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“ I will give you a talisman. Whenever you are in doubt or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test:

Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you may have seen and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him.

Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him to a control over his own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to Swaraj for the hungry and spiritually starving millions?

Then you will find your doubts and your self melting away ”



Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi

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Editorial

Covid-19 was the major highlight of the year 2020. Every individual's life was changed by the virus, and so was every organization and sector. As we entered into 2021, business and the economy of India looked different. The online platform became the new normal. While the world was ready to address the novel coronavirus, suddenly there was news of the second wave which turned out to be more devastating and deadlier.

With the ongoing pandemic we all are accommodating our lives and work in concurrent with the virus. At IIPA a few of our employees were infected with the virus and many were quarantined. Most of the staff were working from home, however, were determined to continue operations. Though the pandemic is far from over and the economic impacts will be felt for years to come, we are grateful to our dedicated staff and authors for steering IIPA through this year.

The highlight of this edition is the significance of the 'Dr Ambedkar Chair in Social Justice' established in IIPA. The edition also covers two noteworthy features on the 'Digital Challenges of Classical Indian Arts' and 'Death of a Classical Language: A Case Study of Sanskrit in India'. The article on 'Shilpa Gurukul Revisited', 'Relevance of Ancient Indian Philosophy', 'Gautam Buddha: The Glorious Master', 'The Glory of Bhabha Atomic Research Centre' and 'Child Sexual Abuse: Causes and Consequences' are also worth reading.

This edition of Digest also includes a writeup on the lecture delivered by H.E. Hon'ble Barry O'Farrell AO, Australia's High Commissioner to India. Besides, under the slug Policy Watch and Ministry Watch we included an article on 'Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana: Implementation is the Key' and another on 'Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the rain initiative of the Government to Save Water' respectively.

We have tried to memorialize former faculty of IIPA, Prof Asok Kumar Mukhopadhyay in a biographical note penned by his son Samik Mukherjee.

Hope this diverse range of articles that we publish in IIPA Digest will make an interesting read for you.

Meanwhile, we urge you to stay safe and get vaccinated.

– Surendra Nath Tripathi



DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR CHAIR IN SOCIAL JUSTICE IN IIPA

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair in Social Justice was set up at the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA) in 2004 by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Foundation, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Government of India. Since its inception, it has focused on 'Social Justice' as a theme covering pertinent social issues like exclusion, inclusion, marginalisation, disadvantaged sections and the like. As per the mandate of the Chair, a number of quality publications, value adding workshops, memorial lectures, national seminars, dialogue/ discussions, awareness and extension programmes and inter-chair collaborations are organised regularly. Most events highlight Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's work and philosophy and issues relating to socio-economic and cultural life of scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, minorities, backward classes and other weaker sections of the society.

The events center around Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's work and philosophy, issues relating to socio- economic and cultural life of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Minorities, Backward Classes and other weaker sections of the society.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was a great national leader of twentieth century. He was an intellectual, a scholar, a statesman and contributed greatly in the nation building. He led a number of movements to emancipate the downtrodden masses and secure human rights for millions of depressed classes. He has left an indelible imprint through his immense contribution in framing the Constitution of India. He stands as a symbol of struggle for achieving the Social Justice. Therefore, the chair has a special significance in Indian Institute of Public Administration, which has key role in providing inputs for policy formulation and governance besides sensitizing the administration. ■

– Amitabh Ranjan



THE DEATH OF A CLASSICAL LANGUAGE: A CASE STUDY OF SANSKRIT IN INDIA

The paper explores various reasons for the demise of Sanskrit language that is left with only 24 thousand speakers. The research also states the significant reasons for allocating more central funds to Sanskrit in comparison to other classical languages. Premised on cooperative federalism, the paper argues that other classical languages have the support of the state, local governments and Indian diaspora for their survival and prosperity. But the state of Sanskrit in its place of birth is such that it is hardly left with speakers. The governments took a long time in according the status of official language to Sanskrit in 2010 but it ended up becoming the second official language. No state in India figures Sanskrit as its primary official language. The marginalized status of Sanskrit is in stark contrast to the other classical languages.

The article further makes an attempt to dispel the notion that the current nationalistic dispensation has a political agenda of saffronization of the Indian education system. Rather the policies pursued by BJP government for Sanskrit are the furtherance of Congress policies only. The paper discusses the policies pursued by BJP government for the preservation and protection of Sanskrit language and also highlights that their nationalistic endeavors and fervors for Sanskrit language are all ado about nothing.

Introduction

In mid-March 2020, the upper house of Parliament Rajya Sabha passed the bill to upgrade the three deemed Sanskrit universities into Central universities. A whopping Rs. 640 crores spent by the Centre on the popularization of Sanskrit language in the last three years has caused a huge furore amongst the opposition parties of all hues. The paper intends to explore why Sanskrit could not become the language of masses in its own native country? It also enunciates BJP's policy since 2014 vis-à-vis Sanskrit and argues against the futility of the opposition raked up against the promotion and protection of Sanskrit that is now spoken by merely 24,812 people.

Why Sanskrit?



Other than augmenting the popularity of the language, the intention behind the various initiatives taken by the current dispensation for the preservation and promotion of Sanskrit was to enhance unity of our diverse land that is afflicted with the caste malaise. The significant report carried by *The Print* titled 'Indian tribal students are learning Sanskrit to find jobs' is a case in point. Sanskrit which was earlier confined to the elite class, *The Print* writes that increasing number of Scheduled Tribes have opted for *Shiksha Shastri*- a B.Ed equivalent course in Sanskrit, "challenging the age old Brahminical hegemony over the ancient language". According to the data of All India Survey on Higher education, the number of ST students in the Shiksha Shastri course has almost doubled in the last six years. In 2011-12, 14.14 percentages of STs were enrolled in Shiksha Shastri course. In 2014-15, the percentage of STs was 28.34 %; 2015-16, it increased to 36.81 % , 2016-17, it was 36.51 %, and in 2017-18 it was 27.13 %.

The percentage of STs enrolled in the course is much beyond the percentage of seats reserved for ST's i.e. 7.5%. Though it has been argued that making Sanskrit mandatory for the course has led to the overall surge in enrolments. But the compulsory deployment of the language in the curriculum could also be seen as a progressive step where the knowledge of Sanskrit has not remained the preserve of the elites and upper castes

as it was in ancient India. Rather it has been disseminated to the lower echelons of society for bringing an inclusive education and growth.

Jairam Ramesh, leader of the opposition has also welcomed the support given by the nationalistic dispensation for the Sanskrit but lamented at lesser financial resources allocated to other languages. He said "Sanskrit has been the monopoly of few and that it is a matter of great sadness and tragedy for India. We have to make this monopoly into a treasure of many and that is what this bill hopes to achieve". But he added "we are giving greater importance to Sanskrit which is at the cost of the other Indian regional languages".

On February 3, 2020, he said Rs. 640 crores were spent by Centre in last three years on the popularization of Sanskrit language whereas 24 crores on Tamil, three crores on Telugu and Kannada and nothing on Malayalam and Odia. Twiterrati responded disturbingly asking the government not to fritter away the tax money on the dead language. They also questioned the differential and discriminatory treatment meted out to other classical languages, asking why can't an equal amount be spent on all classical languages. Next section will discuss the efforts made by state governments to preserve our classical languages namely Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada and Odia. The paper will explore the reasons for not allocating much of central funds to other classical languages.

 *Sanskrit, now being popularly resonated as a "dead language", was once the pride of India's ancient civilization history and was imbued with immensely enchanting ideas of science, astronomy, mathematics, medicine and literature. This old treasure is in such a dire state that its survival is at stake. The prominent question that is put forth is that why Sanskrit has been given a special treatment.* 

Status of Classical Languages

Language has remained central in defining the identity of an individual. Language is not just a means of communication but it is loaded with bountiful ideas of science, technology, history, literature and other varied subjects. Thus, the demise of a language also causes the death of its rich heritage and legacy.

Sanskrit, now being popularly resonated as a "dead language", was once the pride of India's ancient civilization history and was imbued with immensely enchanting ideas of science, astronomy, mathematics, medicine and literature. This old treasure is in such a dire state that its survival is at stake. The prominent question that is put forth is that why Sanskrit has been given a special treatment. It is because no other classical language is living on a ventilator. No other classical language has been popularly called a dead language.

The Constitution of India abides by the principle of affirmative policies that lends support to the marginalized sections that have lagged behind in development by giving them aid in kind or in terms of monetary assistance. Similarly, the lack of support and apathy towards Sanskrit language has put it in a perilous zone where if the number of speakers falls below 10,000, it will cease to be a separate language in the Census. Only 0.002% speakers are left of Sanskrit language. In the popular imagination, Sanskrit has already been buried and Rest In Peace condolences have been offered to it.

On the other hand, thanks to the efforts of governments and society, the size of speakers of other classical languages is notable. Tamil has 70 lakhs speakers forming 5.70 % of population. Telugu has 81 lakhs i.e. 6.70% of population. Malayalam has 35 lakhs making 2.88% of population and Odia has 37 lakhs, making it 3.10 % of population. Looking at the numbers, Sanskrit is at the greater threat of extinction vis-a-vis other classical languages of India.



DMK MP Dayanidhi Maran himself calls Sanskrit a “dead” language. Therefore, it becomes all the more important to provide support and resources to fuel and nourish the sustenance of Sanskrit, otherwise it will be an abominable disgrace to the country that it could not save its own treasure that once contributed immensely in the field of science, mathematics and astronomy, from its own demise. That’s the reason that Centre had set up a nodal authority christened Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan to promote the language of Sanskrit. And it allocated Rs. 231.15 crores in 2019-20, Rs. 214.38 crores in 2018-19 and Rs. 198.31 crores in 2017-18.

It seems to be a political gimmick and unnecessary furore created by opposition parties that has falsely raked up the issue of discrimination in the treatment of other classical languages. It can be agreed that Centre should have lent more assistance to other classics as well. But this nowhere discounts the fact that the survival of Sanskrit language that calls for immediate and emergent rescue measures need to be given less assistance.

The other notable fact is that other classical languages have a host state government. If the central government lacks behind, then the state and local governments pitch in to accomplish the task of nation building. That has been the beauty of Indian federalism and it’s constitution.

And this is what has happened in the case of grant and support for the other classical languages also. The Centre’s provision of aid to the classical languages was supplemented by the all-encompassing support given by their respective state governments.

Let us look at the assistance given by the Centre and various state grants for the protection and promotion of six classical languages. Government of India bestowed the honor of classical language to Tamil in 2004, Sanskrit in 2005, Kannada in 2008, Telugu in 2008, Malayalam in 2013 and Odia in 2014. In July 2014, Human Resource and Development Ministry replied in a starred question in Lok Sabha on the benefits accrued to a language that has attained classical status. The reply said that two major annual international awards are conferred to scholars of eminence in each classical language. Centre of Excellence for studies in classical language are also set up and the UGC has been requested to create, to start with a certain number of Professional Chairs for the classical language at least in the Central Universities. And to further promote these languages, the UGC also awards research projects. In 2017-18, UGC released 95.67 lakhs, and in 2016-17 INR 56.74 lakhs were disbursed for the same.

In addition to Centre’s efforts, states fully complement in securing and furthering the spread of its languages.

For instance, Kannada became the official language of Karnataka in 1963 and is relished by Kannadigas including linguistic minorities that border Karnataka, viz. states of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Kerala and Goa. The state government has also roped in private sector to further the spread of Kannada language. Priyank Kharge, a cabinet minister in the Government of Karnataka who holds the portfolio of Minister of Information Technology and Tourism, is making use of digital technology in dissemination of the language. In an event named Elevate Call2, IT department picked up startups under Kannada and Culture category to devise new ways on how to digitalize the language and bring it in common online use for the speakers. The tourism department will also be funding them from five lakhs to 35 lakhs INR for development of the app and solutions to address the challenges confronting the promotion of Kannada.

In 2015, Jawaharlal Nehru University had instituted a Kannada chair with the financial assistance of Rs.50 lakhs every year for a period of five years by Karnataka government after the decade of the conception of its idea. The objective is to undertake language teaching, literary and cultural studies and digital archiving.

And thanks to the efforts of Centre, Centre for Classical Languages in Kannada in Central University of Karnataka is also in the pipeline.

The second classical language, Tamil was adopted as the official language in Tamil Nadu by the Tamil Nadu Official Act 1956. And it is also one of the official languages in the two Union Territories of Puducherry and Andaman and Nicobar islands. Tamil also takes pride in going international and being one of the official languages in Singapore and Sri Lanka.



Now let's look at the support given by the Centre and Tamil Nadu government in its proliferation and development. Central Institute of Classical Tamil was given Rs.22.94 crores in the last three years of 2017, 2018 and 2019. In addition to this, state government ruled by the AIADMK has also raised the grant for the development of Tamil language from Rs 5 crores to Rs 56 crore. In one of the momentous events in '*Pariksha Pe Charcha*' in 2018, Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed the beauty of Tamil and remarked that it is much older language than Sanskrit.

The next classical language, Telugu has 81 Lakhs speakers and is ranked fourth among the languages with the highest number of native speakers in India. It also boasts of being the most spoken Dravidian language. Andhra Pradesh and Telangana have accorded the official language status to Telugu. It is also a linguistic minority in more than six states of India and a fastest growing language in United States. From 2010-2017, USA has witnessed a spike of 86% in Telugu speakers. Satya Nadella, Microsoft CEO is the most prominent USA based Telugu speaker. The reason for the upsurge in the number of speakers is not hard to find. The export of IT engineers from Hyderabad has led to the dissemination of Telugu language.

Union Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal in his response to a question asked by Telugu Desam MP Kesineni Nani on the steps taken by the Centre to promote Telugu said that the Telugu Classical Development Centre of the Central Institute of Indian Languages of Mysore was shifted to Nellore that has started working in November 2019. He added that Telugu as a subject has been introduced in Hyderabad Central University, Benaras Hindu University, Aligarh Muslim University and Delhi University. Centre has also set up Centre for Classical Languages in Telugu in University of Hyderabad. The TDP government in Andhra Pradesh has also constituted Telugu Language Development Authority in 2018 and Chandrababu Naidu has talked of strengthening its teeth. A fund of Rupees 25 crores has also been earmarked for the development of Telugu language by the state. Apart from this, Telugu has been made compulsory in all the private schools including CBSE, ICSE and IB boards in Andhra Pradesh. Venkaiah Naidu has also asked the state government to make learning and speaking Telugu compulsory for people working in the state. International Institute of Information Technology, Hyderabad has also taken a noble initiative to create quality content in Telugu on Wikipedia.

Official language of Orissa and second official language of Jharkhand, Odia was conferred the classical language status in 2014. With 35 million native speakers and four millions who speak as second language, it is predominantly spoken in Odisha and is also savoured in neighbouring states such as Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. 3.1 % of Indians speak Odia according to 2011 Census.

Naveen Patnaik moved the Odisha Official Language (Amendment) Ordinance 2016 making Odia mandatory in all the official communication of the state. Any violation of the said provision now calls for punitive action. MHRD is also considering setting up Centre of Excellence for Odia. In addition, Rs. two crores have been allocated every year to Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), Mysore for promotion of classical languages.

Spoken by nearly 2.88 % of Indians, Malayalam was designated the classical language in 2013. It is the official language of Kerala and Union Territories of Puducherry and Lakshwadeep. Minorities in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka and a significant numbers in Gulf countries also speak the language. Kerala cabinet has also taken the decision to make Malayalam mandatory in getting government jobs. In 2017, Kerala Assembly also passed the Malayalam Language (Teaching Act) Bill making the language a subject for study in all schools of Kerala from class 1-10th. To take the language to the Malayali diaspora, Kerala Bhasha Institute for the first time in 50 years since its inception in 1968 organized book fairs in four prominent Indian cities including Chennai, Bangalore, Kolkata and Mumbai under first of its kind in 'Look Beyond Kerala' programme. The second book fair was held in Bangalore. Established under the aegis of Central government, the aim of the institute is to publish university level textbooks spanning from language and literature, science, technology, and humanities in vernacular languages. In a bid to promote language diversity in a cyberspace, Kerala government launched a state-wide campaign for Malayalam computing. Aim was to access the technology benefits and its know-how in a local language and to alter the impression that the language of computing is only English. It was decided to set up 3000 Akshaya centres to cater to 40-50 lakhs households in enabling their computing system to Malayalam language. A Malayalam computing web portal <http://malayalam.kerala.gov.in> aids in teaching Malayalam language in technology.



The popularity of Indian classical languages can also be fathomed by that the Quora, a prominent online question answer platform with its headquarters in USA is now available in Malayalam, Telugu and Kannada. Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) is also considering setting up Centres of Excellence for Odia and Classical Malayalam.

All the above six languages reverentially come under the status of classical language and most of the languages engage each other in their evolution and development. So, the preservation of a language becomes the duty of a country and the glory of the civilization lies in how well its antiquities and classics are kept.

It is also to be noted that the furore raised over the allocation of central grants to Sanskrit vis a vis other classical languages is highly political and uncalled for. In 2017-18, Comptroller and Auditor General reported that Tamil Nadu has returned a humongous amount of Rs. 3,676.55 crore of Rs 5920.39 of central aid allocated to the state for various schemes in 2017-18. And the reasons for returning the funds were delay in identification of beneficiaries, slow progress of work and short release of funds by the state. The schemes, however did not include development of Tamil language and they ranged from housing to women development, provision of employment opportunities to development of village panchayats. But it shows the sheer callousness and unnecessary political bickering by the political factions who are interested only in raking up the issues for building political capital.

Secondly, it is a misguided notion that BJP is upholding the cause of preservation of Sanskrit language for furthering its saffron agenda in Indian education system. This assumption based on ignorance has done immense damage to this rich language. The misconceived notion of associating Sanskrit with the religion has portrayed it to be non-secular entity in a secular and liberal nation. This has deprived Sanskrit of its sheen and charm amongst the current generation. It becomes important to trace the journey of the three deemed Sanskrit universities that have been converted to Central Universities by the Centre.

The first Sanskrit Commission was set up by India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in 1957 under the tutelage of renowned linguist and educationist Dr Suniti Kumar Chatterjee.

On the basis of the report of first Sanskrit Commission, Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeetha, country's first Sanskrit institution was established in Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh in 1961 as the premier institution of traditional *shastras* and pedagogy. The primary objective of the institution was to impart and improve Sanskrit pedagogy, to enhance the pace of higher Sanskrit learning, and to combine the traditional Sanskrit education with modern scientific research.

In 1965, the then Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri set up the second institution to preserve the Sanskrit legacy christened as Kendriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth which was later renamed as Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth. The noble intention was to elevate it to an international institution. In 1970, Indira Gandhi government had set up Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan, which now has 15 campuses across the country, as a nodal agency for Sanskrit education. It is an apex body that takes care of the propagation and development of Sanskrit and also assists Ministry of Human Resource and Development in formulating and implementing policies for Sanskrit studies. And it was she who first launched the Sanskrit bulletin on All India Radio with the intent to revive the language.

Therefore, the furore over the Central Sanskrit Universities Bill, 2019 to set up three central Sanskrit universities is uncalled for as it is these three deemed universities, viz. Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan, Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth, New Delhi and Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth, Tirupati set by the Congress regime that will be converted into Central universities. This will provide an impetus to the status of universities and lend a fillip to the post-graduate, doctoral and post-doctoral education and research in the field of Sanskrit and Shastraic education. Many people from abroad will also be able to engage in learning Sanskrit and Shastraic lore from these recognized central universities.

Significant point to be noted is that it is not the BJP government that wants to elevate the status of Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan to the central university. Rather it was the UPA government that set up the Second Sanskrit Commission led by Prof Satya Vrat in 2013 with the intention to upgrade the status of Rashtriya Sanskrit



Sansthan to the national importance. Though the BJP government did not accept the recommendations put forth by Prof Satya Vrat as there was an year delay in the submission of report. In 2015, HRD ministry constituted a 13-member committee headed by former Chief Election Commissioner N. Gopalaswami to discuss matters related to promotion of the language. It gave suggestions on how to integrate the study of Sanskrit with other disciplines such as physics, chemistry, mathematics, medical science and law and have also solicited reforms for Sanskrit education in schools and colleges.

