effect and irrespective of the costs bring about a successful fruition of the project of space based anti missile defence.

INITIATIVES OF CHANGE

Arvind Kejriwal

Talking Governance to the People - Mohalla Sabhas in Delhi

People find themselves completely helpless when it comes to governance. Right from small issues like overflowing sewers, broken roads to bigger issues like large scale corruption in Commonwealth games, people have absolutely no say. They can only vote any government in or out every five years, but they cannot guide it to correction between two elections. During the five years, the government are in power they can only plead before those who they voted to power. That is Indian democracy.

How can we ensure direct people's participation between two elections? How can we ensure that the people have some say in day to day governance?

In order to try that and drawing from experiences from other such experiments, we started an interesting experiment in Delhi about a year and a half back..

Initiated in Delhi by *Swaraj Abhiyan* along with the councilors of Trilokpuri and Sundernagari wards, each ward has been divided into 10 *mohallas*. All residents of a *mohalla* are members of *mohalla* sabha. Each *mohalla* sabha meets once in two months. The councilor and all local municipal officials are present at *mohalla* sabha meetings. People decide how the municipal funds should be used in that *mohalla*. Till now, some officials or politicians used to take those decisions. Now, you can just walk into these *mohalla sabhas* and demand that your road be repaired. Your demand would be noted as minutes of meeting and funds would be sanctioned on the spot by the councilor. If the number of proposals received are more than the funds available, then voting takes place to decide the priority to select which work should be done first.

These councilors have announced that the payment for any work would be done to a contractor only if *mohalla sabha* expresses satisfaction. This would deal a body blow to corruption. Roads, which used to come off within a few days of being made, would now hopefully last their life.

Lists of those who are poor and deserve government social security benefits like old age pension, handicapped pension, widow pension etc are now being prepared in these *mohalla sabhas*. People collectively, transparently and openly decide who is the poorest and deserves pension. Earlier, only party people or those close to the councilor used to benefit from these schemes.

The Lieutenant Governor of Delhi has not only congratulated these councilors but has also requested the Municipal Commissioner to explore the possibility of starting this in other parts of Delhi. The LG has also directed police to be present at these mohalla sabha meetings.

It has already started now in five wards of Delhi. In one area, even the local MLA, Mr Veen Singh Dhingan, has also started attending these meetings.

How are Mohalla Sabha Meetings Conducted?

- A municipal ward is divided into 10 parts. Each part is called a mohalla. Roughly, there are 40,000 voters in a ward. So, there would be about 4000 voters i.e. around 1500 families, in a mohalla.
- Each voter of a mohalla is a member of “mohalla sabha”.
- A mohalla sabha meets every month.
- Every household of the mohalla is sent a written notice of the meeting in advance informing them about the date, time and venue of the meeting. The notice is in the form of a personal letter written by the councilor to each voter.
- The meeting is chaired by the councilor. It is an open meeting. Outsiders can also attend as observers. However, only the eligible voters have a right to participate.
- The councillor tries to ensure the presence of MCD officials in the meeting who are required to respond to citizens’ queries and complaints.

- To prevent several participants from speaking simultaneously, blank paper slips are distributed in the beginning of the meeting. A person has to write his/her name and subject on which he/she wishes to speak. On the basis of these slips, people are invited one by one on the stage to speak.
- Citizens narrate their problems. They collectively discuss and debate their problems, suggest solutions, and decide what facilities/public works they want. Wherever needed, the officials respond. If it concerns inefficiency of officials, they are required to commit a time frame within which they would do the work. Wherever needed, the councillor sanctions funds on the spot.
- The citizens also decide, who among them, is most deserving of government aid or social security benefits.
- All decisions are taken either consensually or through voting.
- The citizens are able to directly question the councillor and local MCD officials present.
- The councillor and the officials, on their part, respond to complaints and questions; they also offer clarifications and solutions. The councillor also commits himself/herself to the things that he/she can do or will try to do and points out to the things that are outside his/her jurisdiction.
- The councillor also makes a commitment that contractors will be paid only after the local people have expressed satisfaction with the public work in question.
- The principle governing the Mohalla Sabha meeting is: citizens will decide what they want and their representative (i.e. the councillor) will merely carry out their will within the limits of his/her jurisdiction, the law, and the availability of funds.
- Copies of the minutes of the meeting, including the decisions taken, are sent to each household of the area.
- The participants also decide the time and place of the next Mohalla Sabha meeting in which the councillor will present a report of the progress on implementation of the decisions taken earlier.
- MLAs have also started coming to these meetings now.

EXPERIENCES SO FAR

Meeting demand with fewer funds

- Demands of the people are very small. The government spends crores of rupees. However, people still remain dissatisfied because the funds are spent on items which may not be the top priority of the people. But when the people decide, all their demands could be met with smaller amount of funds. Like, the funds needed to meet all the demands of first mohalla sabha in Trilokpuri were just Rs 14 lakhs. Whenever there is a big problem, which needs huge funds, the best way is to deal with it is to place all facts before the people and inform them of the total funds available. The people themselves, through discussions come to a conclusion on how best these available funds could be used. If needed, voting is done in mohalla sabhas to decide priorities.

People's Participation

- Earlier, only those works used to be done which were suggested by the councilor or the people around him. Now, even the most ordinary person can walk into a mohalla sabha meeting and demand implementation of a work. And everyone's demand is written down, responded to and acted upon, if it is within the jurisdiction of the Councilor.

Officials Responsibility

- Most councilors complain that the local officials do not listen to them. The officials keep making false assurances but never act upon them. This leads to a loss of face for the councilors, who make assurances to the public which are never fulfilled by the officials. This situation has changed in those wards where *mohalla sabhas* have started taking place. The officials now have to publicly inform about action taken on their assurances. It is seen that the officials have now started doing work. For instance, in one of the meetings, one woman informed that she had met the ASI and the Councilor several times earlier and had been promised many times in the last one year. However, her

drain was not cleared. The ASI again promised in *mohalla sabha* meeting that he would do the job in three days. The people questioned the Assistant Sanitary Inspector (ASI) in *mohalla sabha* as to what should the people do to ASI if the promise were not kept this time. ASI said – I am willing to undergo whatever punishment you give me in the next meeting if I do not do my job. And the drain was actually cleared within three days.

Identifying the poor for government's schemes for them

- It is very interesting to observe the manner in which these *mohalla sabhas* are finalizing names for old age, widow and handicapped pensions. These are social security schemes of the government for poor people. Earlier, only those people which were either close to the Councilor or to his cronies or belonged to the same party got benefits of these schemes. However, now the names of beneficiaries are discussed and decided openly. We thought that as soon as these schemes would be announced, almost everyone would raise their hands to claim benefits. However, that hasn't happened. For instance, the people of Badarpur Khadar village are very poor. They depend either on agriculture or do sundry labour work. In the *mohalla sabha* meeting at Badarpur Khadar, nearly 100 people participated. When the schemes were announced, the people consulted amongst themselves and suggested names of eight women, who according to them had lost their husbands, had no sources of income and were very poor. The councilor announced that there were more slots available and if more people wanted, they could also get it. However, the people unanimously said that only these eight women deserved it. It really brought tears to the eyes of most people present on the honesty and truthfulness of poor people. It also shows that unless a person is really poor, he/she would not offer his/her name publicly for these benefits, else he/she gets publicly declared as a poor and this affects his/her dignity.
- These *mohalla sabhas* are keeping the politicians constantly on their toes. Earlier, they could be questioned only once in five years. Now, they can be questioned every month.

Involving the Bureaucracy and the Politician

- There is no platform where the Indian bureaucracy can be directly questioned. They work in completely unaccountable fashion. These mohalla sabhas are offering those platforms where one can publicly question them. In fact, Mohalla Sabha meetings are bringing citizens and their elected representatives together. So the bureaucracy – i.e. unelected officials – have no choice but to join in too. They will be isolated if they don't.
- It is providing excellent opportunity to a councilor to be constantly in touch with each voter in his/her area. He writes two letters every month to each of his voters – the notice for the meeting and the minutes of meeting. So, even if everyone does not turn up for these meetings, each voter comes to know of what is happening through these letters. Besides the meetings are also widely discussed in the area. This makes the councilor immensely popular in the area and gives him/her huge political dividends.

