The Current Indian Crisis

DARKNESS BEFORE DAWN

V. K. R. V. RAO

Social Science Institute, Allahabad

THE CURRENT INDIAN CRISIS

Darkness Before Dawn

V. K. R. V. RAO

National Professor

First Edition ı 1984

320.954
R18C

© G. B. Pant Social Science Institute, Allahabad

Published by O. P. Vohra for
VOHRA PUBLISHERS & DISTRIBUTORS
745, University Road, Allahabad—211002

Printed at :
Dev Bharti Press
10, Darbhanga Colony, Allahabad

These lectures were delivered by Professor V. K. R. V. Rao, under the auspices of the Govind Ballabh Pant Social Science Institute in the Govind Ballabh Pant Memorial Lecture Series on 22, 23 & 24 March, 1984. The Institute expresses its thankfulness to Professor Rao for presenting a lucid analysis of the present crisis in the country.

A. D. Pant

DIRECTOR

INTRODUCTION

Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, in whose memory these lectures have been endowed, was one of India's greatest sons, who had played a significant role in the country's fight for freedom under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. During this struggle, he not only underwent several terms of imprisonment but also suffered physical injuries which left a permanent mark on him throughout his life. Before independence when he was Prime Minister of U. P. during 1937-39, and after independence when he was Chief Minister from 1946 to 1954, he rendered significant services to the economic and social development of his state. He then transferred his services to the whole of India by moving to Delhi in 1955, where he served as Minister for Home Affairs till his death in 1961.

I had the privilege of knowing him for many years and more intimately after he shifted to Delhi in 1955. I found in him a man of remarkable erudition combined with good common-sense and practical wisdom. At the same time, he showed himself to be a person of great gentleness and modesty, who gave himself no airs in spite of the big position he held in the country both within and outside Government. Whenever I met him, he made me feel perfectly at ease and free to express myself even to the extent of what less generous and charitable men may have described as impertinence. I should like to recall on this occasion three incidents which left me humble and grateful and full of respect and regard for his greatness as a perfect gentleman.

The first relates to the invitation I extended to him to inaugurate a function in Delhi University of which I had become Vice-Chancellor. I had started a programme of extension lectures for the general public in different parts of the city under the caption "The University must go to the people" and wanted him to inaugurate the programme

at a meeting in the Convocation Hall where all those who had registered themselves for these extension courses were requested to assemble. Having heard of Pandit Pant's habitual unpunctuality at public functions in U. P. and being a stickler for punctuality myself, I told his PA to convey to him a personal message couched in somewhat impertinent language : "Please tell him," I told the PA, "that Delhi is not U. P. and our University functions have a tradition of starting on time". The PA was aghast and embarassed. I told him not to be afraid but convey to the Minister what I had said as my personal message. He evidently had, for I found Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant almost exactly on time for the inaugural function. He was only two minutes late and apologised for the same with a twinkle in his eyes. I felt humble and ashamed of my brashness in sending him the kind of message I had sent.

The second incident was of a more serious character. The Government of India had decided to start a new co-educational medical college in Delhi in memory of Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad and without waiting for the necessary permission from the University or undergoing the formalities required for the purpose, advertised its starting and admitted students. Evidently, the Director General of Health Services took the University for granted as it was almost wholly dependent for its finances on the Government of India. I was not prepared to be taken for granted either personally or institutionally and told the D. G. that the new medical college would not get affiliation as it had not complied with the required procedures. He did not take me seriously at first, but when he found I was adamant, he arranged a meeting for me with Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant who, as Minister of Home Affiairs, was also in charge of Delhi Administration. I met Pandit Pant at his residence. He was, as usual most gentle and asked me why I was creating difficulties. I told him that as Vice-Chancellor I had to implement the statutes and ordinances of the University, even as Ministers in the Central Cabinet had to uphold the Constitution and actually took an oath to do so on their induction as Ministers. I had of course taken no oath of office as Vice-Chancellor, but the position was not different in practice. The Home Minister looked at me again with a twinkle

in his eyes and asked me to explain the procedures for affiliation of new colleges. I did so briefly, adding that I felt it my duty to observe the statutory procedures of the University and would not continue in office if I could not do so. Pandit Pant's reaction was not one of irritation or anger. He looked at me for a moment and then asked what do you suggest then. I replied : "Let the authorities apply for affiliation, the University will appoint an inspection committee, and after its report is accepted by the University and the Government, steps can be taken for giving it affiliation. As this would take time, please postpone the opening of the college to the next academic year." "What shall we do with the students who have been given admission", he asked. I replied : "you can send the women students to Lady Hardinge College and the men students to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences". "But that is only a post-graduate institution", he pointed out, to which I replied, "They have provision for admitting a limited number of under-graduates". There was silence for two minutes. He then turned to me with a benevolent gesture, I can never forget. "Have it your own way, and be a Constitution-abiding Vice-Chancellor". I felt overwhelmed and felt like touching his feet. He was a really great man who did not let his power and authority to submerge the feelings and duties of lesser persons.

The third incident is another instance of his kind and generous nature. I had requested an appointment with him and was given a time. I went to his residence at the appointed time and found a number of other persons in the hall. Panditji was seated in a corner, and, one by one the persons assembled went upto him, talked for 5 minutes and then left. When my turn came, I went upto him and told him in my usual cheeky fashion that I had hoped to have a personal talk with him and did not expect to be part of a durbar. He then gave his usual winsome smile and said : "You know, I can't help it, when so many people want to meet me. But for you I would suggest that when you want to meet me next, don't ask for official appointment. Come for dinner and then we can have a relaxed talk". I took him at his word and met him several times

at dinner, at which no one else was present except his family members.   He was really a noble and a big hearted person.

You should not therefore be surprised at the alacrity with which I accepted Prof. A. D. Pant's invitation to deliver these lectures endowed in his memory.   I consider it both a privilege and a pleasure to have done so.

V. K. R. V. Rao

———

CONTENTS

———

I

The Current Indian Scene :
    Light And Darkness

CHAPTER I

THE CURRENT INDIAN SCENE : LIGHT AND DARKNESS

Looking at the contemporary Indian situation, one sees a mixed picture, giving rise to both pessimism and optimism for the future of our country.

Let me first glance at the optimistic side of the picture. It is now 37 years since we got our independence and gave ourselves a Constitution based on parliamentary democracy, adult franchise, fundamental rights, directive principles of state policy, and economic growth with social justice. Unlike in most parts of the developing and ex-colonial world, we have managed to retain our parliamentary democracy. It is true that we have had a long spell of one party government, but it is also a fact that we have had opposition parties forming governments for longer or shorter periods both in the States and at the Centre. No doubt we have had a period of internal emergency when many of our democratic freedoms were suspended and there was fear that parliamentary democracy would be replaced by non-parliamentary rule and a one party or even dynastic dictatorship. But it is also a fact that the emergency was not made permanent, the very government that declared it also terminated it, voluntarily going in for a general election at which it lost heavily ; and a new Government was formed at the Centre with a coalition of opposition parties giving itself a new one-party name. Thus there was a peaceful transfer of power from a semi-dictatorial to a fully democratic government on the basis of a free and fair general election. When the Janata party broke up due to its internal divisions and no government could be formed at the Centre with a parliamentary majority, general elections were held once again ; and the same electorate, which had so decisively thrown Mrs. Indira Gandhi and her party out of power in 1977, returned her to power in 1980 with a stable and equally decisive majority. Once again

there was a peaceful transfer of power.   Similarly, there were peace-
ful transfers of power in the States, sometimes in favour of Mrs.
Gandhi and her party and sometimes in favour of an opposition party
or a combination of opposition parties or a new political party as in
Andhra Pradesh.   Parliamentary democracy has proved its ability to
survive in our country bringing about a peaceful transfer of power
through the adult franchise electorate voting in free and fair general
elections.   No political party is asking for the abrogation of parlia-
mentary democracy, though the way in which it is sought to be
worked does not command intra-party agreement and in fact leaves
much to be desired. This commitment of India to political democracy
based on adult franchise and periodic elections, when political
democracies have collapsed in so many parts of the world, is a matter
of profound satisfaction.   Parliamentary democracy has survived in
India and is accepted by all political parties in spite of their ideol-
ogical differences or their assessment of the way in which it has
worked.   This is something the country can be proud of.   In many
ways it is the most optimistic factor for the future in the contem-
porary Indian situation.

The second bright factor in the situation is that, in spite of dismal
prophesies to the contrary, India continues to be one political unit as
a sovereign nation.   Of course, there have been alarms and
excursions, we have suffered invasions of our territory, and divisive
regional forces have been operating in different frontier areas of the
country.   Not withstanding this, India continues to be one sovereign
political entity, and has gone on widening, deepening and streng-
thening the basic communication, economic, administrative and
educational infrastructure that is so necessary for the survival of such
a large country as a single political entity. It is not in the interest of
any part of India either in the short or in the long period to break
up the country into disparate sovereign units nor do any of them
want to become satellites or playthings of external powers, super-
powers or other forces.   In fact, there is a strong underlying feeling
among all the people and political parties of the basic need for one
sovereign Indian identity, even from the point of view of regard
for their individual regional interests or pride in their regional

identities. It is this feeling, historical, emotional and also utilitarian —that makes them use their separate identities for pressurising the Indian polity to giving them regional concessions rather than for breaking up the country's single political identity. In spite of the dismal predictions about India's territorial and political future which have again started surfacing abroad, I for one have no doubt that India will continue permanently as a single sovereign political entity, though it may have to undergo constitutional and administrative changes in Centre-State relations.

A third factor on the optimistic side is the way in which we have been able to maintain the secular character of the State in spite of a feeling to the contrary created by the many instances of inter-communal conflict and violence that have been witnessed in independent India. The constitutional concessions given to the minorities in respect of education, religious practices, and economic opportunities have been sought to be fulfilled by the Central Government, the State Governments and the judiciary, irrespective of their political or personal composition. As far as the State in India is concerned, it has sought to lean backwards to do its best to look after its minorities within the limits of governmental power. India can be proud of its governmental record in respect of its Muslim minority in spite of internal disturbances and subversive and provocative Muslim influences from some of its neighbours. Though its two sovereign neighbours on the sub-continent have become Islamic states, India continues to remain a secular state and no political party that has any chance of getting into power has any ideas or programmes to the contrary.

The country can also be proud of its governmental record of positive and discriminating support to those sections of Indian society that have been socially and economically oppressed and exploited on the grounds of their heredity such as the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled tribes. Nor can one deny the advance that has taken place in their educational and economic condition, even though one may quarrel with the extent and pace of such advance. We are of course quite right in looking with special concern at the continuing exploitation of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, but it is

also necessary to take a balanced view and not ignore the positive efforts that the Government has put in for improving the conditions of these traditionally backward sections of Indian society.

The country can also claim some credit for the positive and deliberate steps it has taken to tackle the problem of mass poverty, which embraces more than the traditionally and hereditarily poor sections of Indian society. While during the earlier periods of planned development, the emphasis was on growth rather than on social justice, the latter years of planning has seen a frontal attack on poverty by special attention to the poor as individuals rather than merely as spatial or social groups. Besides the twenty-point programme and the stress on basic needs, there have been specific programmes for the individual poor such as integrated rural development, rural employment, subsidised distribution of physical assets besides credit, and special attention to the *antodaya* sections or the poorest of the poor. Lifting increasing numbers of people below poverty line to above it has become a specific objective of plan programmes and development. While these anti-poverty programmes may not have yielded adequate results and the poor continue to be with us in large numbers, there can be no doubting the reality of the effort behind *garibi hatao* ; nor should one ignore such positive results as have been achieved by way of reduction in the numbers of the poor or in the content of their poverty.

Also on the plus side is the country's substantial achievement in economic growth. In contrast with the economic stagnation, and marginal if not actualy nil growth rate seen during the period of colonial rule, post-independent India has achieved a compound growth rate of about 3.5 percent. The output of food grains has practically trebled in less than four decades, and there has been an impressive increase in domestic energy with the production of crude forming a success story. While industrial output has not grown at targeted or expected rate, especially in recent years, nevertheless the growth achieved is substantial and gives India a place within the top ten industrialised countries of the world. This presents an astonishing contrast to the situation prevalent in the thirties, in terms of variety, import substitution, capital goods, intermediate goods,

2

durable consumption goods, and luxury articles. The urban population has grown enormously in absolute numbers, though it still remains below 25 percent of the total population. But we have all the ills attending urban society elsewhere, with perhaps only a part of the conveniences and the stability that is found in other urban conglomerations. India has now some of the world's largest cities and its urban population in absolute numbers is perhaps second or third in international ranking. I am not suggesting that all this is an unmixed blessing, but it does show a good measure of achieve- ment, if urbanisation is regarded as a progressive step towards modernisation.

In terms of transport and communication, the results achieved have been impressive in terms of coverage and quality. The majority of Indian cities and large towns are now linked by air; practically all cities and towns and a majority of villages with a population of over 1,000 and some below even that number, are now linked by road. The railway system has also increased its coverage though not to the same extent ; but in terms of the quality of service offered in the lowest passenger class (now called second class in place of the previous third) there has been a significant and conspicuous improve- ment. Travel across the length and breadth of the country has now become easier and it is possible for an Indian to get a first hand knowledge of his vast country much more easily than in the past. There has also been a vast expansion of telephone services though largely confined to urban areas, while the postal system now covers practically all the villages in the country, besides of course its towns and cities. There has also been an immense spurt in media develop- ment, not only through the written word, but also through broad- casting and now the T. V. A particular beneficiary of media development has been Indian languages. The communication gap between the rural and urban areas is now much less than it was before independence.
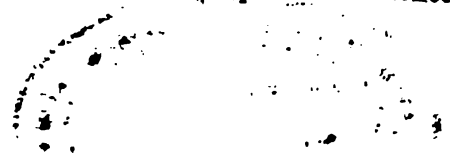
In the field of social services also, the country has made significant progress in absolute terms. There has been a tremendous increase in student enrolment at all levels, and the country has accumulated a stock of scientific and technical personnel that is not

only the second or third largest in the world but also given it a profitable export industry. Hospitals, health centres and medical facilities (both private and public) have increased in appreciable numbers and some of the medical facilities the country now offers is of such quality as to attract foreign visitors, especially from the Middle East, for medical attention. There has been a marked rise in average longevity and a sharp fall in infant and maternal mortality. The tourist traffic has recorded a sizeable advance, and places of cultural and tourist interest have been given a face lift and easier access. Cultural activities, including music, painting and sculpture, have expanded, especially in urban areas ; and the local engagement columns of cities and even of big towns give a massive evidence of the increase in leisure activities among the urban population. Much of urban India, especially the big metropolitan centres, can now stand comparison with the cities of the developed world in the cultural fare they offer both to their citizens as well as to their visitors.

