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Just jobs, sustainable growth

Old jobs dying, new being created

From jobless to job loss

KNOW INDIA BETTER

Hidden gems of Hoysala empire

FACE TO FACE

Kamal D. Shah



MEANWHILE, IN PAKISTAN,
BOTH ARE FREELY AVAILABLE

SINGLE-USE
PLASTIC

SINGLE-
USE
PLASTIC
EXPLOSIVE



UNEMPLOYED?
WANT WORK?

JOIN PROTEST MARCH
AGAINST RISING UN-
EMPLOYMENT AND
GET PAID ₹ 1000



WANT TO FEEL
PATRIOTIC, WITHOUT
LIVING IN A DIRTY,
STINKY, POLLUTED,
CORRUPT, LOUSY,
MISERABLE,
HOPELESS
COUNTRY?

THEN
COME
HERE!



HOWDY MODI

WHY DOES
NO ONE IN
THE WHOLE
WORLD TAKE
ME SERIOUSLY?



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October 2019

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Just jobs, sustainable growth

*It is very evident by now that India's labour market is ailing, and has been for some time. Worse, the nation's growing employment woes are impeding its economic growth too, says **Sabina Dewan**, striking an ominous note.*



The relentless pursuit of economic growth and the assumption that growth will inevitably lead to more, and eventually better jobs, has all but proven to be unfounded. For almost a decade, India's economic growth has neither produced enough jobs, nor the quality of jobs, that the nation needs. Capital intensification fuelled economic growth for several consecutive years, but it did not generate enough employment to absorb the country's surplus labour depressing wages and working conditions. A lack of productive jobs and low wages are now manifesting in a decline in private consumption and low aggregate demand. This in-turn adversely affects production and investment creating a viscous cycle.

Breaking this cycle calls for a drastic shift in priorities from a growth first narrative to a good jobs first strategy.

More and better employment must be the priority. Harnessing the productive potential of the nation's population (especially its large and growing youth population) through good jobs will drive more sustainable economic growth. This, on the one hand, entails focusing on the

expansion of labour intensive sectors, especially in manufacturing and infrastructure, to create more jobs; on the other, it entails investing in effective education, skills and social protection for workers.

Causes for rise in unemployment

Only one in two Indians of working age, 15 years and above, participate in the labour force. Fewer than one in four women 15 years and above – 23.3 percent – enter the labour market, and this rate has been declining in recent years. The drop in female labour force participation can be attributed to several factors ranging, for instance, from girls staying in education longer and delaying their entry into the labour market, to the 'middle income effect'. A lack of demand from female friendly industries such as apparel and footwear, and continuing social disapproval of women's economic engagement are both important factors. Other culprits include migration and the nuclearisation of families where there are fewer women in the household to contribute to domestic work. Women also tend to be relegated to low-value added activities, they receive lower wages, and

are more likely to be exposed to various forms of exploitation than their male counterparts, such that staying at home becomes a more appealing option.

India's unemployment rate now stands at 6.1 percent, up from 2.2 percent in 2011-12. At 17.8 percent, the youth unemployment rate is nearly three times that of the general labour force, up from 6.7 percent in 2011-12. The rise in unemployment can largely be explained by the fact that more young people are obtaining an education. Equipped with education, some youth expect a 'better' job. Those who can afford education also tend to be in a position to wait for a job that meets their requirements. Those who are not as financially fortunate must find the means to make a living, however poor in quality the work may be.

Mismatch between education and employability

In addition to more educated young people waiting for the right job to come along, evidence also points to a mismatch between education and labour market demand. The India Skill Report 2018 highlights the fact that higher unemployment among the educated signals the disconnect between skills and aptitude of a majority of graduates, and the needs of industry. In a survey of 416 employed youth in Sonapat and Faridabad districts of Haryana, the JustJobs Network found that 56 percent of employed respondents felt that their general education and their vocational skills were insufficient to help them procure a job.

Aside from the uptick in unemployment, underemployment is also a worrying phenomenon. Most people in India cannot afford to be unemployed; they have to work to sustain themselves. Among those that are working, informal employment as a share of non-agricultural employment was 68.4 percent. Informal employment usually entails the sharing of low-productivity work, with poor wages, and the absence of social protection.

What's more, regular wage and salaried work is also becoming increasingly precarious. The share of regular wage workers with a written contract went from 59.1 percent in 2004 to 71.1 percent in 2018. Thirty-eight percent of regular wage/salaried workers were not eligible for paid leave, did not have a written job contract and were without any social security benefits in 2018.

On the heels of these indicators reflecting poor labour market health, economic growth has also slowed down from eight percent in the first quarter of fiscal year 2018 to five percent for the same period this year.

Labour intensive sectors must get priority

When it comes to job creation, the composition of growth matters. India must prioritise labour intensive over capital intensive sectors. Mega investment in sunrise and advanced technology may invite some investment from global companies, but much more from streamlining compa-

ny compliances to improving access to finance, can help domestic labour intensive firms, especially in manufacturing sectors, grow. Small firms in these sectors offer the potential to become engines of job growth.

Infrastructure development creates large numbers of jobs – though the quality of construction jobs leaves much to be desired. The multiplier effect of infrastructure projects can be significant from promoting value chains, connecting production to markets, building irrigation, energy and transportation infrastructure for rural areas to alter cropping patterns toward more labour intensive and higher value crops. All these are promising potential outcomes of investments in infrastructure, but building infrastructure needs resources and institutions to deliver projects successfully.

The need for more and better jobs is one side of the equation. The other side is creating a labour force that has the requisite education and skills to meet the needs of the labour market today, but that is also adaptable in the face of a technologically driven, dynamic 21st century economy. To this end, it is imperative to build a strong foundation with quality basic education for all as a precursor to skills development. Skills development cannot compensate for deficiencies in education.

In addition to investing in education and skills, there is a need to rethink social protection in an era of growing labour market precarity. As the Indian government simplifies and rationalises the existing labyrinth of labour regulations, it must heed the warning that the poor labour market indicators are delivering. The rules for the minimum wage code must be clear so as to ensure that workers are making enough to provide for themselves and their families. The code on occupational safety and health must be implemented to ensure that workers are well protected in their workplaces. The right and ability to organise must be secured to ensure an effective channel for industrial relations. And the social security code must move toward greater universalisation of benefits to account for the growing precarity in the labour market.

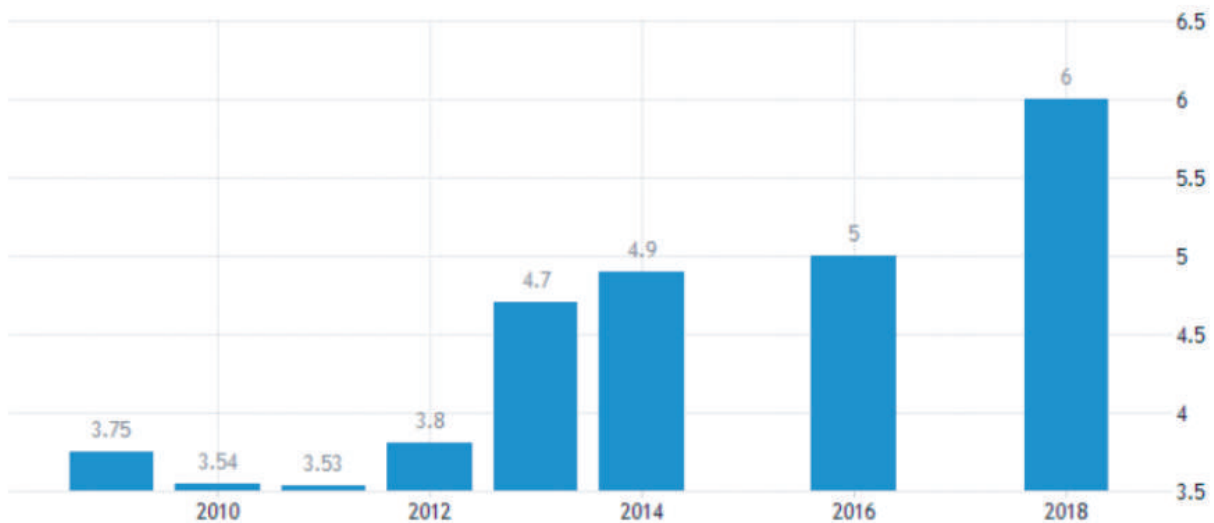
The country needs a comprehensive and coherent roadmap for just jobs. Only then will we spur aggregate demand to jumpstart flagging economic growth. Only then can we break the vicious cycle we are in and make way for a virtuous cycle of rising living standards for all.



Sabina Dewan is Founder and Executive Director of the JustJobs Network. She is also a Senior Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Policy Research in India, and a Non-Resident Fellow at the Carsey School of Public Policy at the University of New Hampshire.

Old jobs dying, new being created

*The last decade has seen business models change rapidly across sectors due to digital technologies and changing consumer habits. New jobs are being created but we don't have the means, yet in India, to capture data accurately, says **Raj Nair**, as he tells us where new job opportunities exist.*



Source: tradingeconomics.com | Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI)

Creating employment opportunities in India is important because millions are graduating each year from schools and colleges, from skill development programmes, but jobs will not be created unless people can be deployed to provide relevant goods and services at proper prices, quality and as efficiently as required by the market. This is possible only if it is economically viable to provide such goods and services in India, if people with required skills are available and if technology required to be competitive, is used.