Some Success Stories

- The jhuggis of Sundernagri, a resettlement colony in East Delhi had a public toilet 20 years back. The same had been closed down then due to some local feud. For the past 20 years, jhuggi residents have been living in great difficulty, having been forced to defecate in open. Many mishaps have happened with women in this area. The jhuggi residents wanted the toilet to be rebuilt. However, a nearby economically better off locality was not letting this happen as they wanted a parking lot in place of the toilet. In the *Mohalla Sabha* of this area, people from both sides came, many viewpoints were discussed, the people even fought, but ultimately it was realized that the need of jhuggi residents was greater. The toilet was thus sanctioned in the Sabha by the Councilor and was constructed within 3 months.
- In a Mohalla Sabha in F 1 Block of Sundernagri, people demanded 5 lanes to be constructed. The councilor and officers, citing paucity of funds expressed their inability to

do so. However, when the officers were openly questioned by the people of the area, they agreed to get funds sanctioned for the lanes. Within 6 months of this Mohalla sabha, all 6 lanes were constructed.

- In a Mohalla Sabha in a middle class area in RK Puram, some people raised the issue of “nuisance” created by hawkers. They requested the officers to disallow hawkers from entering the area. However, the resolution was not passed by the Mohalla as many people expressed support for the hawkers. It was felt that not only did hawkers provide services to their area, but also, it would be unjust to take away their means of livelihood. The Mohalla Sabha finally decided to call all the hawkers of their area to the next meeting and discuss these issues with them, to find a viable solution.
- In one Sabha in a jhuggi colony in Trilokpuri, people asked for construction of a pucca lanes. The same were sanctioned. After a few months, when the sabha again happened in their mohalla, the people complained that the roads were not constructed properly and threatened to stop the payment of the contractor. The officers then took a round of the area and ensured that the roads were constructed properly.
- In Khanpur, the Councilor was surprised to see over two hundred residents attend the first Mohalla Sabha. It was observed that even those people who never go to the Councilor or any government office to register their complaints, openly voice their grievances in these meetings. Since the first Sabha, the Councilor has been working seriously on all the issues raised and has managed to get most works done. The police also got into action in this area after the meeting. In the meeting people had expressed immense frustration over satta being played in parks and alcohol being consumed in the open. The SHO had personally attended the meet. Police jeeps patrolled the area for many days and these activities have completely stopped now. People having expressed immense dissatisfaction in the meeting over sanitation in the area,

are amazed to discover that drains and parks of their area are being cleaned every day. Safai karamcharis have started reporting on time every day. This is happening because people in the Sabha summoned their attendance register in the next meet.

- In one meeting in a jhuggi colony in Sundernagri, the SHO of the area was present. He was informed by a woman that illegal activities including satta took place in the parks in their area. The SHO assured that he will take action. One man then dared to tell him, "How will you take action? You get a fixed income or hafta from the wrongdoers!" The SHO assured everyone that he will remove all satta in the area within 3 days. He did so (as he again had to face the public in a week's time). He also gave his mobile number to the residents in the Sabha. Crime in this area has reduced considerably now.
- The people of O, M, N Block of Sundernagri have been suffering from a severe water problem for the last 2-3 years. The sewage line leaks, as a result they get water mixed with sewer in their area. The residents in the Sabha expressed deep anguish and frustration over the same. DJB officials were present in the meet. Within the next 3 days, they ensured that the problem was solved.
- In L Block, Sundernagri, the sewer line overflows since the last 1 year, as a result, during mornings and evenings, muck from the open drains comes into the lanes. It is a pitiable sight. Within 1 day of the Mohalla Sabha in this area, this problem was resolved by the officials.
- The SDM of Sundernagri attended one Mohalla Sabha and interacted with the people. In between the meet, he confessed that he had no idea that people in jhuggis live on rent! Mohalla Sabhas, thereby are providing a platform to the officers to understand the needs of the common people.
- Talking governance at the grass roots level with participation of all stake holders has been successful and perhaps this scheme needs to be extended in many more areas.

INITIATIVES OF CHANGE

Amit Gupta

Ending Manual Scavenging - A Case Study in Budaun

As district magistrate I visited the village of Ramzanpur, in block Qadar Chowk during a health and sanitation meeting. I was shocked by the number of flies and the disgusting odor that one felt as one entered the village. While making an inspection of the lanes of the village, he observed the vents of the dry latrines opening on the roads and the excreta from many vents flowing into the drains and even onto the roads of the village. On further enquiry I was told that nearly 700-1000 such latrines existed in the village making it nearly 70% of the total households in the village. This brought to my mind that there had to be someone who must be cleaning this mess. And thus came to the forefront the existence of Manual Scavenging that was allegedly ceased years back. Human excreta lied in the house for days if a scavenger didn't come for cleaning.

I was much concerned by the health indicators of the district which were among the worst in the state and got the answer when I visited Ramzanpur. A society which could tolerate such type of hygienic conditions and a practice as inhuman as manual scavenging could tolerate nearly anything. As soon as I got back from the village I called a meeting of the district officials and asked them to make a resolution to end these dry latrines from the district.

The Problem

Manual Scavengers are those who are engaged in the removal of excreta manually for their livelihood. This system of manual scavenging is particularly prevalent in the western districts of Uttar Pradesh. Budaun district is one such district where till date more than 2000 estimated families are doing the job of manual scavenging for making both ends meet. What is worse, it is mostly women, including young girls, who do this work.

To end this evil practice of Manual Scavenging a lot needed to be done before initiating the program. This was not as simple as stopping it only with the fear of the law. There were three critical components under this program, namely (a) The Dry Latrine User (b) The Manual Scavenger and (c) The District Administration as implementing agency/ facilitator. To make the process move, it was essential to have all the three stakeholders motivated and brought on the same level of thinking, mutual trust and benefit perception.

Plan of Action

The reasons attributed to the backwardness of Budaun were twofold - one being Education and the other being Sanitation. The main cause of unhygienic conditions in the rural areas was the spread of dry latrines across the length and breadth of the district, proving to be a major contributor to the spread of infectious diseases. The planning began with the assessment of the problem i.e. identification of how big the problem was. A survey of all villages where Manual Scavenging was in practice was conducted. The initial survey in the district revealed more than 15,000 dry latrines in the 73 Gram panchayats, while it was assessed that there could be around 50- 60 thousand dry latrines in the entire district. So on the one hand the district had nearly 50- 60 thousand families using dry latrines and on the other there were more than 2000 families of Manual Scavengers that were entirely dependent on this profession. The task was to convince both the dry latrine users and the Manual Scavengers.

For the success of the program it was essential to bring both the groups to a common platform and get them ready to take active participation. When talks were initiated with the Manual Scavengers, three types of sections came to the forefront. The first problem was of the section that had been into this profession of manual scavenging by birth and this had been their ancestral profession. They considered it as their profession and the only way they could earn their livelihood. They did not see any taboo or any social evil attached to this work. The second section was of the people who wanted to get rid of this work but were forced to take this work due to lack of any other employment opportunity. The third section was the one that wanted to get rid of this socially

backward work but the people in their villages having dry latrines restricted them to adopt any other work and thus forced them to continue. The district administration thoroughly studied the angles associated with this practice and adopted different techniques for different categories of manual scavengers. For those who did not have any other employment opportunity, a strategy was adopted to rehabilitate them. It was decided to give the benefit of the different schemes of government to the manual scavengers so that their dependence on this work could be mitigated. The District Supply Officer was asked to provide the Manual Scavengers BPL and Antyodaya cards. Some were included in state government's new scheme, Mahamaya Garib Arthik Madad Yojna. The manual scavengers whose children were studying were to be provided with the special scholarships and those who were eligible for any of the pension schemes were to be provided with it. A few of the workers could be provided with loans, the Mahamaya Awas and the Indira Awas. MNREGA job cards were to be made for the families of manual scavengers and in order to provide immediate relief, new works were started to provide employment to them under MNREGA. This would result in helping the manual scavengers to take the decision of leaving the work, which they were finding difficult to do in the absence of all these social security measures.