On the international horizon, the country has made noticeable progress in its standing ; its citizens abroad who either go for temporary or longer periods including those who take up foreign citizenship enjoy great prestige ; and there has been a wholesale change in the quality and professional competence of its emigrees. Indians or people of Indian origin now form an important and influential group in many developed countries, especially in the United States and the United Kingdom ; and many of them are showing a positive interest in the development of their home country. India's voice is listened to with respect in all international forums, Indian employees of U. N. organisations have brought credit to their country, and Indian culture and philosophy are now striding across the whole of the developed world. India is currently Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement and very influential in its many offshoots ; and is also taking the lead in the North-South dialogue and in pressng for disarmament and world peace. New Delhi has now become practically the most sought after venue for holding inter-governmental, professional, and other international meets including both developed and developing countries. And the Indian media are full of accounts of India's leading participation in the international realm, which stimulates pride in India's national identity.

On the social side, also, there has been considerable change in a progressive direction. Many members of the submerged and deprived sections of Indian society are now getting out of their traditional bondage and entering into the mainstream of society; and women now play a more prominent role in all activities, including the political and professional, than they do in practically most developing and even in some developed countries. The economic and political opportunities, both legitimate and otherwise, now available to its citizens have brought into existence a large, growing, and dynamic middle class especially in urban but also in rural areas, that did not exist in the pre-independence period. The economic ladder generated by independence and governmental support has led to a spurt of money power among the upper and middle classes and given them a position in society and an influence that far exceeds that exercised by the professional classes in the pre-independence period. Independence and elections brought a new class of politicians seeking power and money, while the expending power of government and controls increased the number of bureaucrats and gave them a money generating power they never had earlier. The growth in number, influence and power of this commercial, industrial, bureaucratic, and political middle class is an outstanding feature of post-independence development, and it constituted a growth-oriented factor.

I have not been telling you anything that you do not already know. In fact, all that I have said is present in your sub-conscience, though you may not be getting the facts aggregated in your conscious thinking. I have taken your time in telling you all this, which is obvious and which you already know, not only because of the sweeping contrast it presents to me between now and the time I grew up in pre-independence India, but because I think it is necessary to balance our thinking and not plunge into a sea of despondency on the future of our country by looking only at the minus points in our contemporary situation. We are all too prone to concentrate only on the negative aspect of what we see around us today. This certainly has a debilitating effect on our ability to overcome the faults of omission and commission during these 35 or 37 years after we became free from British rule and expected that independence by itself would usher in an utopian era. Hence my dwelling at such

length at what is obvious in the contemporary situation. I have
done this because it remains submerged--unsung and unhonoured in
the words of the poet and even unrecognised--and fails to have the
desired effect in stimulating our self-confidence and steeling our will
and effort to rectify the mistakes in our past and so give us a hopeful
rather than a hopeless view of the future. It is not only a mystical
faith in the future of India that I am expressing. I am also trying
to give a rational basis for an optimistic future from the post-
independence experience of achievements grounded on self-reliance
in many fields and our standing together in times of national crisis
in spite of latent or even overt domestic differences.

I shall now pass on to dwell on what is more familiar to your
ears, namely, the many negative aspects that force themselves on
our consciousness in the contemporary situation and the many
frustrations, differences, and discords that seem to mock at our pre-
independence aspirations and our post-independence promises and
threaten to give a fatalistic inevitability to the darkness that appears
to cloud the future of our country.

Let me begin with the changing position of the feeling of
India's national identity and its sense of oneness before and after
independence. It is true that many Muslims, afraid of a majority
Hindu domination that might emerge after independence, were seek-
ing an independent homeland in the Indian sub-continent. It is
also a fact that a number of members of the Scheduled Castes, dis-
gusted with the discriminating behaviour of their caste Hindu
brethren, were not ready to cooperate in the ending of British rule
that might result only in a change in the colouring of the skin of
their domestic oppressors and exploiters. But it is also true that
quite a number of Muslims joined in the struggle and sacrificed for
Indian independence as also a number of members of the Scheduled
Castes. Neither linguistic nor regional nor casteist nor even class
differences came in the way of the emotional fervour for freeing
Mother India from foreign shackles. Not only had I read about it
in contemporary newspapers and journals when I was young, but I
had also seen it conspicuously in action during the early thirties,
when Gandhiji went on his Dandi march and cosmopolitan and
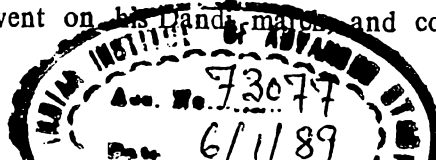
inegalitarian Bombay gave itself to a united and non-violent display of support to his progammes. Women came out of their cloisters and joined in the struggle, with children forming themselves into *Vanar Senas* and marching on the streets singing nationalistic songs and raising patriotic slogans. Every one was aggressively Indian and the thrill it gave us who were living under foreign rule had to be felt to be believed. Things have now become vastly different. We, or vast numbers of us, are now aggressively Hindus or Muslims, among the Hindus Brahmins or non-Brahmins, among non-Brahmins either Kayasthas or Rajputs or Jats or Yadavas or Marathas or Kumbis or Vokkaligas or Lingayats, Reddies or Kammas, Mudaliars, Chettiars or Naidus or Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes ; and amongst these are sub-divisions more than I can either count or remember. Besides, we have no one national language, and talk to each other in our own mother tongue or in English when we can do so ; or sometimes we converse in Hindustani or in broken Urdu when we are Muslims hailing from the South or West or East. We are Tamils, Malayalees, Andhras, Kannadigas, Maharashtrians, Gujarathis, Rajasthanis or Bengalis or Punjabis or Oriyas or Hindi-wallas. We identify ourselves by our religions, castes and sub-castes, languages and regions, and not by the one country of which we are all citizens. We do not even feel irritated when foreigners tell us that they go round searching the country for Indians We take it as a huge joke that it needs a Diogenes with a lamp in broad day-light to find a person who is aggressively Indian and proud of being so. This is in such startling contrast to what was prevalent during the struggle for independence and for many years after that one begins to wonder if one is living in the same country. The biggest problem we find in the contemporary Indian situation is this weakening of the sentiment of Indian nationality and it does give one cause for pessimism about the future.

The major problem that troubled us in the pre-independence days was the Hindu-Muslim problem ; and its ultimate culmination was the partition of the country. But partition has not solved the problem as far as our country is concerned ; nor has the partition of Pakistan into Pakistan and Bangla Desh. The Constitution of India contains generous safeguards for the minorities, of which the

most important of course is the Muslim community. Muslims are represented in both the Central and State governments and this has been continuously so since independence. Muslims have occupied the highest positions in the country including the armed services. We have had Muslim Presidents and Vice Presidents of the Republic and Governors of Indian States and Chief Justices of both Supreme Court and the State High Courts. But the Muslim community has continued to be educationally backward ; and at least partly if not wholly on account of this, its representation in governmental services has not kept in line with the strength of its numbers, especially in the northern States. Hindu-Muslim riots continue to be a feature of the country even after independence, giving the Muslim commun- ity a sense of insecurity and feeling of living on sufferance rather than as trusted and respected citizens of the country to which they belong. It is not that the Hindus constitute an aggressive majority with tortured memories of the hardships they had undergone at some Muslim hands in previous Indian history or that Muslims constitute an aggressive minority with frustrating memories of the positions of power they had occupied in the Indian historical past. The vast majority of the Hindus and Muslims of this country are law-abiding citizens who know that there is no alternative to their living together in peace in this land ; and among many of whom there exist even today the most friendly relations. In fact, not so very long ago, they shared in each other's festivals and undertook many cooperative and collective activities ; and their social relations were also quite friendly. They also know that independence has brought them many economic and other opportunities for advance- ment which they did not have in the past and they both share in the pride in India's international standing and prestige. One just does not understand what it is that sets off a frenzy of inter- communal killing and destruction of property on account of some incident or other involving one or more individuals of one or the other community and the swiftness with which either community as a whole gets identified with the conflict in spite of its being the handiwork of some miscreants who are to be found in both the communities. These riots are not just law and order problems, but are accompanied by deep emotional concomitants that last long

after the passing of the incidents to which they gave rise, and keep alive communal disharmony. There is no Gandhi who can undertake a fast to stem these riots ; and there are no leaders whom both the communities are prepared to trust implicitly and abide by their counsel when it comes to concrete situations of inter-communal conflict. Neither political nor religious leaders are able to tackle the problem of inter-communal distrust. The situation is made more complicated by the new search for group identity that is becoming an almost global phenomenon and the habit of some self-seeking politicians wanting to fish in troubled waters. Nor is there a 'homeland' that can provide a solution to the many millions of Muslims who are scattered over different parts of the country. There is no solution other than that of mutual trust and recognition of interdependence and collective self-interest that can bring about enduring communal harmony. But one does not see signs of such a trend emerging on the contemporary horizon.

Yet another pessimistic factor that one finds in the contemporary situation is the growing alienation among the many millions of the population of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes who are India's citizens. All his life, Mahatma Gandhi strove for the abolition of untouchability and the ending of religious, social and economic discrimination against them. Untouchability has been abolished by the Constitution ; and constitutional provisions have been made for the safeguarding of their interests and the bringing about of their uplift. Vast sums of money have been spent after independence on their education and economic uplift, and special provisions made in plan programmes for their benefit. Reservations have been made for their recruitment in governmental and government-aided institutions and also for their representation in Parliament. They have been given representation in the Council of Ministers both at the Centre and in the States ; and some of them have held or hold high offices in the governmental and political hierarchy. But nevertheless they remain a Secluded class who have not been able to enter the mainstream of Indian national life ; and the feeling of alienation and disenchantment has only grown over the decades following independence. The Scheduled Tribes are striving to find their identity in spatially autonomous terms, while

the Scheduled Castes, who are residing all over the country and cannot even imagine such a solution, find themselves angry, frustrated, and out of harmony with their environment. One reads constantly of outrages against the Harijans and in recent years there have been accounts of counter-attacks and reprisals on caste Hindus. The Scheduled Castes have now become conscious and politicised, and no longer constitute the dumb driven cattle that formed the lowest tier in the Hindu hierarchy. The Dalit Movement is the outstanding illustration of this new mood of anger, frustration, and determination not to compromise and yet the movement is unable to find a practicable and acceptable solution to the problems of its members. They are no longer the pocket-borough of any political party ; but they are not able to find their own political identity either. The situation is fraught with unrest, disharmony and conflict and does not auger well for the future of national integration or harmony.

Another factor that darkens the Indian horizon is the equity aspect of the development that has undoubtedly taken place after independence. More than 30 years of planned development has brought about neither the abolition of poverty nor of illiteracy ; and we rank highest in the world's national totals of the poor and the illiterate with the absolute figures running into hundreds of millions. Neither our economic growth nor our distributional machinery have been adequate enough to prevent the emergence of a dual society with the world's most glaring contrasts between affluence and destitution, a much sought-after class market accompanied by mass deprivation, five star hotels and conspicuous albeit also, a vulgar consumption, side by side with pavement dwellers and the many underfed whose living standards are nowhere near even the human minima, and a powerful and well-to-do middle class, dynamic in the quest for their own growth and oblivious of their obligations either to the ethical or ecological aspects of society at large or to their poor and half-starved brethern in particular. The rich in India live more luxurious lives than their counter-parts in the much richer developed countries of the world, while the poor in India would count themselves rich if they could reach the level of living attained by the poor even in some developing countries. Nowhere is the

contrast between light and shade more glaring than we see in the economic field in India. But the poor have lost their traditional 'pathetic contentment' with poverty. While the escapist religion and remnants of the feudal awe of the powerful and the well-to-do still keep them away from revolutionary commitments, adult franchise, periodic elections and the fervent and utopian promises held out by the politicians seeking their votes has activised their consciousness and brought to the surface their disenchantment and discontent with their national environment. Class consciousness is not so easy against the background of communal, linguistic and caste feelings, but there is no doubt that the poor are now getting conscious of their poverty, see no reason why they should continue to be poor, feel unhappy or angry over their condition, and want to do something about it, they know not what. One can feel the anger of the common man in the nation's air, and when anger sees no outlet in purposive action, it only leads to sporadic outbursts, violent though short-lived protests, and a sullen mood of uncooperativeness, non-participation and alienation that only makes for social and economic disharmony and bodes ill for the country's integrated political future. Nor do the multiple divisive forces in contemporary Indian society make for a viable revolutionary alternative.

Additionally, the increasing pace of urbanisation especially of the cities and metropolitan centres, with slums, housing, transport, civil maintenance, and proletariat problems combined with the steady drift of the rural skilled and the rural poor to the urban areas is adding to the duality of Indian society. There is a dual society within the urban areas and a dual society between the urban and rural areas, while there has been development in rural areas, this has not been adequate or diversified enough to prevent large scale migration to the towns; and while the rural rich and the urban well-to-do are forming links with each other, the rural areas are becoming pools of comparative stagnation, and account for the majority of the population; and no cooperative or organisational links have been formed between the rural and the urban poor. This increasing extension of duality in Indian society is conducive to discontent and discord and cannot promote the needed harmony. The socialistic pattern of society to which the country stands largely committed,

does not seem to have worked in practice either in removing poverty or unemployment or inequality; the commanding heights which the public sector has occupied has evidently failed either to maximise growth or to improve the welfare of the common man. This is certainly a great disappointment to those of us who were witnesses of the socialistic urges led by Jawaharlal Nehru sweeping over the youth of the country and the bulk of the Congress even during the struggle for independence, and is probably a greater disappointment to the young among us who witnessed a socialist change in the Congress constitution in 1963 and a similar change in the preamble of the Indian Constitution in 1976. One can now see even a retreat from socialist frontiers in the minds of politicians, intellectuals and the common people, apart from the allegiance they never had from business and trading interests.