The latter two have not been accorded the required level of importance over the past seven decades by the Governments in power and the private sector alike, resulting in India losing out during the Second and Third Industrial Revolutions. We are at the door-step of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (aka Industry 4.0) and much needs to be done. However, the focus of this article is not on that but on five other issues. They will, in fact, help us understand why data on employment is unreliable and where new opportunities exist.

New metrics required to measure employment data

In the recent months, there have been headlines ranging from screaming ones like 'The cat is out of the bag'

to more sanguine ones like 'unemployment is on the increase'. The figure for unemployment in India for 2018 is reportedly 7.6% and the following chart seems to suggest that it has risen sharply from a benign 3.54% in 2010.

It is my submission that neither positive news nor negative news on employment in India is reliable for important reasons.

We need new metrics and measurement tools to understand unemployment in India. We continue to bemoan job losses and high unemployment because we have not woken up to the fact that the world has changed in more ways than one; business models have changed rapidly across sectors due to digital technologies and changing consumer habits. For example:

- Automobile production and sales are sinking in the past few quarters, but shared cab, autorickshaw and scooter numbers have shot up dramatically in the past five years. There used to be 80,000 taxis in Mumbai. Now there are over 200,000 including Uber and Ola, but the number of black and yellow taxis has halved. Have jobs decreased or increased? Perspective depends upon what you measure. Taxi aggregators have not only created a huge number of jobs for drivers but also for techies, marketing, HR and other professionals. Internet data sales and devices sales to consumers have consequently shot up too.

- Retailers in many parts of India are not creating as many new jobs as one would expect because many are struggling to grow. At the same time, e-commerce is growing, and the e-commerce model requires home delivery of goods from pins to smartphones, from shoes to clothing, from exotic fruits to humble vegetables and other groceries. While the number of restaurants being added each year may be falling, food parcel service is shooting up at a phenomenal rate. There are so many interesting mobile apps today that enable consumers to buy meals from housewives / home cooks. Home delivery of food from restaurants too has shot up in recent years due to companies like Swiggy, Zomato, etc., across urban India. This has not only created huge employment for last mile delivery, but also professional jobs in the e-commerce companies. How are all these jobs being recorded?

- Education is undergoing change due to online learning/teaching platforms on which teachers (including part timers) are getting gainfully engaged without being formally employed. Tuition classes are changing their business models even in India.

- Malls may be shutting down and being repurposed (hence some jobs lost) but online marketplaces are growing to serve not only cities where there are traffic jams and parking challenges, and even Tier 3 and 4 towns where retailers used to carry limited merchandise (new jobs being created). Some conventional used car salesmen and real estate agents have lost jobs due to digital transformation of their sectors, but many have reinvented their avatars. Jobs are growing. The growing market for used cars has also created large online car sales companies.

One can list a few dozen more sectors that are changing including entertainment, travel and hospitality, real estate, healthcare, etc., where old jobs are dying, new ones are being created. No one measures such employment. What metrics will help to measure such job creation? There are no clear answers, but jobs are being created though we don't have the means, yet in India, to capture data accurately.

The second issue is that comparison of employment statistics with those of the previous years, is a challenge peculiar to India, because of the weakness in the methodology used in the past to arrive at employment numbers. Approximately, 93% of the employment in India is believed to be in the rural sector and the informal sector. It is very difficult to measure. Sample surveys are done once in five years by the NSSO (National Sample Survey Organisation) to arrive at estimates, which are neither accurate nor done frequent enough. Often factors and definitions used are debatable. When neither the present nor past data on unemployment are reliable, how can any meaningful conclusions on trends be arrived at?

Flaws in government policies

The third issue is whether it is the Government's job to create jobs. It was definitely the case till the late

sixties when the newly independent country needed some economic pillars to build businesses on. Government and public sector jobs were coveted, both for stability as well as because the Government was the biggest employer. The Government's industrial licencing policy actually curbed business growth in the private sector and curbed job creation till 1991. Not anymore. Today, the Government's role should be to facilitate job creation and not to create jobs. Unfortunately, some sections in the Government think, it is still their responsibility to create employment. They must own airlines, manufacturing companies, telephony services, etc., provide poor service to customers; hence, struggling to stay alive. A few jobs are being protected with money that could be used to create many more viable jobs. For instance, Air India is being kept alive to protect jobs using tax-payer's money, with no real plan on how to make it a great airline that can compete against the best in the world. In fact, Government policy of pricing aircraft fuel high, is killing the entire private sector airlines.

Where the Government has fallen short is in policies that encourage industrial and business investment, in sensible innovative taxation, in policies that encourage entrepreneurship, in labour and judicial reforms, in making the processes for buying land, building construction, etc. Till this day, several policies actually retard job creation. Countries in the Asia Pacific region have mastered the art of doing that. We could even learn from Vietnam, which has hugely benefited from the trade war between China and the US.

That leads me to the fourth issue, the requirement of a flexible contract labour law. Disingenuous as it may seem, it will actually create more employment and not kill jobs. Anyone who has been in business knows that business has its ups and downs. A large part of the opportunity for India's exports, especially for labour intensive businesses which the Government wants to promote, actually lies in the cyclical ups. Indian companies cannot go for those opportunities because they are afraid to employ labour due to inflexible labour laws. If there was a flexible contract labour law, one would see an increase in labour hours used per year, though not in the form of higher number of permanent jobs. But only in some countries like India is part-time employment looked down upon.

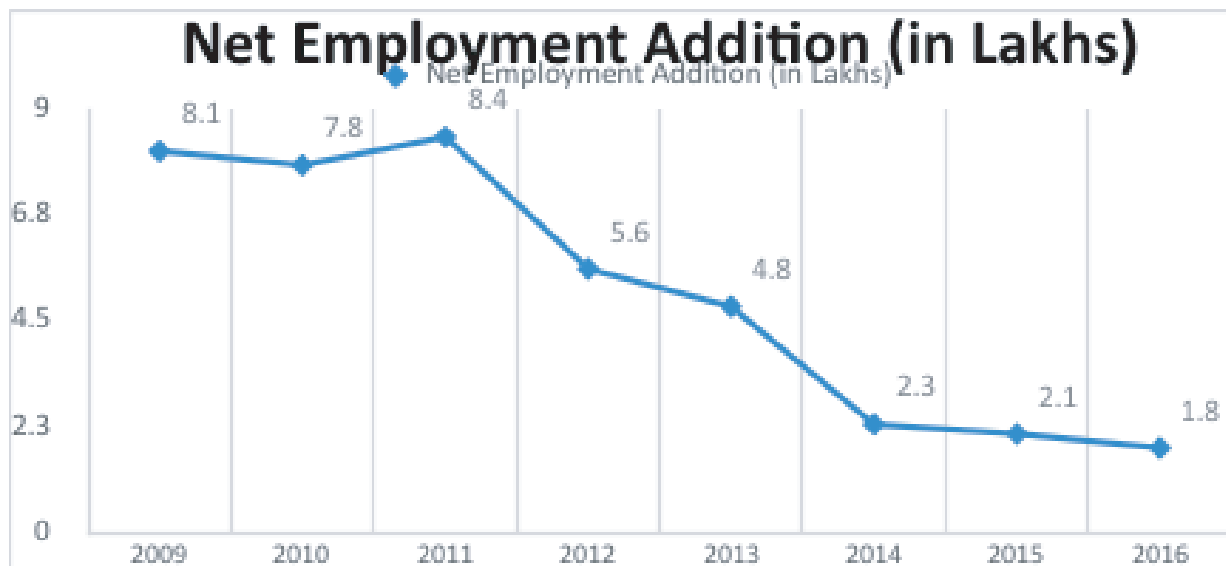
Artificial Intelligence will create jobs, not kill

One area where the Government needs to stay out of policy making is Artificial Intelligence (AI), which is likely to create more jobs than it destroys, but the jury is still not out. While it is true that AI based systems will sooner or later replace most repetitive jobs, it will enable humans to do the unthinkable, thus creating more jobs than it kills. Let the private sector figure out this conundrum like the Government of India stayed out of IT Services sector for a long time, unlike the Government of Kerala, which was against the use of computers in general. Today, it is a major advocate for computerisation and software development after seeing the huge number of jobs created in the State.

(continued on page 12...)

From jobless to job loss

*Contradictory narratives have been built around the issue of unemployment in the last few months. However, the most puzzling aspect is that the years of high economic growth have been years of joblessness too, especially amongst the educated youth, which is a cause of concern. **Rahul Sapkal** and **Kaustubh Ban** try to analyse the reasons for this trend.*



Source: Ministry of Labour and Employment

Recent years, especially post-demonetisation (December 2016) followed by the introduction of Goods and Service Tax (GST, July 2017), have generally been characterised by the period of “jobless growth” in India, as revealed by various media reports and micro-level studies. In a quest to achieve higher economic growth, India’s slated pro-market economic reforms have turned out to be a folly. One of the direct manifestations of these targeted policies is the rising rate of unemployment among youth.