The second section that was made to continue this profession was tried to provide support by the administrative tactics. All SDMs, were told that if any person was found restricting any manual scavenger from leaving his job, he should be dealt with very strictly within the existing provisions of law. If necessary they could be booked under the criminal acts and further actions taken accordingly. The clear message from the DM's desk demoralized any attempt to restrict the manual scavengers from leaving their jobs.

The third section, that wanted to remain associated with this profession of its own will, was difficult to handle. But as the saying goes, "where there is a will there is a way". One day, a leader of Balmiki Sena, Mr. Mukesh, came to the DPRO for an issue related with a Sanitation worker. The DPRO responded that he would certainly look into the matter but only if the Balmiki Sena supported this program. Mr. Mukesh was more than happy to work for the

betterment of his own community. He also organized the influential people from his community, Mr. Kalicharan being an important one among them, and went along with this program. For the program, the vehicle and the posters were provided by the District Panchayati Raj Office. The poster named *Naya Savera* brought a new morning, as its name meant, to many villages. They even threatened that they would totally boycott the family that was still engaged in manual scavenging and that they would not get into matrimonial relationship with any such family and this brought a real change. They also tried to boost the lost confidence among the manual scavengers. They also told that they were the descendents of Maharishi Balmiki who had the credit of writing the *Ramayana*. This helped in changing the minds of people who considered this work as the only means of earning their bread. They also compared the status of manual scavengers, in the way that nobody cared or maintained distance, with a beggar but everyone tried to get away from them and this was only because of the work they were doing. These words had a lasting impression on the minds of the manual scavengers and motivated them to forego this menial job.

The families using dry latrines were identified and during the survey itself it came to be known that many of the families were having a super structure in their dry latrines, which could be used in the '*pour flush*' design a technology that involves connecting the seat to a soak pit using pipelines. The soak pit – which is about 1m deep and 1m in diameter – collects the sewage and can be used by a family of five for about five years. During this time the sewage turns to manure, and another similar pit is dug close to the first for the family's use too and that it would not take more than two days to convert a single latrine. Regarding the cost, it was found that, with a super structure already in place, not more than Rs. 1600 would be needed for the conversion. And thus began a mega conversion drive. A little support of Rs 1500 could be provided to the families, which were really in distress and needed support from the TSC funds that were lying unused in the accounts of the Gram Panchayats for past many years. These funds were to be brought back to the district and were then diverted to the villages where needed.

Execution

Generally the government machinery is known for its incapacity and insensitivity, so it was decided to sensitize the district officials regarding the problem and to get them engaged in this campaign. In the sensitization meeting, DPRO Mr. Chaudhary initiated his address by asking if any one of those present there would like to handle the excreta of another person for which he or she would be paid 5000 rupees. None among the present officials responded to it. Mr. Chaudhary said that while walking on the road if the human excreta got on our feet, we tried to get it off by rubbing against the grass and then by water and finally after reaching back home we tried to wash it thrice so that not even the smallest particle was left over. He added, the excreta once discarded, which we didn't want to look back at, was handled by a human being like us merely for a single piece of bread. He asked the audience if they thought it was acceptable. The answer came in one voice that this was not acceptable and that they would do all that could be done to abolish this cruel practice. This was the initiation of a new program in Budaun district.

The district Magistrate ordered the DPRO to identify, for the first phase of the conversion drive, villages having the largest number of dry latrines, so that funds could be transferred to the respective Gram Panchayats accordingly. Now, arose the question of resources. In the first phase there were more than 16000 dry latrines to be converted in 73 identified villages and at the district level there were funds adequate only to support the conversion of 9000 toilets. Taking note of the funds previously transferred to the Gram Panchayats, and which were lying unused in the accounts, the funds were transferred back to the district and it was decided to provide funds to those Gram Panchayats where conversion drive was to take place. Within a month, 15 million rupees were brought back and now the district had enough funds to initiate the conversion drive in full swing.

To generate awareness about hygiene and sanitation and create positive atmosphere for the campaign, thorough cleaning of each village was done by deploying 10-15 safaayi karamchaaris from nearby villages. To create awareness about health and impact of sanitation on health, health camps were organized in selected villages. Students of the government schools were also

motivated through their teachers. Provisions of the act prohibiting dry latrines and manual scavenging were also explained to villagers through meetings and wall writings.

Users of dry latrines were apprised of harms of such a toilet being situated in their houses, often a few feet away from the kitchen. Through motivational meetings, they were convinced of hazards of dry latrines and those who were capable, started converting on their own while the rest demanded government support.

While the manual scavengers were getting rid of this menial job, the villagers, at the same time, were getting help in controlling the deadly diseases and creating an overall clean environment in the district. Within a short span of two months, 14000 dry latrines were converted to *pour flush* ones and 51 villages were made completely free of the dry latrines menace. As much as 566 families associated with the work of manual scavenging were rehabilitated. One of the key strategies of the campaign was that, while on the one hand, the conversion of the dry latrines helped tame the problem of manual scavenging, on the other hand, rehabilitating the scavengers helped in pushing people to convert their dry latrines. The effectiveness of one goal thrived on the effectiveness of the other. A fact worth mentioning is that, while in some villages, there was a progress of as little as 6 and 9 toilets in two months, there were villages like Sakri jungle, Ramzanpur, Shekhupur and Kheri where despite the heavy rains, 632, 718, 565 and 470 toilets were constructed, respectively. Till November last, 21,000 dry latrines were converted to *pour flush* latrines in a short time and that too despite Panchayat elections, heavy rains and unprecedented floods in the district affecting 11 out of 18 blocks. This became possible because of the involvement of the community. However, in some cases, dry latrines also had to be demolished against the wishes of their users to ensure compliance with the act.

For the successful implementation of the program it was essential to have a set of workers matching the government structure. For this, at the Block level and at the Village level, the motivators were appointed from the community itself and trained. Usually there is a delayed payment to the motivators, which makes them lenient towards the cause. So in order to make payments

available for the village motivators, an amount matching to their honorarium was transferred to the accounts and the Village Secretary and the Gram Pradhan were told to pay the amount instantly to the motivators. Payments to motivators gave the required impetus to the program. The financial help of Rs 5000 per month by Unicef in the form of honorarium to Block motivators also helped a lot. Training was also conducted for Village motivators and the Gram Pradhans from the district. For motivating the motivators, the district coordinators regularly visited the villages.

In the success of this program, timely action and effective monitoring played a pivotal role. With the help of banks, it became possible to transfer funds from the district to the Gram Panchayats at a faster pace. As regards the monitoring of the progress, the BDOs of the concerned Blocks were made responsible and additionally, the senior District level officers like ADM, CDO were made responsible for 2-3 Blocks.

The District Magistrate had ensured a daily assessment of progress by e-mails, every evening. The District Panchayat Raj Officer collected daily progress reports from the villages and reported to the District Magistrate. Every evening at 8 pm the District Magistrate assessed the reports and compared them with the previous day's progress and discussed the village-wise progress with the SDMs, BDOs and the DPRO. SDMs held regular meetings at the Tehsil level and provided whatever support BDOs needed. This new experiment at the district level proved a success. The role of BDOs is especially worth appreciating in this entire program. The Block Development Officers undertook meetings at the village level and did effective monitoring of the program at the block level. In difficult villages, teams from the district level helped them.