The country is also not happy with the inflation accompanying economic development, which has brought misery to the poor and the fixed income groups and increased inequality in income and consumption levels. Added to this is the increasing role of black money in the Indian economy which has not only fuelled inflation and worsened inequalities, but also added to conspicuous consumption and duality in Indian society. Inflation and black money diminish the people's faith in the effiiciency of government and have reinforced the atmosphere of discontent, distress and anger in the country.

Another factor contributing to the current discontent and unrest in the country is the feeling of dependence and absence of autonomy that has been created in the States by the way in which Centre-State relations have developed over the years since independence. I have dealt with this subject at length in the key-note address I gave to the seminar on Centre-State relations held in Bangalore in August last year. Many irritants have developed in the relations between the Union and State governments and these are not confined only to the non-Congress States. The Union Government has now recognised the need for a review of these relations and has appointed a Commission under Mr. Justice Sarkaria to go into the question in all its aspects and make recommendations. Meanwhile, the country is witnessing a campaign to diminish the role of the Centre and transfer or share with the States some of the powers it now exercises

exclusively, replacing the dominant by the partnership element in
the relations, and restructuring them on a real federal basis with
the States having the power and resources to enable them to fulfil
the obligations to their people which has been imposed on them by
the Constitution. Mixed with this and leading to highly emotional
overtones is the personality of the Prime Minister and her relations
with her own party organisation, her party colleagues at the Centre
and party governments in the States, and also with the non-Congress
governments in the States. Principles and personalities have got
intermingled and given political activity in the country a measure of
discontent, agitation and confrontation that certainly does not make
for a peaceful or harmonious future.

Another disquieting feature of the contemporary Indian
situation is the kind of unrest that is prevalent among the youth in
this country, especially in its college-going student population.
There was also student unrest in the pre-independence days, but it
was based on patriotic feelings, formed a part of the national
struggle for independence, and did not have the anti-social, narrow
and self-centred base so characteristic of campus disturbances in
today's India. Unemployment, the feeling that opportunity is not
related to individual ability countered by the feeling that it should
really be linked with hereditary backwardness, the role of patronage
influence and kinship in recruitment not only in employment but also
in other economic openings, wooing of student power by political
parties and the style of functioning of these parties vis-a-vis each
other, all these have affected the mind and behaviour of not only
college students but also non-student youth in the country. The
young, who normally constitute the foundation of idealism and
non-self-regarding action, are now turning selfish and taking to
anti-establishment activities not so much for purpose of reform as
for personal exploitation through pressure tactics exerted either
individually or in groups. I do not want to blame the young for
their behaviour. I believe that we who belong to the middle and
older generation are the real culprits by the way we have seen
functioning both in our private and public lives and the unsavourly
example we have set and are setting before the younger generation.
But the fact remains that campus disturbances and youth unrest are
adding to that atmosphere of national confusion, discontent and

frustration but without producing any positive force for reform, or reconstruction or change along nationally or socially desirable directions. This negative role of students and youth in nation building certainly does not make for an optimistic outlook in the current Indian context.

In the earlier part of my lecture, I had referred with pride to the fact that we have been able to retain the system of parliamentary democaracy on the basis of adult franchise and periodic elections. If the system had been worked in conformity with the objectives for which it has been established and the obligations and codes of conduct it imposes on politicians, political parties and their mutual relations, it would have constituted a most heart-warming feature in finding a way out of the morass and confusion in which we are finding ourselves today as a nation. But we all know that our democratic institutions have not been worked in that manner. Our electorate is largely illiterate and not in a position to take an objective or critical view of the promises or performances of different political parties. The people do not participate in political debates and their so-called leaders talk at them rather than to or with them. And people's participation in the political process is just a periodic electoral flash in the pan. Rights dominate the shouting ; duties are not referred to even in whispers. The electorate has no clear cut political alternative before it for choosing its government as is possible in a two-party system or even in a multi-party system where coalitions are based on principles and common minimum programmes with inter-party and intra-party discipline. We have a plethora of political parties and most of them are splinters from the banyan tree of the pre-independence Congress party. Political parties split, combine and split again in bewildering fashion, and even an alert and intelligent observer cannot under-stand what these party formations are about except in terms of temperamental clashes or personality power quests. To add to the confusion, individual party members do not stay in the same party ; and their floor-crossing does not even have the symmetry of the folk dances where there is periodic but regulated exchange of partners. Our individual contribution to the democratic dictionary has been the phenomenon of *Aye Ram* and *Gaye Ram* or party

floor-crossing of a kind magnitude and motivation that has a real spark of creative originality. I do not know if the word has passed into the Oxford dictionary like the more innocent mulligatawny or the more pregnant Kamarajing, but I don't feel happy at its dragging into the sordid market place the hallowed name of one of the Hindu avatars. All our political parties express their horror at the phenomenon and they all promise to pass anti-defection laws but get a convenient lapse of memory when they are in a position to do so. Hope lies eternal in the Indian party breast as far as defections are concerned, and no sane person attuned to the current political situation can dare hope that anti-defection laws will ever become a part of our democratic armoury. The parties themselves have no internal democracy. They have no list of members open to public scrutiny, no one knows the sources of their financing, their audited accounts conceal more than they reveal unlike modern feminine garments, displaying at least in this matter their conformity to traditional Indian values. They sometimes have elections but more often prefer to do without them ; and when they do have elections, there is no independent election machinery to prevent or look into the mistakes of electoral commissions and omissions. Candidates are chosen not by the people but by the leaders or leader and on what basis they do it is a mystery that may be left unsolved in the interests of peace and freedom from action for libel. Elections are expensive and money has to be collected some how, the how is not so important. No political party out of power is willing to wait for its turn for power till the next general elections and sees nothing wrong in attempting to topple governments with legislative majorities during the interval. Opposition for the sake of opposition has become the ruling code of conduct of all political parties and it is also carried to the streets almost as a matter of course in the form of demonstrations, processions, morchas, bundhs and the like. The people are certainly not being trained to accept or respect the governments they have elected for the inter-election periods ; and this has undoubtedly an adverse effect on the law and order situation, besides weakening the efficiency of government in its developmental activities. All this is known both to the people and the experts. There is talk of electoral reform, codes of conduct

for political parties, and proper functioning of the democratic process, but nobody is willing to bell the cat. The people at large apparently care even less and seem prepared to live with it, as is perhaps natural to a long tradition of conformist philosophy and the mystery of the divine *Lila*. I am sorry to sound so bitter and cynical, but I am sure you sympathise ; as the proper functioning of democracy is, in the last analysis, the only peaceful and respectable way of getting out of the existing morass and reaching the desired goal of good Indian society.

The most horrifying aspect of the contemporary Indian situation is however the growth of group violence. Ours is a vast country, with a multiple society, with many groups that function on varied criteria and have many differences, grievances and expectations with each other and with the government which belongs to them all. Such a society can only survive, with peaceful coexistence among its groups, and interest in both individual and collective development. This can happen only if they are prepared to resolve their differences or their mutual claims by dialogue, discussion, debate and consensus and not by conflict, confrontation and violence. Increasingly however, dialogue is giving way to insinuations and recriminations, mutual acceptance to mutual mistrust, reason to unreason, friendliness to fear and hatred, and disagreement or assertion to confrontation and violence. There is anger everywhere and intolerance of difference with the actions or ideas of the other fellow or group ; with anger there is a growth of fear and insecurity; and in turn anger and fear lead to suspicion, hatred and violence. We have forgotten what Sri Krishna told Arjuna in verse 63 of the second Chapter in the Bhagavat Gita :

क्रोधात्भवति   सम्मोह: सम्मोहात्स्मृतिविभ्रम: ।
स्मृतिभ्रंशाद्   बुद्धिनाशो   बुद्धिनाशात्प्रणश्यति ॥

"From wrath arises delusion ; from delusion, failure of memory ; from failure of memory, loss of conscience ; from loss of conscience he is utterly ruined."

This applies to all spheres of activity, social, political, economic, educational and even cultural and sports. Recent years have seen a significant spurt in civil disturbances and law and order

situations ; and there has been other situations ; and there has been a startling increase in the numbers and equipment of internal police forces. Individual violence is one thing and group violence is another. The former exists in every country and does not normally leave social or community aftermath ; whereas group violence, which is becoming peculiar to this country in its incidence, does both ; and spells danger to the future of our multiple society. We seem to have come a long way from Gandhi who brought us power by his non-violence and compassion, and Nehru who wielded it with humaneness and regard for human dignity. Diversity is leading to divisiveness, affluence to acquisitiveness, deprivation to aggression, difference to discord, and grievances to violence. Unless this trend Is reversed, great danger looms before the country, with a future where diversity may result in disunity rather than lead to a composite unity.

There are many more impressions I have, both positive and negative, of what is happening in contemporary India. It would take many days to relate them and even then I may not have finished. But what I have said is enough to show the validity of the proposition with which I started this lecture. The contemporary Indian scene is of mixed hue, with light and darkness intertwined, and giving rise to both optimism and pessimism about the future of our country. It is a different picture from what we dreamed of during our pre-independence days and in writing our Constitution as an independent country, and even during the earlier years of the post-independence period. Why has the dream failed to become a reality ? Can we do something at least to weaken, if not to eliminate, the prevailing darkness and strengthen the existing light in our setting ? If shadows flee before sunshine, can we hope for an Indian summer that will give our country the sunshine of a good and harmonious society for our people ? These are the heart-rending questions on which I shall venture to express amateur reflections during the course of my subsequent two lectures.

2
The Current Indian Scene :
Why Darkness ?

CHAPTER II

THE CURRENT INDIAN SCENE : WHY DARKNESS ?

Why have these shadows darkened the Indian contemporary scene and why does the light seem to be retreating before the increasing darkness ? I don't think I have any complete answer and I am not at all sure if my answer will satisfy any one of you. What I say is only hind-sight and it may not be a correct one at that. But having taken the plunge I shall go ahead and give ruthlessly frank expression to my reflections, though it hurts me to do so. But if it helps in finding a wayout and leads to an optimistic future for our country, it is worth while my doing this exercise in brutal frankness.

Let me begin with one of our intractable problems, the Hindu-Muslim question. Muslims have been in this country for many centuries. Some of them came as invaders and stayed behind as rulers. Some came as visitors or traders or mercenary soldiers and settled down in the country as they found themselves welcome. Some others were original Indian residents who got converted to Islam, either of their volition or due to pressure of one kind or another. But all of them have their homes in India, and the country belongs as much to them as to the majority of other Indians who do not profess their faith. But they did not constitute a monolithic community whose Islamic identity made them a national group without internal differences. Muslim kings waged wars against other Muslim kings, even as Hindu kings waged wars against other Hindu kings. Hindu soldiers fought for Muslim rulers and Muslim soldiers fought for Hindu rulers. There are many instances of Muslim rulers giving benefaction to Hindu temples and helping to get them repaired. And

Htndu and Muslim masses were not at loggerheads. Muslim rule in India was certainly not wholly or even in large measure of oppression of the Hindu population or violation of their religious sentiments. It was the wrong and unbalanced writing of Indian history that has led to the sub-conscious feeling of distrust and hostility that has been created between the two communities. British machinations and Muslim educational backwardness stoked the latent fuel into active life ; and so did the Muslim participation in Gandhiji's first civil disobedience campaign, as they were brought in on a narrow and reactionary religious basis which politicised the communal rather than the national in their consciousness. The founder of Pakistan was a staunch Indian nationalist who had functioned as Secretary of the Indian Home Rule League. I recall from my own experience how students in Bombay were all great admirers of Mr. Jinnah and the arrogant way in which he treated the British masters of the country. When provincial autonomy came in 1937, and the Muslim league party asked for coalition governments as a way of security and participation in what otherwise they thought would be a Hindu majority government, the Congress Parliamentary Board led by Jawaharlal Nehru did not agree. It was only after this that many Muslim leaders grew intransigient and began to talk of a separate homeland for Muslims, where they could function as a majority government in the areas where their numbers would constitute a majority of the population. The story of how Pakistan ultimately came to be a reality and was accepted by the very Congress which had negatived coalition governments with Muslims in 1937 is well known to students of Indian political history. The only thing I would like to underline is that it was not only the British who played up Hindu-Muslim differences or the Muslims who showed their distrust for Hindus by their active movement for a separate home land, who are wholly responsible for Pakistan. The Hindus also had some share in the matter by the social aloofness they showed in regard to their Muslim brethren even in respect of drinking water at railway stations ; and the Congress also by the way in which they treated the Muslim leaders within their ranks as the real representatives of the Muslim community rather than the large and more influential number of those who were outside. It is a tragedy that Pakistan when it

came did so with aggressive violence on the part of Muslims and sullen acquisence on the part of the Hindu dominated Congress, and brought with it the bloody aftermath which was a disgrace to both the communities and a violation of all the best each stood for. Gandhiji's martyrdom came as a refreshing interlude when Hindus and Muslims wept together, the former for their communal reaction against Muslim separatism and the latter for their not having realised that the man who was regarded as the greatest enemy of the conceptual basis of Pakistan was also the one who was out to save them at the cost of alienation of many of his Hindu followers, ending in the sacrifice of his own life at the hands of a Hindu assassin. That was the time when the Hindu-Muslim problem, with which India was still left even after the creation of Pakistan, could have been tackled at its basic emotional roots and may have led to a new Hindu-Muslim relationship that would have buttressed the new Indian national identity. Unfortunately, we failed to tackle the problem at the social and religious levels to establish communication between the hearts of Muslims and Hindus. A great deal was done at the political level. India did not declare itself a Hindu State, but opted for secularism in line with Congress ideology and the country's spiritual tradition of religious tolerance, and provided ample safe-guards for the Muslim minority which the government tried its best to implement. But legislation institutions and finance are not sufficient to deal with traditional animosities, as was also found to be the case when tackling the problem of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. What was needed was action at the social and inter-religious level ; and this could not be done adequately either by politicians or by the Government. What was required was a country-wide movement for national reconciliation at the grass roots level which would have given independent India a new start in her nation-building. The one person who could have done this successfully was Mahatma Gandhi if he had survived the assassination. But his martyrdom did clear the air. That was the time to have formed a national Indian-Muslim-Hindu Unity Board, and to have used the media deliberately for the purpose of promoting harmonious social relations, reviving friendly memories from the past, and bringing about not just coexistence but also mutual respect among different religions. In this grand national