India’s unemployment rate stood at five per cent in 2015-16 compared to 3.8 per cent in 2012-13, according to the fifth annual survey of employment-unemployment published by the Ministry of Labour and Employment. According to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), an economics and business think-tank, as of 2018, unemployment in India had risen to 31 million individuals looking for jobs. The lowest unemployment rate in India was 3.4% (July 2017) but has now risen to 7.1%. The shrill debate on jobless growth in the absence of credible official data of the magnitude and character of the erstwhile National Sample Survey (NSS) database became quite controversial and even served fodder for electoral discourses preceding the General Elections, 2019. The National

Democratic Alliance (NDA) government reportedly withheld the release of the revised and refined Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) till April 2019. However, after the declaration of election results on 31 May 2019, the Ministry of Labour and Employment uploaded the PLFS report for a larger public. Economic reforms undertaken by the present government assume that the structural problem of India’s growth trajectories could only be resolved by peddling pro-market strategies, which will decontrol the private sector and by reducing the active state intervention in the market activities. The government also believes that the sluggish economic performance is largely externalised by the rigid institutional mechanism that constraints the employers ability to take its decision regarding closure of factories, mass layoff of workers and access external finances. As a result, the Indian economy is crawling on the path of low-development.

Debunking the unemployment debate

Official economists and politicians deny there is jobless growth, with claims of jobs having been created during the previous term of the government. However, evidence from multiple sources points to a far more serious crisis of employment generation than is accepted.

The figure on page 8 shows that there has been drastic decline in the net job creation in India. Despite the increase in the size of economy (i.e. gross domestic product or GDP), the employment growth has been poor for the given period. This phenomenon to a larger extent shows that we are witnessing a period of job loss growth. The job crisis among educated youth has often been described as a ticking time bomb, given that half of India's 1.3 billion population is below the age of 25. According to the PLFS report, the paradox is the more educated one is, the more difficult it is to get hired. The unemployment rate among male job seekers with secondary-level education far exceeds joblessness among illiterates, in both rural and urban areas. A similar trend is seen among females. When educated youths are unable to find suitable jobs and are compelled to accept low-wage, low productive jobs, we push them to the margin of vulnerability and follow low path to development.

The report also indicates that the unemployment in current weekly status¹ is 8.9 percent and usual status² is 6.1 percent. In the weekly status, the unemployment rate is 9.6 percent in urban areas and 8.5 percent in rural areas. Similarly, in usual status, the unemployment rate is 7.8 percent and 5.3 percent in urban and rural areas respectively. Female workers both in urban areas had higher unemployment rate in both approaches as compared to male workers, while in rural areas it was obverse of urban picture.

Youth unemployment, i.e. unemployment of persons aged between 15-29 years showed a tremendous spike over the period, 2004-05 and 2017-18, irrespective of gender or rural or urban spaces, though the rate of increase over the period was higher for rural (4.5 or 3.2 times over the period) as compared to that for urban (2.1 and 1.83 times). What is far more serious is that the unemployment rate of rural young males increased the fastest (4.5 times) and as a result the gulf between rural male and urban male unemployment has considerably reduced over the years (from 4.0 to 1.3 percentage points). Though youth unemployment for both males and females in urban areas remained always higher, during this period wherein the urban female unemployment was always in double figures and in 2017-18 peaked at 27.2 percent. The youth unemployment in 2017-18 ranged from 13.7 to 27.2 percent, and these are worrisome figures.

The survey clearly shows that the vital metrics of Indian labour market is a cause for concern. Some serious aspects of the foregoing analyses need serious attention from the policy makers. A dramatic reduction in female labour and workforce participation rates, rise in and alarmingly higher macro unemployment rates in general and rising unemployment among educated youth pose not only economic problems but raise serious social concerns. Higher unemployment rate also indicates that the business promotion strategies of the government have failed to create new jobs for the youth, especially for the highly educated ones.

Fear of recession

Failure to create decent jobs and absorb new



workforce pose another macroeconomic concern. When the person's ability to demand decreases due to lack of earnings, it exposes various sectors to macro-shocks. As we see, since the beginning of April 2019, many firms in the automobile sector were forced to shut down factories for days and axe shifts. Lack of demand for automobiles have reportedly triggered massive layoffs of 3, 50,000 skilled workers in the last couple of months. Many commenters argue that it is the global slow-down in the automobile sector which has truncated the employment growth. However, policies premised on the belief that pro-market reforms will unleash economic growth rates, and labour flexibilities extended to firms will incentivise them to generate jobs, have failed to achieve the desired results. For all the signs that the economy is humming, if we don't understand the current signals, sooner or later we will be engulfed in the period of recession.

¹ The Current Weekly Status (CWS) approach to measuring unemployment uses seven days preceding the date of survey as the reference period. A person is considered to be employed if he or she pursues any one or more of the gainful activities for at least one-hour on any day of the reference week

² The Usual Status approach to measuring unemployment uses a reference period of 365 days i.e. one year preceding the date of the survey of NSSO for measuring unemployment.



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Severe gaps in new labour reforms

*The proposed labour codes of the Government have come in for sharp criticism from the wider trade union fraternity, as it allegedly seeks to deprive millions of workers of decent work and wages, an equal work place and avenues for access to justice. **Chandan Kumar** avers that the legislation is all set to alter the labour protection landscape in India beyond repair.*



On July 4, the Economic Survey argued that a higher national minimum wage (NMW) is central to addressing inequality and widespread poverty in the country. A couple of weeks later, the Government of India (GOI) trashed its own analysis by proposing a "starvation wage" of ₹178 a day. The central government hit the nadir with a minimum wage hike of ₹2! Experts allege that it is a precursor of what is in store for millions of workers as the cabinet passed two of the four proposed labour codes – Code on Wages as well as the Code on Occupational Safety, Health and Working (OSHW) conditions.

The two codes were tabled for discussion recently by Santosh Gangwar, Minister of Labour and Employment. With this the Parliament has struck the proverbial hammer on the fate of millions of workers, depriving them of the possibility of decent work and wages, an equal workplace and avenues for access to justice. Primarily driven by the interests of the industry, this predatory piece of legislation is all set to alter the labour protection landscape in India beyond repair.

A precursor to the darker days ahead

The new minimum wage of ₹178 per day trans-

lates to ₹4628 per month. It goes against the Labour Ministry's own expert committee recommendation of ₹375-447 per day, let alone the 15th Indian Labour Conference's suggestion of ₹692 a day, ₹18000 a month. The new national minimum wage, half of what was recommended, truly portends a death knell on India's labour protection framework.

The rhetoric on labour codes passionately pitches a National Minimum Wage. However, a closer look at the provisions of the wage code busts this myth. First and foremost, it violates the Supreme Court and Indian Labour Conference guidelines for a "need-based" criteria (covering nutrition, healthcare, education and provisions for old age) to fix the minimum wage – something that was adopted for central government employees, but ignored for the larger mass of unorganised sector workers.

Wages are also proposed to be determined by state level advisory boards, something that Indian industry has long wanted. Experts argue that such an arrangement would lead to a race to the bottom as different states would compete to attract investments by lowering wages – an observation that is borne out by facts on the ground. India's Labour Law Changes from 2015 points out that in the

period between 2010- 2015, several industrialists relocated from Okhla Industrial Area in Delhi to Uttar Pradesh and Haryana, as the latter offered 25-35% lower minimum wages than Delhi. Flight of capital would become extremely convenient in such a regime, pushing state governments to compromise on worker's wages and welfare.

One may well question the intention of GOI in even announcing such a national minimum wage. In our judgment it is primarily a signal to the industry that the jungle has been let loose, only wilder this time and wages can be pushed down to the lowest levels possible to suit capital interests.

The chowkidar is not even a worker as per law

Despite its claims, both the codes exclude millions of unorganised workers. The OSHW Code (Code on Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions) does not cover workers employed in small enterprises deploying 10 or less workers, or those in the informal sector. As per an estimate, this is over 85% of India's labour market, especially including those in medium and small enterprises, which often tend to be more risky and vulnerable to occupational hazards and safety violations. The wage code also does not cover the large mass of informal workers because its definition of "employer" is ambiguous and narrow. Most workers would struggle to establish their employment relations to benefit from the Code provisions.

The wage code is disturbingly silent on providing equal opportunities to women, and penalising discrimination on the grounds of gender. In India, where female labour force participation has hit an abysmal 23%, this deletion is highly damaging. Most disturbingly, the code does not have any provisions to prohibit discrimination against workers from Adivasi and Dalit communities. There is pervasive evidence on the exclusion faced by such workers in the form of low earnings, wage thefts, abuse, harassment, low opportunities and minimal upward mobility. The new law is blind to all this!

What if you are duped of your wages?

What happens if a worker does not receive due wages or receive them in time? As per the new code, in case of a dispute, a worker can now approach only a quasi-judicial, appellate authority, not within the jurisdiction of courts – a violation of the Civil Procedure Code section 9 that requires mandatory judicial review of decisions. What is worse is that a claim can only be filed by an appropriate authority, employee or trade union. This leaves out all workers in casual, informal, undocumented work, denying them any formal avenue to seek justice.

India's informal economy is structured through long serpentine chain of contractors. Migrant workers often do not know who their employer is. The new wage code

weakens the principal employer liability to pay wages to contract labour, if the contractor has failed to do so. This has grave and far reaching consequences on the access to justice for informal workers, especially in a scenario where the volume of wage thefts from such workers is unacceptably high. Notably, the OSHW Code does talk about Principal Employer liability but it also stealthily passes the buck to the manager or the supervisor.