The resources available in the district played an important role in the effective monitoring of the program. The District Magistrate spared one of his Personal Assistants fully to get reports from the district officials. The three desktops and four laptops available in the DPRO's office helped in imparting the information timely and compiling the achievements and its reports. All the assistants in the office of the District Panchayat Raj Office

were computer literate which helped a lot. The District Facilitator Mr. Ahmad Shahvez of the UN- Joint Convergence Program, District Coordinator Parikshit Seth and District TSC Coordinator worked hard to get things online. A blog was created which gave daily updates of ongoing activities.

To set examples for the people there was also an effort to get the toilets constructed in the houses of the village level workers connected with the government machinery, even if they didn't have dry latrines. The district level officers of various departments provided information on the status of the toilets in the houses of their employees and those who did not have a toilet were motivated to go for it, which showed a positive response. From the Shiksha Mitra in education department, to ration dealers in the District Supply office, all started constructing toilets in their houses. Till now about 1000 such latrines have been constructed.

Response

The program received a series of responses from all connected with the conversion drive. The first and foremost to refer here is the community response- This was not an easy task to get the community motivated for the conversion of the dry latrines. Over a hundred meetings were held with the community chaired by DM, CDO, ADM, district level officer or the BDO or SDM. The first question of the community at majority of the places was regarding the need of the *pour flush* toilets. Second question that was raised was regarding the high cost needed to convert the dry latrines. They were very concerned about the high cost incurred in converting, but when the model was built and shown to them in one or two places, then they got convinced of the possibility of converting the dry latrines within an amount of Rs 1600. Women were particularly happy and many of them told about the bad odor which came when they cooked food in the nearby kitchens. Now they also didn't have to face the problem of not being able to defecate when the scavenger did not come for a day.

The best part of this conversion drive was that there was 100% usage of all the toilets that were converted in the villages. And this could be made possible only by the involvement of the community which was ensured before initiating the conversion work in the district.

The second response was that of those Manual Scavengers who were not ready to leave their age old profession. They were skeptical of the promises made by the government in general and that it took much time to get something done from the government. They were convinced by providing them with immediate relief as detailed above. Much of it was done through posters that were developed and displayed at these villages urging the Manual Scavengers to discard this work. The Balmiki Sena leaders who joined the program also played a positive role in convincing the people engaged in manual scavenging.

The third response was from the officers and the staff involved in the program. As always there were one or two people who lacked the commitment, but when they saw the response from other blocks and when the pictures of officers working hard to achieve their targets were displayed in the review meetings, they also got motivated.

For several years a community that has been suffering the unimaginable societal discriminations is now looking at a new dawn of equality and equity and the district is seeing the silver lining in the dark cloud to eradicate other health hazards. A proud district for its small success.

COMMENTARY

Sunita Narain

Fix What Is Broken

The high corridors of the nation are abuzz with talk about how much food should be given to the country's poor as a right. Should it be 25 kg of rice or 35 kg of wheat a month per person at highly subsidized rates?

Then they worry who should get this right to food. All who are poor, the very poor or the poor but not so very poor? This haggle over the below poverty line (BPL) and above poverty line (APL) seems to miss two crucial points. One, that the government does not know how to enumerate its people in terms of poverty. Two, there is no fixed and absolute line dividing the poor and not-poor. Subsistence economy of the poor is such that they are always at the risk of slipping down the poverty curve. One failed monsoon or crop, or one episode of illness in the family could dictate the difference between APL and BPL.

Even as economists and policy wonks are busy haggling, a huge amount of food is rotting in the country. Some 18 million tonnes of food grains are lying in the open or kept without adequate protection just because the government does not have storage facilities. Worse, a large number of people are going to bed hungry because the food, which is in the hands of their government, is not reaching their homes. Everybody agrees that the public distribution system is not working. It is badly broken.

But the policy discussion is not about how this system should be made to work. There is a belief that the system will work because of proposed improvements through new-fangled technologies—GPS to track the trucks that deliver food; electronic biometric cards to track delivery in the hands of the poor. I have nothing against smart solutions, but these miss the point. Technologies work in the hands of people. The system of delivery is broken because we have neglected the repair of our administrative system that has to make any programme work.

The challenge lies in ensuring accountability at the very bottom and top of our delivery operations, addressing the personnel requirements, and in making sure that what has to be done is done. This is the old-fashioned governance route that nobody wants to take. Technology cannot be a silver bullet if there is no working gun to fire from.

This is what my colleagues learnt when they investigated the working of the public distribution system in Chhattisgarh and Tamil Nadu. There the system has been made to work against all odds that beset other states. Why and how? The states have introduced many reforms— from cleaning up and computerising the ration card list to computerising the procurement of grain and its transport to the fair price shops. But most importantly, they have invested in systems that make officials accountable for delivery and make people aware of their rights. The bottom line is that there is political will at the highest level to make the system function. And there is obsession at all levels to make sure it does.

Fix what is broken; don't just shop for something new. We forget this simple rule as we make new plans and new programmes and even set up agencies to sidestep the basic problem. Take the matter of pollution control. We know that the institutions that manage pollution—the pollution control boards—desperately need more staff, better technology and facilities, and personnel and administrative reform. But fixing this system of administrative governance is time consuming, and it brings no accolades to the political reformer. So instead of fixing what is broken, the talk now is to build a new institution —the National Environment Protection Agency. The other option is to simply bypass the need for regulation by suggesting technology solutions to polluters. The system is so out of shape that it cannot be repaired, is the belief. But a new institution will also need the same reforms and same funds and facilities that will make the old one work. Sophisticated technology for self-monitoring will need even more sophisticated and well-informed regulators for its management.

The other dream reform is to invent new institutions— called authorities—to sweep the mess under some mythical carpet. But there is no effort to check if the structure of the new creature permits management or accountability. Then we rue that they

don't deliver. Take the Food Safety and Standards Authority. It was set up, through legislative order, to fix the food regulatory system in the country. But it has no head; nobody can hold it accountable because it reports fictionally to Parliament, where no clear structure for management has been created. It has little technical competence. Existing agencies involved in the business of food standards, like the Bureau of Indian Standards, have been left out of the new authority. But it does have a swanky new building and powerful new friends in the food business.

A new programme, some promised (repackaged from old schemes) money, a new authority and new buildings, all add to the grand illusion that the problem has been solved. And that government is busy at work. Let us only hope that more people see through the hoax. The business of pretend government must go.

MUSINGS

Yoginder. K. Alagh

The involvement of the State in the present crisis has been both adequate and restrained. The response to uncalled for financial exuberance, irresponsibility in financial nerve centres and lack of regulatory systems for transparency, was quick and necessary. The RBI under Dr. Reddy and now had done all the preparation. But in difficult times and from all accounts the going is not smooth. Initial financial support can build the case for more aggressive intervention as the consequences show up in the real economy of the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD). If you don't have a systemic approach for intervention, it becomes difficult to withstand the pressure and India must be prepared to strengthen its own turf. This is particularly so since it can approach the World with competitive strength and confidence if some chinks in its armor like fiscal irresponsibility can be covered.

China has and in an earlier phase India had, a systemic response to economic policy in an uncertain and not necessarily fair global system. It is useful to recount the rules of these strategies. This is so since the present policy makers have been the strongest critics of these responses and their global friends have actually been fairly abusive in describing Indian policies before the Nineties. Policy makers in India have intervened sometimes more but policy without theory or first principles is always flawed.

The first principle to follow is Occam's Razor. Be simple; if the market can achieve your objective, follow it and in fact if necessary strengthen it. The story of substituting physical controls with fiscal, monetary and tariff policies, what we call the Narasimhan Committee mind set is the paradigm. The second is keep a watch on the World generally since as a large country you are going to be affected and also need to develop positive

options. The second is that if the market is unfair retaliate with speed. At one stage we would do it and China does it all the time, for example using tariff and non tariff barriers to respond including phyto sanitary restrictions. The third is the ability to recognize domestic weakness as compared to losses emerging from unfair practices abroad. When you have the kind of strength India has, you can afford to let those who can't compete go to the wall. This is important since they will be the most noisy politically. When NRI and Bank Fund economists talk of the late Eighties as a period of cronyism in India they forget that the maximum churning around of Indian industry took place in that period. Large capacities were closed and interestingly the companies which now straddle the globe made their reserves then by reorganizing, cost cutting, modernizing and expanding. The rupees they put in 'Reserves' then are all convertible now for them to conquer the World. The elephant moves slowly but gathers speed and does not go back.