reconciliation process should have been involved not only politicians and the government machinery, but also religious leaders, social workers, Gandhian organisations and workers, intellectuals, student community and educational institutions. A similar strategy should have been followed in respect of the social and religious integration of the Scheduled Castes with the caste Hindus, while in the case of the Scheduled Tribes the strategy should have included their protection from non-tribal exploitation and the building up of tribal self-reliance for their own development. All this should have been a mass campaign using all its gadgets and supported not only by Government machinery and political workers, but also by non-government institutions and social workers. We should have set up a National Integration Council simultaneously with the advent of a sovereign Indian nation. This would have been one of the best ways to have commemorated Gandhi and made his message an integral part of the life of all the people living in the country who had become Indian nationals and citizens. Social development of this kind and building up of an all Indian national consciousness were as much needed as economic development. In fact, social development, leading to social harmony, national integration and maintenance of individual human dignity, was not only a basic condition for economic development but also its desired end product. As such, social development should have been given the same priority and attention as economic development by the decision makers in the country and those who could influence them. Unfortunately, we chose to concentrate on economic development. We took Indian national identity for granted ; and acted on the belief that non-governmental action and active popular participation were not needed either for social harmony or inter-communal unity or integration of the Hindu community with its numerous castes and its so—called untouchables, or for giving humanist and emotional support to nurse the infant national sentiment. We did not even try to make the history of the freedom movement a part of national mass consciousness and student education. Economic backwardness, unemployment and poverty were considered the real sources of communalism and for the unfortunate condition and status of the so-called untouchables. What was thought to be needed therefore

was rapid econmic growth, increase in output and employment, and decrease in poverty followed by its eventual abolition. We developed an irrational thesis that economic development was the sovereign remedy for all our national ailments and would automatically assure the disappearance of our social evils and divisive factors. There was no doubt some truth in this position but it was certainly not the whole truth. It was therefore that we neglected social development and emotional integration, and made no use either of religious leade s, social workers, intellectuals and voluntary organisations, or of a mass media-based mass campaign for building up social harmony. It is this that has resulted in the continuing presence of the Hindu-Muslim problem and that of the so-called untouchables, eroded the sentiment of Indian national identity, and diluted, if not actually negatived, the effect of economic development on social harmony.

This monolithic concentration on the economic aspect of the Indian problem of national unity and uplift to the neglect of the social aspect and social discrimination and social divisiveness is also responsible for the alienation we see among the scheduled castes in this country. I know it is difficult for any government directly to interfere with the social system, but they do have a large armoury for influencing its change in the right direction. Negatively, it could have brought under the penal code social discriminatory practices that violate human dignity and equal social treatment. When such violations took place, legal and administrative action could have been prompt and effective, inquiries into their occurance speedy, and punishment of culprits quick and deterrent. We have not been acting in this manner. Positively, the Government could have used all the powerful control and influence it had over mass media and the communication network to carry the message of social equality to the hearts of the masses and the classes, and emphasise the necessity for its observance, not only on ethical grounds, but even more, for the sheer survival of the nation as an economic and political unit. The Government could have made use of the many voluntary organisations working in the field of social up-lift, social equality and social harmony, and encouraged other similar organis-

ations to come into existence. They could have given them positive help in their functioning without interfering with their autonomy or subjecting them to impersonal bureaucratic shackles. This also we have not done. We have also neglected the use of the vast network of educational, health and other social welfare organisations under government control or influence or working with Government aid to drive home the message of social equality and the inequality and destructive character of social discrimination. This neglect of the social aspect in the developmental process has had a lot to do with the nation's failure to achieve the expected integrating and harmonising dividends from the vast expenditure incurred and the other non-fiscal measures undertaken by the Government. I do not think that the bonafides of the leaders could be questioned. What was at fault was their imperfect perceptiveness, which identified the problem of change, uplift, harmony and national integration solely with the economic to the neglect of the social and human, in the behavioural patterns making for social change towards harmony and integration.

Even in regard to the economic development of the country which we tried to tackle with deliberation and some vigour by planning and plan outlays, we have not been able to achieve in adequate measure the objectives behind this effort. While we have been successful in bringing about a large measure of industrialisation, placed the country on the industrial self-reliance and built a viable infra-structure of capital and intermediate goods, we have not been able to maintain the rate of industrial growth that we had reached during the earlier years of our post-independence history. Nor have we been able to obtain a domestic market for our capital goods that could have accelerated our industrial development. In spite of our professed desire to bring about industrial decentralisation, industrial development of backward areas and rural industrialisation, we have not been able to prevent the concentration of industrial activity in our metropolitan cities and big urban centres and conglomerations of urban population and the related problems of slum dwellers, the urban poor, the cost of maintenance of urban centres, and the social and psychological problems accompanying such urbanisation. Even

the small industries which have recorded a conspicuous measure of progress, and also ancilliary industries have got concentrated in big urban centres instead of functioning as an instrument of decen-tralisation in our small towns and larger villages. On the agricultural side, while our success in stepping up the production of food grains has been impressive, we have not been able to achieve similar success either with oilseeds or with pulses, with a resulting dependence on imports for meeting domestic requirements. While the green revolution has made headway in irrigated areas and areas of assured rainfall, the new technologies for dry land farming have yet to take off the ground ; and this has added to the regional and spatial imbalance in agricultural production. No doubt social services have recorded a significant advance, but this has largely been concentrated in urban areas in terms of quality and even in absolute terms in some of its sectors. Even in urban areas, the progress achieved leaves much to be desired in terms of coverage, quality and relevance to felt needs. We have certainly built up a large body of scientific and technical personnel, but they are mainly confined to the urban areas except for their agricultural section. Rural India, which still accounts for the vast majority of the population, is grossly under-represented in the non-agricultural field, either of industry or transport or marketing or the professions or even basic services. Even in agriculture, scientific, technical and professional services have been confined to the minority who have viable holdings and some capital assets, and largely left out of its reach the small and marginal holdings, and wholly ignored the large number who have neither land nor capital assets nor literacy or skill formation. While the rural poor continue to migrate to the urban areas swelling the ranks of the urban slum dwellers and a grossly exploited informal sector, the rural poor are also growing in numbers, unable to escape from the self-sustaining trap of rural poverty.

Not that no attempt has been made to tackle the problem of poverty. In fact, anti-poverty programmes account for a sizeable portion of plan outlays ; and they have shown a measure of imaginativeness and flexibility not seen in most other countries. But they do not constitute a basic part of the main thrust of our economic development. This is concentrated on sophisticated

technology, large-sized production units, concentrated complexes of mutually reinforcing facilities, and a small urban minority or a dynamic middle class that is money seeking and profit motivated and aided in its quest for affluence by a whole bundle of government subsidies and other facilities. The scenario looks as if our society is divided into two sectors. One sector is dynamic, government aided in its productive activity, solely guided by self-regarding and economic motivation, adopting consumerist life styles wholly out of the reach of the vast majority of their countrymen, having foreign connections, and constituting a big enough market of their own which offers but little access to others outside their class except for the rural rich who have benefited from the green revolution. The other sector is much larger in number-I guess not less than 70 to 80 percent of the population-largely without any real literacy, without capital assets or technical skills, and self-employed or under-employed or unemployed. They are resident in rural areas or in backward regions or backward pockets of better-off regions; and many of them belong to the Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes or backward classes, though they also include quite a number of the so-called forward castes and minority religions. Their effective demand is limited to a few basic needs, though their ineffective demand or infructuous longings, far exceed what the other sector has by way of effective demand. The two sectors can almost be called two contiguous but mutually isolated two nations, or if that is an exaggeration, they certainly constitute a dual society of a magnitude and degree of mutual insularity not to be found anywhere else in the world. If the first group, which is small and affluent can be called Sector A and the second, which is large and poor can be called Sector X, I must say that true to the Indian tradition, Sector A feels charitably disposed to Sector X and Sector X feels there is nothing wrong in taking alms from Sector A, though in recent years this is accompanied either by a resentful acquiscence or by noises indicating a right that has to be met. This is exactly what Indian economic development and planning is doing. I almost get the feeling that our planning is functioning like a Rotary Club, prosperous and well-to-do citizens, efficient and dynamic in their own occupational pursuits, who feel hurt in their conscience by the vast mass of the

deprived and the distressed by whom they are surrounded ; and, as a sop to their conscience, undertake some welfare activities for the masses as an act of charity. If one were to be in a nasty and cynical mood, one may even compare the action to that of affluent black-marketeers who deposit a part of their illgotten earnings in the Hundi at Tirupati to secure the favour of Lord Venkateswara. Such appropriate or inappropriate analogies apart, the development leads to the emergence of a well-to-do minority that has no healthy or integral connection with the attempts at bettering the conditions of the poor who constitute the majority. The former is self-sustaining and self-accelerating and provides its members with self respect and dominance ; and the latter is largely temporary in its effect, does not prove to be either self-sustaining or self-accelerating and produces in its members a feeling of dependence and either a *bakshis* mentality or resentful or ungrateful acceptance. The dual society that our economic development has created in the country is one of do-minance and dependence, and not of partnership or of integrated allround development with mutual aid and understanding. It is this duality created in our society, combined with the politicisation of the poor and the awakening of their human dignity and consciousness of rights as voters and citizens, that has contributed its share to the prevalent social disharmony in the country.

It is not only the lack of integration between the plans and programmes for the development of the affluent and the betterment of the poor that is the fault of our planning. The fault also lies in the wrong perspectives of its priorities, and tardy and inefficient implementation in its production programmes. If with all its faults in priorities and lack of integration between the classes and the masses, the plans had been efficiently implemented in their attempts to maximise the national domestic output, the rate of economic growth would have been much higher and there would have been greater employment and larger resource mobilisation. The funds available for investment in infrastructural facilites and basic services for the rural mainland and the many poor in the country would have been more adequate and resulted in a lessening of social discontent and disharmony. Tardiness in implementation of the creation of

new capacity and its cost-runs, unutilised capacity when created, inefficient maintenance of existing capacity, wasteful use of mobilised resources, and unwise resort to financing by deficit have all tended to raise the capital output ratio and reduced the returns on investment, and the size of the national output. To add to the sadness of the picture, it is the poor masses who have suffered most from this low economic growth and inadequate national output, and the not rich minority whose affluent and consumerist life styles give no indication of the country's low per capita income or the overall poverty of its people. Our planning exercises have not only suffered from lack of linkage between productive efforts and distributive justice but also from unwise priorities and inefficient implementation. So, even on the economic side, the results achieved have not led to the lessening of social disharmony, though they are certainly impressive in statistical terms, and given the country a place of importance in the industrialised world and in the scientific and technological community. I have dealt with this subject at greater length in the V. T. Krishnamachari Lecture I gave in Delhi earlier during this week.

Another negative factor attending the development of the contemporary Indian scene is the extent of tax evasion through under reporting of output and understatement of income, and corruption linked with the securing of permits, licenses, and clearances of various kinds at different levels. The multitude of controls and discretionary decisions that have accompanied our attempts to bring about a regulated economy on a socialistic pattern has not succeeded in reducing inequality of incomes and wealth nor in preventing the emergence of an affluent class with vulgar consumerist life styles. Nor has it resulted in efficiency in the public sector, while in the private sector it has stimulated tardiness, influence-orientation, lack of competitiveness on the basis of cost and quality, and politicking. The commanding heights occupied by the public sector have not enabled it to bring down prices or prevent inflation or increase mobilisation of resources for further investment. To a person like myself, who has been a social democrat all his life and tried to some extent to influence public policy in that direction, what I have seen

of the socialist experiment in terms of either distributive justice or increased production or maintenance of ethical standards has been particularly distressing. Nothing has been done either to create a foundation of socialist psychology among the people or to reinforce the socialist professions of government with a dedicated and disciplined socialist cadre, or contact with the people at the grass roots. Black money has proliferated and penetrated for various reasons into almost all channels and sections of society and it is accelerating the inflation caused by deficit financing, inadequate production and inefficient controls. The victimisation and harassment it inflicts on people without power or influence or money, and the *nouveaux* rich and the new power lords and influence-brokers that it has brought into being, certainly does not lead to social harmony or belief in a normative society.

The way in which we have worked our Constitution and some of the amendments we have made in its provisions have also not contributed to regional concord or social harmony or ethical behaviour. The basic federal principles, the national and regional identities on which alone a vast country like India with its multiple society can function in the sphere of government, have not been followed ; and numerous irritants have emerged in centre-state, or what I would prefer to term, Union-State relations. I have discussed this at length in my keynote address to the Bangalore Seminar to which I had made a reference earlier. What I would now emphasise is the impetus that Union-State relations have given to political unrest of a regional and divisive character and the general distrust and disrespect for the Union Government and national integration that it is bringing in its train. The Sarkaria Commission has just issued its questionnaire (in early part of February this year) and it is bound to take its own time before making its recommendations on such a complicated and controversial subject with its strong emotional overtones. Meanwhile, something needs to be done to alleviate the present situation and refrain from doing anything to aggravate it. And this applies both to the Union and the State Governments, as well as to the ruling and opposition political parties. Some re-thinking also appears to be necessary on the language issue

and the existing de-linking of education from ethical and spiritual values. The extent to which Union-State relations can either positively or adversely effect national integreation and social harmony depends not only on what is done in the legislative, administrative and financial spheres, but also on the human relations of the Union Government and their understanding and respect for the dignity and even touchiness of regional identities. Dialogue, discussion, compromise, consensus and a feeling of mutuality are missing in current Union-State relations and are therefore leading to confrontationist attitudes on the part of regional forces.