Coercive work assuming new forms

Labour bondage and other forms of coercive work have existed in India for centuries. Coercive work is also assuming new forms in the contemporary labour market. Vulnerability to coercive labour is rooted in longstanding patterns of inequality, social exclusion, discrimination and inadequate labour market governance. In the contemporary economy, distressed migrants employed in the informal sector who are willing to accept advances are particularly vulnerable to coercive labour relationships.

By permitting recoverable advances, Code on Wages, 2019 leaves marginalised workers vulnerable to coercive labour. Recognising the stubborn persistence of coercive labour in India, the Supreme Court has explicitly linked advances to coercive labour, and has even declared a legal presumption that advances suggest the presence of bonded labour. Despite this presumptive link between advances and coercive labour relationships highlighted by the Supreme Court, the Code on Wages, 2019 retains provisions permitting employers to recover advances. Using provisions such as "deductions for recovery of advances of whatever nature", will lead us to dark days and encourages slavery like practices across informal economy. We should not be using archaic provisions of statute that existed before Independence, especially when India claims to abolish forced labour and slavery.

The entire tenor of both the codes reeks of eagerness to appease industry and create the much hyped labour market flexibility and ease of doing business. This is exemplified by the flexible provisions for overtime, a move that can potentially legitimise 14-hour workdays as the norm.

Furthermore, the vocabulary replaces inspectors by introducing facilitators who merely have an advisory function, as opposed to their previous regulatory role. There is no mention of the labour department and its functionaries across both the codes – an omission that is more than deliberate.

'Craftily' written piece of legislation

Finally, it is most ironical that the Parliament is about to debate on what could be the most poorly written piece of legislation in Indian history. Both the codes have no understanding of informal labour and its requirements from the law. There is a lot of ambiguity in the way provisions are phrased.

At times the codes get too specific and at times too vague, reflecting either poor ground work done or a deliberate ambiguity to allow for excessive discretion of the appropriate government.

The OSHW Code most notably subsumes the Building and Other Construction Workers' Act, 1996 leaving out millions of construction workers in the lurch who were enrolled with the Welfare Board created under the Act. It makes vague mention of provisions for construction workers, too visible to miss.

While many of us have been fighting for a change in labour laws ourselves and demanding a protective framework for informal workers in India, the proposed changes are far from what we have strived for. Our collective analysis shows that the new codes are crafty – in the garb of promoting worker welfare and enabling formalisation, it is seeking to repudiate basic human and labour rights to workers.

Working people are a national asset - undermining their wellbeing is the biggest anti-national act. Need based

MW (minimum wages) should be guided by Supreme Court, based on principles and test laid down by judiciary, and if any committee, any advisory board decided below this, has to give reason and recommendation.

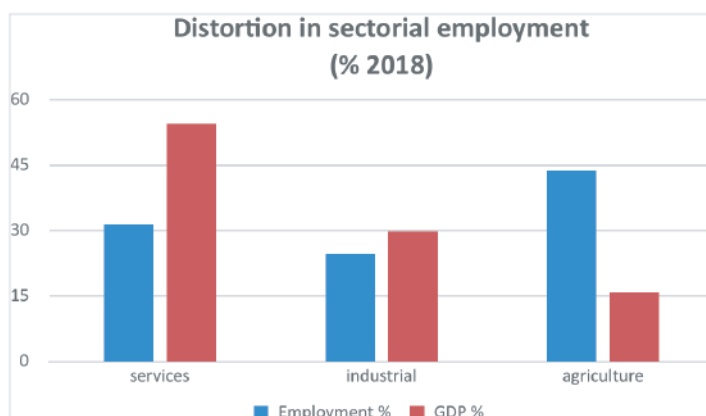


Chandan Kumar, works with Rashtriya Hamal Panchayat, a national trade union, organising workers in the informal economy. He is one of the coordinators of Working Peoples' Charter Secretariat (WPC), an alliance of over 100 informal worker organisations, comprising trade unions, civil society, academia, etc. He was part of Delhi Minimum Wages Advisory Committee, which implemented the landmark Supreme Court judgement on living wage. He is also member of National Minimum Wage Advisory Board, a statutory committee responsible for wage revision. (The article has inputs from Working People's Charter.)

Old jobs dying, new being created

(continued from page 07...)

Skilling for new types of jobs needs to start now as some things are already evident. If we get our policies right or don't create adverse policies, India has an opportunity to create a large number of jobs to cater to the demand for AI-based software and hardware arising from the world at large. China has already got onto that path aggressively. There is good space for India too; it is for us to lose the race by lacking vision. The fifth issue is disguised unemployment in agriculture. The following chart shows how 43% of the employed are in agriculture but they contribute to only 16% of the GDP. Many of them should be moving quickly into the manufacturing and services sectors, where real employment opportunities are growing and productivity is better. The seriousness of distortion in India is evident from the following chart:



Outside industrialised cities like Greater Mumbai, new factories and existing ones depend upon migrant labour from distant places which disappears during harvest season (creating shortages), or depend on rural labour that have migrated to nearby towns with no change in their agricultural mindset. Thus, labour productivity is abysmal. There are Government initiatives for skilling but paradoxically, factory owners are not willing to pay high enough for skilled labour for workers to be incentivised to attend skilling schools because they make do with yesterday's technology. As mentioned at the outset, the world is moving to Industry 4.0. It is for us to win or lose this time. There is inadequate appreciation of this opportunity and threat. Job creation in the future will depend on that.



Raj Nair is the President of IMC Chamber of Commerce and Industry. He is also the Chairman of four professional services companies including Avalon Consulting, with 17 offices in India and abroad, employing over 2,200 professionals. These companies are known for innovation, quality and creative use of technology. He is a strategy consultant who has worked across sectors for clients in India, South East Asia, Middle East, USA and the UK to develop ways to win in competitive markets, transforming organisations to cope with changes happening in the business environment. Digital Transformation is his passion.

Becoming richer through women's work

*Despite rising literacy rate, women's labour force participation in India has fallen. From skills upgradation to safe public transport, a number of pressing issues need focussed attention from policy makers, in order to raise women's participation, writes **Reshma Jain**.*



The age old saying about a woman's work never being done and over is doubly true in today's times. In India's cities and towns and in its villages, older girls and women find that they are expected to seamlessly go from house work to work outside the home, be it offices, shops, on the streets as hawkers or agricultural fields. Festivals imply more work and managing of time, inside and outside the house.

However, we are concerned in this article with labour force participation rates (LFPRs) for women in the country. This rate encompasses the ratio of females in the population who either have employment or are searching it. According to the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO 43rd round), the LFPR for women fell in 2011-12 after having shown an increase in 1999-2000 to 2004-05. In 2015-16, say the other records like that of the Labour Bureau Employment, this rate has decreased to 27.4 per hundred. Worryingly, this is the lowest in the world.

An update prepared on this subject in 2014 by Sher Verick and Ruchika Chaudhary of the ILO (International Labour Organisation) Decent Work Team for South Asia under the title "Women's labour force participation in India:

Why is it so low?" lists this rate in various countries in the subcontinent. "Most notable is the falling engagement of women in the Indian labour force, which occurred despite strong economic growth and rising wages and incomes."

Challenges faced by working women

In fact, Verick and Chaudhary point out that a large number of women engaged in domestic duties are keen to take up work if they could do it and earn in their homes. This brings us to other significant issues like safe and efficient public transport and commuting facilities. A number of surveys worldwide have described how women prefer to take up low paying jobs provided they save on commuting time and hardships. This is a factor that requires focused attention from policy makers.

The ILO update that despite the rising literacy rate and education among women, the sectors in which they could gain employment do not have the capacity to do so. In most households where the income was rising, women left their jobs outside the home for a number of reasons. And more noteworthy is the fact that women's work is not documented adequately or correctly in official data.

This scenario is of course not designed to elicit much optimism for the near future if one couples it with the state of the Indian economy. The unemployment rate for women in 2018 was calculated at 15.7 per 100 as compared to 5.4 per 100, for men.

Rising unemployment affects women more than men

A Press Trust of India (PTI) report in a business newspaper in April 2019, quoting the survey on unemployment by a leading private university said that in general women have been “much worse affected” than men by rising unemployment among the higher educated as well as less educated. Not only are the rates higher as far as unemployment is concerned among women but their labour force participation rates have also taken a beating.

It follows of course that issues around work like wages, salaries and promotional prospects are fraught with gender discrimination and prejudices as far as women are concerned over their male counterparts. For example, an issue like sexual harassment at the workplace is a significant one as far as women workers are concerned. And yet, despite the rising awareness, the implementation of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 is tardy, to say the least.

The ground reality in various industries and sectors cannot be commented upon in this article. But as we have said above about an efficient and safe public transport network, there are other factors that should be attended to in the context of raising women's participation in the labour

force. It hardly needs to be stated that such attention and targeting should be based on gender specific issues. Right from access to skill formation, technical education, and maternity leave facilities to enabling women to become entrepreneurs.

It is interesting to note that economic researchers and observers across the world have commented upon this aspect of India's economy and employment scene. In July 2018, the Economist wrote on this titled ‘Why India needs women to work’ and the strap observed: Were India to rebalance its workforce, the world's biggest democracy would be 27% richer.” The female employment rate in India, counting both the formal and informal economy, has tumbled from an already-low 35% in 2005 to just 26% now. In that time the economy has more than doubled in size and the number of working-age women has grown by a quarter, to 470m. Yet nearly 10m fewer women are in jobs. A rise in female employment rates to the male level would provide India with an extra 235m workers, more than the EU (European Union) has of either gender, and more than enough to fill all the factories in the rest of Asia,” is what it further adds.