The fourth is an interesting principle which I take some credit for. It is the recognition of negative protection. If you are efficient but the guys who supply you at home are not, for example the energy wallahs, then you will suffer even if you are good, as compared to your competitor abroad. As the OECD shows in a crises all countries follow inverted tariff policies. So, policy for maintaining the edge has to be visualized with closely interconnected, interrelated sets of actors. Of course, the real solution is to make your weak link strong, but when it is not tradeable that is not always instantly easy and wisdom requires to recognize the need of phasing.

These four are enough but I will add on two more. The fifth is that in a coalition regime a constant restatement of first principles is important for the guys who will chip away are less than at arms length. The last one emerges from the global Indian. Strangely enough, the World's troubles can be our oyster if we play it well. This is the time to buy real resources abroad. We are only dimly recognizing that possibility. It will mean changes in tax laws, monetary policy stances and regulation. Here, I don't for the present even know the rules. We better learn fast though for in India everything has to be rule based or it degenerates into bhai ruling the roost.

There is a supra rule which dominates all this. Don't give up your closest dreams which are social and political in the finest sense of the term. Namaste Walekume Salaam, both saying from the bottom of my heart I salute you in modesty. This century belongs to you and me.

In the meltdown, we argued for quick response. We now say that we should have anticipated that agricultural growth will not fall. I said so in a Global Investor Call of Morgan Stanley which they later published in August 2009. Speed is important but better now than never. So now we are Keynesian and Krugmanites, not just targeting fiscal deficits by cutting public investment and borrowing and turning up our nose on long term strategies. This will be the message of the Mid-term approach of the Eleventh Plan. Infrastructure and domestic initiatives are needed we are told. The important thing is to start walking the talk. In electricity, the last decade has been the worst in our history with capacity expansion halving every decade since the Nineties. The Austria Technologie und Systemtechnik (AT&S) losses are going out of the window as we have the case studies of success, Delhi DISCOM, Kolkota, Ahmedabad and Surat , with Agra, Kanpur and Bhiwandi on the winds. No political leader says that rural power has to be paid for and the morass becomes worse. Open access then means exorbitant rates if you want power. The Plan makes a good story on large projects, but we need solace on financial closure after the crunch. The international companies doing it have lost half their wealth and having negotiated the so called 'prudence regulations' like not lending more than a certain preordained percentage to a company with Finance when I was Power Minister, we do need comfort, not of words, but financing. Painfully negotiating relaxation because one power project can be more than all of a large Companies borrowings, I was horrified that the 'relaxation' was reversed as soon as I returned to Ahmedabad. It is also extremely likely that the foreign counterparts of our power Corporates will shy away now. Irrigation, the Plan repeats our lament on why did you turn grants to loans on completing large projects as soon as we left after designing them. They blissfully changed it but no pick up seen and want a 'professional examination'. I said this once reviewing the Seventh Plan and

Montek knows that our boss an airline pilot said 'Good you have ten weeks, because the sowing season starts then.' Get along my friends, we need more energy there. What about National Highways? Again a lot of words and in fact less progress in completing the Expressways in the last few years.

Big ticket ideas would have an impact, but we have consciously talked of agriculture and the cities and the difficulty is putting energy behind States and local bodies. We saw in each story in the plan there is operative talk of decentralization, mandated bodies with responsibilities and resources starting from the bottom and going up. There is the rural urban continuum and today a friend from the Gujarat cotton cooperative, the best in India called up to say we are setting up your Producer Company since the Sarkar at Gandhinagar and Delhi can do nothing as kapas prices fall and we don't want suicides. The Plan has a fascinating story on rural, urban development and regional strategies, repeating our lament on new approaches to identification of beneficiaries since the Alagh Poverty Line currently sworn by (at?) is very rightly dead as a dodo for practical purposes. It goes on to show that the last Finance Commission gave fairly large sums of money to Andhra, MP, Gujarat and to an extent Karnataka, but on Normal Central Assistance (NCA) it says somewhat undiplomatically for a Sarkari document 'the NCA amount has got substantially reduced since 2005-06, the year from which the Central Government ceased to provide the loan component of NCA.' The last Finance Commission abolished this part of the Plan but the Government did not put in place the Loan Council it wanted. Is the problem money? A friend called me when the borrowing plan of ten thousand crores was given up to enquire if it wouldn't cut investment. It would but the problem is not money as always. The States the RBI tells us are flush with money but it comes with Central schemes and they have no scope for free initiatives. We cleverly, in the name of reform and improving capital markets destroyed borrowings in the Gadgil formula, but didn't set up anything in place. That part of the, Kelkar Commission is yet to be implemented. With that mind set you won't get Keynes or Krugman either.

At stake is a strategic future. In water demand the Plan

quotes numbers from a Commission I set up which assumes a growth rate of six percent, but in energy the figures come from another committee which says we will grow at eight percent. Water and energy are two sides of the same coin. You believe in strategic futures, long term operational goals, empowering communities and keeping your nose on the ground or you do not. You can't push one set of ideas down the line for years, of course seeing to it that Soniaji's NAC is taken care of, public private partnerships and decentralization are talked about but systems work in a different direction and then without an effort go from reverse to first gear. You can and you should, but then will have to start all over again. The knowledge base, the local energy and history with all its pitfalls and glory is there. Lets learn the lessons of the past and put it together again fast.

The Marriot blast was on the wires and brought a memory. On a visit given the 'khatta meetha' relationship my hosts announced that the Indian Vazir was given the same protocol as the Defence Secretary of a powerful alliance State, but sharing a history he did not touch the liquor placed in his room; also my friend and their Minister, Mahabul Haq made me talk with the World Bank Chief on India's gradual reform. Born not far away from Islamabad, I went out to jog the next morning much to the astonishment of my security (ISI?) and in the evening that was commented upon by a young IFS officer saying that the security part of the jog is a non issue for our 'tiger' is there in Delhi referring to our young Prime Minister. Fear does not come easily to the generation built by Bapu and Nehru Chacha. The intelligence agencies report to the PM directly and he will reassure us with the fact that the enemies of India will be ferreted out and will not be allowed to get sanctuary anywhere. Also that the mailed fist goes with the velvet glove and the rights of every Indian will be protected. We need to counter politicians with feet of clay, with confidence in ourselves for sometime we seem like Hanumanji unaware of our strength.

The more some prescriptions fail globally the more we cling to them. The more a particular mind set is shown as irrelevant, the more it is clung to. That India is a large country and has options in the world is sadly missing in the thought process. The first thing is to build a firewall to those operators who would chip

away at India's financial strength. We need the defiant rhetoric of a Venugopal Reddy. The monetary authorities have to work in tandem with the Government but the Treasury and the Central Bank each have their own karma. Attending the Bank Fund meeting in Hong Kong in 1997 I was horrified to find that the scare in global bankers on the East Asian meltdown didn't have a ripple in our Economic Survey, mentioned after Page 60 and so Virmani and now Kaushik are to be congratulated on advising caution on derivatives. I remain unrepentant on laying down in the Plan that India must go in for capital account convertibility.

Elections can be fought on strategizing ideals as Garibi Hatao and others showed. The jobs created in the Rural Employment Guarantee will have a dividend and good politics should be on policies. This has not led to jobs for growth yet. IRMA's State of Panchayati Raj made the point that the States and local bodies are flush with Central tied funds but can't innovate since they don't have the resources to maneuver. This can be easily remedied and the consequent flurry of infrastructure in rural areas will help industry too. Why not reform public transport and invest in carbon saving sustainable technologies. Why not do the reform in markets and tariffs for improving profitability of agriculture so that it gets really going rather than self congratulate at a two and a half percent growth.