Youth unrest is another negative factor in the current situation. Student disturbances and indiscipline have manifested themselves in all parts of the country. The young no longer have respect for the old. They do not find consistency between their professions and their practices. They find their conservativsm irksome and their social and cultural attitudes too rigid for their comfort. To some extent of course this is part of a world-wide phenomenon of conflict between generations, but in our case it is getting to be a more serious problem than in the West, and results not only in campus disturbances but also in youth outbursts and in law and order problems and rowdy wings of political parties that are now beginning to make use of lung and muscle power. The educational system does not provide relevant skills while the economic system does not provide adequate employment. The working of the political system does not give them any faith in ideological beliefs, while the social system sickens them with its hypocrisy and double standards. And there is no Holy Grail of Sir Galahad that can spur them to constructive or ethically oriented activity. The rural environment disgusts them while the urban environment fills them with frustration at its enticing but unattainable opportunities. They do not know what to do with their enforced leisure and are developing a feeling of alienation and non-belonging. And their numbers are increasing, both absolutely and in percentage of the population, in post-independent India. Our failure to tackle the youth problem is no more than a by-product of our failure to tackle the national problem either at the political or economic or educational or social or linguistic or cultural

levels. This failure adds to the forces of social disharmony and
discontent that are so conspicuously evident in the India of today.
It is one of the saddest features of the contemporary Indian scene
that youth, who should form the foundation of hope and the van-
guard of progress, should be suffering from such a sense of frus-
tration and inability to recognise the positive element in their
identity.

Yet another negative factor in the current situation is the
population explosion we have been witnessing in the post independ-
ence period. Our population has increased from 359 millions in
1951 to 709 millions in 1981. We have nearly doubled our numbers
in three decades. This has necessarily reduced the positive improve-
ment in per capita well being that should have taken place with the
three fold increase that has occurred in national income at constant
prices. While real national income increased from Rs. 16731 crores
in 1950-51 to 50486 crores in 1982-83 or nearly trebled, per capita
income in real terms rose from Rs. 359 to only Rs. 709 or less than
double, or by a little less than 100 percent as against the 200 per-
cent in the national product. This gap between the national product
and per capita income is not only caused by the food expenditure on
the additional population but also by all their other consumption
expenditure including social services and the additional investment
expenditure needed for financing this additional consumption expen-
diture. Thus neither the full benefit of the increase in the national
product nor of that in national investment, not including the income
lost by the resulting reduction in priority investment, was available
to the common man, because of the unprecedented increase in India's
population. While it is not always feasible to bring down population
growth to targeted levels, the results achieved are undoubtedly un-
satisfactory, and can be only accounted for by the tardiness in
starting the family planning programme, half-heartedness in pursuing
it, and unimaginativeness and inefficiency in implementing it. The
comparative failure of the Indian attempt at family planning has
added to social discontent and restiveness not only directly by the
increase in numbers but also indirectly by reducing the possible rate
of economic growth and failing to translate even the growth achieved
into national welfare in individual terms.

The failings in the working of our democratic system, to which I had referred in my earlier lecture, owes its development to the casual way in which we introduced adult franchise and direct elections from huge constituencies and illiterate electorates. We made no attempt to educate our people in the obligations that a democratic system places upon its citizens on the manner in which they represent their needs and grievences or thoughts, through representations, dialogues, discussions and non-violent political lobbying, but left them to carry on their relations with government on the agitational and confrontationist basis which had been employed in the past against their colonial rulers. Leaders of consequence did not explain to the people that, as democracy provided for periodic elections at which ruling parties and governments could be thrown out of power if they had misbehaved during the inter-election period, there was but little legitimacy for deliberate defiance of the law or resort to the streets during the currency of a duly elected government. There was no consensus that a majority government should be allowed to function during its elected tenure of power. Gandhian methods of protest, which had proved their legitimacy and effectiveness against colonial rulers, were now vulgarised and shorn of their moral content by being used against elected governments and for minor issues. Populism and extravagant promises became the order of the day for all political parties, whether in or out of power ; people's expectations were roused without regard to the resources or other constraints on their implementability, or the kind of self-restraint, hard and disciplined work, and self-sacrifice needed for even a modest measure of their implementation. There was no recognition of the serious obstacles that illiteracy and lack of civic consciousness places to the efficient functioning of a democratic political system nor was any serious attempt made to wipe out mass illiteracy and lack of understanding of the norms of democratic functioning. Just as we took for granted our national identity because we had fought for and won a negotiated independence for the country, we also took for granted our political democracy because we had enshrined it in our Constitution and in text books in colleges and euologised its relevance for good government. Governments thus failed to obtain the positive support and participation of the people who had

voted them to power. On the contrary, the Government continued to be identified with the bureaucracy with which people had been familiar in the colonial past, except that there was now added another tier to the hierarchy with Ministers, whose life style was different from that of the common man and who expected feudal allegiance from them rather than function as servants of the people. The play of money power in mobilising the votes of large number of illiterate voters and the corruption it could lead to was neither real- ised nor counteracted. Cultivation of vote banks on a caste or communal basis was resorted to in place of ideological appeals and programmes, thus destroying the basic logic behind the democratic vote and promoting irrational divisiveness and groupisms in the national set-up. While elections were, on the whole, free and fair, and electoral majorities determined the assumption of governmental power, our parliamentary system was far removed from the British system on which it had been modelled.

This was due not only to the size of the constituencies, direct elections, voters' illiteracy, non-ideological groupings, and the role of money power, but also to the multiplicity of parties that emerged after independence. Gandhiji had wanted the monolithic and multi- faceted Congress to dissolve itself after independence and let political parties emerge on the basis of differences in ideology and programmes. If his advice had been heeded, we might have developed a two party system or even a three party system on the basis of rightist, leftist, and centrist persuasions, digesting communal and casteist feelings and providing alternative govern- ments with stability for inter-electoral periods. But we did not follow his advice. Instead we had a one party government elected mainly on the basis of the historical contribution which the Congress had made to the national struggle for freedom. This normally produced frustration among other political parties, whose numbers now almost exhaust the alphabet vocabulary and included also those who had split from the ruling party. One party rule did not leave the ruling Congress with any ideological coherence nor was there any such coherence among the numerous opposition parties. The way in which the party system was allowed to develop in post-

independent India made it difficult for the country to get the expected dividends from its adoption of the parliamentary system of democracy. It is not enough to have the framework of a political democracy ; it must also have the force and the spirit to function as an operational democracy.

The way in which our parliament and state legislatures are functioning have not added to the people's respect for the democratic system. The rowdiness and lack of decorum in these places that one reads about in the press sets a bad example to the country in regard to the way in which people should treat their differences with each other. It does rot encourage optimism about the ability of the parliamentary process to solve the people's genuine problems in a spirit of understanding and accommodation. Nor does the sight of near empty benches, when important legislations affecting the daily life of the people and matters that concern their well-being are being discussed, give people the feeling that the democratic process is seriously concerned with the details of legislation affecting their vital interests. The frequent resort to ordinances and their continued life through almost automatic replacement as in Bihar takes away the supremacy of the legislative process and adds to the arbitrary exercise of legislative authority by the executive, a pheno-menon wholly contrary to the basic principles of democratic govern-ment. The frequent overruling of judicial interpretation by legislative or constitutional amendments made possible by the government's majority also adds to the suspicion that the executive is gaining at the expense of the other two partners in the sharing of governmental power. Altogether, the way in which the parliamentary democratic system has been operating in the country has led to an erosion of popular faith in the democratic process and weakened its ability to act as an arbiter and conciliator of the many differences of interests and attitudes natural to a multiple society like ours. We have to set right the working of our parliamentary system if we want to enjoy the benefits of democracy.

The violence we are witnessing in the country today is a development during the post-independence period, and the years immediately preceding it. Gandhiji had succeeded in establishing

4

in the public mind the moral and also the practical superiority of
non-violence, not only in his fight against colonial rule but even
in regard to the resolving of domestic differences. But the 'Quit-
India Movement' of 1942-43 took a different turn. It was not
Gandhiji's fault that his call to the country to 'Do or die' got mis-
understood as a sanction for violence and destruction of public
property. The British Government took the unprecedented step of
clapping him in jail along with all his trusted colleagues and followers
all over the country even before he had launched his new civil
disobedience movement and had thus deprived the country of his
counsel and influence that would have kept the movement on a
non-violent path. The result was that the Quit India Movement
became violent and an under-ground movement, even though it was
in a good cause. Violence may be resorted to in a good cause and
thus acquire respectability, but no one can then prevent its use for
whatever an individual or a group thinks is a good cause ; and
violence retains its newly acquired respectability. It is this legacy
that was inherited by post-independent India. There was no Gandhiji
to correct it. And it is this legacy of the respectability given
to violence that has led to all too frequent resort to violence in
practically all realms of group differences that we have been witness-
ing in post-independent India. Thus the tradition of non-violence
for articulating grievances and seeking their redress initiated by
Gandhiji was lost to the nation at a time when it needed it even
more badly, when the country was experimenting with self-govern-
ment by a multiple society, with group differences and grievances
against each other and with a Government that represented society as
a whole. With the denigration of the Gandhian tradition of non-
violence also came the denigration of what I have called elsewhere
the Gandhian approach—dialogue, discussion, absence of recrimina-
tion or insinuation or abuse, and compromise and conciliation for
the peaceful settlement of inter-group differences and grievances.
Unless we restore the Gandhian tradition of non-violence, truth,
righteousness and harmonious living by compromise, it is difficult
to see how even democracy can function as an instrument for social
harmony and national development of a multiple society like
India's.

Above all, what has caused the negative factors that have darkened the contemporary Indian scene is the steady erosion in values that has taken place in our country after independence, especially during recent years. The value system we inherited from our struggle for independence was a sturdy nationalism that swept aside linguistic, regional and casteist differences and even communal differences though to a lesser extent. Simplicity in life-styles, the use of power for the service of the poor rather than for patronage and personal aggrandisement, a work-ethic that was based on the productivity and quality of one's work, a credit-ethic of proper utilisation and prompt repayment, the placing of the village and the rural population in the forefront of development, abhorrence of bribery, corruption, and pursuit of money by any means whether legitimate or illegitimate, preference for the non-violent approach to differences and grievances, stress on self-reliance and self accelera- tion in the country's economic development, distaste for ostentation and vulgarity in consumer behaviour, respect for knowledge, wisdom, spirituality and sacrifice rather than for monetary or political or bureaucratic power, regard for human dignity irrespective of caste, creed or economic or social status, an ideological and socially oriented motivation for one's activity rather than just economic and indiv- idualist self-regarding desires, allegiance to principles and convictions rather than to expediency and short-term self-interest, and a desire to make India a model society for other developing countries and an example to the materialist driven developed countries and give our country a place of moral leadership rather than of material or military might—these were the elements that constituted our value system. And they derived their authority not only from the hoary past but also from the immediate present that preceded our independ- ence. When I established the Delhi School of Economics in 1948, I named its auditorium, the Vivekananda Hall and when I started the Institute of Economic Growth in 1958, I called its auditorium the Sri Ramakrishna Hall. The Vivekananda Hall bore on the top of its platform the ancient and life saving wisdom of the Rig Veda *Ekam Sat Vipra Bahuda Vadanti'* and the heart-rending but electrical- ly inspiring statement of Vivekananda : "May I be born again and again to serve the poor, the down-trodden, the suffering. My God,

the wicked, the miserable, the poor of all races and species, is the only object of my worship". The staff and students of the Delhi School of Economics used to take a pledge every year to cultivate the qualities of courage, humaneness and social awareness as representative of what the President of the Delhi School of Economics Society, Jawaharlal Nehru stood for in his thought and deed. I was moved by our value system in my own life and doings ; and I shared this feeling with many millions of my countrymen. We were all the legatees of vedantic universality and spiritual equality, the compassion of Buddha, the sacrificial love of Jesus, the democratic equality of Islam, Sikhism and Basaveswara, the Bhakti of the *Dasas*, the secularism and *daridra narayana seva* of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda, the *Satya* and *Ahimsa* of Gandhi, and the humanism and respect for human dignity of Jawaharlal Nehru. We have now lost these values ; and it is this loss which has made a mockery of all the positive factors in the contemporary Indian scene and soured our efforts at national, economic, political and social development. Ours is essentially a crisis of values ; and there is no hope for a real and durable future in the desired direction unless we regain the basic values that we have lost during our recent history.

———

3

The Current Indian Scene :
Is It Darkness Before Dawn ?

CHAPTER III

THE CURRENT INDIAN SCENE : IS IT
DARKNESS BEFORE DAWN ?

I hope that my first two lectures have not created gloom and despair amongst you for India's future. I, for one, have not succumbed to gloom, even though I have fathered this tale of the emergence of darkness on the Indian horizon. Darkness is always succeeded by dawn, shadows retreat before light, and India will survive her contemporary crisis and emerge with a glorious future. But this cannot happen automatically. Neither procrastination nor lordly passivity will help. Even prayers will not work ; for a while God is kind, He is not a *bakhis* dispenser, and will help only those who help themselves. In this connection, I am tempted to relate a story that I heard the other day from a friend : A Brazilian, an Egyptian, and an Indian called on God to seek his views on the future of their respective countries. "Will my country get developed during my life time", asked the Brazilian. "Yes", replied God, "if you live to see your 100th birthday". The Egyptian's turn was next ; he asked the same question. God replied firmly 'No'. "In my son's life time?", the answer was 'perhaps'. "In my grandson's life time ?", the answer this time was a categorical "Yes". Now it was the Indian's turn. The question asked was the same. "In my life-time ?", "No", came the answer. "In my son's life time" ?; the "No" was repeated. The same 'no' was the response to the next question, "In my grand-son's life time"? "In my great grand-son's life time" ? "No". The Indian felt completely stricken. He mustered enough strength to whisper his last question : "When then Oh Lord, will my country get developed?" God looked at the

Indian with sadness and replied : "Not even during my life-time".
The Indian fell down unconscious. Recovering his consciousness
and folding his hands in the traditional Indian *Namaste*, he asked
God, "Is there then no hope for India ?" "Do not despair", replied
God, "India can develop and have a bright future, provided :
Indians will learn to help themselves and, in doing so, work together
in harmony".