Amounting our ancient heritage to a culpable saffronization and equating it with a particular religion is a denigration of its richness, its legacy and the immense contribution of Sanskrit in the knowledge of science and literature. To say, that building of Sanskrit universities will protect and promote only one kind of a narcissistic ideology must look at the resolution passed by Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit at Kalady in Kerala against the Citizenship Amendment Act becoming the first university in the country to condemn the violence unleashed on students, teachers and scholars.

Popularization of Sanskrit under Modi Government

PM Modi has been frequently deploying Sanskrit *shlokas* in his public speeches. Whether it was on the launch of multi-role combat fighter jets or against the Chinese unlawful incursion in Galwan Valley. Or it was during the pandemic lockdown. His poetry book titled '*Naynam Idam Dhanyam*' was also released in Sanskrit for the lovers of the language. His official website can also be accessed in Sanskrit language.

Many Sanskrit words have been deployed in our daily usage without many people knowing that the words they are pronouncing are actually Sanskrit words. The popular government application to combat Covid-19 has been made by combining two sanskritic words- Aarogya Setu meaning a 'bridge to being healthy'.

In 2010, Uttarakhand made Sanskrit the second official language of the state. Himachal Pradesh has also tabled the bill Himachal Pradesh Official Language (Amendment) Bill, 2019 to make Sanskrit their second official language in the state. The language has also been made mandatory in all the state-run governments in both Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh and private schools in Uttarakhand from class 3-8th. It has also been decided to replace Urdu language on signboards at state platforms with Sanskrit. A new policy has been enunciated to create Sanskrit village in every block (administrative division) of Uttarakhand. In 2019, the Centre also advised Sanskrit teaching varsities namely Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan, Delhi, Sri Lal Bahadur Shastri Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth, Delhi and Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth, Tirupati, to adopt two villages each. Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan has already adopted five villages - Jubarta (Mohanpur), Tripura, Masot (Pragpur) Himachal Pradesh, Chittembail (Shimoga), Karnataka, Adat (Puzhakkal), Kerala, and Barai (Huzoor) Madhya Pradesh. The complaint of Sanskrit linguists on the pedagogical method for Sanskrit that Sanskrit is taught in English to a student that is also called a Grammar Translation Method, has been started to address with Haridwar based Uttarakhand Sanskrit Academy making the use of Sanskrit compulsory on the campus for both students and faculty alike. In 2019, Maharshi Sandipani Rashtriya Veda Vidya Pratishthan (MSRVP), a fully funded autonomous body under HRD Ministry has approved setting up of Bhartiya Shiksha Board (BSB) to promote Ved Vidya that will have Sanskrit and Vedas as major subject. The Survey of India after a gap of 18 years has released the map of India in Sanskrit also. It has been published in the ancient language in 1979, 1983, 1988, 1997 and the last time it was published in 2002 under the NDA regime.

But an All India Survey on Higher Education has a different story to tell. Despite the mammoth investment and efforts in enhancing popularity of the language, Sanskrit has not been able to win the hearts of the young. There has been a decline in the number of students enrolling for studying Sanskrit. Though two more universities have been set up to increase the intake of students, but no proportionate increase has happened in the enrolment of students. Rather students in PG level and MPhil have declined. There has been a small increase in PhD students but comparing it with 2015-16, the indicators appear pessimistic. This is despite the MHRD guidelines to give NAAC accreditation to Sanskrit universities so as to make them at par with national and international universities. But this also raises a startling question, are the governmental policies for reviving Sanskrit a shot in dark?



Years	Universities	Students in PhD Sanskrit	Students enrolled in MPhil Sanskrit	Students Enrolled in PG Sanskrit
2013-14	11	994	263	23590
2014-15	11	773	400	23951
2015-16	11	1074	620	25228
2016-17	13	939	505	26197
2017-18	13	971	476	26886
2018-19	13	1048	401	21226

Much Ado about Nothing

The greatest threat to Sanskrit language is not its dwindling speakers, or the paucity of funds for its development, or its diminishing popularity and endorsement. But it's misidentification with the religion. Sanskrit has been equated with the Hindu religion. This divisive and factionalism towards Sanskrit has confined it to a section. Therefore, any attempt to learn and disseminate the language and traditions of Sanskrit raises the political embers of "imposition", "saffronization", "hegemony", curtailing its spread and endorsement across the religions and castes. The result is, Sanskrit is not looked as a rich, ancient heritage of India. But rather as a mean dominion of a few Hindi bigots.

In its criticism of Modi government, an eminent Sanskrit scholar Shastri Kosalendradas says "The government under Narendra Modi should have done more for Sanskrit because the BJP claims to be a custodian of Hindu traditions".

The above words of Sanskrit scholar Shastri Kosalendradas underline the mere rhetoric endorsed by the BJP government in promotion of Sanskrit language. He commends the significant work of Congress government in development of Sanskrit language as unparalleled.

But it is not only Sanskrit scholar who is not in consonance with BJP's effort in development of ancient language.

RSS backed Samskrita Bharati, an NGO dedicated for the protection, development and propagation of Sanskrit language is severely miffed with the Modi government's insincere efforts towards the revival of Sanskrit. Expressing their chagrin, the organization held a three-day *chintan baithak* from 9-11 November 2019 and invited more than 4000 delegates over 17 countries to accelerate the spread of Sanskrit globally and discuss the concerns and impediments afflicting the promotion and propagation of language in their respective countries.

Samskrita Bharati has expressed its displeasure over the decline of status of Sanskrit under the BJP government that has explicitly kept the nation first. The organization's Akhil Bharatiya Mantri, Srish Dev Pujari expressed remorse over the closure of third of 800 Sanskrit schools in Uttar Pradesh due to the lack of funds and teachers. He also added that with this half-hearted approach, an equal number of Sanskrit schools will soon close down. Citing an example of Sampuranand Sanskrit Vishwavidyalaya, a university specializing in Sanskrit language located in Varanasi, Srish Dev lamented at the continuous dwindling of students taking exam in Sanskrit. In 2010, 1.61 lakh students took Sanskrit that has now fallen down to 54,715 in 2019. He also said that the recommendations put forth by the committee constituted under former Chief Election Commissioner N. Gopalaswami in 2016 had gone unheeded. Not even 10% of it was implemented in last three years.

Srish Dev disclosed that the objection to the pedagogy related to Sanskrit discipline has fallen on deaf ears. The current dispensation has not even changed the Sanskrit learning system. Sanskrit, he says, cannot be taught like English where grammar is pushed first. Rather Sanskrit has to be taught through *sambhashan* (conversation) and not by grammar.



Telegraph reported that 200 contract teachers mounted protests in front of Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan headquarters in Delhi to demand regularization of jobs. They complained that PM Modi government has not revised their remuneration even once. Unlike Congress government, that thrice revised their remuneration from Rs. 8000 in 2006 to Rs. 41,000 in 2012. And the less said about leave and provident fund, better it is.

But on visiting the website of Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan, it has been found that the Sansthan advertised various important posts in both teaching and non-teaching areas and candidates were called for interviews for recruitment reportedly.

Sanskrit can also gain popularity if it also provides gainful employment to its learners. Another deemed university that was promoted to Central University status, Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth also advertised its posts in both teaching and non-teaching fronts in 2019 but no links were found for the documents of eligible/rejected candidates or there were not any calls for interviews yet. The third university that was elevated to Central University status, Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth, Tirupati also advertised various posts but the recruitment is yet to take place.

Youth4work, a recruitment portal that boasts of its partnership with All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and has almost 50 lakh users report that no active jobs are available for 519 candidates seeking jobs in Sanskrit on their site. The portal also reports that top companies in World offering highest salary packages in Sanskrit are currently N/A.

Another popular job portal Naukri.com did not have anything substantial to offer to Sanskrit graduates or post-graduates except an insignificant handful of openings. Sadly, Monster.com also a job portal, had nothing to offer.

The government's high pitch endorsement and low action on Sanskrit is also blatant in the no provision of support to the world's oldest and only running daily in Sanskrit, *Sudharma* that began in 1970 in Mysore by Sanskrit scholar Kalale Nadadur Varadaraja Iyengar. It lately appealed to its 3000 subscribers for donation for its sustenance after receiving no response from Honorable Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Smriti Irani and Rajnath Singh.

State of Sanskrit Today in India

The language of Sanskrit in India, famously called the *devabhasha*, has prospered magnificently in the realm of divinity.

Today, a number of yoga and meditation organizations in India and abroad have resuscitated life into the language by teaching Sanskrit *shlokas* to the seekers.

Sahaja Yoga founded in 1970 is educating young and old on the meditational practices and Sanskrit *mantras*.

Sanskrit symbols or *mantras* have also become quite a rage amongst youth in selection of their tattoo designs. Clothing companies like Fab India, have incredibly contributed in making Sanskrit a fad by printing symbols, images, *mantras* on their clothes.

Though Sanskrit has made inroads into the lives of people, it has not become a part of their lifestyle. The people have little knowledge of the language. They know about Sanskrit, but unfortunately they do not know Sanskrit.

The reasons are not hard to find.

Sanskrit is taught as an optional language in various states and at various levels from 1st to 12th standard. For example, Kerala offers Sanskrit as second language from class 1.



About 14,000 schools affiliated to Vidya Bharati Akhila Bharatiya Shiksha Sansthan teach Sanskrit from class IInd. State of Uttarakhand teach Sanskrit from class IIIrd. It is also offered as part of Three Language Formula by most State Secondary Education AICTE Boards from class VIth to X and as second optional language in class XIth and XIIth. Some states also offer it as a composite course along with the mother tongue as well. Though approximately five crores students study Sanskrit at school level but only few thousands are the speakers of the language.

There are about 5000 traditional Sanskrit *pathashalas* at school level and 1000 Veda *pathashalas* in the country. Eight states have Sanskrit Secondary Education Board or Directorate of Sanskrit Education. Approximately 120 general universities offer Sanskrit at UG and PG level and there exist 15 Sanskrit universities.

Ten Sanskrit academies, 16 oriental research institutes, about 60 periodicals and magazines in Sanskrit exist and about hundred NGOs are working for the popularization of language.

Most of the states are offering Sanskrit at XIth and XIIth for Arts stream students but very few states are offering Sanskrit to Science and Commerce stream students. This is one of the major cause of a disconnect between Sanskrit and Science and technology.

Another reason for students not pursuing Sanskrit at higher education levels is the discriminate treatment meted out at school level. CBSE, National Institute of Open Schooling(NIOS) and Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE), all the three boards have removed not only Sanskrit but also local and regional language from higher secondary classes. They have three language formula till class VIIIth and teach two languages (English and regional) in IXth and Xth and one language that is English is taught in XIth and XIIth grade.

Some states even offer new subjects like computer, environmental science, agriculture, and skills in place of Sanskrit at secondary level.

The low status of Sanskrit can be attributed to the lesser salaries offered to the teachers. In many states, Sanskrit teachers are offered lesser salaries than their peers teaching other subjects. Britishers who paid higher salaries to teachers teaching Western subjects than the Sanskrit teachers introduced this legacy of paying lower salaries. The reason was that English speaking, well-trained administrators were required to sustain British rule. And Sanskrit education was merely confined to insignificant character building and moral education.

The panel headed by the former Chief Election Commissioner, N. Gopalaswami recommended pay parity in schools. It is palpable that when the Sanskrit educators are left to fend for themselves without much finance and institutional support, the demotivation is passed onto the students as well and they do not opt for Sanskrit in higher education thus resulting in further lesser production of Sanskrit teachers. This leads to the vicious cycle where low availability of Sanskrit teachers dismally impacts the quality of Sanskrit education.

The committee also noted the absence of B.Ed course in Sanskrit and suggested the introduction of diploma course for the students aspiring to become Sanskrit teachers.

Apart from pay discrepancy, the other conspicuous reason for the decline of Sanskrit education in India has been 'Grammar Translation Method'. Though the entire world has discarded this method, unfortunately it is still very much in use for imparting Sanskrit education in India. And this has gravely affected the prosperity of Sanskrit. People read translations only and not Sanskrit. Even today, the question paper of Sanskrit comes along with the translation. Whereas the question papers in other languages do not carry the translation. Therefore, it does not become easy to understand the Sanskrit language. Hence, it has been earmarked as 'difficult' language and students have taken to rote learning and memorization. This memorization has also made it a very 'scoring' subject.

Though universities now give a concession to students in admissions who have taken Sanskrit in secondary and higher secondary classes or want to opt for Sanskrit as optional language, but this has not resulted in qualitative learning of the language. Result is that students know about Sanskrit but they do not know and cannot speak the language of Sanskrit. They can translate Sanskrit to other languages but not vice versa. They

can understand Sanskrit but cannot converse in Sanskrit. There are Sanskrit classes and departments but no environment for Sanskrit. That's why it has become difficult to promote inter-disciplinary studies in Sanskrit institutions.

The Way Ahead

Many prominent personalities involved in the making of Constituent Assembly including Dr. B.R. Ambedkar favored the grant of official status to Sanskrit language. Having himself read many Sanskrit texts, he was of the firm view that Sanskrit will correct the distorted history of India. After his in-depth study, he concluded that Aryans and Dravids are the original inhabitants of India. He believed that the reading of classical Sanskrit texts by masses will ultimately annihilate the caste hierarchy and destroy the false and derogatory notions attached to the *Dalits*.

This paper is an attempt to state the apathetic condition of our dying language, that is now spoken as their mother tongue by only 0.00198 percentage or 24,821 people of India's 121 crores of population.

There is an urgent need for the state concomitant with the civil society, academia and media to vamp up its efforts and sincerity in the sustenance and preservation of our withering heritage. ■

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AUSTRALIA'S HIGH COMMISSIONER TO INDIA DELIVERS A LECTURE IN IIPA

Australia is a modern successful multicultural nation

Australia has long valued the significant contribution successive waves of migrants have made to building our nation. Today, Australia is one of the most successful multicultural countries in the world—with an estimated 30 per cent of the Australian population born overseas.

We have achieved this success by welcoming and integrating people from many cultures. Keeping Australians together in an increasingly polarised world is a high priority of the Australian Government.

We encourage and support new arrivals to actively contribute to Australia's economic prosperity and growth as a country, and in return, take full advantage of the economic and lifestyle benefits Australia has to offer.

We do this by providing a range of support services to eligible migrants and new arrivals to integrate into the community and fully participate in it.

Like India, Australia celebrates diversity, and values its democratic institutions as the bedrock of our cohesion and strength as a nation.

The Indian diaspora is central to this story

The Indian diaspora is a particularly important part of our success. It is our fastest growing diaspora community – and occupies a special place in Australia's success as an open, diverse and dynamic nation.

You may find it surprising to learn that 1 in 35 people living in Australia claim Indian ancestry. Hinduism is our fastest growing religion, and Punjabi our fastest growing language.

People of Indian origin have lived in Australia since at least the 1800s.

Migration from India significantly increased in the last quarter of the twentieth century. Two-third of overseas-born Indians have arrived since 2006. This makes Indian-Australians some of our newest Australians.

India is also Australia's largest source of skilled migrants and the second largest source of international students, representing around 17 per cent of Australia's total international student cohort.

The pandemic has been an extremely difficult time for international students, who are an important part of the Australian community. We look forward to welcoming them back to our classrooms, campuses and communities, when conditions allow in 2021.

Indian-Australians have integrated successfully into Australian society - socially, economically and culturally.



H.E. Hon'ble Barry O'Farrell AO



They contribute to all facets of Australian life – in the fields of engineering, medicine, academia, politics, art and culture and information and communication technology. And this contribution is not surprising given their immense talent – Australia's Indian-born population is almost three times as likely as the wider Australian community to hold a bachelor's or higher degree.

The early 2020 bushfires across Australia, quickly followed by the emergence of COVID-19 pandemic, saw Indian communities in Australia show a great sense of civic responsibility.

During the terrible bushfires, members of Indian Australian communities provided outstanding support to our firefighters and those who had lost their homes and livelihoods, by distributing food and other essential items.

During the height of Australia's COVID-19 lockdowns, Hindu, Sikh and Muslim community leaders ensured that accurate information was conveyed to community members, helping stop the spread of COVID-19 in Australia.

There is no doubt in my mind that Australia is stronger and more resilient because of the contribution of the Indian diaspora community.

And this is set to continue with Australia's new *Global Talent Program*.

The idea is simple. We are looking for marquee businesses and exceptionally talented individuals to come to Australia. We are offering:

- ☐ Facilitated relocation of executives, critical staff and their families
- ☐ Fast tracked visas with a streamlined pathway to residency, and
- ☐ Connections to essential industry and professional networks.

This program offers opportunities for the continued growth of the Indian diaspora in Australia, the benefits of which we know flow strongly to both India and Australia.

India too is stronger through its ties with Australia.

Many Indian alumni from Australian universities return to India and make notable contributions across various domains in India. Be it education, biotechnology, agri-business, agricultural research, sports, creative industries, health, science, innovation and technology, civil society and government, sustainability and design, Australian alumni are scaling new heights in India. Many continue to engage with their mentors and institutions to further the co-operation.

Through our New Colombo Plan, the Australian Government also supports young Australians to study, live and work in India at various educational institutions or organisations. This initiative sows the seeds of long-lasting friendship and cultural familiarity.

Once established, people-to-people links are bridges of understanding and critical to any relationship. Initiatives such as the Australia-India Youth Dialogue and the Australia-India Leadership Dialogue are examples of regular forums where people can keep on engaging in regular dialogue on issues critical to both our nations. This ongoing exchange deepens our understanding of each other's culture and reality.

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But the Australian Government recognises that to further strengthen our relationship we need to better understand each other. To support this objective, Australia is investing about Rs 80 crore (AUD 14.2 million) over the next four years to enhance the business and education relationship, including a mapping and research exercise on Indian diaspora in Australia.

The more we know about each other, the more we can do together.

And it has driven Australia-India relations to a historic high

Our mutual understanding is already bearing fruit.

The Australia-India relationship has never been stronger. Our friendship made great strides in 2020. It is based on our shared values and outlook, our open economic and political systems, and our interest in maintaining a region governed by rules, not power.

Last year's Virtual Summit between Prime Ministers Modi and Morrison elevated our relationship to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP). The CSP has cemented India at the forefront of our international partnerships.

It is our job as public servants to deliver our respective leaders' ambition – to increase the depth, breadth and complexity of the bilateral relationship.



The CSP gives us a practical framework to do so - to guide collaboration in areas like science, technology and space, defence and maritime security, and health. The CSP also provides us with new opportunities to work together on public administration, governance and broader economic reforms.

And what a pace we have been setting. To support the CSP, we have implemented eight new MOUs in areas spanning defence, cyber cooperation, critical minerals, education, science and governance. And our ambitions don't end there - we already have plans for deepening engagements in areas such as health and telecommunications.

We haven't let COVID and travel restrictions impede our ambitious agenda. Our experts have collaborated in 12 virtual joint work groups since the Virtual Summit on topics as broad as water, agriculture, education, customs practices and countering terrorism.

In coming months, the India Australia Circular Economy Hackathon - a two-day virtual event held simultaneously across Australia and India will see participants learning first hand from industry experts - creating new ideas to rethink how we manage materials and waste.

We have also launched the first round of the Australian-India Cyber and Critical Technology Partnership grants program, which will deepen practical cooperation on cyber and critical technology issues. And we also hope to commence the India-Australia research workshop series in 2021 and hold the Australia-India Energy Dialogue.

Our defence cooperation is at its highest point in history, with more collaboration and activities than ever before. The activities are becoming ever more complex - aided now by our new Mutual Logistic Support Arrangement.



We were pleased to accept India's invitation to participate in Exercise MALABAR in November 2020. Defence exercises like MALABAR are key to enhancing Australia's maritime capabilities, building interoperability with close partners like India, and demonstrating our collective resolve to support an open and prosperous Indo-Pacific. It showcased the deep trust between four major Indo-Pacific democracies and their shared will to work together on common security interests.

While political leadership is obviously important in nation-to-nation relationships, nothing could be achieved without the specialised expertise, skill and efforts of our public sectors.

As a former Chief Minister of Australia's largest State, I often reminded my Cabinet Ministers that we could not run the State or implement the programs and initiatives we hoped would improve lives, living standards and opportunities for our citizens.

For that we relied on our advisers - your equivalents in our national and state public sectors. I urged my colleagues to empower their departments. To encourage them to have high ambitions, to consult widely, to study the issues we were tackling, to assess all the options - and then present their best views for consideration.