It is time to heed these voices.



Reshma Jain is one of the co-founders of The Narrators which is a publishing platform to lend a voice, a shape, a form to help people tell their story through the print or visual medium like biographies, documentaries or even e- platforms.

WHO AM I?

*I am a proud Indian,
citizen of the world community,
inhabiting this lonely ...
but lovely little ... ★
planet...*



Earth...



Will liberal arts give access to better job opportunities?

Though the Draft National Education Policy 2019 acknowledges that the existing knowledge economy calls for acquisition of new skills on a regular basis, it leaves much to be desired in terms of ensuring that the required skills are developed in its liberal arts curriculum, writes [Priyam Lizmary Cherian](#).



The Ministry of Human Resources and Development recently released the Draft National Education Policy, 2019 (Draft Policy). The document running over 400 pages was drafted by an eight member committee under the Chairmanship of former ISRO Chairman, Dr. K. Kasturirangan.

The Draft Policy notes that the education system has been slow in adapting to technological advances with the earlier education policies of 1986 and 1992 having been drafted much before the Internet revolution. It emphasises on creating equitable and vibrant knowledge society through high quality education for all. In this pursuit, the Draft Policy proposes developing and providing liberal arts education at undergraduate level.

Though the Draft Policy acknowledges that the existing knowledge economy calls for acquisition of new skills on a regular basis, it leaves much to be desired in terms of ensuring that the required skills are developed in its liberal arts curriculum.

In 2014, the four-year undergraduate programme in Delhi University was withdrawn amidst protest from the staff and students over the manner it was sought to be implemented without consultations. About the same time an increased number of universities were introducing four-year undergraduate programmes, reportedly one of them being the most expensive undergraduate programmes in the country. The four-year undergraduate programmes are oft-advocated for the ease of admission to post graduate programmes in the US that follows four year undergraduate programme as against the three-year curriculum in India.

The proposed liberal arts programme

The new Draft Policy proposes setting up of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) by restructuring the existing ones and building new institutes, such that there is one HEI in (close to) every district. Residential Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs) / Indian Institutes of Liberal Arts (IILAs) modelled after Nalanda and the Ivy League schools in the US are also proposed to be set up.

The Draft Policy outlines a four year programme for Bachelor of Liberal Arts/Education in each of the HEIs by 2030. The four year programme will allow students to major in one to two areas. The student can also opt for one major and one minor. For instance, the student may choose Physics major with music as minor. With an emphasis on need for proficiency in more than one Indian language, the Draft Policy recommends that undergraduate students be proficient enough to discuss their major in a different Indian language. It envisions a culture of cross-disciplinary thinking supplemented with departments of languages, literature, music, philosophy, Indology and the study of India, art, dance, theatre, education, statistics, pure and applied sciences, sociology, economics, sports etc.

The programme would also have an option to exit with a B. Voc or B.Sc or B.A. at the end of three years. Similarly, the student will receive an advanced diploma in a discipline or field (including vocational and professional areas) if she chooses to exit after completing two years of study or a diploma if the exit is after one year. While the traditional B.A., B.Sc., programmes would be offered in existing institutes, the object is to gradually phase into liberal education curriculum.

The missing pieces

The MERUs and the IILAs are to be modelled after the pace-setting institutions like IITs and IIMs. With the state governments providing upto 50% of the funding requirements of these universities, one wonders how many aspiring for higher education will be able to afford four years long education. The Draft Policy does suggest that a National Scholarship Fund would be established for financial assistance of students at HEIs, however, it does not analyse whether the existing schemes have been effectively implemented for higher enrolment.

Promoting liberal arts at college level spontaneously raises a question over delayed specialisation. The Draft Policy indicates that liberal education must go hand in hand with specialisation in chosen field. It also notes that the liberal arts programme would combine conceptual knowledge with practical engagement through practical laboratory work, field work, workshops, internships, involvement in teaching etc. However, it does not make a query into the disconcerting rate of unemployment and whether mandatory liberal arts courses would be a solution to it. Further, with the provision for exiting the programme in three years, it is

unclear if the employability of a student changes if she decides to complete four years of the curriculum instead of three. For a student coming from a family struggling to even secure minimum wages, exiting sooner to enter the job market would be of greater concern than to take advantage of an additional year under the liberal arts education system. Additionally, the cost burden would force students to exit the course sooner, thereby negating the intent of setting up a four-year programme.

The Draft Policy does suggest that a National Scholarship Fund would be established for financial assistance of students at HEIs, however, it does not analyse whether the existing schemes have been effectively implemented for higher enrolment.

The Draft Policy suggests that the undergraduate liberal education programme will have “robust element of skills and professional competence”. How these elements would be included in the curriculum, are to be analysed. A liberal education programme may ensure entry into a job, but needn’t facilitate entry in the desired field of work. The All India Survey of Higher Education for 2017-18 reported the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) to be 25.8%. Simultaneously, the Ministry of Human Resource Development has set a target of achieving 30% GER by 2020. Whether the proposed holistic curriculum would facilitate achieving this target, be sufficient to attract economically backward students and push social mobility are some difficult concerns that the Policy needs to

consider. Pressure of early marriage, expectation of fulfilling household responsibilities, taking care of the family and concerns over safety continue to be gendered realities in India. A longer period to complete higher studies would affect enrolment of women, or will lead to early exit with a keepsake diploma or degree.

Liberal education programmes are identified with access to greater opportunities. In our idea of holistic development, we can neither be clones of the West nor be prisoners of the past. With high number of first time learners and a market desiring short-term outcomes, the Policy needs to push for improved standards of existing institutions with nuanced curriculum taking social complexity into account, to ensure training in appropriate skills for absorption in specialised employment landscape.



Priyam is a Delhi based lawyer. She litigates and counsels on issues of law and policy with a focus on rights and development.



Hidden gems of Hoysala empire

While Belur and Halebidu are exemplary works of Hoysala art, there are a number of little-known Hoysala masterpieces scattered across Karnataka. These temples were built by the Hoysala kings, not only to get divine blessings but also to display their wealth and power. Usha Hariprasad takes us on a guided tour of some of the off-beat locations near Bangalore.

Text & Photographs : Usha Hariprasad



The Kedareshwara temple at Nagalapura is made of soapstone

Belur, Halebidu and Somanthapura, are beautiful temples built during the Hoysala period. But these are not the only architectural marvels constructed by Hoysala Kings in Karnataka. The Panchakuta Temple at Govindanahalli, the soapstone temples of Nagalapura are all Hoysala masterpieces but definitely not touristy places. Most of these temples are tucked away in remote villages, not to mention scenic locations. And you need to rely mostly on the Google Maps Navigation and help of the locals to access these offbeat locations. Here is a handy guide to check out these obscure Hoysala temples near Bangalore.

A brief history of Hoysalas

The Hoysalas ruled Karnataka from the beginning of 11th century to the middle of 14th century. They began as tribal rulers in Malanad region gradually expanding their power in South India. During the reign of Viraballala-II they had extended their rule till Tamil Nadu, and the State was a Hoysala protectorate. It was because of the Hoysala rulers that most parts of South India could resist Muslim invasions from North for a long time.

The origin of Hoysala dynasty goes to a historical personality named Sala. It is said that at Sosekapura--- the present Angadi of Chikamagalur district, a Jain ascetic, Vardhamana was worshipping the goddess Vasantika Devi. A tiger attacked him and he cried 'Poy Sala' or hit Sala, and Sala acting under these instructions struck the tiger and killed it. The sage was pleased and blessed him. Sala became a ruler shortly.

The early rulers of Hoysala dynasty after Sala was Vinayaditya. He was a subordinate of Chalukyan king, Vikramaditya-V. After him came Nripakama – his son, next Vinayaditya-II. It was Vinayaditya-II who extended the Hoysala territory and then changed the capital from Sosevur to Dorasamudra or Halebidu. After Vinayaditya-II, it was his grandson Ballala-I who came to power. He ruled only for eight years, and after his death his younger brother Vishnuvardhana came to power. During his reign (1108-1142 AD), he subjugated many dynasties. He defeated the Cholas and put an end to the Chola domination in the south. He became an independent monarch after he won against Chalukyan army.

Vishnuvardhan's son Narasimha-I, however, was a weak ruler. His own son Ballala-II revolted against him. Ballala-II was crowned king in 1172 AD. His rule made Hoysala dynasty an imperial power. He defeated Pandya rulers, Kadambas of Hanagal, Sevunas, and expanded the Hoysala territory. The Hoysala influence extended till Tamil-Nadu. His son Vira Narasimha-II was an able ruler and maintained the Hoysala empire efficiently. After his death, his son Vira Someshwara came to power and during his reign, he divided the empire to his two sons Narasimha-III and Vira Ramanatha. In spite of the division, the brothers continuously clashed with each other and weakened the empire.

The last great ruler of Hoysala dynasty was Ballala-III, during whose rule South India was invaded by Muslims from North. He was killed in the battle in 1342, which took place between the Madurai Sultan and Ballala III. He was caught and flayed. After his death his successor was Ballala-IV, who came to throne in 1343 AD. However by this time the Vijayanagara dynasty rose to power and most of Hoysala territories came under their rule.