This is the time for India to invest abroad, but in energy this means unshackling ONGC and its Videsh, IOC and more generally Indian companies. An electricity economy growing at half of the rate in the last decade which itself was half of that in the previous decade needs a little more than sagely advice on appropriate pricing. The fatal blow was knocking off the requirement of a minimum rate for rural power of a rupee and a quarter in the NDA 1998 ordinance, from the act introduced in Parliament in August 1997. The sector never recovered and this now can be taken up only after the next elections. The objective of closing the fuel cycle by nuclear power must be stated and investments put there now that nuclear deal is signed. The Energy Policy of the Government, half hearted on this, misses the wood for the trees. Sad for the forest is all ours but many perhaps legitimately would like to share the trees

My friend the late V.N.Dandekar is known for his path

breaking work on poverty. He was member of a Task Force I chaired which set India's poverty line in the Seventies and even upto now with the work of persons like him, it has not been possible to change the line, long after it outlived its utility. He was also a great raconteur and a classical singer and with his two patialas in the evening, great company. His Presidential Address to The Indian Economics Association in the early Seventies is still a classic for food distribution not much that is new has been said since. But he begins it by saying that I ask you my listeners to suspend your faculties of what is practical and go on a mental journey with me for the next few minutes. I ask you let me be your policy fantasy. We will start by dreaming that there are political leaders across the coalition and not only one or two who know that you cannot solve any big problem by constantly giving in to small entrenched power groups and the real solutions lie in reaching out to solutions on a larger plane.(Since this was written the Tendulkar Committee instead of developing a new poverty line said that the urban poverty line of the old line is the national line and an otherwise good report is not being followed).

Montek is right in saying that we will clock an eight percent growth rate, be runners up in the Growth Olympic this as the FM put it. Inflation does not affect growth in a big way instantly, for it takes a while to adjust to the fact that the economy has crossed a precipice in which costs and prices are chasing each other as a famous macro economist put it. India is in that phase and it is bull to say that this is a price rise of a few items globally triggered. Right now companies will pass on the costs and you will be runners up. But soon the shoe pinches. Those who say that inflation is there all over do not advertise the fact that the inflation rate in most OECD countries is half ours and even in China less than seven percent. Having globalised this relative splurge will hit us soon, most certainly next year, possibly early. You cant have costs and interest rates twice their's and run the Olympics. The answer is reform and frugality now and sit back and enjoy later.

Monetary policy alone cannot do it. The RBI has gone hoarse in talking of the fiscal overhang. The FM reportedly said that he may consider taxing 'luxuries' later this year. He doesn't

have the time. The package has to come now if it has impact by end year or soon thereafter. One possibility is to use excises or a new vat rate. Also there has to be a severe cut on inessential expenditure. Some prices will have to be raised. We argue for a mild increase in the price of nitrogen and consequent rise in other fertilizer on account of nutrient based pricing. There were complaints but heavens didn't fall with the energy price rise and more is called for. Together improve supplies. This is the time for example for public private partnerships in public transport. An excellent idea is to start in the BIRTS corridors.

More non inflationary doses of public policy expansionary investments and reform are possible. Quickly take stock of the policies which led to the big decline in foreign and private domestic investment in power and free policy from the stranglehold of monopolists. Fewer blackouts wont hurt any body The Investment Commission has a report on a road map on distribution and another committee one on financial reform. Implement these not by setting up another Committee but with time bound action in a matter of days. That very practical strategist V. Krishnamurthy has a Manufacturing Competitiveness Plan. We are told that in work for him a think tank has prepared details to get thirty one industries going. The steps are all in the Sarkars hands. A fiscal and tax package to take care of the inverted structure or what we called the negative protection case, technology and industry specific measures. Krishnamurthy is old fashioned like me to believe that competitiveness and employment can go together. A double digit growth rate for industry and four percent in agriculture is on, if we have the guts to take on the problems head on. We will grow this year but have also to grow next year and if you are the fourth largest economy of the world you cannot lose 2010/13 for slow growth means you lose out to number five.

When Rahul Gandhi was told that nuclear power was only three percent he said that it would in the future be seventy percent. In the growth race you need the stamina of a long distance runner. Thorium based fast breeder nuclear reactors are the only way of completing the fuel cycle and powering the youth of India as they move to capture their destiny. When Rajiv Gandhi lost the election in December 1989 I asked to see him. Getting

time the day he handed over as Prime Minister, expressing solidarity I said we are coming back. He looked at me in the eye and said, Yoginder, our stakes are for the next quarter century. Perhaps that is the reason that the enemies of India had to get rid of him. Time to get out of the fantasy but the message must go that rewards will go only to those who solve real and long haul problems.

E. Phelps got the Noble in Economics for giving a rigorous work out of the concept that when prices have risen, interest rate and exchange rate policies need adjustments and output and employment is below the potential levels, then coordinated and harmonized policies are required. This in turn, means that the Government has to give a believable business as usual scenario of what would happen without a suitable policy structure in the short run, say this year and the next and demonstrate the difference that policy can make. Realizing this in my first job in the Planning Commission, heading the Perspective Planning Division I had requested Jayanta Roy who we had hired as a Consultant when he was with the IMF and placed with him Manohar Rao who was to become one of the leading macro economists in India and who passed away for the Gods call those whom they love early, to build a macro economic framework to influence annual policy. Even in the mid seventies I knew that planning to influence events in India would be through policy and not only allocations. In fact the Annual Plan for 1978/79 had presented their efforts. Sadly discontinued in the Eighties. It can be shown that if the stakeholders respond rationally in such a context, policies leads to a win-win situation where growth and employment is secured at the margin without inflation and balance payment troubles. But that space for negotiations has to be defined concretely for everyone has to see the sacrifice and rewards.

REVIEW

Report of Social Audit of the Public Grievances Commission of Delhi

Civil society organizations have started taking up social audit studies of government agencies that profess to provide measurable services to the citizens. It is an instrument of social accountability of public institutions in the hands of the civil society. It helps the government agencies to monitor their performance through an independent agency not under their control.

In order to be useful for the government agency and the people alike, a social audit is supposed to be a fair and unbiased in-depth analysis of the claims of the government agency. The objectives of the policy under which the said public good is offered should, therefore, be closely scrutinized by the auditing organization.

It is in this context that the recent social audit carried out by the IC Centre for Governance on the working of the Delhi Public Grievances Commission is sought to be reviewed here.

Social audit should be a tool of advocacy. It should be indicative of the improvements in the delivery of public good. To that extent, the present study can be said to be somewhat weak. There is no indication of any visible improvement in the functioning of the departments over the years. The same type of complaints viz. non-issue of ration cards, harassment by police personnel, MCD's indifference to infrastructure maintenance etc are being repeated in increasing numbers. It is obvious that the real test of an institution like Public Grievances Commission is systemic improvement in state agencies.

Another desirable outcome of the study should be dissemination. It should not only be brought to the notice of the department concerned but should also be made available to the general public.

It was participative in the sense that the persons who had used the Commission in the recent past were asked to comment on the efficacy of the Commission.

The selection of the complainants was supposedly random. But care had been taken to ensure that various classes of citizens were fairly represented in the sample. Most of the respondents chosen belonged to the lower income groups.

The survey regarding the extent of awareness of the existence of PGC should have been carried out along with the social audit. The audit was conscripted by the fact that there is extremely inadequate awareness among the people of Delhi.

The cases of persons or organizations coming repeatedly to seek redress from the Commission should have been carefully examined to look for any vested interest or professional complaint makers. A few such cases have, however, been pointed out in the Report.