Once Cabinet decisions were made, we then looked to these same officers to implement the policies. And as important as the decision-making process is, the enactment of policies is even more critical, especially 'the last mile'.

 *In coming months, the India Australia Circular Economy Hackathon - a two-day virtual event held simultaneously across Australia and India will see participants learning firsthand from industry experts - creating new ideas to rethink how we manage materials and waste.* 



So, one of the reasons I jumped at the chance to speak to you today was to make clear that good government is a partnership between the public's elected representatives and their public officials. You - and your colleagues in New South Wales (abbreviated as NSW) is a state on the east coast of Australia and Australia - have critically important responsibilities in ensuring the success of your states and nation.

You represent a diversity of professions, and your efforts, excellence and acumen are crucial to the success of our post COVID world.

In both Australia and India, our—political and public sector – colleagues are stepping up to deliver what I see as a historic whole-of-government effort to deliver a shared vision for the region - an open, free and rules-based Indo-Pacific.

Our friendship, and the ties between us, have real benefits.

It is not just our governments that are working together. Our think tanks and academics are working closely together too. And this is also important because neither Cabinet rooms nor departmental offices are the repositories of all wisdom. Good government requires us to reach out to all those who can contribute to better governance.

In October, we saw the release of a joint report on critical technology. This ground-breaking analysis, by leading Australian and Indian experts (all women) addressed the essential role that critical minerals play in developing the technologies that are key to advanced manufacturing, global prosperity and security. The report recommended that our countries invest in building a new India-Australia partnership on technology which could stimulate regional momentum in a range of key critical and emerging technology areas.

Continuing that theme, in December 2020, Australia's Minister for Foreign Affairs announced the establishment of the Sydney Dialogue on emerging, critical and cyber-enabled technologies. The Dialogue will help to drive global discussions on the technological advances that are shaping our economies, security and daily lives. This year's inaugural dialogue will highlight the important role India plays in driving these global trends.

Recognising the global leadership role India is playing in so many areas of international relations, the Lowy Institute - one of Australia's premier independent think tanks - interviewed Dr Jaishankar in December 2020. More than 17,000 people listened in to the podcast, as Dr Jaishankar covered a wide range over topics including India's place in the world, its relationship with China, the impact of COVID-19, and the India-Australia connection.

We have partnered too on our COVID response

Given the year that was 2020 and all of our roles as officials of our governments, I wanted to touch on the one issue that has shaped our lives over the past 10 months - COVID-19.

Domestically, Australia and India's federal structures have required us to adopt unique approaches, as we coordinate across governments. In both our countries, key responsibilities for different parts of the health and economic response are shared between respective tiers of government.

As a former chief minister, I have been proud of the cooperative approach between our federal and state governments.

Early in the pandemic, Prime Minister Morrison established a 'national cabinet' to ensure effective coordination and information-sharing between the Prime Minister and state and territory premiers and chief ministers.



In turn, the national cabinet has been advised throughout by expert sub-committees, made up of top experts in a range of fields, ensuring that decision-making has always been informed by the best advice available. This innovative approach has contributed to Australia's success in containing the virus—and Australians know your colleagues there, as here, were crucial in combating the pandemic.

Australia and India have also been putting our closer partnership into action to address COVID19. We have recognised the strengths the other brings to the table. And I am pleased with the strong coordination and information-sharing that has occurred between Australian and Indian officials throughout the pandemic.

Internationally, COVID-19 has reinforced that Australia's security and prosperity is tied to that of the wider Indo-Pacific. Our foreign secretaries have participated in regular coordination calls on the COVID-19 response in the Indo-Pacific with like-minded partners.

And we have seen remarkable leadership from India since this crisis began in the region and globally – whether it be in being a 'pharmacy to the world', through vaccine rollouts, calling for a global response through the G20 or as an early voice advocating for reforms to the World Health Organisation.

These regionally and globally focused steps are consistent with the increasing international leadership role we've seen India take in support of a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region.

Australia and India are working together on our post-COVID recovery, to help each another and to help our neighbours in the Indo-Pacific region. Vaccine cooperation and logistics is the next step in demonstrating what we can achieve together.

Conclusion

Indians and Australians are working closely together every day, discussing and debating the critical issues of the day and finding solutions to the challenges facing both our countries and the Indo-Pacific region.

As External Affairs Minister Jaishankar said in his address to the Lowy Institute:

"How Australia and India sit down and think about our region and the world is consequential for both of us and the world. We both need to think beyond the space for middle powers. We have a window to do more between one another and in the world. And Australia and India will play a very important part."

As you return to your respective agencies following this program, my humble ask of you is to keep Australia in mind as a partner on a wide range of endeavours. The coming century brings with it a host of new problems, which we can only solve together in partnership. And then, only with the ongoing efforts of you and your colleagues across the Indian central services. ■

(H.E. Hon'ble Barry O'Farrell AO is Australia's High Commissioner to India. This writeup is his commentary delivered during the 46th Digital APPPA Participants on 'The Indian Diaspora and the Australia-India Partnership' dated January 29, 2021 coordinated by IIPA Faculty, Gadadhara Mohapatra.)



SHILPA GURUKULA REVISITED

This paper is a temporal case study of the Shilpa Gurukula, an art school for stone and wood carving and a creation of Cauvery Handicrafts, a government-owned corporation. It follows the evolution of the school since its conception in 2009 until the present day, analyzing its history, challenges, constraints and opportunities.

Conventional scholarship associates Corporate Social Responsibility with the private corporate sector. But how does a public enterprise balance its largely social developmental role with a commercial presence? This is an area hitherto unexplored by CSR scholarship. The paper uses a case study methodology with a qualitative grounded theory approach to explore the formative process of the Gurukula. The study adopts a temporal approach, looking at the Gurukula at two points of time over a decade apart alternating flashbacks into the past with flash-forwards that revisit the school at the present. In addition, the utility of using a CSR initiative for the preservation and dissemination of knowledge, rather than mere distribution of benefits, is also uncharted territory. By studying processes, and how constraints are faced and overcome, the paper aims to make recommendations for the design and implementation of unconventional CSR initiatives customized to transitional societies on the cusp of change.

Introduction

Can a government corporation complement its commercial presence with corporate social responsibility? The Shilpa Gurukula, an initiative of Cauvery Handicrafts, Government of Karnataka is living proof that it can. With a clear practitioner orientation, this case study explores the micro managerial processes and challenges in the making of this unique institution; and studies of a slice of its contemporary history. The study is temporal in scope. As Managing Director of Cauvery Handicrafts in 2013, I had written a short piece on the Shilpa Gurukula for a Springer publication. In this piece, I revisit the school and describe its present status.



Source: (Krishnaraja, 27.01.2019)



Theoretical Framework

The defining principle of this paper is its practitioner orientation. This informs both the content examined as well as the choice of research method. As Dubin puts it: "It is exceedingly difficult to say something meaningful about the real world without starting in the real world" (1976, p. 18). Lack of practitioner orientation is a general weakness that has dogged CSR scholarship. In their 2010 article, Lindgreen & Swaen comment: "The current state of affairs may be a result of how CSR has developed; this development reflects the influence of various theories..., which results in various conceptualizations of CSR... The best conceptualizations remain in their (to use a strong word) embryonic stages, and prescribed approaches to CSR seem perplexing to theorists and completely elude practitioners" (p. 1). This paper seeks to overcome this deficiency in two ways: one, by keeping the focus entirely on the real life challenges of implementation in the formative stages; and, two, by drawing data from archival and personal (interviews) data sources.

Grounded theory was chosen as the research method as it offers the best handle for the large volumes of non-standard data that qualitative analysis generates so as to systematically develop theories about observed phenomena and "discover theory from data" (Turner, 1983, p. 333). "Grounded theory is not concerned with the production of schemes of cosmic proportions, which predict world-epochal movements: it is concerned with producing theoretical accounts of small fragments of the world in which we live" (Turner, 1983, pp. 334-5)

Background

Gurukula is an ancient institution of the Indian sub-continent, enshrining values of learning, and the preservation and dissemination of knowledge. Central to the traditional education system of ancient India, a Gurukula envisages a traditional structure where the principles and the practice of 'living' and 'working' are seamlessly integrated. In a Gurukula, learning took place in close proximity between preceptor and pupil, and not just the craft skills but also life skills.

The Sandalwood Heritage

The centuries-old tradition of sandalwood craft is nurtured by the *Gudigar* families of Karnataka. The clan migrated from Goa to the Malnad region of Karnataka, where sandalwood was in abundance. These talented artisans were patronized by the erstwhile Mysore Wodeyar royalty to build temples and palaces. In time, they also made *mantapas*, *basingas* (headgear) during the wedding season, clay *Ganesha* idols at the time of *Ganesha Chaturthi* festival and other utility and decorative artefacts. At present, there are about 600 registered and 300 unregistered artisans in the Malnad region. For the most part, they craft idols of gods, besides *mantapas*, jewellery boxes, *padukas*, pens, prayer beads, garlands and other items. More recently, to cater to changing public taste, contemporary articles such as bookmarks, pen holders, paper cutters, paperweights, keychains, mobile stands, light-weight wall panels and the like are also being designed. Some of their sandalwood products include distinct combs like the oil comb and lice comb that were shaped by cutting out wood with a saw. The government registered the artisans through the Cauvery Handicrafts, or Karnataka State Handicrafts Development Corporation. Concentrated clusters of crafts-persons led to the establishment of craft complexes with common facility centres in Sagar, Sirsi, Soraba, Kumta, Mysuru and Channapatna. The artisans are provided with wood at subsidized prices. Finished products are procured from them and marketed across the globe.

The idea for a modern day Gurukula for stone and wood carving originated in an unlikely place. The Public Accounts Committee is a legislative committee of the Karnataka Legislature which examines the finances and accounts of government corporations. As part of the discussion in 2008-09, several Members of the Legislative Assembly expressed concern at the slow demise of the traditional crafts of stone and wood carving. It was felt that targeted initiatives had to be taken if the crafts were not to die out altogether. This was the genesis of the Gurukula which took shape in the years that followed. Paradoxically, a committee which usually performs an accounting and financial regulatory function (derisively dubbed a "fault finding committee") performed a constructive function in this instance (Officer of Cauvery Handicrafts, 30.04.2013).



The Project

At this juncture, Cauvery Handicrafts, a government of Karnataka undertaking, stepped in to fill the gap. Cauvery Handicrafts is the popular sobriquet for the Karnataka State Handicrafts Development Corporation. It has a history and a niche in the world of handicrafts since 1964. It has earned a reputation in the realm of cottage industries and provided a platform for artisans to market their products in Karnataka and other Indian states. Yet it is primarily a commercial organization, and its identity is market rather than service based. Structurally too, Cauvery Handicrafts is incorporated as a company. Therefore, the sphere of developmental work was uncharted territory.

Shilpa Gurukula was set up as a training centre for traditional wood and stone carving in Sagar, Shimoga district to preserve and promote the authenticity of the craft. The project commenced in 2009 and became operational in 2011. With a training centre, hostel, administration block, exhibition and seminar halls, staff quarters and a guest house within the campus, the Gurukula aspires to abide by the ancient *guru-shishya parampara*. It offers a two-year certificate course for unemployed youth interested in art. The selected candidates are granted free boarding and lodging and equipped with toolkits and raw materials. About 30 candidates are enrolled each year.

The steps that the incumbent management of the corporation took to establish the Gurukula can be categorized under the following heads:

Funding: The first step was to moot a project proposal for state approval and funding. A preliminary internal note of the corporation titled *"Details of Budget Proposals for the year 2010-11 sent by Karnataka State Handicrafts Development Corporation Limited to the Government"* mentions as follows: "Establishment of Gurukul in Kumta/Sagar: The Corporation has requested for a grant of Rs.200.00 lakhs from the Government for establishing a Gurukul in Kumta/Sagar which will benefit around 3000 artisans" (Cauvery Handicrafts, 2010, p. 1). Another detailed proposal gives a more complete picture: "Establishment of Gurukula at Sagar: Currently there are no schools for teaching and awarding certificates and diploma to traditional artisans to undergo training in the various sectors of handicrafts. The youth are not inclined to take up the profession of handicrafts sector because of its low brand equity and attendant low income. Therefore, it has become necessary to formalize the traditional skill sets of the artisans in the sector by way of establishing a school or Gurukula. The corporation intends to open a school/Gurukula at Sagar (Shimoga district) for the benefit of artisans. The training will be provided in the areas of wood crafts which includes (sic) sandalwood, rosewood and other woods, stone sculpture and metal art. ... The programme would be highly beneficial to artisans. In order to implement the scheme and for establishment of Gurukula, a sum of Rs.400.00 lakhs is initially required including nearly Rs.200.00 lakhs for infrastructure. It is proposed to start a Gurukula in Sagar in the current year in a small way with a grant of Rs.50.00 lakhs in the first phase" (Cauvery Handicrafts, 04.02.2010, p. 1). Then began the arduous task of launching the project. Beginning with the Board of Directors, the process took about two years. When the project was finally included in the Annual Budget of the Government of Karnataka in FY 2010-11 with seed money, a major milestone had been crossed: "With a view to providing training to the youth in traditional crafts, such as carpentry and sculpture, and to adopt modern technology, it is decided to establish Gurukula Training Centres at a cost of Rs. 5 crore (sic)" (Government of Karnataka, 03.2010, p. 36).

Personnel: Early efforts by the management focused on the induction of personnel appropriate to the task on hand. As there was a general freeze in recruitment in government, certain experienced personnel from the parent department of Commerce & Industries were obtained on deputation. However, the need for a skilled professional qualified in fine arts as faculty was recognized. Though the initial discussion contemplated two to three faculty; eventually only one instructor was recruited through a process of calling for candidates by a newspaper advertisement and personal interview.

Planning: A professional approach demanded that a detailed project report be prepared. Once again, the fall-back option was a government organization, the Technical Consultancy Services Organization of Karnataka. (Cauvery Handicrafts, 18.03.2010, p. 2). The Directorate of Kannada & Culture was also consulted and a meeting proceeding reads as follows: "Chairman pointed out that schools started to teach Traditional Sculpture and

Temple Architecture by Government as well as private bodies have failed utterly in Karnataka. Hence it is very essential to be highly cautious (sic). All care should be taken to build a successful school, by avoiding the wrong steps" (Karnataka Shilpa Kala Academy, 26.03.2010, p. 3).

The organization also sought external expertise. M/s Canara Bank were successfully running Artisan Training Institutions and a request from the Managing Director, Cauvery Handicrafts to the Secretary, Canara Bank Centenary a Rural Development Trust reads "Since you have already established such institutions at Jogaradoddi near Bidadi, and at Miyyar, Karkala and near Karaikudi, Tamilnadu, we would like to avail your expertise to start the Gurukula on the right track. Hence I write to request you to be our Technical Support group, in establishing the Gurukula at Sagar" (Cauvery Handicrafts, 18.03.2010, p. 1).



Source: (Krishnaraja, 27.01.2019).

Structure: Two administering agencies were created to execute and carry forward the programme, the State Level Advisory Committee with the Managing Director, Cauvery Handicrafts as Chairman, and a District Level Committee with the District Collector, Shimoga as Chairman. In the initial stages, it was the state level committee which was the prime mover behind the project.

Land and Infrastructure: A request was made to the Deputy Commissioner, Shimoga for 8-10 acres of land. Since this was a long time coming, construction of the facilities required was commenced in the existing craft complex premises. As even this would take time, the first-year certification course was started in the existing building of the complex straightaway. In fact, the request for land was still pending three years after the programme was launched. An office note recorded at the time states as follows: "To implement the proposed project with (sic) full swing, necessary infrastructural facilities are required at Sagar. As assured, 8 acres of land will be provided by local authorities for the purpose. In the meantime, M/s Nirmiti Kendra has (sic) entrusted to renovate the existing quarters for hostel facility to start functioning of the Gurukula at Sagar. In the interest of the artisans, we have to start the certificate course in wood carving for one year period at the existing buildings during the current year and subsequently, a full-fledged diploma course for 3 years may be implemented after constructing the required buildings with necessary infrastructure facilities (Cauvery Handicrafts, 06.07.2010, p. 1). Today, the Gurukula continues on the craft complex situated in 10 acres of land. New buildings, including three hostels, have come up, constructed by the district Nirmiti Kendra and the Karnataka Rural Infrastructure Development Corporation.

Curriculum: Parallely, an Academic and Curriculum Committee was formed "to decide on what faculty is required with regard to practical and theory, local or from outside, permanent or guest, number of faculty, eligibility for faculty, facilities to be given for faculty, etc"(Cauvery Handicrafts, 18.03.2010, p. 2). Besides the curriculum envisaged in the TECSOK report, the Directorate also recommended a tentative syllabus for the school. Today, the students undergo a two-year program, with six months devoted exclusively to traditional art work and drawing, which is common to both stone and wood scholars. They then branch out to their respective specializations for 18 months of practical training in stone and wood separately. They receive free boarding and lodging in the entire period.



The curriculum comprises drawing skills for the first six months, and carving and practical tasks later on. Students are taught to draw creepers. Gradually, they learn to make animal drawings, god faces, full figures and symmetry. Simultaneously, they refer to and examine the figures in temples, which enhance their observational and artistic skills furthermore. On Saturdays, they have projector classes where rough strokes, ideas of figures and other techniques needed to assimilate the art form are presented. "Apart from practical classes, students are well-versed with selected portions of Shilpa Shastra in theory. Once in three months, exams are conducted. We also enlighten them on Chola, Chalukya and Hoysala styles of depiction," mentions the instructor, Mahesh Jogi. (Krishnaraja, 27.01.2019).

Approvals: Once the budget was sanctioned, the corporation appears to have gone ahead without waiting for or seeking specific approval for the project. This seems to have engendered some differences: "Prof.... was insisting that MD had to secure necessary approval for this 'special school' from Government of Karnataka" (Karnataka Shilpa Kala Academy, 26.03.2010, p. 1) but that did not have an appreciable impact on the launching.

Challenges & Opportunities

Today the Gurukula is fully operational. Located in Sagar taluka in Shimoga, it houses budding artists in verdant surroundings. Merging the conveniences of homestay (free boarding & lodging) with the advantages of a modern education, the institution offers certificate courses in stone and wood carving. Breaking barriers, the "shishyas" learn spoken English even as they hone their skills. Study tours add to their exposure and experience. Operating since 2009, the Gurukula trains about 30 students a year. In the current year, despite Covid-19 restrictions and the consequent six-month delay in admissions, the school has 28 students on its rolls.

However, the Gurukula has faced several challenges in the course of its short history. Goal oriented behavior is a desired objective in management literature. But in public management, it is often "the tail that wags the dog", the constraints are frequently as important, if not more important, than objectives. Hence the appreciation of constraints becomes important in public governance. In the Gurukula too, the constraints shaped the course of its implementation.

Gender Imbalance: Even a casual visitor to the Gurukula today will notice the skewed gender balance. There has not been a single girl student among the 30 odd budding carvers and sculptors enrolled each year. In the year 2021, the Gurukula has enrolled 28 students, yet not one of them is a woman. (Telephonic Interview: Project Officer Sagar Craft Complex, 2021) This is explained away by the local officials as a manifestation of cultural and social restrictions that discourage girls from joining a fully residential school (Intw: Project Officer & Assistant, 11.03.2013). But on closer look, this explanation is both superficial and inaccurate. In nearby Soraba, hardly 30 kilometres away, women play an active part in trade, particularly in weaving and stringing the highly popular sandal garlands and *japmalas*. As in Soraba, in Sagar too the *Gudigars* (traditional artisans) and their families, both men and women, live and work in the *Craft Complex* of living-cum-work sheds provided by the corporation. The Gurukula is located within the premises of the craft complex, hardly a few feet away from their homes. Therefore, there is no real barrier to girl students attending the Gurukula, developing their craft, and returning back to their homes in the evening. On interviewing the programme implementers at the state and provincial level, there appears to be hardly any interest at all, except at the higher level, to make the programme more inclusive in gender terms (Intw: Project Officer & Assistant, 11.03.2013) (Telephonic Interview: Project Officer Sagar Craft Complex, 2021).