I have made some editorial changes in the story I heard. But
the moral is clear. Darkness is not a permanent phenomenon.
Light will dispel darkness, but light will not come on its own. We
have to create the conditions for its emergence from behind dark-
ness. We ourselves, by our own thinking and action, have to find
a way out of the contemporary crisis in Indian affairs. And it is
on this theme I propose to dwell in this lecture, offering my humble
and amateur, but I hope, not entirely impracticable suggestions for
a way out of the crisis. I may add that these suggestions are based
on my own but limited experience of public affairs, my constant
thinking about what is happening in our midst, and, above all, my
deep and undying love for our country and people, and the unshak-
able-may be mystical -faith I have in their future.

Let me begin with the Parliamentary democratic process on
which I had laid so much stress in my first lecture as a hopeful
factor. I had also indicated the defects in its working which had
negatived its usefulness. Unless we reform the system, ours will
remain only a paper democracy, in spite of our having had seven
general elections to the Central Legislature and even more to the
State legislatures, with hundreds of millions of people taking part in
free and fair elections. First of all, we have to set right the working
of our party system. It is a pity that we have not been able to
develop a two party system but we could still have worked our
democracy successfully if parties had been based on clear and
perceived ideological differences, had been democratic in their own
functioning with open lists of members, conducted fair and free
elections to committees and offices, shown their accountable and
accounted funds, displayed some regard for credibility in their
electoral promises, and abstained from resort to tactics of divisive -

ness bassed on such non-ideological considerations as communalism, casteism, linguism and regionalism. Parties should have had continuous contact with their electorate at its grass roots by becoming cadre-based, which will not only give them the needed feed-back but also enable them to influence the behaviour of the people in a positive and constructive direction. Selection of candidates has also to be on a fair and above board basis, with some machinery like the American primaries for the democratic selection before being placed before the general electorate as their party candidates. Candidates once elected on a specific party ticket should not be allowed to defect, and required to resign and seek fresh election if they want to change their party labels. There should be no room for independent candidates in a parliamentary democracy operating on a party basis. Nor should there be any resort to bribery or corruption or black-mail or intimidation for inducing floor-crossing. Governments based on party majority in the legislature should be allowed to run their full term of office and there should be no attempts at toppling them during the inter-electoral period. There should be agreed rules of conduct for parties and party members, and penalties provided for breaches of the same by judicial process if necessary and an appropriate amendment of the Constitution.

In addition, I may make some suggestions affecting the elected legislators as a whole irrespective of their party composition. Election expenses, known to all but not acknowledged, are reaching astronomical proportions. This is making politicians or would be politicians seek moneyed backers who naturally expect a return or resort to unhealthy practices for collecting election funds involving patronage, corruption, protection of anti-social individuals and groups, and transactions in black money. One way of meeting this menace is to remove the infective legal ceiling on election expense, but make the candidates and their parties bring out into the open what they have spent and how these expenses have been financed. Another is for the State to bear the infrastructural expenses of election of all the candidates in the fray and then impose a ceiling on individual or any party expenses on the elections. A third way is to reduce the size of the constituencies to reasonable limits

comparable to those in other countries with a successful record of parliamentary democracy. As this might make for an unwieldy number-for example, if we limit the size of the constituency to 100000 voters, we may have to go in for a Lok Sabha with some thousands of members instead of hundreds as at present-serious consideration should be given to indirect elections for the Lok Sabha from electoral colleges whose members are directly elected on adult franchise from the re-constituted constituencies. Incidentally, these reconstituted constituencies for the electoral colleges for the Lok Sabha should be co-extensive with Assembly constituencies ; and elections for both namely, members of the electoral colleges for the Lok Sabha and of members for State Assemblies should be held simultaneously not only to save election expenses and discourage proliferation in the number of political parties, but also to give a unified direction to the expression of voting behaviour in respect of both the Union and State governments. Where regional parties will fit in, I do not know, though in my view there is no room for regional parties in a federal set-up as they have also to send representatives to the Union legislature. In any case, 1 think serious and urgent thought should be given to the working of our parliamentary democracy and the party system, and a consensus arrived at on reform in the same, before the next general elections are held either for the Lok Sabha or the State Assemblies.

Another reform of a general character is the need for a code of parliamentary conduct by members of our legislature. Members are conspicuous by their absence when serious legislation or policy issues affecting the vital interests of the people is under discussion ; members crowd in only at question time or the zero hour or when some *tamasha* or rowdiness or unruly scenes are expected. I cannot resist refering to the laments of the Speaker of the Lok Sabha on the failure of the country's legislators to conduct their proceedings with seriousness, decorum and dignity, when chairing a conference of presiding officers only very recently. Sermons and good advice do not seem to work either on the country or its elected representatives. What is needed is statutory recognition, with provision for implementation, of a well defined code of conduct for members of our Union and State legislatures.

Another factor for improvement is the education of the voter in his voting. While different political parties try to entice him with populist promises, and competitive emulation in their extravagance, the voter needs to be educated in coming to a right judgement not by specific reference to any of the promised roads to utopia, but in utopianism and populism in general, critical and objective evaluation of what is offered, constraints and obligations besides satisfaction, and need for not being swayed by communal, castiest or linguistic prejudices or affiliations, and the importance of his vote in deciding on what sort of Government he will get for the next 5 years.

The voter must also be educated in understanding with discrimination (the better word is the Sanskrit, *Vivek*) that election promises are by nature extravagant and carry no real accountability, while they also display competitive escalation in populism and candidates do not care to tell the electorate about what duties and obligations are involved in the references made to voter's rights and the benefits they should bring. All available sources of media, both public and private, should be used for th e purpose ; and this should be done for the entire period covering the announcement of the election and the date of actual polling.

Another suggestion relates to the place of bi-cameral legislatures in our Parliamentary system. As at present constituted and functioning, they seem to only involve duplication, delay and waste in both legislation and administration. Some re-thinking is necessary on the subject. For the States, they should function as the voice of the decentralised interests and activities of their regional units rather than as duplicators of the party position in the Assemblies ; and the nominated element in their composition should cover scientific, technical, professional, and social expertise, relevant to development in the State. There should be no party labels for nominated members, and State governments should not depend upon the support of legislative councils for their survival, while for legislation, they should only have the power to delay enactment with the final verdict being left to the Assemblies. In regard to the Union Parliament, the Rajya Sabha as at present constituted and functioning is really a fifth wheel in the coach and an anachronism

in relevant Indian politics and does not act as "Peter sober to Peter Drunk", which is how my Professor of Indian Administration used to teach us about the role of the Upper House in Parliamentary democracy. Though the members of the Rajya Sabha are elected by the MLAs of different States they do not concentrate on the articulation and promotion of individual state interests and the efficient and just implementation of the federal principle in the Union set-up, but act as pale and sometimes even noisier counter-parts of their party brethren in the Lok Sabha. The nominated members are supposed to represent intellectual and artistic excellence in the country ; in actual fact their membership has fallen a victim to politics and party expediency, while quite a number of them have joined different political parties as members in the Rajya Sabha, subjecting themselves to party whips. There is no representation in the Rajya Sabha of scientific, technological, social, cultural and other professional organisations, which could have brought into the counsels of the nation the best functional expertise in the country and also the active participation of their organisations in the work of national development. Here also, renewed thought has to be given to the role of the Rajya Sabha both as a federal body and as a harnesser of the best available functional talent and wisdom in the country for the purpose of ensuring the effectiveness, efficiency, and stability of a federal form of government for the Indian Union. Incidentally, the preamble to the Constitution also needs to be amended to add the expression "Federal" to the other adjectives indicating the basic object as we want to see established under the Indian Constitution.

It is also necessary to have provision in the Constitution regarding the number of both Union and State Ministers, the non-appointment of M.Ps. and M.L.As. as Chairman of Public companies or Corporations or other bodies with financial resources and administrative powers created by Parliament or the State legislatures or by Government, and stringent provisions against the toppling of governments during inter-election periods. The power of the Union Government to dismiss State Ministries or impose President's rule should be exercised only in exceptional cases and with prior approval

through a semi-judicial advisory process that will conspicuously ensure its not being used for the ruling party's advantage. The Governor's power in regard to the appointment of the Chief Minister and his dismissal, or recommendation to the Union Government to impose President's rule, should also be subject to a clearly laid down code of conduct that may be given semi-statutory recognition. The best safeguard against democratic misrule is only the electorate and general elections, but there could be provision for mid-term polls under specified exceptional circumstances which are not capable of being twisted to suit party exigencies.

Finally, every legislator including Ministers should declare his income and wealth before the elections and after the termination of every elected term of membership (or office as the case may be) ; and also file a written report at the end of each year on the work done in the legislature and in his constituency but also to research workers and bodies engaged in evaluation of work done by representatives of the people. MPs and MLAs should neither treat themselves or be treated as demigods with special privileges and exemptions but as servants of the people who acquire respect and regard by the services they render to the people.

Centre-State, or as I prefer to call it, Union-State relations also need to be changed both in the letter and in the spirit from the way they have developed over the years since independence. I have dealt with this subject at length in my Bangalore address on Centre-State relations and would refer you to what I have said there instead of burdening you with more words to listen to in this lecture. All that I would like to say here is that Union-State relations should be based on partnership and not dominance, mutual respect for each other's dignity and sensitiveness, compromise and accommodation rather than a scramble for power, and Union respect for regional identity and State's dedication to national integrity. To the extent that this re-orientation in Union-State relations require amendments to the Constitution, they should be undertaken, but a great deal can be effected by mutual consultation and the setting up of healthy conventions in Union-States and inter-States behaviour.

The second set of suggestions I want to make relate to the re-inforcement of national identity and emotional integration of Indian citizens. These would cover the various forces of divisiveness and alienation that are threatening our political and social stability and harmony. Among these suggestions, I would give a major place to what I call Positive Secularism and Composite Indian Culture, that permit differences but eliminate divisiveness and bring about a harmony of unity in diversity. In the implementation of both Positive Secularism and Composite Indian culture, reliance would have to be placed not so much on legislative and administrative action by Government—though they are also necessary along with adequate financial commitment—but on voluntary workers and organisations, religious leaders and social workers, the intellectual and artistic community, students and teachers and above all, the purposive, deliberate and nation-wide use of the media, both public and private in furtherance of the two desired objectives.

Positive Secularism is much more than and possibly radically different from, a neutral attitude to all religions and advocacy of mutual tolerance among them. What determines the role of religion in national integration and communal harmony is the way one is taught to look at his own religion and other religions. Each religion has its own prophet, philosophy, sacred books, traditions, rituals, customs and practices. Different religions may act differently on different individuals as stimuli for evoking the necessary response in terms of love, compassion, fraternity and service. There is no reason why any person should not be proud of his religion nor is there any reason why a person should not change his religion if he feels that by doing so he is better stimulated to respond in terms of love, compassion, fraternity and service.

What is important is the recognition, by men who profess different religions, of the universality of the presence of basic spiritual values in all the religions of the world, whether Hinduism or Islam or Christianity or Buddhism or Jainism or Sikhism or other faiths. This is what I understand by Positive Secularism. When Positive Secularism accompanies the practice of multiple religions, it is bound to be helpful in promoting national integrationand com-

munal harmony. And this can happen only when Positive Secularism is also taught along with teaching of each individual religion.

My mentor in Positive Secularism is Vivekananda ; and I need only quote what he said when he concluded his discussion of the universality of Religion and the existence of many religions. I quote :

> "Our watchword will be acceptance and not exclusion. Not only toleration, but acceptance. Toleration means that I think you are wrong and I am just allowing you to live. I believe in acceptance. I accept all religions that were in the past and I worship them all. I worship God with every one of them, in whatever form they worship Him. I shall go to the mosque of the Mohammedan ; I shall enter the Christian's church and kneel before the Crucifix ; I shall take refuge in Buddhistic temple, where I shall take refuge in Buddha and in his Law. I shall go into the forest and sit down in meditation with the Hindu, who is trying to see the Light which enlightens the heart of everyone".

The essence of Vivekananda's teachings on religion was the universality of God and his accessibility both in form and without form, the divinity of man, respect and understanding of all religions, the equality and brotherhood of man, the supreme virtue of compassion, work without attachment, devotion without return, renunciation of the personal ego, and service of all men and especially of those who are poor or maimed or illiterate or disinherited, the *daridra narayanas* of this world. It is this recognition of the One or the universal in all religions that will enable different religions not only to bring succour to their individual followers but also to stimulate national integration among the followers of different faiths and promote communal harmony among them.

This is what I understand by Positive Secularism ; and it is this Positive Secularism that the country must adopt in regard not only to the Hindu-Muslim problem but also to all other religions, identities and differences. I also feel encouraged in my advocacy

by the recent speech of a distinguished Indian Muslim, Ex-Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and now Chairman of the Minorities Commission who talked of Secularism not as a negative creed of inter-religious neutrality, but as a positive one of what he called the promotion of a *"civil religion"*.

But Positive Secularism cannot be promoted merely by seminars or arguments for its acceptance on an intellectual or didactic plane. For translation into practice, ideas require concrete measures and institutional aids. Government behaviour has a most powerful demonstration effect on popular opinion and conduct ; and this is particularly so for India, where Government activity impinges on every aspect of our lives and voluntary organisations play a much less important role than they do in some other countries. Accordingly, I am venturing to put forward a few suggestions for promoting positive secularism as an instrument for getting the aid of religion itself for securing inter-community harmony.

Government can officially celebrate the most important festivals of each practising religion in the country. Heads of governments, Ministers and important officials can visit their places of worship during these occasions and participate in the worship, thus demonstrating the mutual esteem in which all religions should be held in our country. Such public participation in the religious occasions of different religions by the repositories of official power will go a long way to establish in the public mind the Positive Secularism that not merely stands for tolerance but more importantly for mutual esteem among the different faiths that our people profess. The attitude our Government is now adopting in what I think is a mistaken interpretation of the secular nature of our State is leaving the field clear for dividing our people into exclusive religious groups, who do not respect each other's faith and even whose tolerance gets eroded from time to time on some haphazard incident or some deliberate instigation leading to communal conflicts. It would also be useful if we revive and universalise the practice that prevailed in the past in many places and in diverse religious communities of mutual participation in the social celebrations of their individual religious and cultural festivals. In a multi-religious country like India, if

secularism is to play a positive role in making religion a promoter of national integration and communal harmony, there must be a conspicuously visible display of mutual esteem and respect among her religions with Government playing a prominent role in this respect.