Some of the other significant conclusions of the study like using Hindi in correspondence, opening branches of the Commission in different regions of Delhi, accelerated computerisation of the records to facilitate proper follow up etc should be seriously examined by the state government. Otherwise the whole exercise would be futile.

It is surprising that despite repeated invocations and persuasion, the enlightened Chief Minister of Delhi has not taken any steps for putting the Commission on statutory footing. This particular recommendation needs immediate attention of Delhi government.

Social audits are invaluable tools for assessing the performance of state agencies and government schemes. Unfortunately, it is seldom resorted to either by the agencies themselves or by the civil society organizations. An insignificantly small number of such studies have been carried out in our country.

Delhi PGC should be congratulated for agreeing to get its working scrutinised by an independent organization. It was a calculated risk taken by the Commission as the recommendations could have been more damaging than they actually are. The Centre has, however, not pulled any punches in bringing out the

shortcomings in the functioning of the Commission. Strangely, these shortcomings have not yet appeared in the omnipresent media.

The report says that as many as 30 percent of the respondents are not satisfied with the action taken or not taken by the Commission on their complaints. This can be seen both ways – the glass being half full or half empty. The report takes a charitable view. What is remarkable is that every case has been studied and commented upon in Chapter 6. I have not found such detailed case by case analysis in any social audit report.

On the whole, the Centre should be commended for making a good effort and producing a highly readable report.

Avdesh Gupta
Prof. Emeritus, IIT. Delhi.

MAIL BOX

I will like to congratulate you and your Editorial Team on the successful launch of the Journal carrying high quality of contributions from learned authors. In particular, I fully support the concept of “Government Transformation through Agencification” by Prof. Pradip N. Khandwalla. That this can even be achieved within the governmental set up, before considering outsourcing, can be illustrated by my own experience.

In the seventies, the Government decided to introduce the Retention Price Scheme for fertilizer industry to resolve the dilemma of fixing affordable price to the farmer to induce increased consumption and, at the same time, ensuring health and growth of the industry to reduce dependence on costlier imports. The difference between the sale price fixed and reasonable cost of sales was reimbursed to the industry.

To administer this scheme, the Government set up a high level Fertilizer Industry Coordination Committee(FICC) under the Chairmanship of Secretary Fertilizers and consisting of Secretaries in the Departments of Expenditure, Agriculture, Industrial Development, Chairman BICP and 2 Chief Executives from the industry. It had its own secretariat headed by Executive Director (ED) who was also the Member Secretary of the Committee. The Secretariat was given the status of an Attached Office of the Ministry of Fertilizers.

I took over as the first ED in 1978 on deputation from the Railways and worked for about five and a half years. Coming with commercial orientation from the Railways, I ensured staffing by professionals drawn on fixed tenure deputation from Cost Accounts/Civil Accounts/Audit/Railway Traffic Services and technical experts from fertilizer industry, each branch headed by a Joint Director or Director assisted by PAs who also maintained files. The clerical staff was limited to only the administrative function. In respect of settlement of subsidy bills, the file was initiated by Junior Accounts Officer through Assistant Accounts Officer and finally approved by Joint Director or Director and then cheques issued. In respect of other branches, the file initiated at the level of Deputy Director and put up to the Director who enjoyed considerable freedom of action. Only matters requiring

coordination or being put up to the Committee were brought up to me. Care was also taken to house the Secretariat a few Kms away from the Ministry so that its personnel could function independently not subject to day to day interference by Ministry officials.

Unlike normal secrecy in price fixation, the system was thrown open for discussion with the concerned units which brought in objectivity and eliminated scope for mistakes. More and more emphasis was put on normative approach allowing incentive for improved efficiency. Instead of processing proposals on bulky files causing obstacles and long delays, Agenda Notes were prepared and placed before the Committee, which was virtually like a Mini Government, and once approved by it, draft notifications were prepared and sent to the Department, along with Agenda Notes and the minutes, for issue. As Member Secretary, I had direct access to the concerned Secretaries/Chairman BICP and this brought in greater objectivity and speed in the decision making process, eliminating normal bureaucratic obstacles and delays in processing proposals on files. This system resulted in manifold expansion of indigenous production in 80s and 90s, to meet the sharp increase in demand of fertilizers, virtually eliminating imports by the turn of the century.

It is a different matter that the success of the system became its own enemy. During the current decade, the system has degenerated and the role of FICC has been undermined; the post of a full time ED has been eliminated, giving ex-officio charge to a Joint Secretary in in the Department. Adverse policy changes have been made affecting viability of the industry. This has been done in an effort to reduce subsidy in which also there has been no success as the basic factors responsible for it, namely non adjustment in MRP in the face of galloping increase in production cost factors, have not been tackled. The result is stagnation in the industry, there being no major investment for capacity expansion leading to heavy imports at significantly higher cost defeating the very objective of the scheme. This does not, however, detract from the merits of Agencification as the earlier experience of 80s and 90s established.

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Pratap Narayan
Former DG,
Fertilizer Association of India

I have read Dr. Khandwalla's article with great interest but feel that there are several reasons why "Agencification" may not work across the board.

A number of government projects and programmes are already being run on agency lines, whether using the private sector entirely or as a quasi government organisation which operates more like an NGO. But unless there is high-level policy understanding that the political executive will be precluded from seeking special dispensation, it would not be possible to operationalise this. A case in point is the Prasar Bharti which is supposed to be completely free of the government but the Ministry of information and broadcasting has to continue to publicly respond to whatever goes on within the organisation and through it the pulls and pressures that operate in PB are now legendary. A counter view is therefore very necessary to balance the arguments being made by Dr.Khandwalla.

There will also be a cost to offloading government responsibilities to agencies and a cost benefit analysis would have to be undertaken. For large-scale, repetitive tasks, there is no doubt that outsourcing would be both efficient and result oriented but this would have to be examined with reference to individual cases before adopting outsourcing as a panacea.

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K P Anand

Dr. Prajapati's paper is extremely well presented and goes into sufficient detail for a reader to understand how the system is proposed to be reorganised to become more target oriented.

However he has said that the current systems of accountability results in Government suffer from several limitations – it may perhaps be difficult to prevent reporting to important principals particularly if they have constitutional or statutory backing. While weighted targets will undoubtedly result in much greater attention being paid to outcomes on a scale, and would be a marked improvement over the present system, in the totality of the Ministry's work, it will gain primacy only if the Minister attaches importance to the results based on the PMES findings . Most ministers are unlikely to be as passionate about meeting

the targets as from their point of view, fulfilling constituency related responsibilities and responding to requests from influential power groups within and outside Parliament take precedence. Since ministers can only operate through the bureaucracy, demands will be put on the latter to find solutions.

The second argument is that by giving weighted targets, the work of the Ministry would get subdivided into those responsible for more important targets as compared to less important targets. This militates against an underwritten understanding that everything that the ministry does is important. To give an example, matters relating to unions, subordinate offices, autonomous organisations, fulfilment of directions given by the SC/ST commission, official language committees are often considered outside mainstream activity. But if work relating to these bodies is given low weightage or is ignored in the targeted approach, it could give rise to a feeling that an independent body has considered the work to be of lesser importance. That may not be advisable from several points of view. To ignore these areas altogether would not be fair to the system or to officers who contribute and often face the flak for poor performance despite having inherited the problems as a legacy. Non-recognition of such contribution will make it of peripheral value.

- *J S Oberoi*

This Journal of Governance could not have come at a more opportune time. I am glad to note that an important hallmark of this Journal is that it is a confluence of theory and practice, because, I have been a firm believer that good theory is also good practice. Delineating a problem is one aspect, finding effective means of implementation is far more difficult. If this journal is to bring about a significant change in the way we are governed and not become another of those journals of public administration which largely remain a conglomeration of readable articles; then it needs to have practical orientation. The focus should be on providing innovative and “out of the box” solutions to overcome the implementation bottlenecks and improve the delivery of public services to the weakest in the society.

When practice of Public Administration synergies with the think tanks and academicians, I am sure it would produce more viable solution to the problems faced by governance.