Economic Circumstances: Poverty is another issue. Students come from very poor families. This hampers the students' ability to continue the craft and skills learned, in the absence of additional support. Absenteeism does not appear to be a major problem in the Gurukula. But continuing education is likely to be. While Cauvery Handicrafts had ambitious plans to upgrade the certificate programme into a Fine Arts degree programme in collaboration with the neighbouring Kuvempu University, it is uncertain how many students would be able to avail this facility. The programme continues as a certificate programme for over a decade despite the initial enthusiasm to upgrade it into a Diploma or Degree programme. In an informal focus group discussion with the students, several of them expressed their keen interest to earn a degree but also their inability to pursue it given their financial circumstances (Students, 03.04.2013).



Source: (Krishnaraja, 27.01.2019).

Marketing Linkages: Closely related to the economic circumstances of the students are the forward linkages consequent to the program. The marketing of the finished goods not only of the Gurukula but after the completion of the course, in the form of standing production orders was envisaged at the inception of the institution. However, Cauvery Handicrafts, being a commercial organization, is unable to place standing production orders with the Gurukula because it conflicts with the 'saleability' requirement which governs all purchase decisions. Besides, there is direct competition to the Gurukula in the form of the production by the artisans of the craft complex. Being more experienced in terms of skill and also association with the corporation, they are in a better position to negotiate and even pressurize the Corporation, which the Gurukula students are in no position to do. For these reasons, the prospects of the Gurukula's students are curtailed. Even today, a decade after its launching, fresh pass-outs are unable to launch their own enterprise. Those who belong to hereditary artisan families return to the family fold, others join established sculptors as assistants or apprentices. However, opportunities have grown. In recent years, the political climate in India and Karnataka has encouraged the construction of temples, which in turn has opened up more opportunities for sculptors, particularly stone sculptors. Many manage to earn an income of Rs.1000-2000 a day (Telephonic Interview: Project Officer Sagar Craft Complex, 2021).

Upgradation Constraints: The initial conception of the course left the option open for awarding certificates/diplomas. When the programme was launched, it was restricted to being a certificate course. This compulsion was imposed on the programme because the students were mostly SSLC pass/fail and lacked the pre-matriculate or +2 qualification required to enroll for a degree course. Though one of the initial discussions envisaged as follows: "The prescribed minimum qualification for the one-year Diploma in Fine Arts is SSLC. For students who have studied upto 7th standard, there would be link-up with the State Open School, so that they can finish SSLC and the Diploma simultaneously" (Cauvery Handicrafts, 18.03.2010, p. 1), this was not implemented. The programme continues as a certificate programme for over a decade despite the initial enthusiasm to upgrade it into a Diploma or Degree programme, and despite the students' interest in earning a degree. This will act as a limitation on the programme even after its upgradation to a degree course.

The academic level seems to have been driven more by a desire to launch the programme speedily rather than creating a sustainable syllabus and evaluation: Prof. was insisting that MD had to secure necessary approval for this 'special school' from Government of Karnataka. As MD was very particular to start the school in June 2010. "personally I feel to revive the Diploma at this stage, is not easy.... By following this plan (certificate syllabus with local tutor) MD could inaugurate Gurukula School at Sagar as per his schedule without waiting for getting approval from any Government Body"(Karnataka Shilpa Kala Academy, 26.03.2010). That this short cut method was not universally acceptable is clear from an email from one of the Advisory body members: "Due to procedural requirements, it was decided that initially the course could be started as a certificate course ... and later we can create a diploma Course. In my opinion this will not help us achieve our objectives.... My suggestion is to start only a Diploma Institute, in the next academic year" (Centre Head, NID R & D campus, 24.07.2010)



Certification Constraints: Another nagging issue is regarding the certification itself. The initial discussions centred around the market acceptance of such a certificate programme: "We can create suitable opportunities for the students of the Schools (sic) run by Canara Bank and other institutions to join the proposed Diploma Education. The members expressed their desire to understand the 'VALUE' of the certificate issued by Canara Bank School, or similar schools in terms of *recognition in Society* (emphasis mine), Banking sector, preferential treatment in terms of Corporations and external trade, etc. It was felt that the society will see a formal recognized education differently than any certificate course offered by independent authorities. It was strongly felt that this is an attempt to bring in formal education as a means to create and sustain the Sector and this experiment must be formulated to succeed" (Cauvery Handicrafts, 25.03.2010).

Analysis

When set against the backdrop of CSR literature, the unfolding story of the Gurukula reveals some surprises, and some confirmations.

Corporate Social Responsibility is conventionally associated with the private sector. Even Friedman's famous essay sets his discussion on CSR in the context of "a free-enterprise, private-property system" (Friedman, 13.09.1970). But there is increasing recognition of its role in public enterprises as well. A World Bank policy paper acknowledges the role of public agencies in public good, while appreciating the fact that the terminological shift has not yet been made: "Although the contemporary CSR agenda is maturing, the term 'CSR' has not yet taken hold within many public sector agencies, either in industrial or developing countries. Few government initiatives have been undertaken explicitly as 'pro-CSR initiatives' but nonetheless many have contributed effectively to the promotion of greater social responsibility. Public sector agencies that do not use the expression 'corporate social responsibility' are not necessarily doing any less than those that do. There is a significant opportunity for public sector bodies in developing countries to harness current enthusiasm for 'CSR' alongside key public policy goals and priorities to encourage delivery of results in both respects" (Petkoski, Djordjija; Twose, Nigel, 7-25.07. 2003) (Ruth McNeil & Associates, undated). Other than in the Technical Consultancy Services Organisation of Karnataka (TECSOK) report, the term CSR finds no place in the Gurukula discourse (TECSOK, 02.2011). But the social intent and impact of the project is unmistakable.

The nature of the CSR effort takes a distinct form in a public corporation as against a private sector initiative. Here the CSR initiative was not a simple distribution of benefits as in the case of so many corporate initiatives. A successful CSR strategy, according to Van Marrewijk (2003), has to be context specific for each individual business, i.e., what are the specific CSR issues to be addressed and how to engage with the stakeholders (Dahlsrud, 2008). The challenge is for public sector bodies to identify priorities and incentives that are meaningful in the local and national context and to build on existing initiatives and capacities. In this case, this has been successfully done. Cauvery Handicrafts stayed within its own domain and close to its core competency of handicrafts. While the intended objective was the broad one to preserve the craft, the related benefits of creating a pool of craftsmen with the potential of future suppliers to the corporation and ensuring a steady stream of artefacts for sale cannot be gainsaid. In terms of the intelligent positioning of the project, this CSR effort can be deemed successful.

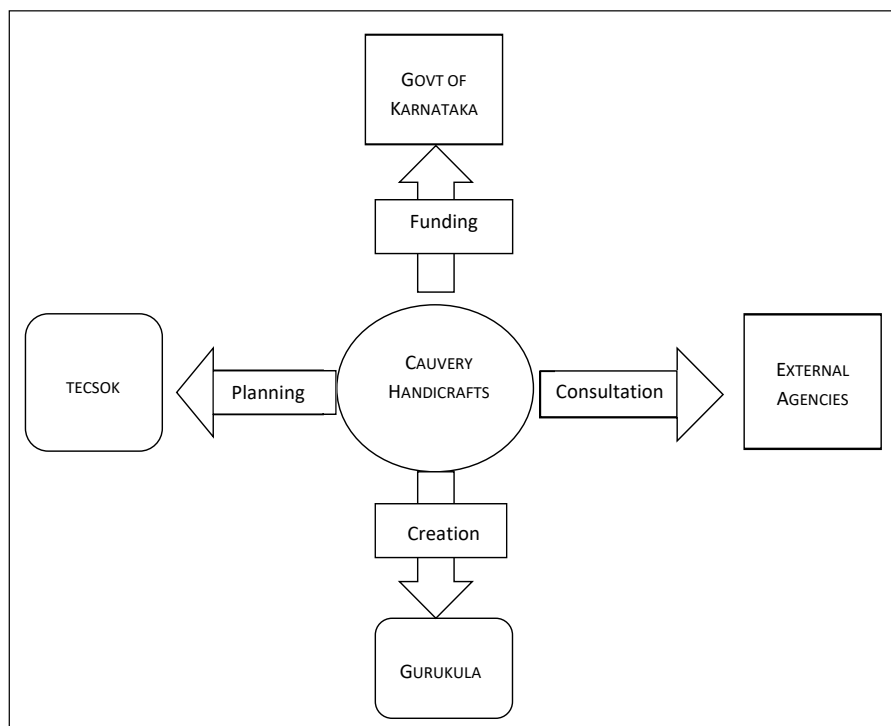
Moving away from the nature of the CSR initiative to the implementation issues, there are interesting revelations. Unlike the general organizational perspective of the government and governmental agencies as a 'closed loop', Cauvery Handicrafts exhibited a substantial 'reaching out'; to Canara Bank, Karnataka Shilpa Kala Academy, various individual experts and so on, in a consultative mode. But this consultativeness was selective and limited to the formative stage; once the programme got going, the corporation took charge and the presence of external experts and agencies faded away, not gradually but abruptly. This may pose problems when the Gurukula enters upon its phase II or expansion phase, for outsiders would be more wary of such a 'use and throw' approach.

A lot of thought appears to have gone into the project, with numerous meetings, advisory committees, discussions and so on. But whenever a tricky issue was confronted, the tendency was to skirt rather than

solve the problem. The debate regarding the level of the course, diploma or certificate, is a typical example. Ultimately, the programme architects apparently settled for a lower level (and presumably less useful) certificate course, despite the objections of their advisor, merely on the grounds that the then Managing Director, who was to retire shortly, desired to launch the programme during his tenure.

The node of decision making was the higher management and specifically the Managing Director. This is understandable in a small organization like Cauvery Handicrafts, but it was not conducive to institutionalization. Unlike most governmental activity, documentation was extensive. The decision making itself seems to have been a 'spot decision making', only the implementation process involved time. This is very different from public decision making in large infrastructure projects, for instance, where the phenomenon of extended decision making is seen, suggesting a greater degree of independence and discretion vested in decision makers in the case of developmental effort.

FIGURE 1: Diagrammatic Representation of Agencies Involved & Nature of Interaction in Gurukula Process



Source: Authors

There was no specific strategic thinking observed during the entire course of decision making, except in fund seeking. Instead, a pattern is seen, wherein first a decision is reached, then available resources are marshaled; problems are 'solved' on an *ad hoc* basis as and when they arise rather than anticipated and prepared for; disputes or differing opinions are circumvented rather than resolved; implementation steps are not planned in advance but dealt with in a step-by-step piecemeal fashion as the process proceeds. While a certain amount of planning is demonstrated in the commissioning of the Technical Consultancy Services Organisation of Karnataka (TECSOK) report, it is not visible how much the report actually informed the decision of the leadership or the recommendations of the advisory committees, or even whether the latter were even aware of the report. In fact, it could well be that the report was influenced by the decision making than vice versa.

The implementation challenges faced by the Gurukula are engrossing. But the central issue is a much larger one. In the present market system, the craft industry is vulnerable. With the development of the modern market economy, the old patron-client business network is fast declining. The artisans become dependent on middle men and trader entrepreneurs to sell their products. In the Indian constitution, handicrafts are a state subject and the responsibility of development and promotion of crafts lies with the state governments. Corporations such as Cauvery Handicrafts were created to fill this gap. But they face their own challenges. In any market, emphasis is laid on the consumption pattern. When the demand for any product is high, it should be made available even if the social costs are high. But such quick shifts are difficult in handicrafts as artisans need time to adapt their skills. But the commercial compulsions of making a profit constrain their efforts because their performance continues to be rated by profit creation than their developmental efforts. These two objectives of profitability and social responsibility are seen in direct opposition to each other in this case. This will eternally dog the Cauvery Handicrafts Corporation's development efforts unless parameters other than profit are factored into their performance evaluation.



Areas for Future Research

This paper places a CSR effort of a Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) against the scholarship on CSR and finds areas of convergence and divergence. The theoretical integration is modest, it restricts itself to pointing out the distinct interpretation and form that CSR takes when initiated by a public undertaking. Its complexity and alignment goes beyond simple benefit distribution to touch skill development, craft preservation, learning and livelihood issues. However, this paper does not delve into the by-lanes of CSR literature to say, for instance, measure the impact of the Gurukula on firm performance (Wood, 10.1991) or consumer preferences (Sen & Bhattacharya, 05.2001). To isolate such defining data from one case is not feasible. Yet the case points to a conflict between the commercial and social objectives. Going by the World Bank report, it is likely that many socially responsible initiatives by public undertakings may be under implementation without an explicit label of CSR. It would be an interesting study to measure the impact of such efforts through a longitudinal macro study.

Epilogue: The way forward

The sandalwood heritage is at the crossroads. Scarcity of sandalwood has affected sandalwood artisans as they can no longer rely entirely on their dexterity for livelihood. The *Gudigars*, who have been committed to this occupation since ages, are gradually venturing into other pursuits. "There is less work at present. Many artisans go for door carving. The younger generation is stepping into other spheres," says an artisan who hails from Gudigar family and has been in this field for the past 25 years and is ailing with poor eyesight due to persistent concentration on minute features. "Nowadays, artisans function on a part-time basis and follow this more as a hobby. Shivani woodcraft is yet another option for artisans which is well in demand too," says an officer of Cauvery Handicrafts. Due to the scarcity of the raw material, variations have been made in conventional designs wherever permissible. "Like for instance, for segments of the idol that are not seen (base and inner parts) different woods are used. Earlier, the idols were made entirely with sandalwood." (Krishnaraja, 27.01.2019).

Meanwhile, the Shilpa Gurukula marches bravely on. The institute has won the SKOCH award (Instituted in 2003, SKOCH Award salutes people, projects and institutions that go the extra mile to make India a better nation. SKOCH Award winners include the mighty and the ordinary alike. They receive this Award for their extraordinary achievements in contributing to the society) in 2018. Plans are afoot to provide infrastructure and additional facilities, but more ambitious are the plans to launch a full-scale undergraduate course in fine arts in collaboration with the Kuvempu University. A few years ago, the leadership was interested in expanding student strength, taking in students regardless of caste and creed, with particular emphasis on the recruitment of girls, but these efforts have not been taken forward. The Gurukula is an evolving institution. Modest in its publicity but aspirational in its vision, the Shilpa Gurukula is truly an inspirational CSR story. ■

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THE DIGITAL CHALLENGES OF CLASSICAL INDIAN ARTS

Classical Indian dance forms have existed and evolved over centuries facing each challenge to its very existence and structure. Dance is referred to as “Drishya-kavya” or visual poetry by the Natyashastra, an ancient treatise on the performing arts of India. But classical artists are often unrecognised entrepreneurs. Their art includes an initial funding crunch, location hunting, effective marketing and possible scale-up. While recognition continues to be their primary dream, creating a successful ‘business’ is often an elusive dream. And the year 2020-21 shut more doors for these entrepreneurs. With no other option but to go online, artists face innumerable obstacles due to the very nature of the art form.

As patrons and art enthusiasts walk into a performance hall and watch the swirl of dancers executing intricate choreography accompanied by brilliant music, the ambience elevates the overall experience. The ability to engage and interact with a wider audience remains unparalleled and both the artist and audience feed off and communicate with each other. This interaction was provided by organisations or ‘sabhas’ who, to a large extent, did not place remuneration of artists as a priority. However, the sheer volume of artists applying, and an unending pool of young, aspiring artists promoted a slow but decadent culture of pay and perform. A donation by the artists ensured the sabhas’ continued functioning and a secure spot amongst the multitude applying.

The spurt of artists also helped an entire ecosystem grow---increased employment in related sectors, growth of ancillary industries and a steady economic source for many artisans, make-up artists, stage and light designers, photographers and tailors.

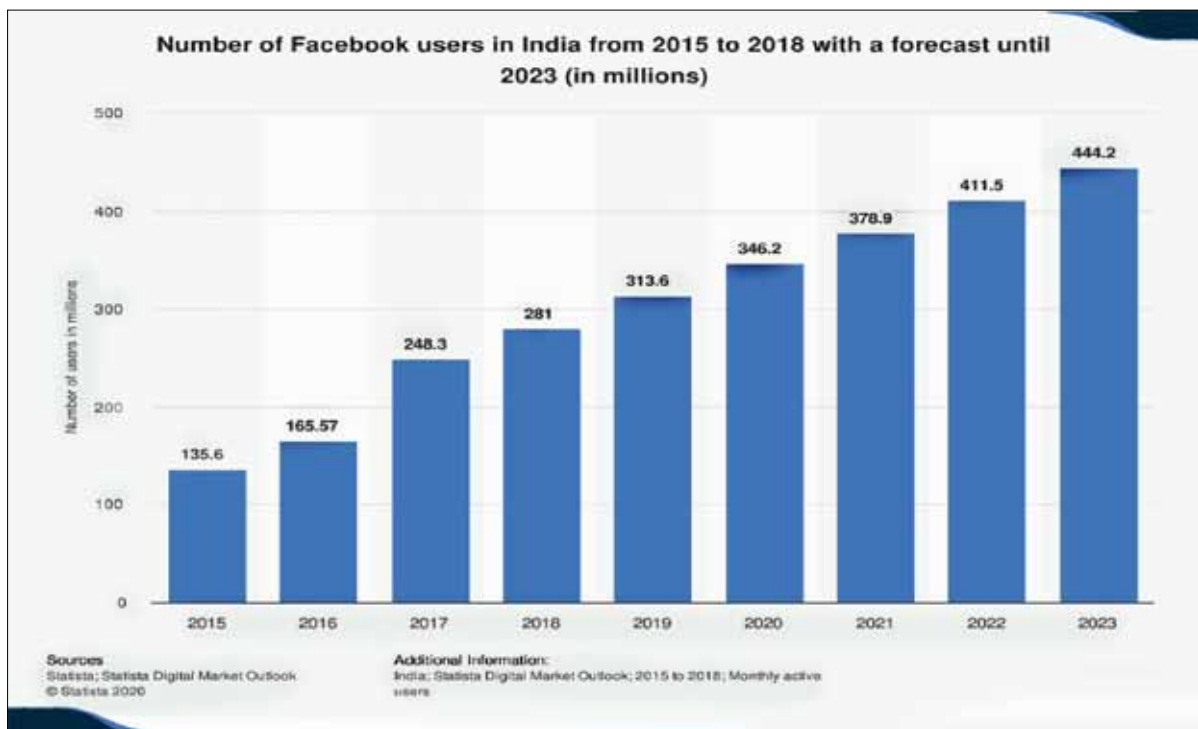
And COVID 19 happened. The pandemic and the ensuing lockdown have shaken the performing arts world more so in the Indian context where the performances mainly depended on small and fast spreading localized platforms to showcase their talent. With the pandemic, these organisations were no longer open for businesses which meant these artists no longer had a stage to perform. Faced with the risk of becoming invisible, artists started seeking alternate ways of staying relevant, showcasing their talent and being heard above the noise.

While the core aesthetic has not changed, the very basis of the presentation has deeply evolved. The digital revolution coupled with a pandemic has affected the Indian classical dance scene in India and abroad in many ways.

Attention deficit

Multiple platforms offer a variety of shows that showcase artists from different parts of the country as well as from abroad. The topics are varied and often reflect current situations. Facebook usage has steadily increased over the years and is predicted to increase to 444 million users by 2023. More artists joined the social media bandwagon and upskilled themselves towards reaching that elusive audience and staying visible.

Given social media has truly arrived in people’s lives, the number of apps available as well as the choices of programmes offered often creates an ‘impatient’ viewer. Flicking between channels has now moved to flicking between social media content. Hence the deluge of events held on social media eventually ends in viewers briefly attending or ‘shopping’ events and moving on to the next platform. Also, viewers tend to sign into a social media event but spend more time away from the event while still staying signed in. This neither helps the artist nor the organizer as it is not a true representation of a successful event.



Source: Statista

Online festivals have mushroomed aplenty with curated content for specific audiences ranging from focused discussions from ancient texts to teasing out the specificities of the 'nayikas' or heroines through 'abhinaya' or emotive representation. Bare-it-all sessions and technique workshops are dime a dozen. This targets specific interest groups and hence manages to gather a limited but core audience.

Lowered entry barriers

With social media, often the loudest get heard and having a social media account is a credential enough to perform online. Senior dancers have voiced their concern on not only the quality of the dancing but also the attention to aesthetics. Shabby screens, poor lighting, lack of colour and costume sense is often jarring. All that is required is a social media account, time to put together a show and an oftentimes poor audience.