***(Right) A memorial stone at Nagalapura
(Below) The beautifully carved ceiling inside the
Kedareshwara temple***





A closeup of the horizontal friezes on the temple walls

Hoysala temples and their features

While Belur and Halebidu are exemplary works of Hoysala art, there are a number of Hoysala masterpieces scattered across Karnataka as well. Temples were one way of displaying wealth and power. And Hoysala kings used this effectively, showcasing temples in all their grandeur. Perhaps another reason for construction of temples was to get divine blessings. According to Puranas, a king who built temples would earn his place rightfully in heaven.

Most of the Hoysala temples were either at the centre of a town or outskirts near the banks of a river or lake. And generally the villages had both Shiva and Vishnu temples, so that the devotees of both the deities could co-exist peacefully. Most often Vishnu temples were located in the centre of the city while Shiva temples were in the east, north east or south east of the town.

Nagalapura is one such planned village that has both Shiva and Vishnu temples. In the case of Nagalapura, the Vishnu temple's location was once the centre of the town. The Hoysala temples were influenced by Western Gangas, Cholas and Kalyani Chalukyas, but they also developed their distinct style. The Hoysala temples were most often built in

soapstone that was easily available. Another common feature was the stellate plan. The inner sanctum or the *garbagriha* walls and the raised platform in which Hoysala temples were built were generally star shaped. Another common feature was the horizontal band of friezes that ran the entire length of the temple. The lower most horizontal band of friezes was of elephants followed by tigers, then horsemen, scenes from epics, then yalis and finally the geese. Above the friezes there are niches having rich decorative figures.

Hoysala sculptures are generally high relief images. These were according to the guidelines laid out by Puranas and Agamas. The images were supposed to be decorative so that they could attract divinity and usher in success and prosperity.

Many of the temples do not have the name of the architect or the sculptor. In some temples like Kedareshwara temple at Nagalapura, the artist Baicoja has carved his name and origin. Some temples have only the short names or initials like 'Ma', 'Bo' etc. There were some famous sculptors like Dasoja, Malloja, Macoja, Mallitamma, etc. Many of these artists migrated from other regions especially from Chalukyan empire, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh



The horizontal friezes on the Channakeshava temple at Nagalapur dedicated to Vishnu

Hoysala temples

Though most of the temples are scattered in Karnataka, temples built after 13th century are concentrated south of their native – mostly in Hassan and Mysore. The Sevunas had during this period conquered the northern part of their homeland. The temples listed here are from this period.

Nagalapur

This is a small village in Tumkur boasting of twin temples of Vishnu and Shiva – the Channakeshava and Kedareshvara temples. Both these temples are made of soapstone and are similar in most of the sculpturing details. The Kedareshvara temple which is an ekakuta temple boasts of the traditional star shaped platform of the inner sanctum. The temple is quite simple with a *garbagriha*, vestibule and a navaranga. The deity – a cone shaped linga is kept inside the *garbagriha* and faces east.



The doorkeepers or dwarpalaks at the Govindanahalli temple



Beautifully carved pillars at Nagalapura temples

The ceilings inside the temple are beautiful. It is divided into nine blocks and the patterns in each part are different. While some have the banana flower patterns, some have the conventional *ashtadikpalakas* – Gods of eight directions. Inside the temple there are other sculptures of Saptamatrika, Vishnu, and Surya, etc. And there is a statue of Nandi in the hall.

The outer walls of the temple have the typical Hoysala feature – horizontal friezes of elephants, horses, scrolls, makaras, and swans. However there is also a blank frame running along the walls of the temple. The puranic scenes were meant to be carved here but it is empty. The sculptures on the outer walls of the temple, however, are very rich and artistic thus offsetting the emptiness brought about by the missing tower and blank friezes. Some of the significant sculptures on the outer walls are that of Bhringi, Bhairava, and Arjuna.

A few minutes away is the Channakeshava temple dedicated to Vishnu. It was once at the centre of the old town. Today it stands on fields with a small school nearby. It is similar to Kedarashvara temple and has a *garbagriha*,



A sculpture on the Brahmeshwara temple at Kikkeri



The special feature of the Hoysala temple at Govindanahalli is its Panchakuta structure

vestibule and navaranga with the ceiling designs. Once again on the outer walls there are friezes, and a blank frieze meant for depicting puranic scenes. The idol inside the inner sanctum however is that of Venkatesa – five feet high of Vijayanagara times and not from the Hoysala period.

Govindanahalli

One of the specialities of the Hoysala temple at Govindanahalli is that it is a Panchakuta structure – i.e. five shrines with five towers. Dedicated to Lord Shiva this temple in Mandya has five lingas in five separate shrines. All the lingas are enclosed in shrines and each of these shrines is connected to a hall or a navaranga. Initially this temple was a Chatushkuta – a four shrined structure, the east shrine was a later addition.

There are plenty of interesting things to see in this temple.

For one, the linga inside the shrine is distinctive. With different names like Aghora, Ishana, Tatpurusha, Sadyojata and Vamadeva, the lingas in the five shrines are different in shape and size. Only two of the shrines



A sculpture at the Govindanahalli temple

boast of a Nandi mantapa in front. You can see some unique sculptures of Saptamatrika, Mahishasuramardini, Shanmuka, etc., inside the shrine.

There are beautiful sculptures of doorkeepers or dwarapalakas at the entrance, and on the pedestal is carved the name Mallitamma. He was a sculptor responsible for work of many temples – Amritapura, Nuggehalli, Somnathapura, etc.

Another interesting thing about this temple is that it boasts of a 1236 AD inscription during the reign of Hoysala King Veera Someshwara. Someshwara gave a grant of Tenginaghatta village to his ministers Bogayya and Mallaya. The ministers transformed this village and its eleven hamlets into agrahara – called Prasanna Somnathapura and gifted it to different Brahmins in the presence of God Ramanatha at Setu.

On the outer walls of the temple there are various forms of Vishnu-Keshava, Madhava, Govinda, Venugopala, etc. What is interesting here is that the labels of the gods have been inscribed below each of these forms giving clarity on the various sculptures.

Kambadahalli

This is a Jain centre for Digambaras. And it has basadis (temples) dating to Ganga and Hoysala times. Kambadahalli has a panchakuta basadi and in the north of this basadi is another temple dedicated to Shantinatha.

Panchakuta basadi

The Panchakuta basadi has been built in two phases. First a trikuta structure dedicated to Adinatha was built and then a dvikuta was added to it.

The trikuta structure has three inner sanctums – the central sanctum has the Adinatha sculpture while the east facing sanctum has the sculpture of Neminatha, and the west has Shantinatha. All of them are seated on lotus. The trikuta structure can be dated to 900 AD. The three shrines have a common navaranga and a mukhamantapa. Inside the temple there are sculptures of yaksha, yakshis like Dharanendra, Kushmandini, Padmavati, etc. The ceiling of the navaranga has the figures of *ashtadikpalakas*.

An interesting feature of this temple are its *shikaras* or towers. Each of the three shrines has a Dravidian style shikara topped with a different stupa. While the east facing shikara has a circular stupa, the south facing shikara has a square shape and the west facing shikara is octagonal. The niches in the temple walls are filled with tirthankara figures (figures of spiritual teachers) while some are left bare.

Two more twin temples that face each other have been added to the trikuta structure in the second phase making the temple complex panchakuta. These twin temples said to have been added during Hoysala times have their own inner sanctum, antarala and navaranga and have figures of seated tirthankaras. There are a few memorial stones outside the temple complex.



An interesting feature of the Panchakuta basadi are its shikaras or towers.



The two dwarpalaks at the Shantinatha basadi

Shantinatha basadi

To the north of the panchakuta temple complex is the 12th century Shantinatha basadi. It was constructed by Boppa, son of Gangaraja – a general during Vishnuvardhan's times. The temple has two *garbagrihas*, a navaranga and a sabhamantapa as well. The temple boasts of a well carved Shantinatha sculpture, beautiful sculptural designs on the navaranga ceiling. There are also two *dwarapalakas* or door keepers in the temple.

Along with the charming basadis, there is a 50 feet high pillar with a Brahma sculpture on top. The pillar has *ashtadikpalakas* at its base.

Kikkeri

Kikkeri is located in Krishnarajapete taluk. It has a beautiful Hoysala-styled Brahmeshwara temple. It was once an agrahara known as Kikkeripura.

The Brahmeshwara temple is a Dravidian style temple with a Nandi mantapa outside. The temple boasts of an inner sanctum, sukhanaśi, navaranga and mukhamanta-

pa. The temple has the Brahmeshwara linga inside, and two other shrines in south and north. One has a Shivalinga in it and the other shrine has the sculpture of Keshava. The doorways of the temple boast of Shaiva doorkeepers. The navaranga has Hoysala-styled pillars with the Madanika (sculpture of women displaying stylised feminine features) reliefs.

The Nandi mantapa outside has a beautiful image of Nandi and the sculpture of sun idol behind it.

The temple does not have any plinth and there are no horizontal friezes like other Hoysala temples. But it has beautiful sculptures of Uma-Maheshwara, Brahma-Saraswati, Lakshmi-Narayana, Arjun piercing fish, Bhairava and the famous Darpana sundari images (a lady holding a mirror) that we see prominently in Belur. In the temple courtyard, you have other smaller temples of Parvati-Ganapati and Kalabhairava. There are also few Naga sculptures in the courtyard said to be from the Hoysala period.

As per inscription records this temple was built by Bammavva, wife of chieftain Barmayya in 1171. This was during the reign of Hoysala king Narasimha I.