The educational system must be reoriented, especially at the primary stage, to instill in the children pride in their individual religion, esteem for each other's religion, and cognition of the universal values that are contained in all their religions. Appropriate text books for the purpose should constitute a part of compulsory reading and should be accompanied by songs, plays and other audio-visual media that should depict the 'unity in diversity', that is the essence of Positive Secularism.

Priestcraft, irrespective of which is the religion it serves, should be treated as a profession like education or medicine or law or other callings that affect not only the individual taught but also society as a whole ; and no one should be permitted to function as a priest or a religious teacher who has not undergone a regular course of training in the basic tenets and the spiritual values enshrined in his religion. Such teaching institutions will have to be set up by the communities concerned and their religious leaders, but they should be registered, the teaching material they employ should be open to inspection and include a sympathetic understanding and esteem for the basic tenets of other religions which are shared by the religion in question. The end product of the system should be priests who are proud of their religion, understand and emphasise its basic spiritual values, and at the same time show and inculcate awareness of similar values found in other religions,

Inter-religious boards should be set up at various territorial levels with the object of promoting inter-religious understanding, mutual esteem, and inter-communal harmony. It is not the politician or the intellectual so much as those whose profession is to teach religion who are the most important from the point of view of promoting communal harmony and making religion an instrument of national integration. Hence the need for paying them special attention when considering the role of religion in the context of communal harmony and national integration.

The common element in all religions of the need for uplift of the poor, plea for avoidance of conspicuous consumption, limitation of property and simple living, and equality of all human beings in the sight of God and the need for translation of this equality into material conditions of living should be brought out clearly and emphasised ; and an attempt made to educate the people in their common religious inheritance for a just and good society in the country.

Thus, multiplicity of religions in India, including the two major ones of Hinduism and Islam, can be made a promoter rather than a deterrent to inter-communal harmony and national integration, if only we take to the path of Positive Secularim in place of the colourless and negative secularism we have been trying to practise so far in our country.

The other important factor that works against national integration is the continued prevalence of the anti-social and discriminatory and divisive forces associated with the practice of Hindu religion over the centuries. There have been many attempts at reform in the past, but they have not succeeded in breaking the hard core of the anti-social element in traditional Hindu religion and its way of life including caste exclusiveness and the abominable practice of untouchability. It is difficult for the Government to bring about reform in Hindu society beyond what it can do by way of protective and penal legislation and financial and educational aid for the depressed sections. Reservations in educational institutions and Government jobs have also helped, but have their own limitations and adverse effects on efficiency. I shall not dilate on this matter, as I have already discussed it in some detail in the Ambedkar lectures I delivered in Delhi University in 1982. What I would like to say here is that the increasing alienation felt by the Scheduled Castes cannot diminish or disappear unless a change of heart takes place in the Hindu community along with egalitarian and dignity-promoting social treatment of the Scheduled Castes and backward classes among them. Reform of Hindu society in a modern and egalitarian direction is a must, if national integration and social harmony is to be promoted in this country. This cannot be done unless the

5

initiative is taken by religious leaders, voluntary organisations, progressive Hindus and Hindu intellectuals, educationists and the student community. I hope that something will be done in this regard soon and on a national scale. Signs are not wanting of Hindu religious leaders shedding their traditional orthodoxy and liberalising their attitude, while modern Hindu religious preachers and leaders are emphasising the egalitarian and democratic content in Hindu scriptures to bring about the needed reform in Hindu society. The media, botn public and private, audio and visual, and educational syllabuses have a major role to play in the matter. All this has to be done on a planned and deliberate basis with imaginative understanding of the psychological problems involved. Educated but religious-minded Hindus and even secular Hindus have also to contribute their quota for the reform of the Hindu social structure and the elimination of its anti-social practices. I can only hope that, in the midst of our preoccpation with political and economic issues, we will not ignore this vital task of reforming and restructuring Hindu society in a progressive direction. There can be neither social development or social planning or a positive social harmony in India unless Hindu orthodoxy is repudiated, the hold of irrational superstitions and anti-social priest-craft is eliminated, and humanistic, fraternal and cooperative practices take the place of the exclusivist and divisive practices now current among the bulk of Hindu society. Neither vedantic metaphysics nor ritual reading of Hindu scriptures will do the job. What is needed, as Vivekananda put it, is Practical Vedanta or as Gandhi would have it, bringing the basic spirit of real Hindu religion into daily Hindu life and practice. The state in which I am delivering these lectures and its people and their neighbours in North India have a special role to play in this matter, as they were the original legatees af the Buddha and the Upanishads and of Rama and Krishna but are now living in a way far removed from their spiritual inheritance. It is the North that has to begin the task of reforming Hindu society in an egalitarian, progressive and democratic direction ; the rest of India will then find it easier to do so.

The other important instrument for bringing about social harmony is the education of the people, not only the masses but also the classes, in India's composite culture and make them take pride in this inheritance. The bulk of Iranians are Muslims, but they take pride in their pre-Islamic cultural heritage, so do the Egyptians and the Indonesians. Even the Pakistanis, in spite of the loud noises they are making about their Islamic State, are proud of Taxila, Mohanjodaro, and Harappan culture. There is no reason why the Indian Muslims should not be proud of their pre-Islamic Indian cultural heritage, even as the Hindus are proud of the Taj Mahal, the Red Fort, Fatepur Sikri and Gol Gumbaz. Cultural heritage need not necessarily be an Individual's religious heritage. The Vedas, Upanishads, Ramayana, Mahabharata, Bhagavata, the Pancha-Tantra, Kalidasa's Shakuntala and Meghadoota, Kautilya's Arthashastra, and the magnificent temples and archaeological monuments of Konark and Khajuraho, Ellora, Ajanta, Elephanta and Kanheri caves, Belur and Halabidu and Sravanabelagola are all cultural treasures of which every Indian can be proud. They may have religious significance to the Hindus or Buddhists or Jains, but they have cultural significance for the other Indians who are Muslims or Christians or even agnostics or atheists. Indian culture has been enriched and diversified by the contribution of Indians of diverse religious faiths and made India's Composite Culture an inheritance of which any people anywhere can feel elated and be proud about. But only a few of us know about our composite culture and still fewer take pride in its being a national possession. We just do not know how to discriminate the unifying from the divisive in our cultural or social or political past or cling to the former as a treasured common possession. The great poet-intellectual Sir Mohamed Iqbal became a supporter of Pakistan in his later days; but it was he who gave us our most stirring patriotic song, the reverberating music of which swayed millions of our countrymen during our struggle for independence. I am referring to his *Sare Jahan se Achcha, Hindustan Hamara*. Recognition of the greatness in things, persons and themes belonging to India runs in his poems

like Sri Rama, Swami Rama Thirtha, Guru Nanak, Gayathri-
Mantra etc. One of his first poems was about the great Himalayas.
I am not a scholar in Indian literature and my ignorance of Indian
languages is a shameful handicap. But I do know that Indians of
different religious faiths have contributed to the composite unity of
Indian culture by their poems, novels, plays, essays, paintings,
sculpture, buildings, archaeological monuments, public works, and
administrative innovations. Once we know about our composite
culture we are bound to feel proud about India, to which
Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists and Jains, Sikhs and Christians and
persons hailing from all parts of India, have made their cultural
contribution. We have talked about India's composite culture but
have done nothing to make it a perceived reality to our people. We
should now go all out to nationalise the message of India's Com-
posi.e Culture and bring it to the notice of all our people, young and
old, irrespective of their differences in religion, language and region.
In fact, it should become a high priority plan programme, even as
much as the family planning programme. The cooperation of
voluntary organisations, intellectuals, writers, journalists and artists,
teachers and students and all educational institutions should be
harnessed for this missionary propagation of India's composite
culture. The media should be brought into full play for the purpose,
not only radio and television but also the daily press, weeklies and
monthlies, especially in the Indian languages. If we do all this, we
will be laying the corner-stone in the building of India's national
identity and the social harmony of its people.

Another factor that can promote national integration is getting
the masses of the country to have a link language that will enable
communication and sharing of thoughts and emotions between the
north, south, east, west and middle of the country. It is a pity that
we did not accept Gandhiji's advice and make Hindustani our lingual
link. Hindi after all is a regional language and the fact that it is the
largest used language in the country is actually a handicap to its
national use, because of its regional concentration and the chau-
vanism that accompanies it. Nor have we implemented the Consti-
tutional provision that it should draw on all Indian languages for

its expanding vocabulary. Instead we have mainly resorted to Sanskrit for adding to its vocabulary ; and the Hindi now propagated not only does not satisfy the linguistic attachments of the non-Hindi speaking people but is becoming unintelligible even to the Hindi-speaking masses. Nor have we gone in for an additional script and massive transliteration and inter-lingual dictionaries that could have established a bridge between our multiple languages and given the Indian masses an opportunity to share each other's literary heritage. I do not know why no serious thought, let alone action, has been given by our policy makers to this bridge-building among the Indian languages. If the Nagari script is not nationally acceptable because of Muslim and Christian reservation on the subject, there is nothing to prevent the country from adopting the Roman Script as the *additional* script for Indian languages. The Roman script would have the additional advantage not only of neutrality or non regional identity, but also facilitate the learning of English which is so ardently desired by many people in our country, including the poorer classes and the rural areas. It has also been tried out with success in the Army's teaching of Hindi to its Jawans. It is no good pinning our faith in the three language formula for bringing about emotional integration among a multi-lingual people who speak many more than 3 languages. Moreover, the three language formula has failed either to get implemented or achieve its objective. We seem to have rolled our language problem under the carpet and left it to our gods to find a solution. I have been speaking and writing on this subject now for some years and even put it in book form in the three lectures I gave in Bombay in 1979 in the Hindustani Prachar Sabha's Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Lecture series ; but no one in authority has paid my words any heed though this does not prevent me from continuing to talk about it. I would earnestly request my Hindi audience in Allahabad to look at my little book "Many Languages and one Nation-the Problems of Integration" published by the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Research Centre and Library of the Hindustani Prachar Sabha of Bombay. In any case let us recognise that we have not solved our language problem and start thinking again on the subject for arriving at a nationally workable and acce-

ptable consensus if we want to survive as one nation with its people speaking many languages.

Let me now turn to the Indian economic problem in the light of not only growth and development but also national integration and social harmony. Shortage of time and concern for the patience of my audience prevents me from dealing with it at the length to which it is entitled ; and I would refer my listeners to the V. T. Krishnamachari Memorial lecture I gave a few days back in Delhi under the auspices of the Institute of Economic Growth on A New approach to Indian Planning. Here I will deal only with some salient features of our economic problem and that too only in summary form.

There is no doubt that our rate of economic growth is inadequate, capital output ratio is increasing, and so is unemployment of both skilled and unskilled labour, mass poverty is only declining at a snail's pace, and inequality of incomes and wealth is growing. The dichotomy of conditions of living between rural and urban areas is widening, and so is the difference in consumerist life styles between the affluent and the poor. We seem to be busy building up a dual society in our economy with paradoxically simultaneous attempts at increasing the affluence of a minority and diminishing the poverty of the majority. This is an obviously unsatisfactory situation that has to be remedied if economic planning and development is to maximise national output along with social justice, and promote national integration and social harmony.

For increasing the rate of economic growth and maximising national output, we have to reorient our entire investment policy in an appropriate functional direction. Investment policy should not be conceived merely in terms of adding new investments or going in for new projects but also for attending to the efficiency of productivity and maximisation of output from existing or old investments. It is only when output from existing investment is maximised and stablished at the maximum level that we get the largest return from it, which not only increases the rate of economic growth but also produces the surplus needed for re-investment and a further increase in income. This requires adequate and efficient maintenance of exist-

ing equipment, avoidance of break-downs, timely replacement of old and antiquated equipment with diminished productivity, and addition of new and modern equipment to replace the obsolescent in existing equipment. It also requires provision of the inputs relevant for continued and maximum output and their timely availability. Also needed is the maximising of the motivation and efficiency of the human factor in industry with suitable incentives of rewards and penalties, refresher courses, and induction of new skills. The investment outlay targetted for each Five Year Plan should include an appropriate amount for looking after existing capital equipment and its continued efficiency, and working funds for the continued and increased efficiency of its associated labour force. The other requirement in regard to existing capacities should be priority in the investment and working expenditure needed for its full utilisation. The story of India's planned development is full of omissions in both these directions, notable instances being railways, thermal and hydel power, irrigation, and much of the capital equipment in both capital and consumer goods industries. In fact, the Plan Draft should not only include such an outlay but also an evaluation of the state of existing capital equipment, maintenance, continuing efficiency, and full utilisation of created capacity. This would automatically bring down the capital output ratio, enhance the mobilisation of domestic resources and step up the rate of economic growth,

Another factor, needing mention relates to new investment. Though a great deal of literature exists in Plan documents on project preparation and training courses are arranged in some institutions like the Institute of Economic Growth and directly by some State Governments, inadequate attention to details and of dove-tailing them in timeliness, linkage, availability and cost, and insufficient attention to market prospects for the output emerging from these projects and unrealistic projection of related variables lead to cost escalations, unutilised capacity and unsold products. In turn, this leads to negative or nil or low returns from the new investment and thereby to an increase in the capital output ratio and a reduction in the rate fo economic growth. It is also deplorable that new projects are taken up on impulsive or populist basis, diverting funds

from uncompleted projects and thereby leading to nil or negative net returns from investment and waste of resources. I would give therefore the highest priority to investment policy planning and implementation in the new look that I want to see in our planning process.