Peter Brook articulated the importance of an audience in his book *The Empty Space*- 'The only thing that all forms of theatre have in common is the need for an audience'. And the irony is often any audience is a good enough audience!

Tailored Services

Organisations understand which customer base and demographics appreciates what is presented and come back for more thus creating a loyal base of subscribers. Online festivals have mushroomed aplenty with

curated content for specific audiences ranging from focused discussions from ancient texts to teasing out the specificities of the '*nayikas*' or heroines through '*abhinaya*' or emotive representation. Bare-it-all sessions and technique workshops are dime a dozen. This targets specific interest groups and hence manages to gather a limited but core audience.



Remuneration

Often the least paid profession, artists are confronted with an even bleaker future. For most professionals, events and programmes provide the sustenance and with public gatherings prohibited, they see their livelihood drying up. Those who are in abject penury or who took their lives are merely a statistic. While crowdfunding and donations to art organisations are trickling in, it might require a deluge to sustain the struggling artists. Most are diffident to step out to ask for help and that makes them all the more vulnerable. Another cause of concern is the promised 'exposure' of artists in return for their performance, for no remuneration. This is definitely an individual preference, though the underlying apprehension is that an artist is willing to showcase their talent absolutely free in the name of visibility thus perhaps devaluing their expertise.

As artists deal with struggles of inadequacies and self-doubt, the need of the hour is coherent support networks to help them in need as well as better funding sources for the arts from firms and corporates. The pandemic has staked a major claim to most firm's CSRs and rightly so, but this has resulted in dwindling available funds for other activities. Individual crowdfunding, though laudable, goes only thus far in reaching toiling artists.

Can the entrepreneurial spirit be sustained till normalcy returns? Can performing arts be re-invented to embrace digital technology? Undoubtedly so though re-inventing might be too strong a word. With social distancing norms and wearing masks making it a physical challenge to dance in confined spaces, artists need to contend with the tools they have to persistently provide their expertise.

Policy

Given these multiple challenges and the pivots the industry has undertaken to meet them, greater government involvement might ensure the very sustenance of these multiple art forms. While the art industry has often been looked at as a "cultural industry" and "creative industry", a need for a discourse on arts funding to grow these 'industries' is missing. A subtle impact of the reduction in art funding and subsequently arts practice might reflect a market-driven agenda rather than an arts-driven agenda. The impact of all these issues needs to be considered by policy makers to ensure the reassertion of core cultural values in emerging economies.

The creative process is always a beacon, sometimes less bright in the fog but always there. In the immortal words of Julius Meier-Graefe- "All great works of art are trophies of victorious struggle". We shall overcome. ■

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BABA SAHEB DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR CHAIR IN SOCIAL JUSTICE

About the Chair:

The Chair named "*Baba Saheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair in Social Justice*" has been instituted at the Indian Institute of Public Administration – a premier National Institute of Public Administration in the year 2004. Since then, a number of quality publications, value adding workshops and courses have been conducted under the Chair. This Chair has a special role in providing inputs for policy formulation and governance besides sensitizing the Administration.



Scope and objectives of the Chair:

The Chair is working currently on:

1. Disseminating the ideas and thoughts of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar to students and faculties of the University.
2. Support the researchers/students to undertake research/prepare course module/curriculum in the line of Dr. Ambedkar philosophy and thought.
3. Sensitizing people of nearby locality and areas about the relevance of Dr. Ambedkar's ideas for the betterment of the poor and vulnerable sections of society.
4. Identify and recognize the contribution of activists/writers those who made significant contribution for mobilization of marginalized sections of society and provide platform for sharing their ideas and experiences.

The brief details of the work done by the Chair at IIPA :

- ☐ Research Papers/ Articles/Book Reviews: The Chair has to its credit the publication of more than 40 research articles in many reputed/peer reviewed journals at the international and national level.
- ☐ Students pursued PhD: This is to submit that students/ officers of APPPA course of IIPA had pursued PhD/ MPhil on the theme of the Chair.
- ☐ Seminars/ Symposia/Trainings/Workshops/Conferences organized: This is to put on record that many local, regional, national and international conferences and dialogues have been organized by Dr. Ambedkar Chair at IIPA successfully. It has a vast experience in conducting the seminars on the themes related to Babasaheb Dr B. R. Ambedkar.



- ❑ Special Lecture/Memorial Lectures organized: The Chair has organized memorial lectures and special lectures for the students/ officers at IIPA.
- ❑ Papers presented in National and International Conferences: The Chair has presented many papers till date in many national and international conferences all over India and outside. The papers were very well appreciated and many of them were also published.
- ❑ Key Note Addresses/ Sessions Chaired/ Panel Discussions/ Special Lectures: The Ambedkar Chair at IIPA has delivered/ participated in many national and international conferences and has delivered key note/ special lectures on the theme of the Chair.
- ❑ Sessions taken in Various Programmes: The Chair has a vast record of presentations given in the trainings, conferences/ panel discussions, symposium, etc., in and outside IIPA.
- ❑ Curriculum Development: The Chair has prepared a compulsory/ elective stream on social justice for the APPPA participants and also for various Universities/ Institutions.
- ❑ Research Projects: The Chair has completed many research projects (long/ short term) for the Ministry and also for different Ministries, the reports of which are duly submitted.
- ❑ Capacity Building: The chair has organized two workshops on 'Capacity Building' for the NGOs sponsored by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. Along with this, the Chair has also attended many capacity building workshops in and outside Delhi and also organized the same. This is also to submit that the Chair had organized many awareness camps / study circles so that the works done by Dr B R Ambedkar can be explored and his writings may reach the masses. ■

**Inputs Credit: Dr Neetu Jain, Associate Professor,
Organisational and Behavioural Science, IIPA and Chair, Dr. Ambedkar Centre for Social Justice.**



CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE: CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

Child sexual abuse is a universally condemned offence against children. Everyday thousands of children are exposed to sexual violence. There are different factors or causes behind child sexual violence which people are not aware about. It is important to understand these factors to protect children in the society. Consequences of sexual abuse are very severe and they deeply affect the physical and mental state of victims for a long time. Aftermath outcomes of the abuse are extremely painful because it disrupts the self esteem as well as physical and mental order of the victim child. Victims suffer from traumatic stress and some long term physical health problems in life. It is essential to keep children safe by a collective effort of family, society and government.

Introduction

Child sexual abuse (CSA) has been acknowledged as a global problem. Sexual abuse includes engaging a child into sexual activities by threat, force, misrepresentations or coercion, where the child experiences, physical, mental and psychological torture. According to the World Health Organization, CSA is involvement of children in a sexual act before their legal age when they are not mature enough to give consent for this. CSA violates the laws and taboos of the society (WHO, 1999). Positive and crime free surrounding are needed for children to be nurtured in a healthy way and freely experience their childhood, but in the present scenario they are subjected to exploitation, violence, and abuse. Girl child is more vulnerable to sexual abuse, and number of child sexual abuse cases (CSA) are reported every day around the world. Nearly one among ten girls experiences sexual abuse before 20 years of age. The actual figure is difficult to estimate because large numbers of cases go unreported (UNICEF, 2020). According to a data, about 15 million adolescent girls experience forced sex worldwide (UN Women, 2020).

CSA leaves lifelong scars on the minor's life. Enormous risk factors are associated with CSA. It retards the social and emotional development of victim child. Post victimization consequences often prove devastating for children as they suffer from several physical, mental, social and psychological traumas. Discussion on various causes is essential to protect children from the future victimization. Knowing about consequences helps to focus on the protection, prevention and rehabilitation strategies to overcome the stress of abuse.

Risk Factors/Causes of Sexual Abuse

Social Factors: Uncontrolled and unplanned birth in economically disadvantaged sections of society where parents are not capable of providing the care, protection and nutrition to the children is one of the critical problems that exposes the children to abuse, violence or exploitation (Seth, 2013). Poverty strongly correlates with child abuse. Children of poor people living on roadsides get prone to such abuses. Parents engage their children in begging on streets, where children could experience violence and exploitation (Southall & McDonald, 2013).

Neighbourhood disorganization is a serious factor linked to child maltreatment. Poor economic or disadvantaged areas that lack socialization are recorded as the crime prone areas (Joshi, 2018). A research study shows that juvenile living in such areas turn delinquents more easily and quickly and develop anti-social behaviour. (Mishra & Biswal, 2018). This behaviour when neglected turns individual into an adult offender who commits crimes like sexual abuse or form of heinous offences.

Familial Factors: Parents generally do not discuss sensitive issue of sexual abuse with their children as they consider their child young enough to understand this issue, also many of them are not aware that how to discuss this matter. Many think that they do not have adequate skills or material which can help them to discuss it with their child (Foster, 2017). Absence of a capable guardian increases the risk and chances of commission of crime (Cohen & Felson, 1979). Many times parents lack information about sexual abuse which is crucial regarding children's well being. Parents do not make themselves aware about the fact that, potential perpetrators in maximum cases are the acquainted or trusted people, and unknowingly parents increase the chances of CSA as they lack the knowledge about this important fact (Finkelhor, 2008).



About 90 percent of the children are abused by an acquainted person. They can be relatives, family members, neighbour or friends. Sexual abuse by the strangers can be found in only 5 percent of the reported cases (Friedman, 2010). Parents sometimes avoid this intra-familial sexual abuse where perpetrator can be a trusted part of family (National Child Traumatic Stress Network Child Sexual Abuse Committee [NCTSN], 2009). Lack of communication and poor relationship between child and parents is also strongly associated factor (Fergusson et al, 1996). A house with single biological parent is highly risky place for a child (Finkelhor et al, 1997). Role and presence of a protective mother is an important factor to reduce or recover child sexual abuse (Berliner, 2011).

Media: A major factor that is hidden behind the increasing rate of juvenile delinquency all around the world is the exposure to sexual content or pornographic content on internet. Children or juveniles accessing pornography become more violent and a distorted view about sexuality and relationship is developed in them, and 'child on child' sexual abuse has become an international problem due to increasing trend of watching pornography among juveniles (Johnston, 2019). A news report highlighted that combination of violent pornography and alcohol consumption among young boys is the rising cause of rapes in India (Thekaekara, 2018). Sending or receiving sexually explicit text messages commonly called as 'sexting' is prevalent among teenagers who use social media. Also, nude or semi-nude photographs are exchanged between the teens on social media. Teens engaged in such activities and are subjected to sexual abuse, rapes or murder as they are not aware of the fact that the unknown person whom they communicate with can be a predator who can harm them severely (Undiyaundeye, 2014).

Substance Abuse: Substance abuse depresses the mental stability of the individual and he commits the offence which later he may regret to. Substance abuse such as alcohol is strongly associated with child maltreatment (WHO). Alcohol consumption is involved in majority of sexual offences. Perpetrators those who consume alcohol and intoxicate themselves use their physical force more confidently to get sexual contacts. (Johnson, 2014).

Lack of Policy Implementation: Gap between policy and its implementation is the major cause that gives the perpetrators a free chance of mustering up the courage to commit such a brutal offence. Insensitive treatment by police in reporting the cases, delayed trials, convictions and tampering with evidence leave the offender unpunished.

Some cases have been discussed in the report of Human Rights Watch, in one of them, a minor girl child was gang raped but police behaved in an aggressive manner with the victim, and did not take action on the ground of medical report where no signs of rape were found, family of the victim was beaten by the police including the station officer in the name of filing a false case (Human Rights Watch, 2013). As per the activists from India, numbers of cases are compromised by the police without trial and survivors are asked to withdraw the complaints. This makes the offender free to repeat such offences in the society again (Arya, 2018).

Consequences

Social Stigma: The most impactful content of stigmatization is shame (Kennedy & Prock, 2018). Victims rather than perpetrators face dishonour and shame in the society. They are blamed for abuse they went through (Olafson, 2004). This stigmatization is very severe and traumatic for the abused victims (Janoff-Bulman, 1992). Stigmatization is carried forward in future life of the victim child, more often in non-abusive intimate relationships (Feiring et al, 2009). Considerable per cent of parents of abused children don't consult doctors for their children's health issues due to social stigma (Singh, 2019).

Physical Outcomes: Effects of child sexual abuse can be very deleterious and long lasting on the physical health of the child. General health of the victim is deteriorated. Females, who experienced sexual abuse, suffer from chronic pelvic pain rather than the females who are not subjected to such crime (Harrop-Griffiths et al, 1988). Other physical outcomes are genitourinary problems, fatigue and headache (Candib & Dickinson, 2015). Brutal child abuse results in genital injuries such as hymen lacerations. Inserting blunt object in the genital region of the girl child victim damages the genital organs and causes long lasting hymenal scars that prove the penile insertion (Kim et al, 2017). Pelvic fractures, urethral injuries (Wright & Wessells, 2007), urinary retention (Brown & Garcia, 2012), injuries or bruises on neck, head or thighs and many other body parts are some physical consequences of sexual abuse committed on children (Cohen & Cohen, 2013).



Apart from the above consequences that occur immediately after the abuse, there are many health issues that are detected long after the incidence and have a severe impact on the physical health of the victim child. Gynaecological health and gastrointestinal health is severely affected (Irish et al, 2010). Experts found that patients with problem of abdomen pain and other gastrointestinal issues have history of sexual abuse during childhood (Tilburg, 2011). It was found in a study that women with history of sexual abuse during childhood suffer gynaecological issues which include Chronic Pelvic Pains (CPP). Long term physical ill-effects of sexual abuse in childhood also include several other health issues such as, diabetes, malnutrition and also functional limitations (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2019). Musculoskeletal pain known as fibromyalgia which also causes fatigue, mood issues (Walker et al, 1997), migraine and headache are also long term effects of child abuse (Felitti, 1991). Lung diseases, bronchitis and other pulmonary diseases also can be outcomes of sexual violence that harms physical health of the victim. Survivors of CSA are also at high risk of suffering from hypertension, strokes and cardiac problems (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2019).

Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) are disastrous outcomes of sexual abuse. Sexually abused children are highly vulnerable to the STDs, such as Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). When child is abused multiple times by the perpetrator, it can cause mucosal trauma and result in STDs. Sexual abuse by multiple perpetrators is also a risk factor for the transmission of STDs (Sexually Transmitted Disease Evaluation and Care, 2019). Syphilis and Gonorrhoea are also infectious sexually transmitted diseases (Hammerschlag, 1998).

An adverse physical consequence of the sexual abuse against adolescent girls is teenage or unintended pregnancy. According to a study, near about 11-20 per cent of the teenage pregnancies are due to sexual abuse of adolescent girls (Akanji & Dada, 2012). It has a painful impact on the physical and mental health. It gives rise to poor health of the victim and other medical complications during the childbirth, and this also turns lethal in many cases. Maternal mortality, systemic infection and unsafe abortions are some of the harmful health issues associated with teenage pregnancy (WHO, 2018).

Sexually abused pregnant teenagers are often forced by the families for termination of pregnancy. This process many times proves lethal for victim. Only 22 per cent of pregnancy termination is done under medical experts or health experts and 78 percent termination/ abortion is done without the health facilities, causing around 10 deaths per day in India. As mentioned in a study, about 16.7 per cent of the adolescent or young women seeking termination of pregnancy were sexual abuse survivors (Grover, 2019).

Mental Outcomes: Child sexual abuse disturbs the psychological and mental wellness of the child. Mental injuries do not heal early and it deeply impacts the behavioural and social life of the victim. Depression, low self-esteem, trouble in maintaining relationships, distrust towards people and fear are some common behavioural consequences (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2019). Crime against children and trauma occurred due to this, cause harmful effects to the developing brain of the child (McCrory et al, 2010).

Sexually maltreated child has lower relationship building, communication and interaction capacity (Bacon & Richardson, 2001). A victim child may respond in different manner to different activities. After seeing a person who resembles to the culprit or a place which resembles the place where the incident took place, it is possible that child may express the feeling of anger and aggression because these situations trigger the memories of the incident in mind (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2018). Children suffer from depressive disorder after being abused. This rate is three times more than the non-abused children (Brown et al, 1999). Their educational difficulties or grasping learning skill is low and they also exhibit poor language development (Veltman & Browne, 2001). They suffer from attachment difficulties and restrict themselves in being positive social or peer relationships (Doyle & Cicchetti, 2017). They often conduct suicidal or self destructive behaviour. Adolescents or youth having sexual abuse history are eight times more likely to attempt suicide more than others (Brodsky & Stanley, 2008). Suicidal thoughts in adolescents are strongly associated with sexual abuse (Evans et al, 2005). Many times victims harm others also due to aggression and have violent nature and behaviour (Gilbert et al, 2009).

Several behavioural issues include, oppositional and conduct problems suffered by the victims. These problems are less likely to be present in non-abused children (Pollio et al, 2011). Depression, sadness, isolation



from family, friends and social withdrawal are some behavioural complications associated with sexually abused girls (Herrenkohl et al, 2017). Children who are abused in different age or multiple stages of development show high rate of behavioural problems (Jaffee & Maikovich-Fong, 2011). Unhealthy sexual behaviour, practices, alcohol or drug dependence is a usual behavioural sign found in sexually abused children (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2019).

Post Traumatic Stress Disorders: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorders (PTSDs) are usually experienced by sexually maltreated children. This psychiatric disorder is faced by victims and survivors of sexual violence, accidents, militant attack or other traumatic events (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Highest rate of PTSD is linked with sexual abuse or rape (Bloom & Reichert, 1998). Re-experiencing thoughts where victims get repeated memories of the trauma again and again through nightmares, disturbing dreams, flashback and repetitive experience of traumatic thoughts are different symptoms or signs of PTSD (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

In some situations, victims dissociate with people. This symptom of avoiding includes, resisting oneself to remind the stressful experience. Victim lives in a state of being highly alert even in safe situation and shows extreme anger. This is commonly known as hyper arousal or highly reactive symptoms of PTSD which also include sleeping disorder or insomnia. Ongoing fear, feeling or thoughts of re-victimization, some specific fears, concentration issues and feeling of being detached are other PTSDs (Brazier, 2019).

Recommendations for Parents and Society

Regular conversations between parents and children about sexual offences or sexual abuse in an appropriate manner can prove to be a very important step for preventing children from this harmful offence. Parents are the most trustworthy people for a child. Therefore, they can help more than the professionals to guide, care and protect. Parents and care givers ensure the safety of their children by guiding them about the appropriate and inappropriate touch and also about the sensitive parts or private parts of the body and make them understand about the risk and vulnerabilities. They must check and find whom their children are spending time with, and also should ask about their activities.

Activities of the child, such as concern, feelings, being out of the house overnight and social activities must be monitored by parents. Children go through multiple feelings. These feelings must not be neglected to prevent further damage to their childhood.

If a child reveals or discloses about the sexual abuse he/she went through, parents must assure the support and must not blame the child for this crime. Support of parents can heal the mental injuries of the victim more easily and quickly. Parents must console the child that his/her relationship with them will be intact after the disclosure. Victim can experience nightmares, depressions, mood swings etc., and parenting can be very difficult after the disclosure.

Parental involvement is very less in many families to guide their children for the risk factors that surround them. To improve this, it is essential to plan a population based prevention and protection programme by government or non-government organizations that can guide adults as well children of a particular sector. Objective of these programme must be involvement of parental skill and guidance in their children's life. These programme can prove beneficial for children who are very young to understand about this sensitive issue.

Workshops must be conducted for children as well as adults in school, where they are informed about the vulnerabilities and measures for protecting them from sexual abuse. Awareness among school going children must be raised by child-friendly methods which are easier for them to understand. Local government, civil society, media and police should be the initiators of such awareness plans. Saving oneself from perpetrators and recognizing their intentions must be its agenda.

Self-defence training programme for the children from pre-adolescence to post-adolescence must be the part of education system. If not by the local administration, then civil societies must come up with these kinds of programmes to build a confidence among children.



A teenage, with delinquent or anti-social behaviour can become a severe offender in future. To keep a check on this it is important to monitor students from junior or middle high school age as they are more prone to indulge in substance use and other delinquencies. Active involvement of a student in school activities and participation in community can prevent delinquencies among the teenagers. Owners or workers at liquor shops should not make alcohol available to people below 25 years of age.

Rehabilitation by civil society is an essential way to provide relief to the victims. Services like counselling sessions and providing therapies which help survivors to overcome the traumatic situation should be conducted by them. Their work must be advertised for the help seeking people in the disadvantaged areas. Also, these civil societies in the form of NGOs must act as a watch dog to find survivors and victims who need extensive care and treatment.