The Ganesha temple in the Brahmeshwara temple courtyard, Kikkeri

Getting there

Nagalapura is 123 km from Bangalore located in Turuvekere Taluk in Tumkur. Kambadahalli is located in Nagamangala taluk in Mandya and is 18 kilometres from the popular Jain centre Sravanabelagola. Govindanhalli is located in Mandya and is around 161 kilometres from the city. Kikkeri is quite near to Govindanhalli, just five kilometres or so.

Food

There are very few eateries near the temples as

they are often located in remote locations. However both Tumkur and Mysore highways boast of myriad eateries, so much so that you will be spoilt for choice. There are a variety of South Indian eateries where you can get/pack breakfast and lunch.



Usha Hariprasad is a freelancer who is fond of travelling, discovering new places and writing about travel related destinations around Bangalore at Citizen Matters. Currently, she works in a trekking organisation.

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"Of an estimated one lakh patients with kidney failure in India, only about 15% are fortunate to get dialysis."



Sheer providence made **Kamal D. Shah** end up as one of the co-founders of NephroPlus, a chain of kidney care clinics. On dialysis for 21 years, this inspiring man is a saviour for patients with nephrological problems. In conversation with **A. Radhakrishnan**, he tells us how dialysis patients too can live a completely normal life.

How have you dealt with dialysis for so many years?

Having completed my Chemical Engineering in 1997, I got admission into a U.S. university to pursue my Masters. Scheduled to fly out in a couple of weeks, I took some mandatory vaccinations. Within a couple of days, I developed symptoms like nausea, vomiting which worsened. Our family physician prescribed some tests which showed that the kidney function had been impaired. My serum creatinine, a measure of kidney function with a normal value of 0.5 to 1.2 mg/dL, was 7 mg/dL! On a nephrologist's advice, I underwent a session of dialysis urgently the next day at a hospital. That was the first time in my life that I heard the word 'dialysis'.

Was there a history of dialysis in your family? What was your initial state of mind when kidneys failed?

No, there was no family history of kidney disease. My nephrologist said my kidney disease was an 'acute' condition but my kidney function would revive within 7-10 days. So, considering it as a temporary setback, I looked forward to my Masters. Of course, that never happened.

How did NephroPlus come about?

While actively involved with a software company, I had co-founded in 2000, I also began writing a blog –

www.kamaldshah.com on my journey with kidney disease, which became fairly popular among the nephrology community and patients.

I got an email from Vikram Vuppala, a strategy consultant in the U.S., who had stumbled upon my blog, while researching about dialysis in India and wanted to be a healthcare entrepreneur in India. I found great opportunity in his suggestion that we work to change the way dialysis was done in India. Sandeep Gudibanda whom he met at an ISB workshop also joined us, and we started NephroPlus.

What is the presence of NephroPlus in India and the world? Its nearest competitor in India?

With initial funding coming from Vikram's own funds and his friends and family members, we set up the first centre, a small five machine centre in Hyderabad.

The entire experience and focus was designed with the patient in mind. As I was swimming every morning, working the full day, travelling and having fun, I believed every dialysis patient could lead a completely normal life too. We needed to change the way patients and the world looked at those undergoing dialysis, not as 'patients' (the word brings to mind a sick, bedridden person), but as normal individuals. So firstly, we decided to call our patients 'guests'.

Today NephroPlus dialysis network is India's largest and the world's seventh with about 200 centres, its competitors in India being Fresenius, Apex, 7Med etc.

How do your co-founders manage roles?

All the three co-founders have clear and distinct roles. Initially Vikram was of course overall in-charge and looked after funding and finances. Sandeep managed Business Development while I looked after Clinical Quality and Patient Services. All important decisions were taken in tandem, and later we hired more specialised management team members.

Why does kidney failure happen? Why is it on the rise? How many dialysis patients are there in India?

Kidney failure happens due to various causes, but diabetes and hypertension are the top two in India. The incidence is on the rise due to our generation's faulty lifestyles. Increase in stress levels, consumption of processed foods, abuse of antibiotics and painkillers, etc., all contribute.

Shockingly, of an estimated one lakh dialysis patients in India, only about 15% are fortunate to get dialysis. The rest 85% unfortunately don't, due to lack of access or affordability.

What is it like to undergo long-term dialysis? How many sessions do you totally conduct every day pan India?

Long term kidney dialysis can be a huge burden in several ways – financial, mental, and physical. Many people's lives are turned upside down usually with such a diagnosis.

We conduct about 5,000 dialysis sessions across the country every day.

Talk about your specialised patient-friendly services and unique concepts?

Our core thrust being 'Guest care comes first', we have come up with several initiatives like Aashayein (a one-day educational-cum-fun event for those on dialysis – both within and outside NephroPlus), Dialysis Olympiad (an Olympics style games event for those on dialysis), and Holiday Dialysis (a programme where those on dialysis along with their families can enjoy a hassle-free holiday where everything is taken care of by us).

Our 'Aashayein Kidney Foundation' covers those who cannot afford certain ancillary expenses like injections, lab tests, procedures etc.

How pronounced are the chances of patients undergoing dialysis running a fairly high risk of HIV and hepatitis C infections? What about bacterial infections and hygiene?

About 30% of dialysis patients in India are infected with Hepatitis C, Hepatitis B and HIV infections. Causes include improper protocols followed by the dialysis staff, movement of patients from a centre where protocols are not followed and blood transfusions.

Bacterial infections are also possible especially related to catheters as access for dialysis. This can be prevented by proper precautions by the dialysis patient and the dialysis staff.

Do you have an anti-infection kit for patients?

We have a "Zero Infection Point" kit or ZIP kit for every guest that is ID'd by the guest, and has everything needed for starting and closing a dialysis session. This goes a long way in preventing cross infections with viruses. Along with our SOPs (standard operation procedures) for starting and closing and indeed, every aspect of the dialysis centre is a key part of our emphasis on guest-centric care and ensuring that those on dialysis get the best possible treatment, with assured safety.

How much do online support groups help patients?

Online support groups can be an invaluable source of support for kidney patients. But they can never be a substitute for a doctor. Every individual is different and what works for one may not necessarily work for another. So, while it is fine to look to online groups for emotional and social support, these groups must never be relied upon.

In India, what are the options for doing dialysis at home? How much does it cost to start dialysis treatment in India and the recurring expenditure after the treatment starts? What has your experience been like?

In India, dialysis at home can be done in two ways – Hemodialysis and Peritoneal Dialysis. You can take content for this from this link:

<http://www.dialysis.org.in/2010/07/home-dialysis.html>

Though the cost info is old, you can use the following: Initial cost of Home Hemo: 6L for the machine plus 1L for RO plus 1L for plumbing and wiring. (approx)

Monthly cost depends a lot on how many sessions, how long is each session and the type of dialyser used and whether the dialyser is reused or not. It can range from 20K to 40K per month.

Best part of daily nocturnal home hemo: No diet and fluid restrictions, dialyse at your own convenience.

Compare Peritoneal Dialysis and Hemodialysis. What are the downsides for PD?

Check link below to consider aspects while deciding on modality to adopt:

<http://www.dialysis.org.in/2010/06/pd-versus-hd.html>

These are only two types. In these two there are sub-types based on the frequency and duration etc.

I would not recommend any dialysis over the other. The reason is purely clinical and personal. I personally prefer PD but I know several people who prefer HD. It is like asking which flavour of ice cream is the best.

What is the standard of nephrologists in India and why do they generally frown on Ayurveda for kidney issues?

Nephrologists in India are on par with the best in the world.



A kidney-care clinic of Nephroplus

However India has only 1500 nephrologists for a population of 1.4 billion, a ratio much lower than that compared with several countries.

They frown on Ayurveda because this treatment can be risky and can cause more harm than good at times. Several quacks abound and sometimes prescribe dangerous, heavy metal-laced concoctions which can cause severe problems.

How important is water to a patient?

Water is a basic necessity for any living being whether human or animal. Thirst is a primordial instinct and to ask patients to refrain from drinking water is to ask them to not do something that is ingrained in every cell of the human body. That is why many dialysis patients find it very difficult to control the amount of fluid taken in. However, it is important to restrict it because of the various harmful consequences of fluid overload especially on the heart.

What kind of diet should be followed to keep potassium at a desired level for a patient undergoing dialysis treatment?

Potassium is very dangerous as excess levels in the blood can cause cardiac complications and can sometimes be fatal as well. To control it, foods high in potassium must be restricted like coconut, fruits like banana, mango, chikoo and vegetables like tomato, potato, spinach, etc.

How long does a person live on dialysis?

People can live for decades on dialysis. The important thing is to adhere to your dialysis prescription, make sure you restrict your diet and fluid as advised and have a positive

mind. Also make sure you keep busy (work full time or part time if possible) and exercise regularly (check with the doctor on what is a safe exercise regimen).

How do you face patient complaints?

Being a large network, there are bound to be complaints. I genuinely try my best to ensure that all are addressed speedily. Thankfully, I have a very motivated and capable team that also takes resolution of these complaints in a timely manner very seriously.

What do you think of the state of private health care in the country?

Private healthcare in the country, despite its problems, is the only way India can achieve the vision of healthcare for all. The government simply does not have the resources or the ability to provide it for the massive population we have. The best way is through Public Private Partnership (PPP) projects, where the provider is the private entity and the payer is the government. That said, adequate checks and balances need to be put in place to ensure that fraud is eliminated and delays and corruption from the government in payments are removed.