The importance of infrastructure and its role in stepping up the rate of economic growth is well known to our planners. Nevertheless, we find infrastructural deficiencies, particularly in regard to sectors like energy and transport which are crucial for utilisation of agricultural and industrial capacity. Wrong protections, wrong utilisation based on short period considerations and an inadequate apparatus for forecasting demand, and lack of attention to the inflationary factor in both cost escalation and demand projections are all responsible for the faulty planning and its resulting in a low growth rate. The whole subject of infrastructure planning needs further detailed and scientific consideration than it has received so far.

Another and even more important area in our planning effort is the human factor in the economy. The human factor is more important for India's economic development than even capital or natural resources, for the largest production potential we have is the magnitude of our labour force. But we are unable to make even a partial use of its number. Apart from the large number of unemployed and under-employed we have in our country, those who are engaged in some kind of productive activity lack skills or industrial discipline or both, while those who have skills lack up-dating in their skills and modernisation in their techniques. Our working force has a large number of illiterate members, especially in its women, and there is no effective programme for giving them even bare literacy let alone functional literacy. The system of apprenticeship has still to reach large numbers of seekers of skills, while there is no programme for giving our youth, including boys and girls, knowledge of and training in industrial and technical skills on a comprehensive and national basis aimed at reaching the bulk of the population in these age groups. The educational system, both formal and non-formal is still literary, bookish and memory-based,

and not vocationally or technically oriented, or stimulant of creati-
vity or enterprise or the building of character and self-reliance.
There are neither refresher courses or in-service training or life-long
education. No attempt is made to create awareness of ecology or
the understanding and enjoyment of the country's flora and fauna
or its rivers or mountains or forests. Nor does the system educate
its clientele in the country's cultural artistic and spiritual heritage or
the basic tenet of harmonious existence for a multi-religious com-
munity contained in the words of the Rig Veda *'Ekam Sat Vipra
Bahudo Vadanthe'*, or in the traditional prayer *'Serva Jano Sukhino
Bhavanthu'* or *'Vasuleva Kutambakam'*. The system does not promote
the cultivation of a scientific temper or of a rational approach in the
understanding or tackling of the problems that one faces in one's
daily life. Self confidence and self-help in the individual, coopera-
tive working with others rather than competing against them, faith
in the nation's future along with knowledge of the causes for both
failures and achievements in the past, recognition of basic values
and the imperatives of *dharma* or one's duties and obligations to
non-self-regarding over selfish action along with pride in one's work
and its quality rather than its cash rewards—these qualities and
attitudes do not find nurture and growth in the pupils who pass
through our educational system. A whole new look is needed at
the educational system to make it an instrument for integrated
human development and what is needed to get the best out of our
human resources for bringing about both accelerated economic
growth and harmonious social development. Good education de-
serves a much higher priority and a more imaginative and intelligent
handling than has been given to it so far in our planning or its
programmes.

Our planners also need to have a study in depth of the impact
that their direct attack on mass poverty through specific programmes
for some of the identified rural and urban poor individuals is having
not merely on immediate improvement in their economic con-
ditions but also on their social and cultural conditions and above
all, on their self-confidence and self-reliance. How far are our anti-
poverty programmes promoting a self-sustaining and self-accelerat-

ing abolition of mass poverty ?   I am aot   saying that we should not
go ahead with these direct and frontal attacks on the poverty of the
individual poor.   All that I am pleading for is their objective eva-
luation and re examination so as to find out how far leakages pre-
vent their actually reaching their targeted clientele, and how for they
have an in-built provision for self-sustaining continuity avoiding the
creation of *bakshish* mentality and making for a spirit of self-depen-
dence and self-reliance.

We must also re-examine the objectives of our planned deve-
lopment.   While the incorporation of social justice into economic
growth is a desirable feature, it   must also be acknowledged that in
the process we should not create or strengthen a dual society in
India.   Poverty is not only a material phenomenon but also a
psychological one ; and abolition of the emotional undertones of
poverty cannot be associated with vulgar and ostentatious consump-
tion by a microscopic minority of the affluent class and the creation
of a Five Star Hotel culture that is unattainable by the masses and
only create envy, jealousy and frustration from non-fulfilable long-
ings.   The objectives of planning must also include sharp dimuni-
tion of the conditions of living between the urban and rural areas
and make for a rural-urban continuum rather than a drain of both
rural talent and unemployed labour to the urban areas, adding
to urban slums and leaving the rural areas in stagnant proverty.
In fact, the proclaimed shift for decentralisation of economic
activity ought to lead to rural industrialistation and reverse
the current drift of people from the rural to urban
areas.   Improvement in rural living conditions, including
transport, housing, water drainage, energy and cultural and educa-
tional facilities, should be such as to encourage a 'back to
village' movement I have been advocating in place of the current
craze not only for *Delhi Chalo* but also for *Nagar* or *Shahar Chalo.*
The dual society that is arising from and getting strengthened by
our style and strategy of economic development is now assuming
menacing proportions. I have shown in the last chapter of my
recent book on India's National Income 1950-1980 that we have
to stop trying to keep up with other national Joneses and should
go in for a national style of plain, though not austere living and

high thinking. That would also be more in line with Indian traditions than the competitive rat-race made popular by global capitalist development. Unless this trend towards a dual society with its vulgar rich and sullen poor and the coexistence of affluence with poverty is rapidly ended and differences in consumerist life styles lowered to within the limits of mass psychological tolerance, no degree of statistical economic growth will prevent the growth of social divisiveness and disharmony and the threat it poses to national integration and social stability.

Planning must also take into account the bet.erment of the social milieu in the country and the need for finding ways and means for good and sustained friendly social relations between the many groups that constitute our multiple society and live in their own ivory towers, secluded from each other except for economic and professional contacts. Attention needs to be paid to expanding the availability of sports and cultural facilities to students of educational institutions and employees of industrial enterprises and other private employees and government employees of different categories, while particular attention also needs to be paid to the provision of similar facilities to non-student youth, self-employed workers and women in general. These facilities should be given not only in urban areas but also in the rural areas where the majority of our people live, and who are experiencing a near-vaccum in this respect. With the increasing employment of women in urban areas, plan programmes should include a provision for a chain of working-girls' hostels for in-migrant women workers. Similarly tourist homes on an austere basis, corresponding to a modern version of our traditional *dharma-shalas* should be built for the convenience and limited pockets of the large number of rural people who have to visit urban areas in connection with their work or even for cultural enrichment.

I must now conclude. We all know from the history of men that where there is no vision, the people perish. And there can be no vision which is not based on a value system.

In my last lecture, I had referred to the value system that the country had inherited from its ancient past and in more recent times from Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi. We have now

forgotten that heritage. Public life in all fields is fouled by bribery, corruption, ostentatious vulgarity in the use of money power, political power, bureaucratic power, and all other kinds of power streams now proliferating in the country like weeds in an unkempt garden. Disagreement leads not to discussion but to confrontation ; and differences and grievances not to compromise and consensus but to discord and violence. Even the non-violent techniques which Gandhiji used with care, caution, and moral discipline for righteous and non-self-regarding causes have now been cheapened, and vulgarised ; and base imitations brought into play for non-ethical and self-regarding causes, without care, caution or moral or any other kind of discipline. The fact that these things have happened and that they no longer shock the people or lead to any attempt to halt and reverse the process shows the extent to which the Indian value system has got corroded and the Gandhian inheritance discarded. We cannot build any kind of vision on such premises, either economic development or abolition of poverty or a socialist orientation of society. First things should come first. And the first place belongs to the value system and the normative structure that should be created in our society. The crisis that the country faces today is not just an economic or political or social crisis. It is essentially a crisis of values.

How do we restore the value system and primacy of the basic values, that need no exposition for their identification ? Is that a sixtyone billion dollar question ? Or to vary the metaphor, who will bell the cat in a world of mice ? I am not overwhelmed either by the question or by the analogy. We are men, not mice ; nor do we need sixtyone billion dollars to answer the question. We have many good men and women in the country, who are trying to implement the value system in their personal and public life. But they remain passive when others violate these values and do not get together to resist their actions. Edmund Burke said a long time ago "When bad men combine, the good must associate". But politics is a messy business and good men do not want to get polluted by the mire. What they forget is that good men do not live in cloisters and cannot escape from the destabilising effects of the bad men around

them. With my background, I have no right to advise good men to enter politics. Nevertheless, I would urge on good men and intellectuals of proved worth and known integrity to step out from their ivory towers and enter the market place of politics. The crisis in the country needs for its solution their active participation ; and I feel hopeful that the electorate will favour them with their choice in the elections, because they have a sturdy commonsense, a strong instinct for survival and a keen desire for betterment ; and they have now become sufficiently politicised to cast their votes in their rational and implementable self interest. It is good that we have stuck to our democratic framework and periodic elections. That gives a ray of hope against the prevailing darkness, if only the good, able and committed among us give up their horror of political involvement and throw in their weight on the side of a good, just, harmonious, and economically developing society.

There are also many voluntary organisations with committed members who are doing good work in the social, cultural, educational and other non-political fields, serving the poor and the deprived, the handicapped and the disinherited, the *daridra narayana* of India, whose service was propogated as the worship of God by Swami Vivekananda and later by Gandhiji. Their deeds are not heralded by trumpets except when some Minister takes notice of them as Chief Guest at one of their functions. They do not hit the headlines either in the press or in the public sector media and most of us are unaware even of their existence, let alone their wholesome activities. But they do exist ; and many of them belong both to the educated class and to the younger generation. Only they do not get together for collective action or bring their collective influence to bear on the correcting of national ill-doings. I don't think they should enter politics, but certainly they should not shun publicity or refuse PRO services or hide their light in opaque bushels. Their presence should both be seen and heard by the people ; even this will help to dispel the existing darkness and encourage hope among the people about the future of our country.

Above all, we must make a determined, if not desparate, effort to educate our people in the relevance and social utility of a

good value system for their own individual and collective better-
ment ; as also for national integration and social harmony. Our
people's mind has to be reached and our people's heart has to be
touched if we want the value system to play its catalytic role for a
hopeful future. Education and communication are the two most
potent instruments for spreading their message. We have a large
network of educational institutions spread all over the country with
lakhs of teachers and millions of students. We have many millions
of AIR listeners and many lakhs of T V viewers. The latter are
expected to reach 70 percent of our population in the near future.
Why cannot we have a comprehensive plan for educating our people
in the validity and utility of a good value system and its basic
values ? Why should we not give it a high priority in our plan pro-
grammes and adequate funding for its implementation ? If we do
this even on a most ambitious and nationwide scale, the cost will be
less than a fraction of the expenditure we are incurring today on our
armed forces. Expenditure on educating our people in basic
values will be productive, for it will promote national integration,
positive secularism, work-ethic and credit-ethic, human dignity and
civil freedoms, a viable and functionally efficient democracy, develop-
ment with justice, humaneness and social awareness, non-violence,
social harmony, and a normative society. It will also be a powerful
and indeed practically invincible instrument for national defence,
for while armies can be defeated, no people can be conquered who
are proud of their national identity and conscious of the mutuality of
their interest. My plea for the re-enthronement of the value system
in our national life is therefore no sentimental cry nor a mystical
longing but a hard needed and practical way out both for resolving
the present crisis and avoiding the recurrence of such crises in the
future.

        I know that my emphasis on the restoration of values by
education and communication rather than by a violent revolution
may sound unexciting and impractical to the younger listeners in my
audience. But revolutions are not easy to achieve in a complex and
multiple society like ours ; and violence is a double-edged weapon
that destroys more than it creates and it does not work over the long

period.   The history of violent   revolutions in the world as well as
the results they are achieving in the contemporary world bear
eloquent testimony to the unexciting thesis I am advocating of a non-
violent movement towards a better value system and the creation of
a good society.   But the non-violence I am talking about is not
negative nor is it based on passivity.   Education can be a powerful
weapon and so also is communication if they are properly and
efficiently used and followed up by appropriate and organised non-
violent action.   The time taken for change may be a little longer,
but the change wrought will be more enduring.   It will also be
ennobling, with the very process of change leading to the emergence
of a good society which is the objective of change.   Means are as
important as ends even in the material world of economics ; it is
much more so in the social, political, cultural, psychological and
spiritual world.   India drew her strength in the past from her
spirituality.   She will recover her strength in the future if she reverts
to spirituality and the supremacy of the value system in all walks of
life.   That is the only way to reach the dawn that is clouded by the
prevailing darkness of the contemporary Indian scene.   Whether that
dawn will emerge or the darkness will grow in its extent and intensity
will depend upon how we react to the current situation.

I began by saying that the contemporary Indian scene is of
mixed hue, both light and shade, with the latter having more than an
edge and threatening to overpower the former. The darkness seemed
to be overwhelming and the dawn seemed far distant.   I now end by
saying that darkness is never ever-lasting ; and the dawn is not so
distant.   The darkness will disappear and the dawn will emerge, if
only we take stock of our present problems in time, and act intelli-

gently, wisely and swiftly, and in line with the spiritual inheritance of our national ethos.   I believe we can do this, and we will.

So I conclude these lectures on a note of hope.   The Indian entity will survive ; and develop into a good society.   In due course, it will also become a beacon of spiritual light to the rest of the world as well.

————
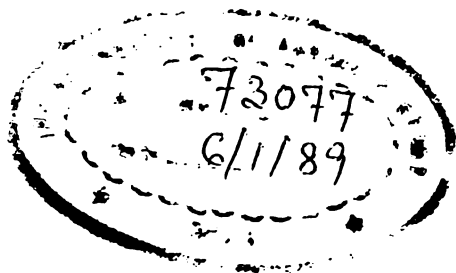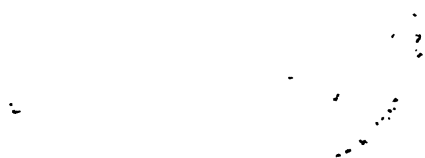
OUR OTHER PUBLICATIONS

CHANDRA, D.   : Open Air Prisons
(A Sociological Study) 85/-

TIWARI, B. N. (Ed.) : Adult Education and
Libraries. 65/-

DAS, S. K.   : The Economic History of
Ancient India. 65/-

त्रिपाठी, रा॰ न॰   : प्राचीन भारतीय आर्थिक विचार ११०/-

तिवारी, भा॰ ना॰ (सं) : प्रौढ़ शिक्षा औ॰ पुस्तकालय ३०/

●