Active policing and specialized officials to deal with the corruption in matters of sexual abuse must be the prior concern of policy makers. Delays in conviction decreases and often shatters the confidence of victim and family in the prevalent judicial system.

Conclusion

Determined efforts are required to reduce the growing evil of sexual abuse. Relying on government machinery and policy implementation is not sufficient to safeguard our children from the demons and haters of childhood. Efforts have to be made from the ground level itself by the family and parents to create a fearless and safe environment for the children of society. Primary efforts incorporated with stringent rules, policies and laws can prove a satisfactory way to fulfil the objective of child protection worldwide. Affirmative obligations need to be exercised by the adults of the society to safeguard children from sexual violence and knowledge of causes and post traumatic outcomes, is the opening move towards it. ■

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PRADHAN MANTRI GARIB KALYAN YOJANA (PMGKY): IMPLEMENTATION IS THE KEY

Globally, the situation is alarming as the number of Corona Virus infected persons and the death toll is gradually increasing. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) forecasted a global economic recession due to the Covid-19 outbreak. India is not an exception given its growth slowdown in major sectors. The IMF managing director Kristalina Georgieva said that the “economic impact is, and will be, severe, but the faster the virus stops, the quicker and stronger the recovery will be” during the video conference of G-20 finance ministers and central bank governors. In this backdrop, on 26th March, 2020 the Union Finance & Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced Rs. 1.70 lakh crore, an economic package for the poor to overcome the crisis situation during the lockdown period. The scheme is called as Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY) aiming to address the food and financial related difficulties of the poor people.

The PMGKY covers a wide variety of poor sections of the population, such as farmers, poor people, women, low wage earners, senior citizens, widows, *Divyang* people, MNREGA workers, women of Self-Help Groups (SHGs), families of Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) and welfare fund for the building and construction workers in the organized sector. No doubt, the package is a comprehensive one; the question is whether it is sufficient to meet the food and other requirements, especially the medical and health essentials. Let us understand and discern the adequacy of the government's economic package and its implications for the welfare of the poor and marginalized sections of the society.

The foremost basic human need is the food. The Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana (PMGKAY) supplies 5kg of rice or wheat every month; the government announced this will be doubled in the next three months which means, a person from a poor family now gets 12kg of rice/wheat per month. That is 5kg of food grains from PMGKY and 7kg from the subsidised rates in the ration shops under the ongoing National Food Security Act (NFSA) of 2013. As per the statistics of the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution and Census 2011, there is a total of 23 crore people who have ration cards. How does the government ensure that the foodgrains reach the remaining poor people without the ration cards? The biggest missing link is that the PMGKY does not mention about the migrant workers who suffer the most due to the lockdown. As per the Census 2011 figures, the migrant workers constitute more than one tenth of the total population in the country i.e., 14 crore.

The government should have added another provision exclusively meant for the migrant workers through direct cash transfer method during this disruption period. The states such as Bihar, Delhi and North eastern states to which large scale migrants belong and work in other parts of the nation get most affected. In addition to this, these are states where the electronic point of sale devices for the purchase of food grains is weak. The identification of migrant worker's location is an administrative challenge. In certain states, we are already witnessing high handedness by some of the police officials towards the migrant workers. There is a need for sensible and humane approach in addressing the concerns and needs of the migrant workers by avoiding the arbitrariness in treating the same.

The ex-gratia amount of Rs. 500 for the 20.5 crore PMJDY women account holders is too less to meet the food and other basic requirements. This would have at least a thousand rupees given the exorbitant rates of essential commodities. The free distribution of the LPG cylinder for the 8 crore poor people under the Ujjwala scheme is a welcome step. The money saved from this can be utilised for meeting other basic essentials. The increase of Rs. 20 wages for the MGNREGA workers is little and this increase would have happened naturally given the scarcity of the labour in the agriculture and non-agriculture areas. Similarly, the amount of Rs. 1000 to the senior citizens, widows and *Divyang* people is less. The amount would have been more for the *Divyang* people and widows. Insurance coverage for the health workers is an essential and much needed and the allocated amount (Rs.50lakh) is not worthy of a life of the health worker during this pandemic crisis. Other provisions are noteworthy enough, however the question is the implementation of the scheme.

One of the biggest missing links of the PMGKY is the informal sector. Most of the benefits are provisioned only for the poor people working in the organised sectors. There is a need for another fiscal stimulus package intended for the welfare of the workforce in unorganised sectors.

Effective Implementation is the key

The state governments must engage the Local Government Institutions (LGIs) in an effective way. Being proximate to the citizens and having a uniform system through the country the LGIs are uniquely equipped to deliver the essential civic amenities in these critical times. The LGIs have a responsibility to educate and communicate the public with the right kind of information about the Corona Virus pandemic and its symptoms. The LGIs can also play an effective role in containing the spread of misinformation or false rumours about the virus and its spread. This is especially vital in the rural areas where the communication between the local communities and health workers like ANM (Auxiliary Nurse Midwifery) is poor.

The success of the PMGKY depends upon its effective implementation on the ground. The corruption in the Public Distribution System (PDS), fake ration cards, nexus between the local administration and contractors, updating the labour migrants details, challenges in the linkage of ration card with that of Aadhar, fake Jan Dhan Accounts and the misappropriation of funds in MGNREGA works are some of the issues of implementation. The Union and State governments must take all the necessary steps to see that the benefits of the PMGKY reach the needy poor people only. ■

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RELEVANCE OF ANCIENT INDIAN PHILOSOPHY FROM ĪŚĀVĀSYA UPANIṢHAD TO THE DISCIPLINARY STUDY OF BUSINESS ETHICS UNDER MODERN MANAGEMENT AND TO THE CORPORATE CEOS

īśāvāsyā upanishad, is one of the ten major upanishads referred to as a source of ancient Indian philosophy. Thoughts expressed therein carry potential of being guiding principles to the discipline of Business Ethics under modern-day management and to the corporate Chief Executive Officers. In this paper, modern-day righteous management behaviour in an ennobled form is considered as constellation of upanishadik values, a few thoughts from īśāvāsyā upanishad are meaningfully explored in that context. In other words, lessons from Indian philosophy of īśāvāsyā upanishad ought to be taught in modern-day management, especially under Business Ethics; and practiced in corporate lives to purify working environment; working selves at the helm of affairs, i.e. CEOs to achieve sustainable growth at an individual, corporate and social level.

I. Introduction

Vedic literature, an ancient Indian philosophy, has four major streams of study, the *samhitā* (*ṛigveda*; *yajurveda*; *sāmaveda* and *atharvaveda*); the *brāhmaṇa*, the *āranyaka* and the *upanishads*. *samhitā* contains chant, i.e. *mantra* praising the Almighty, *brāhmaṇa* contains *mantras* focused on rituals and *āranyaka* dwells upon penance. The terminal chapters from all the three focusing on philosophy are collectively described as *upanishads*, thus it is considered as a source of ancient Indian philosophy. In the following sections, the message from *īśāvāsyā upanishad* and its relevance to Business Ethics and CEOs is provided in detail.

II. Leave to live

Those who hold the responsible positions in the corporate world need to rear the feeling of having had everything enough to be able to perform their duties honestly. This should be the state of the mind of a successful leader; be it in politics or in business to be able to deliver delightfully to the people at large or to the stakeholders.

A CEO must practice a principle from Mahatma Gandhi's thoughts, which has its origin in *upanishads*, i.e. 'trusteeship'^[16], which essentially means that a leader is merely a trustee of the organizational wealth, his role is to create wealth for stakeholders; not for himself, he's just a custodian.

The uncompromising ethical foundation of character of a leader is this very principle, 'leave to live'^[11] which in other words means, 'enjoy by relinquishing'^[11] or find happiness in the happiness of others.

It is not easy for decision-makers to practice this ethical principle while being at the helm of power or authority, as it corrupts. John Acton rightly says, 'Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.'^[25] There comes a befitting reply from Luther Gulick who says, 'Power needs control and absolute power needs absolute control'^[26]. *Upanishads* preach to control power by laying a few ethical principles.



Therefore, in the corporate world, is it important to- 'punish the bad and reward the good', so it is in public life, Jai Prakash Narayan once identified with this as a very cause behind the menace of corruption in India. Good moral is borne to the good character, a CEO needs to build a good character in the corporate social world by learning- 'leave to live'^[1].

III. Desire nobody's wealth

This in essence asks the earner to keep what is just and give up that is not its rightful share as that may belong to someone else. The temptation to step over rights of others by using a coercive power stems from the lust to earn for future generations. This list is endless and forms the cause of corruption. One needs to leave this lust behind to live longer as a real contributor to the economy and the social sphere of life by creating and equitably distributing the wealth in an 'egalitarian' fashion, one should not desire anybody's wealth ^[2].

Corruption creates social divide; as a few people start amassing their unjust share by depriving the others of their just share. Thus, they create unequal distribution of wealth and opportunities not only for themselves but for future generations as well, thus the poor becomes poorer and the rich becomes richer. Disparity creates an economic barrier for the poor, divides the world between two halves- the rich and the poor or of 'have and have-nots'. Chanakya says, 'Whether one wishes or not, honey or poison kept on tongue gets tasted eventually', therefore, it is unrealistic to expect the custodian of wealth to not siphon off a part of the holdings. However, duty of the king is to make sure it does not happen, and he further goes on to advocate severe punishment if one is found guilty of corruption. Another only effective way is to build a high ethical ground by leaving to live and let live! ^[1], as one should not desire anybody's wealth ^[2].

IV. Infinity minus Infinity is Infinity

Science teaches us that, 'infinity minus infinity is infinity'^[3]. Īśāvāsya similarly says that about the absolute knowledge, which is in abundance, no matter how much we share, it remains in abundance. However, in today's corporate world, people work in silos under a false perception- 'information is power', they keep morsel of information close to chest and do not share their knowledge even within a small team. . They refrain from sharing some trivial things with a newcomer; as a result, new member of the team starts learning everything from the scratch; fails multiple times before finding simple things which are known to other team members from years of practice, e.g. where the centralized database link to organizations, white papers is on the intranet page or how to make an expense claim in the system new to her/him but known to all others for years. As a result, the organisation takes longer and continues investing more before the newcomer starts contributing to the organisation. Organisation collectively wastes many man- hours and money while not really practicing the basic principle of 'knowledge sharing', as leaders overlook its abundant availability, which cannot deplete by sharing among team-members ^[3]. It is the responsibility of the business leader to break such silos.

People do not share knowledge because their 'sphere of competence' is limited and for a selfish reason of keeping one-upmanship; for knowing 'more and more of less and less' they breach the very principle of, 'infinity minus infinity is infinity'^[3], and as a result their temporary importance grows within organisation as it starts becoming people dependent which is not a healthy sign of growth for large multinational companies. Hence, it is important for them to foster the culture of 'knowledge sharing' within teams; cross-teams and cross-departments even without any exception to cross-cultural and cross-national sharing within an organisation, barring confidential intellectual-property related material.

V. The Bad meets its Waterloo!

There are a few people who grow up with corrupt practices, their growth appears fabulous and leaves a feeling of unevenness among those contributing honestly without a stupendous reward.



Then, there are numerous examples of one time high flying promoters being punished by the rule of law in their very life-time. One reaps what one sows, 'the bad meets its Waterloo' ^[4].

People practicing wrong, meet their destiny in darkness, reassures a principle of *īśāvāsya* ^[4]. For the good things a man does, she or he is recognised forever, even after her/ his death, that is glory. Unfortunately, those who ignore just means fail in achieving an everlasting glory for themselves ^[4] and their businesses; and dwindle the brand equity in a longer run. Mahatma Gandhi referred to this principle as 'egalitarianism' ^[15].

VI. Relativity

īśāvāsya refers to the principle of relativity ^[5] when it comes to the pace of competence acquisition. Such pace is governed by an individual's 'sphere of competence'. One sees that a given goal is achievable as it falls in his 'sphere of competence' and other may see the same goal unachievable despite having similar qualification and experience but smaller 'sphere of competence', thus the goal becomes relative ^[5].

'Zone of Acceptance' ^[17], was defined by Herbert Simon and 'Zone of Indifference' ^[18] was defined by Chester Bernard for a goal that appears relative to individuals having similar qualification & experience but a different 'sphere of competence'.

However, it is possible to widen the 'sphere of competence' by practice and 'knowledge sharing' and rearing an attitude to learn with glory. An individual needs to set high benchmark of his own performance and continually strive for betterment through sustained impartial self-assessment, however, if this assessment is breached owing to any temptation, then the cheat and the cheated remain the same, i.e. the very individual.

VII. Neutrality

'Working without fear or favour', or with neutrality ^[6], is important in management and public administration. Person at the helm of the administration or management needs to follow this principle of neutrality honestly. That does not mean being inert without action (that attitude will put the entire system in suspended animation) but being just; impartial and active with action.





Neutrality in corporate practice could be applied to 'hiring and firing' situation where the outcome could spill emotional sensitivities. One as a decision maker needs to be neutral to assessment while selecting the best and ensure exit of the worst! Normally, such decisions are not purely factual or empirical but normative as the values creep-in from human nature. It is important to keep such values at a bay to deliver best to the cause taken up. Neutrality, thus is a state of mind to look at things to be assessed through an unbiased frame.

Political executives create their 'spoils system' or 'kitchen cabinet', so do the private executives in the corporate world. That happens mostly based on normative decisions which are not taken upholding the spirit of the 'principle of neutrality'. Such hand-in-glove approach mostly harms overall prosperity of organization in a longer run, seldom succeeds in shorter run, the propaganda at times happens of the successful chemistry while camouflaging the true picture of collective failure. The impression is given to the people around that such system works while it actually leaves the best in the waiting fray, and the rotten system collapses over time^[4].

VIII. Vision with Control

īśāvāsyā refers to 'vision and control'^[7] in one breath, i.e. *kavirmanīsi*^[7]. That can be seen as a quality of leadership. A leader has to be a visionary; a statesman, this quality is described by the word- *kaviḥ*. A leader must have control over his 'mind' which is described by the word- *manīsi*, to refer to one who is able to express a balanced view and take far reaching positive decisions.

Visionary is one who sees ahead of time and spots early opportunities and has willingness and ability to invest and reap benefits out of such opportunities for internal and external stakeholders. While doing so, it is important for him/ her to observe control over mind while taking a series of decisions as each of the decisions influences the final outcome, hence being a visionary and exercising control over mind at the same time, is a rare desired blend in a leader.

While the journey towards success continues, there are impediments on the way, since it's often an uncharted new path with unforeseen challenges and unknowns, a total sum of it all makes the achievement appear daunting initially. Impediments at times bring so much of disappointment that one with no or less control over mind may tend to give up the pursuit in spite of having had a vision to spot such opportunities. Therefore, it is said that, job of a leader is to take his people from where they are to where they have not been.

If we consider 'vision' as one skillset and 'control' as other, then 'vision' becomes an important quality for spotting business opportunities, while 'control' becomes an equally important one to realize such a vision through successful execution. In management, 'control' or 'feedback mechanism' is referred to as a 'cybernetic' loop, if it is not robust enough, then the end result is ought to be sub-optimal. Considering both these as strengths together, a single expression- *kavirmanīsi*^[7] given by *upanishadik* literature underlines the 'Principle of Correspondence' between the two commensurate entities- 'Vision with Control'^[7].

IX. Ubiquitous-ness

īśāvāsyā describes a few qualities of Brahma, Almighty, one being - *sa paryāgāta*^[7], i.e. one who is ubiquitous^[7]. At times, the actual distance a disciple needs to traverse from where she/ he is to where she/ he needs to go for attaining ultimate knowledge, i.e. *Brahma* is not told by the guide; friend and philosopher. If the distance, the seeker needs to traverse is very long, then it might bog her/ him down completely, hence she/he is taken step by step through goal seeking towards the ultimate goal. That qualifies her/ him to then realise the 'ubiquitous-ness' of the task at hand. Similarly, often in big companies, a larger picture of the ideation around 'Productization' is not revealed to a majority of team members working on parts of it all over the globe. People just work on their pieces and complete it, a few put a few parts together and a very few put it together to make the ultimate product, the purpose of it is centrally controlled by a core team for protecting its intellectual property or its secret sauce. One who would have worked on a very small part of it would hardly have an idea about where his contribution would fit into the overall scheme of things. The entire journey towards that ultimate 'Productization' is a summation of



efforts of many individuals, however, the ideation and its fructification are done by evolved few, those who can think holistically, of all dimensions, ubiquitously^[7]. Unnecessarily revealing its vast scope and idea behind to all the team members would only delay its making hence at times the magnanimity of its length-breadth-depth, i.e. ubiquitous-ness^[7] is left to those who had achieved and experienced.

Though it's a successful approach while thinking strategically, in tactical work, leader is expected to do the opposite, i.e. the contributors be given a complete idea, and there be- 'Shared understanding of shared purpose as proposed by Terry.

Other qualities of *Brahma*, *īśāvāsyā*^[7] talks about are - *śuddhama* (Clean), *apāpaviddhama* (Unblemished), *paribhūh* (Commanding) and *svayambhūh* (Self-Made).

These are the best qualities to be sworn into by any of the CEOs. It is important for the leader to have a clean image, an unblemished character and he/she should command respect; not demand it, and be a self-made man or a woman^[7].

X. Game Theory

īśāvāsyā proposes that *Brahma*, the Almighty has a universal system of governance for everything that is created and makes sure that the rules created, govern that system forever without any failure, with utter perfection so much so that there never arises a need to change or amend any such rules, *yathātathyatah śāśvatībhyah samābhyah arthāna vyadadhāta*^[7].

Law of gravitation does not change for anyone, it's a law of nature, similarly, organizations must have a set of ethical benchmarks or rules against indiscipline, corrupt practices or biases, etc., which must not have any room for tampering or flexibility for those who breach them.

People in the system of *Brahma* need to realize that everything in this system has a rule governing it which monitors their behaviour as well. Therefore it is believed that one strictly reaps what he sows. The universal law of- 'Cause & Effect' relationship is certain. Man constantly hence must drive towards increasing his good qualities and reducing the bad ones.

John Nash propounded the 'Game Theory'^[19] of management in a similar spirit, the crux of it goes thus - 'Minimize your maximum weaknesses and maximize your minimum strengths.'

It is important for every employee in the corporate world to follow this principle for his/ her personal and professional growth. There could be relativity around what is good and what is bad; however as per the universal law of *Brahma* there is no confusion in the nature about what is good and what is bad!

XI. Overcoming Vulnerability

In the corporate world, even within a given domain of work, we do not know at times a few things we are supposed to know. That is called 'Point Vulnerability', referred to as *avidyām*^[9]. If someone is ignorant about many parts of the domain he is supposed to know, then it is called 'Gross Vulnerability', referred to as *vidyām*^[9].

No human being is perfect so, we remain point vulnerable to a few areas of our domain, i.e. *avidyām*, ignorance or delusion. We need to decisively overcome point vulnerability to stay on top of our domain knowledge, i.e. *vidyām*. When one fails to do so he goes into blind darkness as per *īśāvāsyā*^[9].

Gross vulnerability is utterly ridiculed as a professional person is not supposed to stay gross vulnerable within his domain of work, i.e. *vidyām*, such people do not even deserve to work in the domain they are. They go in greater darkness as per *īśāvāsyā*^[9].



īśāvāsya expects more from those who are knowledgeable and recommends stricter benchmarks for them, even their point vulnerabilities are not tolerated, such people in modern management become fit to lead the organisation.

This in other words means that a leader is not allowed to commit even a minor mistake that appears like a blot on him; he must continuously strive to keep himself ahead on the learning curve.

XII. Two Ends of a Continuum

We often find mention of Motivation theory of Fredrick Herzberg ^[20] which is also referred to as a 'Two Factor Theory' in management. The crux of motivation theory is that there is a set of hygiene factors and there is another set of motivation factors. Both are mutually exclusive. Motivation factors motive employees, the presence of hygiene factors, however does not necessarily guarantee employee motivation though makes them more comfortable, however, these two factor-sets are two ends of a same continuum.