Another important point which is noticeable about this journal is that it provides a participative platform for engaging various stakeholders, more importantly the Civil Society Organizations.

Therefore, I am glad to note that Technocrats and Scientists are also contributing to this journal and the work of IC Centre for Governance

I hope this journal also provides an inter disciplinary forum for discussion and rendering advice in a free, frank and independent manner. This journal should also serve as a means for dissemination of best practices, replication of successful experiments, and documentation of case studies and lessons learnt.

- ***Pratyush Sinha***
Central Vigilance Commissioner

Thank you very much for kindly sending me a copy of the first issue of the Journal Governance. I am sure that this new venture will prove to be of great importance in dissemination of information on administrative reform, innovation and change. I congratulate you for having taken up this new initiative.

- ***K M Chandrasekhar***
Cabinet Secretary

Although initially the article by Shri B P Mathur in the Journal gives the impression that it is more on the lines of a spiritual discourse, it captures the ingredients of public service and ethics as prescribed by several international organisations and governments, very well.

My compliments to you for bringing out the Journal of Governance

- ***A A Prasad***

CV Madhukar's article on Fostering Effective Parliamentary Security in the Journal is an excellent piece, perhaps the best that I have read so far from the point of view of improving the oversight by Parliament and its committees.

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R D Mathur

Compliments for taking this initiative, which is so timely and badly needed. Lot of problems of inefficiency, delay, corruption and lack of faith could be tackled by reforms in governance: and placing right people at the right – place to govern and deliver the goods. Education, for example, is overridden with inefficiency, indecision, delayed fractured and favoured decisions, too – much of legislation and lack of initiatives. Having been in Education and its governance, I have many points to share

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Prof. B. P. Khandelwal

I have gone through the Journal, and I must compliment you and the Editorial team for an excellent choice of papers. I particularly liked the papers of Dr. Pradip Khandwalla, VK Agnihotri, Kalyan K. Mitra and BP Mathur. I found them very informative and providing good, practical direction to the task of improving governance in our country.

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Kiran Gandhi

I have no doubt that this will prove to be very effective in our overall work of improving the governance in the country. I entirely agree with what has been written so well in the editorial: "...positivism of the society is sadly lacking in our country..." I would like to compliment you for bringing out this Journal.

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Bhanu Kale

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

YOGINDER K ALAGH is a noted Indian economist and former Union Minister of Government of India and a former member at the Planning Commission. Currently he is Chairman of Institute of Rural Management Anand (IRMA). He has taught Economics at the University of Rajasthan, Indian Institute of Management Calcutta, University of Jodhpur, Swarthmore College and the University of Pennsylvania. Has acted as the 7th Vice-Chancellor of the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi,

PRABHAT CHANDRA CHATURVEDI is Secretary, Ministry of Labour & Employment, Government of India, New Delhi. He joined the IAS in 1975. Was Director General, of the Employees' State Insurance Corporation earlier and has a vast experience of working in the field of Policy Reforms.

UPENDRA DUTTA CHOUBEY is presently the Director General of SCOPE, and was earlier Chairman and Managing Director of GAIL. After his Masters from Patna University, did his Ph.D in Hydrocarbon from the Indian Institute of Mines, Dhanbad. He also did an MBA from Patna and LLB from the Delhi University.

RANGAN DUTTA did a Masters in Agricultural Economics from the University of New England, Australia. A former DG CAPART and Secretary to the Government of India is presently a Scientific Consultant in the office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India, dealing with Rural Technology. During 1978-80, served on several missions of the World Bank as Agricultural Extension Specialist in Rajasthan, M.P., Andhra Pradesh and Afghanistan. Writes the North-East Page of 'The Statesman' regularly on strategic and development issues.

SHYAMAL DATTA did a Masters in Political Science from the Calcutta University and started his career as an Accounts

Executive Trainee in J.Walter Thompson. He joined the Indian Police Service in 1965 (West Bengal) and the Intelligence Bureau, Govt of India in 1979. Was Director of the Special Protection Group, in charge of the security of Prime Minister in 1994. Became Director IB in 1998. Served as Governor of Nagaland from 2002 to 2007.

AMIT GUPTA has done a Bachelor's degree in Electronics and Communications from MNIT Bhopal before joining the U P Cadre of IAS in 2000. He has had several postings in the field apart from a spell in the Department of Education.

RAKESH HOOJA Director of the Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi, did a Masters in Political Science and taught at the Rajasthan University for two years before joining the IAS in 1974. He also did a Masters in Rural Development Planning from the University of East Anglia, U.K. He did a Ph.D in Social Sciences from Rajasthan University. Has authored / edited over 30 Books.

N.N. JHA has an honours degree from the Cambridge University and joined the Indian Foreign Services in 1957. He has been Lt. Governor Andaman *Nicobar* Islands 2001-2004 and later Lt. Governor in Pondicherry.

PREM SHANKAR JHA is an eminent Journalist and columnist. After studying Philosophy, Politics and Economics at Oxford, joined the United Nations in 1961, and spent five years in the UN Special Fund/ UNDP. He entered journalism in 1966 as an Assistant Editor, in the Hindustan Times. He later shifted to the Times of India, and then to Economic Times and the Financial Express. In 1986 became editor of the Hindustan Times.

ARVIND KEJRIWAL a founder member of Parivartan, a Civil Society Organization did his Mechanical Engineering from IIT Kharagpur in 1989 and joined Tata Steel at Jamshedpur, and the later Indian Revenue Service in 1992. He won the Magsaysay Award for his work of spreading awareness of the path breaking legislation in the area of Citizen's Right to Information.

PRADEEP SINGH KHAROLA did a Masters in Technology in Industrial Engineering from the IIT, Delhi before joining the IAS in 1985. He is presently working as Commissioner of Commercial Taxes, Government of Karnataka. Was the founder Chief Executive of the Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation and has more than 40 Research papers/Articles to his credit which have been published in various National and International Journals.

SUNITA NARAIN has been with the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) from 1982. She is currently the Director of the Centre and also the Director of the Society for Environmental Communications and publisher of the fortnightly magazine, *Down to Earth*. She is a writer and an environmentalist, who conducts research with forensic rigour and passion. She was awarded the Padma Shri in 2005.

YOGENDRA NARAIN joined the IAS in 1965 and worked in the area of Finance, Industry, Agriculture and Transport before becoming the Chief Secretary, in Uttar Pradesh. Acquired a deep understanding of the governance structure. Has done a Ph.D in Public Administration. Was Secretary General of the Rajya Sabha and is currently Member Secretary of Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH).

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Former Governor of Jharkhand

Dr. R.A. Mashelkar

Former Director General CSIR

Shri R.D. Mathur

Trustee Friends of MRA

Dr. Yogendra Narain

Former Secretary-General, Rajya Sabha

Shri Fali S. Nariman

Former Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha

Shri Prabir Sengupta

Former Director IIFT

Ms. Nalini Singh

CMD TV LIVE India Pvt. Ltd.

Shri Surendra Singh

Former Cabinet Secretary

Shri Soli Sorabjee

Former Attorney General of India

Shri K.L.Thapar

Director, Asian Institute of Transport Development

Shri N. Vittal

Former Central Vigilance Commissioner

Shri Shanti Narain-Secretary General

Former Member, Traffic Railway Board

Contributors

- Rangan Dutta • Yogendra Narain
- Rakesh Hooja • Pradeep Singh Kharola
- Prem Shankar Jha • U.D. Choubey
- Shyamal Dutta • P.C. Chaturvedi
- N. N. Jha • Arvind Kejriwal
- Amit Gupta • Sunita Narain
- Y. K. Alagh

IC CENTRE FOR GOVERNANCE

Niryat Bhawan, Rao Tula Ram Marg, New Delhi-110057

Tele: 91-11-26146236/40809939

E-mail: iccfg@yahoo.co.in • Website: www.iccentreforgovernance.org