īśāvāsya *upanishad* similarly refers to *avidyām* (practical or action) and *vidyām* (theory/ knowledge)^[9] as two factors and ends of a same continuum which can either be mutually exclusive or can co-exist in a fair embodiment. The winning formula for an employee or organisation is the co-existence of thought leadership (theory or knowledge) and action (practical skillsets). In a corporate world, to find 100% co-existence of thought leadership and practical skill sets in every employee is so rare, hence, the organisations as business entities maintain that semblance by hiring non-overlapping competencies so that as a business entity, overall the organisation presides over winning blend of practical and theoretical competence together.

Both the competencies, theoretical and practical are equally important for running profitable and liquid businesses. If one knows 'what' of the sphere, i.e. 'locus' but does not know 'how' of the sphere, i.e. 'focus', then the end result is not a desired outcome and vice-versa. Hence, it is important to have these things together in business continuum with right blend as proposed by īśāvāsya ^[9].





The organisations where this blend is not in desired proportion suffer at the hand of the competition which has a right mix or blend of competence. Barely managing that blend right results into sub-optimal achievement for an organisation and optimally managing that blend right as a part of the DNA of the organisation results into optimal sustainable achievement. Two different sets of results are referred to as *-mrtyum tīrtvā'mrtamaśnute* ^[9] in the *īśāvāsyā upanishad*, i.e. with sub-optimal performance, one overcomes death and with optimal performance, one attains immortality.

An organisation or an individual that just achieves the targets and one that far exceeds it and does it consistently gets to see different sets of avenues unfolding. The others with lackadaisical performance need to settle with the bare minimum!

XIII. Decentralization to Recentralization

'Division of Work' as proposed by F W Taylor ^[21] & Henry Fayol ^[22] is important to be carried out in a business organisation to focus on small parts of the big picture and ensure that every small part of the making gets needed attention. It can happen through decentralisation of power or authority which is referred to as *asambhūtim* in *īśāvāsyā*. However, in big organisations, to run them successfully, at times different Strategic Business Units (SBUs) are formed, which are also referred to as Vertical Integration to enable ultimate focus on a particular line of business. That SBU is made Profit & Loss (P&L) responsible to the umbrella Business Unit. Though it is done for the purpose of better administration under large organisations, the ultimate purpose of such a division is to exercise better accountability and responsibility of that SBUs towards the umbrella business unit, in other words, to enable recentralisation which is referred to as *sambhūtim* in *īśāvāsyā*.

The body of a human being is the best example of one coordinated entity, it has different parts and all coordinate with each other to keep the body alive and in motion. Similarly, different departments e.g. Sales, Marketing, Finance, HR, Operations, Logistics, Production etc., (i.e. *asambhūtim* as individual departments) of a business entity are supposed to work in best coordination with each other to enable better business management (i.e. *sambhūtim* as one entity).

It is seen that the best results are rendered from consolidation/ synthesis, i.e. *sambhūtim* however, due to silos created from division of work or analysis / disintegration, i.e. *asambhūtim*, desired results are not obtained if optimum coordination is missing. Henry Fayol refers to it as POSDCORB ^[23]. Hence, recentralization of decentralized units or horizontal integration of vertically integrated SBUs becomes imperative for optimal results.

Under marketing research; data analysis (i.e. *asambhūtim*) ^[10] is done, however, if the analysed data is not presented in a synthesized format (*sambhūtim*) ^[10], it does not deliver any actionable message to management for taking informed decision. That underlines the fact that it's important to do analysis and synthesis both and best results are obtained from its perfect chemistry in businesses. Lopsided treatment to either of the areas does not render desired results. Be it recentralization and decentralization or horizontal and vertical integration in an organization, excessive focus on any of the areas leads to undesired results. Since organisations are organic entities as they deal with people, different motions at corporate business unit or within SBUs take twists and turns and overall interest of the stakeholders is ignored at times for personal or professional gains. Hence, forbearance of the values and culture of the organisation becomes utmost important in arresting such departures.

Is one expected to know more and more of less and less or less and less of more and more? One who knows more and more of less and less is a specialist and one who knows less and less of more and more is a generalist. Ideal combination is to achieve balance in the two. However, humanly it is very rare to do so hence both are honored, specialization should not lead to parochialism and generalization to ignorance.

A CEO cannot afford to say that his background has been into sales so he does not understand much of HR or Operations or Technology. He may not know everything but he must invest time into sharpening those skillsets which are required to execute duties of a CEO honorably. If a CEO commits mistake, he needs to be punished 1000 times more than the common employee who seldom is a privy to corporate decision making.. *īśāvāsyā*



recommends knowledgeable people to take broader inclusive view, a CEO should practice inclusiveness towards different departments, cultures, geographies and analyze them (*asambhūtim*)^[10] thoroughly to embrace diversities while taking a synthesized (*sambhūtim*)^[10] view of the situation leading to right decision.

XIV. Temptations

īśāvāsyā says that the temptations are nothing but divergences in the journey towards success. It mentions that the truth is hidden under the veil of gold. People often consider gold as truth and remain at that layer of temptation. However truth lies beneath that glossy perceptivities^[11].

Organisations may set up daunting targets, however people who are supposed to achieve them individually or collectively are fallible human beings, their narrow interests supersede organisational interests at times as they may fall prey to temptations (tangible ones through kind or intangible ones through services) and that would jeopardize organization's chances of reaching the target.

It's important to avoid temptations by building a moral character, at all stages factual decision making needs to supersede the normative one, therefore ethos or value system of organization needs to be unshakable, practicing those values in day to day working life, will guide journey to success.

XV. Wise Person's Response stays situational

īśāvāsyā echoes that a wise person's response depends on whom he's interacting with, and changes as per the situation, *tejo yatte rūpam kalyāyatama tatte paśyāmi*^[12]. In an organizational construct, if a CEO comes across an employee wishing him good while entering into a boardroom to discuss a serious topic, he should respond with a broad smile. But, once in the boardroom, he is free to throw his tantrums and anguish at his direct reports. It's a simple situation, that can help understand how one at the helm of organisation should behave, he should know who qualify to see a real him.

If he mistakenly does the opposite and expresses anger in front of an employee passing by then he unknowingly gives away a message he is not supposed to give at all to an employee, in turn gives rise to grapevine. So, it's expected that a leader knows how to control expressions and emotions while rendering his supreme duties.

XVI. Contribution Gratification Equilibrium

Latter part of the verse, *yo'sāvasau purusah so'hamasmi*^[12] touches upon the value of 'egalitarianism'^[24], i.e. equality among people. An analogy could go thus, everyone right from the CEO to the youngest newly joined employee of an organization is supposed to be workers under principal of 'Contribution Gratification Equilibrium'. An employee lower in the ladder should never feel that he / she is not on an equal footing with the CEO when both are putting their best for the organisation. Contribution from all quarters is equally important irrespective of their individual position or experience in the organisational hierarchy. The common factor amongst the leaders and their followers is the common organisational vision, mission and interest. The verse^[12] downplays on any master-slave relation in the system. that tomorrow he would be at the helm of the organisation. Moreover, this lays foundation for upholding meritocratic values in its true spirit as one who contributes most deserves proportionate gratification in such system.

XVII. Life is Finite

bhasmāntam śarīram^[13] reminds us that life is finite. There is timeline for everything we desire to achieve. In corporate world, this becomes super important and relevant. So, our means to attain the goal must be just as well, that is the credo behind the verse.



XVIII. Righteous path to wealth

supathā rāye ^[14], 'righteous path to wealth', is a very meaningful expression as per the last verse of *īśāvāsya*. Businesses are meant to create wealth, their purpose is cherished, however, path taken to wealth must be righteous as well. JRD Tata, has once said, 'Earn honestly and spend judiciously', it sums up the very message given in this verse.

XIX. Conclusion

īśāvāsya upanishad, is a source of wisdom, as per ancient Indian philosophy. We have seen original verses of *īśāvāsya*, its meaning and relevance to the discipline of business ethics under modern management. These verses are equally relevant for shaping ethos of modern CEOs or the leaders at the helm of Government affairs.

References:

- [1]. *tena tyaktena bhuñjīthā*, part of verse 1, *īśāvāsya upanishad*
- [2]. *mā grdhah kasyasviddhanam*, part of verse 1, *īśāvāsya upanishad*
- [3]. *pūrnasya pūrnāmādāya pūrnamevāvaśisyate*, part of peace mantra, *īśāvāsya upanishad*
- [4]. *ātmahano janāh andhena tamasāvrtā: lokā pretyābhigacchanti*, part of verse 3, *īśāvāsya upanishad*
- [5]. *taddūre tadvantike*, part of verse 5, *īśāvāsya upanishad*
- [6]. *ekatvamanupaśyatah*, part of verse 7, *īśāvāsya upanishad*
- [7]. *sa paryāgacchukrakāyamavranasnāviram śuddhamapāpavidddham kavirmanīsi paribhūh svayambhūryathātathyato'rthān, vyadadhācchāśvatībhyah samābhyah*, part of verse 8, *īśāvāsya upanishad*
- [8]. *andham tamah praviśanti ye'vidyāmupāsate, tato bhūya iva te tamo ya u vidyāyām ratāh*, verse 9, *īśāvāsya upanishad*
- [9]. *vidyām cāvidyām ca yastadvedobhya saha, avidyayā mṛtyum tīrtvā'mrtamaśnute*, verse 11, *īśāvāsya upanishad*
- [10]. *andham tamah praviśanti ye'sambhūtimupāsate, tato bhūya iva te tamo ya u sambhūtyā ratāh*, verse 12, *īśāvāsya upanishad*
- [11]. *hiranmayena pātrena satyasyāpihitam mukham*, part of verse 15, *īśāvāsya upanishad*
- [12]. *tejo yatte rūpam kalyānatamam tatte paśyāmi, yo'sāvasau purusah so'hamasmi*, part of verse 16, *īśāvāsya upanishad*
- [13]. *bhasmāntam śarīram*, part of verse 17, *īśāvāsya upanishad*
- [14]. *agne naya supathā rāye asmān*, part of verse 18, *īśāvāsya upanishad*
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Acknowledgement—

1. *upanisadartha kaumudī*, a commentary on *īśāvāsyā upanishad* in Marathi, a regional language in India by Prof. Anant Damodar Athavale, was used as a reference textbook to understand meaning of verses.
2. ISTA software is used for making Roman Diacritic of the original Devanagari Sanskrit text of *īśāvāsyā upanishad*.
3. *īśā upanishad*, The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo file:///C:/Users/ejeetal/Downloads/17IshaUpanishad.pdf is referred to for cross-verification of meaning of a few verses.

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PROFESSOR ASOK KUMAR MUKHOPADHYAY A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

In the year 1970, a young Indian aged around 30 years while entering India Office at London saw an Englishman standing at the entrance. He walked up to the Englishman and after a few necessary words remarked, "I think I have seen you somewhere. You seem to be known to me." The Englishman replied with a smile, "It is very much possible that you have seen me earlier. After all, I was India's last Viceroy." The anecdote of meeting with Lord Mountbatten was often humourously narrated by the legendary figure in Political Science, Asok Kumar Mukhopadhyay.

Professor Asok Kumar Mukhopadhyay (born: 07-12-1940, died: 18-08-2020), popularly known as AKM Sir among his students and colleagues was *Netaji Subhas Chair Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Calcutta*. He was also *Former Emeritus Fellow in Political Science, University Grants Commission, New Delhi* and also served as *Professor of Public Administration at the Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi*.

Graduating in 1960 from Presidency College, Calcutta, with first class Honours in Economics and Political Science, Professor Asok Kumar Mukhopadhyay passed his MA in Political Science from the University of Calcutta in 1962 with first class marks with special papers on Sociology and Social Anthropology. He did his Ph.D from London School of Economics and Political Science (London University) in the year 1972 on *The Politics of Water Supply—The Case of Victorian London*. His second Ph.D was from the University of Calcutta in the year 1973 on *The Panchayat Administration in West Bengal*.

Professor Mukhopadhyay did his Post Doctoral Research from: 1) Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi on *Municipal Government and Urban Development*, and, 2) National Institute of Urban Affairs, New Delhi on *Municipal Personnel Management*.

The learned Professor has a long, brilliant teaching experience spread over a period of four decades. He began his illustrious



Professor Asok Kumar Mukhopadhyay

Professor Asok Mukhopadhyay had a long and close association with various Public Service Commissions and Government of India Institutions. He served Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) New Delhi, West Bengal Public Service Commission, Orissa Public Service Commission, University Grants Commission (UGC) New Delhi; National Council of Educational, Research and Training (NCERT) New Delhi; in different capacities as paper-setter, examiner and head-examiner since 1973.



teaching career from Presidency College, Calcutta (1963-1970). He taught at two other Government Colleges (Taki Government College and Hooghly Mohsin College) between 1973 and 1979. In 1979, he joined *University of Calcutta* where he served till his retirement in 2005. In between he taught at the *Indian Institute of Public Administration*, New Delhi (1982-1984) on deputation.

He was former Editor of *The West Bengal Political Science Review* (Bi-annual Journal of The West Bengal Political Science Association) (1998-2003), and the former Editor of *The Calcutta Journal of Political Science* (Bi-annual Journal of the Department of Political Science, Calcutta University) (1989-1992; 1997-2005). He was a former member of the Executive Committee of *Indian Political Science Association* and former member of the Editorial Board of *The Indian Journal of Political Science* (for different terms in the 1970s and 1980s). He worked as the former President, *West Bengal Political Science Association*.

In 1996, *Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES)* selected him as Senior Research Fellow, on a professional assignment in Germany for three months. It was immediately followed by another invitation for two months in 1996, where he worked as Academic Visitor to *Government Department, London School of Economics and Political Science, London University*.

He has published 15 books and over 100 research papers. He frequently contributed to leading national and international journals of Political Science and Public Administration as well as to standard periodicals and daily newspapers in English and Bengali.

He was a life member of *Indian Political Science Association; Indian Institute of Public Administration*, New Delhi and *Asiatic Society*, Calcutta. He was a former member of *International Political Science Association's Research Committee on Local Government and Politics*.

He delivered occasional lectures on invitation in many Universities in India and abroad. Some of these include Free University, Berlin (Germany); Institute of Commonwealth Studies, London (England); Dhaka University (Bangladesh), University of Madras, University of Mumbai, Banaras Hindu University; Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, Mizoram University, Aizawl, Sambalpur University, Orissa, Jadavpur University, Calcutta, Administrative Training Institute, Government of West Bengal, Calcutta.

He had a hobby of reading and writing. Serious and detailed reading of newspapers both English and Bengali was his habit and passion since childhood, which continued throughout his life. His good handwriting till the last day of his life deserves special mention.

Professor Asok Mukhopadhyay had a long and close association with various Public Service Commissions and Government of India Institutions. He served *Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) New Delhi*, *West Bengal Public Service Commission*, *Orissa Public Service Commission*, *University Grants Commission (UGC) New Delhi*; *National Council of Educational, Research and Training (NCERT) New Delhi*; in different capacities as paper-setter, examiner and head-examiner since 1973.

Recipient of Mahendra Nath Medal from the University of Calcutta, Asok Mukhopadhyay served on interview boards of *Staff Selection Commission (Government of India)*, *Eastern Region*; *West Bengal Public Service Commission*; Universities in and outside West Bengal.

Professor Asok Kumar Mukhopadhyay received Paul.H.Appleby Award from Indian Institute Of Public Administration, New Delhi on October 18, 2013 for rendering distinguished services to Indian Institute Of Public Administration, New Delhi and to the field of Public Administration.

A brilliant academic, gentleman par excellence and a powerful orator, Asok Kumar Mukhopadhyay, will be remembered for his simple style of living, benign nature and affectionate behaviour. His sudden, sad demise is a great loss to the fraternity of Political Science and Public Administration in India. His classroom lectures were unbiased, non-partisan, objective and open-minded.

Asok Kumar Mukhopadhyay has done substantive research in the fields of Urban and Rural Government and Politics in India and abroad. His research interests included *Public Administration, Comparative Politics, Political Thought, Political Theory, Political Philosophy and Political Sociology*. His admirable scholarship, witty sense of humour and serene smile would be deeply missed, even more so, at Union Public Service Commission, New Delhi, with which he shared a very close, warm relationship for the last three decades.

The esteemed professor often referred to two great minds, one from Ancient India and other from Medieval Europe. *Lord Buddha*, on his death



bed, advised his close disciple Ananda to seek necessary enlightenment from inner soul and one's own conscience while confronting any problem. The celebrated Italian poet and philosopher Dante in his long epic poem *Divine Comedy* observed that the darkest places in hell are reserved for those who maintain their neutrality in times of moral crisis.

He repeatedly emphasized that the roots of Indian culture are in the idea of plurality of views and choices. Any genuine democrat, whether in power or out of power, must have a moral commitment to preserve this plurality in order to be acceptable to the people.

Admiration and respect for his teachers were the hallmark of Asok Mukhopadhyay's illustrious career. Throughout his life, he held in high regard, the role of teachers who were instrumental in shaping his life and giving it a proper direction. Their guidance, advices and suggestions played a prominent role in various stages of his life and helped him reach the pinnacle of success. They include Upendranath Ghosal (*Political Science*), Nirmal Chandra Bhattacharyya (*Political Science*), Subimal Kumar Mukherjee (*Political Science*), Bhabatosh Dutta (*Economics*), Dhires Bhattacharyya (*Economics*), Dipak Banerjee (*Economics*), and, George Jones (*Political Science*).

Another noteworthy aspect of Asok Mukhopadhyay, almost unknown to many of his friends, colleagues and students, was his passion for English and Bengali novels, short stories and poetry. He was an ardent reader of Literature and had a varied collection of story books.

Great Expectations and *David Copperfield* by Charles Dickens; *The Mayor of Casterbridge* and *Far From The Madding Crowd* by Thomas Hardy; *The Old Man and the Sea* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls* by Ernest Hemingway; *Treasure Island* and *Kidnapped* by Robert Louis Stevenson; *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe; *The Hunchback of Notre*



Dame by Victor Hugo; *Code Name God* by Mani Bhaumik; *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain were his all time favourites.

He greatly preferred detective and mystery novels like *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, detective stories written by Satyajit Ray, and, *Adventures of Byomkesh Bakshi* by Saradindu Bandyopadhyay. An ardent reader of Shakespearean dramas, like *Julius Caesar*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, *Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It*, *Tempest*, Asok Mukhopadhyay also had collection of short stories written by Ruskin Bond, R. K. Narayan, Anita Desai, Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay and Tarashankar Bandyopadhyay.

The biographical note would be incomplete and imperfect without a reference to Asok Mukhopadhyay's lively and energetic interest in Sports. Probably, nobody knows that he was posted as Professor, Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi during the Ninth Asian Games held in New Delhi in November-December 1982 when Mrs. Indira Gandhi was the Prime Minister of India. He was a regular visitor to various Asian Games events like Badminton (Indraprastha Stadium), Swimming (Talkatora Stadium), Cycling (Yamuna Velodrome), Football (Ambedkar Stadium), Hockey (National Stadium) and Athletics (Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium) including the Opening and Closing ceremonies.

During his IIPA years (1982 to 1984), he often visited Ambedkar Stadium (Football), Feroze Shah Kotla (Cricket) and National Stadium (Hockey).

Since a long time, he had a keen interest in Asian Games, Olympic Games and Commonwealth Games, all of which are held every four years. The events of these Games, telecast live on television channels, kept him engaged and occupied throughout the 15-day period of these Games.

 *Asok Kumar Mukhopadhyay has done substantive research in the fields of Urban and Rural Government and Politics in India and abroad. His research interests included Public Administration, Comparative Politics, Political Thought, Political Theory, Political Philosophy and Political Sociology. His admirable scholarship, witty sense of humour and serene smile would be deeply missed, even more so, at Union Public Service Commission, New Delhi, with which he shared a very close, warm relationship for the last three decades.* 



The quadrennial events of World Cup Football and World Cup Cricket captivated him in no small measure and he was also an eager follower of Lawn Tennis Championships of *Australian Open, French Open, Wimbledon* and *US Open*.

He kept himself updated with Sports news from around the World.

Three prophets of Indian nationalism –*Swami Vivekananda, Aurobindo Ghosh, and Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose* – cast a profound impact and deep-seated influence throughout Asok Mukhopadhyay's life and career. Their philosophy, teachings, ideas and thinking had a significant effect on his beliefs, ideology, principles and thought process. ■

Inputs credit: Samik Mukherjee (Son)



THE GLORY OF BHABHA ATOMIC RESEARCH CENTRE

Atomistic Energy Establishment was renamed Bhabha Atomic Research Centre to commemorate Homi Bhabha who died in 1966 in an air crash.

Homi Bhabha was a physicist. Dirac, the Nobel Prize Winner, was Bhabha's friend and teacher. Homi Bhabha was also nominated for Nobel Prize but unfortunately he did not get it. According to his father's wishes he did engineering in England but he told his father thereafter that his line was physics and not engineering.

Maxwell and Boltzmann were the leading physicists in 19th century. Boltzmann created a branch of physics known as statistical physics. Boltzmann (1844–1906) was an Austrian physicist.

Maxwell (1831 – 1879) was a Scottish physicist. He uncovered the wave-like nature of electric and magnetic fields. The speed of electromagnetic waves predicted by Maxwell coincided with the speed of light. Maxwell concluded that light itself is an electromagnetic wave. Heinrich Hertz confirmed this with experiments. Thus, Maxwell united light, electricity and magnetism. Maxwell's theory of light as a part of electromagnetic spectrum was unscathed by Einstein's theory of relativity.

The statistics of Maxwell and Boltzmann regarded atoms as distinguishable. Quantum Physics changed it. If two photons (electromagnetic waves are also considered as a stream of photons) interchange, the wave function Ψ remains unchanged. This changed the calculation of probability of Maxwell Boltzmann statistics. Bose Einstein statistics was born.

For electrons, the wave function Ψ was also unchanged but it also changed its sign. This can happen only when Ψ was zero. This meant that two electrons with identical quantum numbers cannot exist in the same microstate because Ψ was zero. This changed the calculation of probability differently. Fermi – Dirac statistics was born.

Dirac suggested (and scientific community accepted it) that Bose-Einstein statistics should be called Bose Statistics and Fermi Dirac statistics should be called Fermi Statistics. Photons (which obey Bose Statistics) are called Bosons and Electrons (which obey Fermi statistics) are called Fermions.

Bose statistics and Fermi statistics reduce to Maxwell Boltzmann statistics if density becomes very low or if the temperature becomes very high.





That two electrons having their quantum numbers identical cannot exist in the same microstate is a principle known as Pauli's Exclusion Principle. It was recognized by Pauli. Pauli was awarded Nobel Prize for the Exclusion Principle.

This principle applies to electrons but not to photons because the sign of Ψ does not change for photons but it does for electrons. The probability calculation is different for photons and electrons. Thus, photons (which are Bosons), obey Bose statistics and electrons obey (which are Fermions) Fermi statistics. To exist in the same microstate electron must have their spin different. The spin has only two possibilities.

Spin can be up ↑

or, spin can be down ↓

Two electrons can be there in a microstate only if one electron has its spin up and the other has its spin down.

Dirac was a friend and teacher of Homi Bhabha. Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India also knew Homi Bhabha. Nehru and Bhabha were good friends. Nehru wanted Bhabha (My dear Homi!) to lead the Atomic Energy programme of India. Bhabha's first love was fundamental physics. He accepted Nehru's request but with conditions. He accepted the offer of Nehru to be the director of the atomic energy program. But he insisted that he should also be appointed secretary of the department of atomic energy (It meant that he did not want an IAS officer above him.)

He also wanted that he should be allowed freedom to ignore Central Public Works Department (CPWD) and Union Public Service Commission (UPSC). He also wanted that the Department of Atomic Energy should be out of Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). He also wanted a Ministry of Atomic Energy of which the Department of Atomic Energy should be a part and Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister, must be the Minister for Atomic Energy. Nehru accepted these conditions.

Bhabha proved to be not only a distinguished scientist but a very able administrator. He was the architect of India's atomic Energy Programme and he continued to be the Director of Tata Institute of Fundamental Research for Fundamental Physics was his first love.

One important policy of Bhabha was not to create a post and then find the person. He spotted the person first and then created a post for him or her.

Bhabha died in an air crash in 1966 and Department of Atomic Energy (and the Ministry of Atomic Energy) are today rightly called Bhabha Atomic Research Centre. The Prime Minister of India continues to be the Cabinet Minister for Atomic Energy. Secretary, Department of Atomic Energy continues to be a Scientist but a non-IAS. ■

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(The author belongs to the Indian Postal Service batch of 1966. He retired in 2001.)



JAL SHAKTI ABHIYAN: CATCH THE RAIN INITIATIVE LAUNCHED BY THE GOVERNMENT TO SAVE WATER

In a bid to save the nation from the water crisis, the Central Government has recently launched a programme to conserve water. With a core focus on water conservation and rainwater harvesting, the Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain (JSA:CTR) initiative is one such approach of the government to save water. The initiative is a collaborative effort of National Water Mission, Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan and Ministry of Jal Shakti.

The Ministry of Jal Shakti has initiated a nation-wide campaign “Jal Shakti Abhiyan : Catch the Rain” focusing on saving and conserving rainwater with the theme “Catch the rain, where it falls, when it falls” from March 22, 2021 to November 30, 2021 in the pre-monsoon and monsoon periods of 2021, covering both urban and rural areas of all the districts in the country.

Under this campaign, various water conservation techniques will be introduced or enhanced. At the same time efforts would be undertaken to harvest rainwater in rural as well as urban areas.

To facilitate these activities, the Government has requested states to open “Rain Centers” in each district in their respective Municipalities or Gram Panchayat offices. The states have been asked to put in efforts so that all buildings in the district should have Rooftop Rainwater Harvesting System and that the maximum quantity of rain water falling in any compound should be impounded within the compound itself. The focus should be -- No water or very limited water must flow out of the compound. This will help in improving soil moisture and in raising the ground water level.

In urban areas it will reduce water gushing onto roads damaging them and will prevent urban flooding. During the launch of the campaign, the Prime Minister spoke about the implementation of the Ken Betwa Link Project which will be the first project of the National Perspective Plan for interlinking of rivers.





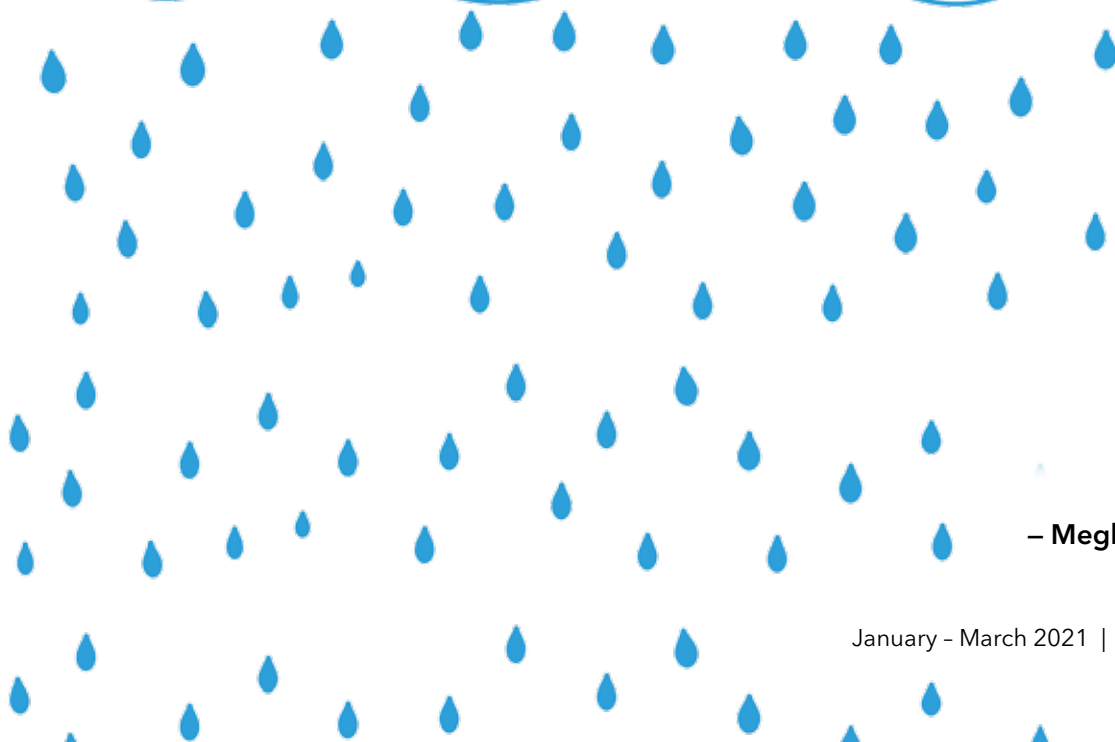
The Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the launch has pointed out that “the better India manages rainwater, the lesser the country’s dependence on groundwater.” The Government is implementing a number of schemes for rainwater harvesting which include Atal Bhujal Yojana (Atal Jal), Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, etc. Trainings, workshops, painting competitions, awards, seminars, water talks, webinars, etc., are also held for awareness generation and for effective implementation of schemes and programmes on water conservation and rainwater harvesting.

The Government hopes that the tag line “catch the rain, where it falls, when it falls” will give a nudge to all stakeholders to create Rain Water Harvesting Structures suitable to the climatic conditions and sub-soil strata to store rainwater as rains falling in the four to five months of monsoon in India are the only source of water for most parts of the country today. ■



Catch The Rain

Where it falls, When it falls



– Meghna Chukkath

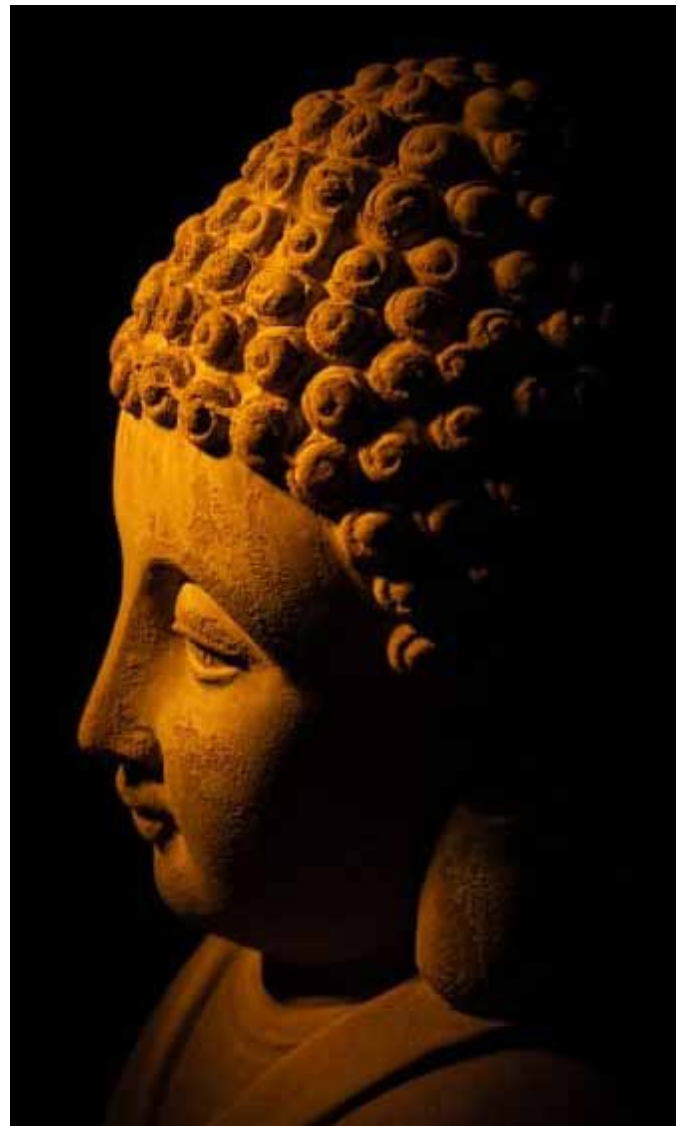
GAUTAM BUDDHA: THE GLORIOUS MASTER

In the annals of human civilization, the 6th Century BC was the most attractive and remarkable one. In this century alone the Greek Philosopher and Mathematician, Pythagoras; Gautam Buddha, the founder of Buddhism; Vardhman Mahavir, the exponent of Jainism and the Chinese political thinker and philosopher Confucius appeared on this earth almost at the same time, who had made profound, indelible contribution over man's socio-political, ethical, and religious life past 2500 years. Among those great men, the visit of the Lord Buddha to this planet was, by any scale, glorious and virtuous indeed.

In India, the period before the emergence of the Buddha was one of the darkest ages in the life of human history. It was, indeed, intellectually, and morally a backward era. While throwing light over the nature of this era, E.G. Taylor (1830/1887) had rightly said in his celebrated book 'Buddhism and Modern Thoughts': "Man had been ruled by external authority long enough. If he is to be truly civilized; he must learn to be ruled by his own principles. Buddhism is the earliest ethical system where man is called upon to have himself governed by himself". Taking a thread from the assessment of Buddhism as made out by Taylor, an American Prof. Dwight Goddard (1861 - 1939) in his book, '*The Buddhist Bible*' could not stop himself and thus said; "Among the world's religious teachers, Buddha alone has the glory of having rightly judged the intrinsic greatness of man's capacity to work out his salvation without extraneous aid".

Even the Nobel Laureate of 1913 for *Gitanjali*, Rabindranath Tagore in his work, 'Buddhadeo' unequivocally wrote: "India is being made known among the galaxy of nations due to the fact that Lord Buddha was born in India". He further expressed his earnest wish in his poetic style that let Tathagat reappear on the Indian soil by saying: "Bring to this country, once again, the Blessed name which made the land of his birth sacred to all distant lands. Let thy great awakening under the Bodhi tree be fulfilled".

It is certainly needless to observe that the Buddha is the tallest religious master who invented and propagated the real philosophy of life among the masses like this: "Religion is necessary for a free



society; not every religion is worth having; religion must relate to the facts of life and not to theories and speculations of God or soul or heaven or hell. It is wrong to make God, the centre of religion. It is wrong to make salvation of the soul as the centre of religion; it is wrong to make criminal sacrifices to be the centre of religion, real religion lives in the heart of man and not in *shastras*. In fact, man and morality must be the centre of religion. If not, religion is a cruel superstition, the function of religion is to construct the world and to make it happy and not to explain its origin or its end. It would be futile to do so".

Buddha said that the unhappiness in the world is due to conflict of interests and the only way to solve it is to follow the 'Great Eight-fold Paths' propounded by him at around BC 528. Those are: right view, right aim, right speech, right mindfulness, right perseverance, right conduct, right livelihood, and



right concentration. By following these eight-fold paths, Buddha is sure to establish the kingdom of righteousness on this earth by banishing the sorrow and unhappiness from the face of the planet. In his time and few centuries later, many rich and poor were attracted towards his teachings in and outside India. However, the existing Hindu socio-religious order is based on the inequality, followed by caste and *chaturvarnya* systems. Buddha stood for liberty, equality, fraternity, and justice. He strongly denounced caste system and *chaturvarnya* which he found detrimental to establish an egalitarian society.

Buddha, unlike others, is the only religious master who enthused the humanity by saying that anyone could be enlightened like him if the seeker decides to pass through the ordeal he had undergone. Everybody needs to ponder over this statement he made 2500 years ago. These great words must hypnotize and excite every sensible person even today, to select the right path for her/his journey. Significantly, in other religions, their individual masters took deliberate attempts to see that nobody, no devotee unsettles their pedestal. Buddha, in contrast, democratized his enlightenment by saying that anyone could achieve Buddhahood; if he or she follows him step by step.

Buddha speaks plain. His message is straight. He is the only master who threw open his teachings for anyone to test or challenge. This is something unbelievable. But it is a fact. No other religious masters dared to allow devotees to challenge their philosophies. In appreciation of Buddha, a famous American writer, W.C. Fields (1880-1946) observed: "You cannot look for loopholes in Buddha. Yes, you can look for loopholes in Jesus. Jesus was not well educated. He is using a very rough language because he was a rough man, a carpenter's son. Whereas, Buddha was the son of a king, well-educated and well cultured. His words are soft, convincing and prudent."

Importantly, Bertrand Russell, a noble laureate of 1950 also followed the line of W. C. Fields to praise Buddha. During a lecture on 'Why I am not a Christian?' at the National Secular Society at London on 6th March 1927, he impressed upon the gathering by saying: "With Jesus, I can fight. But before Buddha, I suddenly feel hesitant. I am not certain about my grounds. Because Buddha convinces me on his own grounds. You can look for loopholes in Jesus. But it is not so with Buddha. Buddha believes in logical analysis of everything. He asks for proof. Buddha is

strictly logical. He will not utter a single word which cannot be proved with the help of human senses.

Buddha's teachings are not like the established dogmas of a religion. In other religions, there is belief, there is God, there is soul and there is salvation. There is paradise and hell too. Whereas, in Buddhism, all these inconceivable things have been discarded with great force of reasoning. This is something unique. Never did such things happened in the history of human consciousness. Notwithstanding, the Buddha's unparalleled philosophy was repressed by external and internal forces for about 1200 years from 8th century AD to 20th century AD. In the 20th century, it was Dr. Ambedkar who astonishingly emerged on the horizon of the existing Hindu socio-religious order, like a sun emitting energy to bring a new lease of life to the oppressed mankind in the subcontinent. His rising and its effects on the grounds could be equated with the biological process of photosynthesis, where the sun rays play the role of a catalyst to help produce energy for the sustenance of plants. In absence of the sun, the plant kingdom is bound to go extinct. In the same way, the arrival of Dr. Ambedkar greatly impacted the lives of the suppressed, oppressed and the discriminated humanity in India. He thoughtfully concluded that without conversion to another religion, it would be impossible to achieve manhood by his people as their basic human rights were abridged by the prevailing system for the past thousands of years.

To achieve his goal, he organized hundreds of public meetings and conferences throughout the country to make his people ready to move from their historical religion to some other faith where equality, liberty and fraternity are ensured for their dignified livelihood. In a packed public meeting held at Bombay on 31st May 1936, he delivered a stirring speech saying: "Why do you remain in that religion which doesn't treat you as human being? Why do you remain in that religion which prohibits you from entering temples? Why do you remain in that religion which does not allow you to get education? Why do you remain in that religion which insults you at every step?" These thunderous words impacted the minds and hearts of the audience instantly for conversion to some other religion where liberty, freedom and brotherhood prevail.

In Buddhism, Dr. Ambedkar found no discrimination, there is no talk of God, nor there is recognition to the existence of soul or salvation.



Buddha is the only preacher who has called upon the man to have himself governed by himself without any inconceivable support. This basic philosophy of Buddha attracted the mind of Dr. Ambedkar when he was thinking of denouncing his Hindu religion since 1935. In his BBC broadcast of 12th May 1956, on 'Why I like Buddha and how it is useful to the world', he emphatically said: "I prefer Buddhism because it gives three principles in combination which no other religion does. Buddhism preaches *Pradnya* (wisdom), *Karuna* (love) and *Samata* (equality) together. This is what man wants for a good and happy life. Neither God nor soul can save humanity." In this broadcast, he further stated that Buddhism was a complete answer to maintain peace in the world. He was completely against the propaganda of communism in countries like Russia as the philosophy of communism was based on the bloody revolutions. Whereas the foundation of Buddhism is on the bloodless revolutions. It is just a change of mind and heart on its own, without any external kind of force – physical or economical.

Finally, the day dawned on 14th October 1956 at Nagpur when Dr. Ambedkar initiated his 5-lakh people into the fold of Buddhism in a peaceful manner,

unheard of in the history of mankind. While making a significant speech before the vast gathering on 15th October 1956 from the place of conversion, now popularly known as 'Deeksha Bhoomi', he impressed upon the audience: "Man cannot live by bread alone. Man has mind which needs food for thought. Religion instils hope in man and drives him to activity. Hindu religion has watered down the enthusiasm of the downtrodden. And I found it necessary to change our faith and embrace Buddhism. Some people say that Buddhism is on its dead bed. If it is so, it is our duty to raise it to a better status. We should act in a manner to enthuse and inspire other people too. A great responsibility has fallen on our shoulders. You should endeavour this religion sincerely and keep in view the position it had once attained. You must lead such a life that you may command respect from the public of all walks of life. If you do not do so, people will laugh at our conversion. Do not think that this religion is like the dog-collar tied around your neck. This religion can save not just this country but the whole world. Therefore, you must take pledge today that you, the followers of Buddhism, will not only work to liberate yourself but will try to elevate your country and the world. Buddha and Buddhism alone can save this world." ■

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