A. Radhakrishnan is a Pune-based freelance journalist, short story writer and poet.

Why Gandhi?

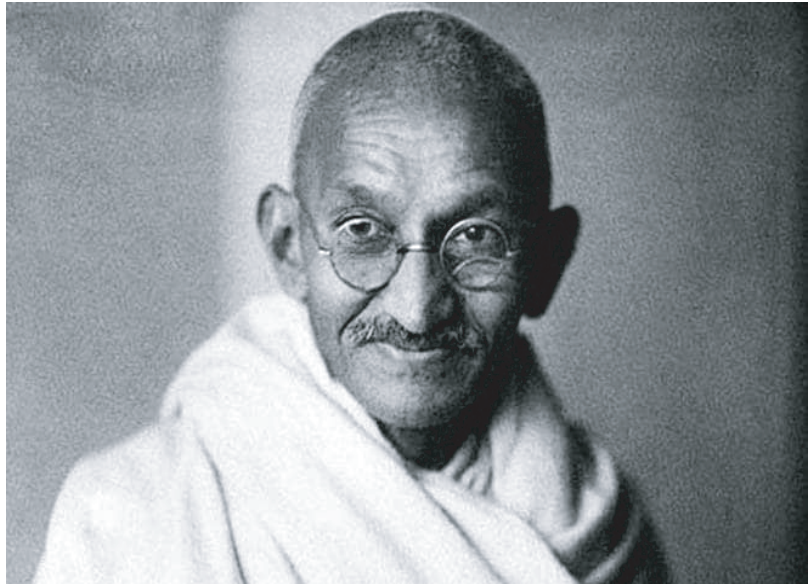
*It has become most fashionable to pan Mahatma Gandhi today, whereas the truth is, his beliefs and values have never been more relevant in independent India, argues **Dr. Rina Mukherji**.*

On October 2nd, we celebrate Gandhi Jayanti, the birth anniversary of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, an ordinary person who became extraordinary enough to be termed the Mahatma, and, the Father of the Indian nation.

Born in Porbandar, Gujarat, on October 2, 1869, to a middle-class Gujarati family, the Mahatma, on his own admission, was an ordinary boy. Yet, he was highly principled and idealistic, with a strong set of values. He believed in honesty and truth, and stood by them, whatever the circumstances. This is what would set him apart, and help him walk tall in an age and time when India indeed could boast of very tall men. A qualified barrister trained in England, he refused to take on false cases, or even profit from legal suits that could be better solved through compromise, or understanding.

Today, a lot of criticism is directed at him, and especially his handling of the Indian Independence movement and India's partition. Yet, no one can deny the redoubtable role played by Gandhiji in forging a new path through his belief in non-violence, and the role it played in our Independence movement. His thoughts assume greater significance today, given the divisive communal politics that is at play today.

Honesty, integrity and truth is what he believed in, and lived by, notwithstanding all criticism. This is what inspired, and impressed his contemporaries, and many votaries of Gandhism in later years. Lal Bahadur Shastri, who shares his birthday with Gandhi, was a living example of honesty and integrity, even as a Cabinet Minister in independent India, resigning from his ministerial position



following a major accident, assuming moral responsibility as a Railway Minister.

The shaper of our psyche, a votary of khadi

A lot has been said and written on Gandhi's politics. But rather than look at that, I would like to dwell on the role he played in shaping the Indian psyche, and laying the foundations of the Indian welfare state.

Of course, it could be well argued that his social reformist actions went on to strengthen his political agenda, which was basically aimed at building a mass movement to overthrow British rule from the Indian subcontinent. Thus, he went on to borrow the ideas of Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Bal Gangadhar Tilak to shape a movement that would reach out to the hitherto never-reached to rural masses all over India. His idea of "satyagraha" was a unique form of civil disobedience, and so was the adoption of regional languages as the

means of communication in the various regional Congress committees. In a way, Gandhi can be said to have laid the foundations of the world's largest democracy in modern times.

However, there were some initiatives that outlasted Indian independence, and spawned the flowering of movements which define the India of today. Khadi and the movement of untouchability are two of these, that stand out.

In spite of having received his higher education in the West, Gandhi was steeped in Indian traditions, and convinced of the superiority of the Indian way of life. These beliefs would be further honed in the years that followed, as he came in contact with the works of international and Indian thinkers. The writings of Dadabhai Naoroji made him aware of the great injustice done to Indian weavers by the British, and convinced him of the need to rebuild the Indian economy. But this could never be realised unless Indians took pride in themselves, and their rich heritage.

Gandhi was equally convinced of the superiority of Indian Ayurveda and Siddha over modern allopathic medicines, and also saw how expensive modern medicines could milk patients dry. He believed in leading by example, and proceeded to lead a simple life in the Indian tradition in the ashrams he set up. He would partake of nutritionally-rich, simple Indian food, and advocated natural cures for illnesses.

He also felt deeply for the plight of the weavers, and along with his contemporaries, pushed for the use of Swadeshi *vastra* in place of cheap machine-made imported cloth. At the same time, he promoted the *charkha*, and home-spun *khadi*. Under him, Congress workers took to *khadi*, with *khadi vastra* (cloth) becoming the clarion call for the Indian Independence movement. Much later, the Mahatma's promotion of khadi inspired Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay to lay the foundations of the Khadi Gramodyog, and various state-run handloom and handicraft boards, which rejuvenated the Indian crafts, and gave a new lease of life to our artisans and weavers. It also helped save our traditional handlooms and handicrafts from dying a natural death. Today, *khadi* no longer stands for the simple hand-spun cloth that Gandhi talked of. We have high-quality *khadi* silk that connoisseurs look out for, and several varieties of khadi that are the toast of Fashion Weeks.

Even though Gandhi swore by Hinduism, and especially Vaishnava/Jain traditions that he had grown up with in Gujarat, he was outspoken against social ills. Untouchability and the caste system repelled him. To wipe out untouchability, he used his newspapers – *Harijan* and *Young India*, to enlighten and educate his readers on the social evil. Using actual instances, the newspapers would report on cases of caste discrimination, and comment on the injustice. Although untouchability and caste discrimination have not been totally wiped out in India, and gory murders continue to be reported from both southern and northern India, it is partly due to the efforts of the Mahat-

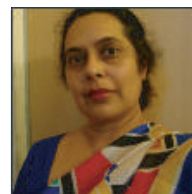
ma that our Constitution recognises it as a social evil, punishable by law.

To make people conscious of the injustice meted out to the untouchable Dalits, he went on to uphold the dignity of labour, and the significance of those who cleaned toilets. A stickler for cleanliness, he had the inmates of his ashram clean the toilets, and maintain them. It is thanks to him that the rigidity of caste no longer shackles Dalits, as in the past. Quotas in institutions of learning, government jobs and the like have ensured that the so-called lower castes have moved up in the hierarchy, and occupy important positions in every field today. Quotas in panchayat bodies, and reserved seats have also ensured sizeable political representation. Uttar Pradesh, which was once a hotbed of caste-discrimination, has had the distinction of electing a well-educated Dalit Chief Minister, who is a woman. This is no small achievement in a state steeped in patriarchy.

A little-known aspect of Gandhian thought is the importance Gandhi gave to vocational education. To him, rather than stress on books, education needed to be practical, and helpful in equipping the individual to earn a living. Although India is yet to overcome its obsession with degrees, Gandhi's ideas influenced the government to set up our Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) nationwide, which are acknowledged today as perhaps the best in the Third World. Although there are variations in quality region-wise, we boast an ITI in Katpadi, Tamil Nadu, that has the singular distinction of imparting the best industrial training to the differently-abled in the Third World, and has students from all over Asia and Africa being trained here. The Kothari Commission, which worked on bringing in a new education policy from 1964 to 1966, actually leant back on Gandhian thought to usher in an education policy which emphasised vocational education. If Indian skilled workers continue to be in great demand all over the Gulf and many Southeast Asian countries, we need to credit Gandhi for this.

In the same vein, Gandhian thought has spurred many to take to social entrepreneurship, and innovative methods to wipe out untouchability, combat poverty, and transform rural India. Take the case of Dr. Bindeshwari Pathak. Since untouchability owes its origins to the practice of manual scavenging and kaccha latrines, Dr. Bindeshwari Pathak pioneered the Sulabh Shauchalaya network of floor-flush public toilets, and bath/urinal complexes. These toilets, which have come up all over India, can be built and maintained even in places lacking in sewerage systems, or flush latrines. The Sarvodaya movement that Gandhi pioneered has also seen hundreds of social workers work in the remotest corners of India, bring in positive changes in the lives of tribals, and the most underprivileged.

Gandhi always believed in the individual's self-worth. He respected individual labour, be that of the Dalit sweeper, or that of the weaver, or the housewife. The skills involved in each case were worthy of respect. His thoughts gave people confidence; and restored the lost confidence of a once-great India. By unshackling the Dalits, and restoring their dignity, and elevating the work of the handloom weaver and craftsmen, he laid the foundations of a mature, modern India that was ready to take on the world, with or without a little help from friends.



A senior journalist, Dr. Rina Mukherji specialises in all aspects of sustainable development, with special focus on the environment and climate change. She has been a UGC doctoral fellow, and holds a doctorate in African Studies, with specialisation in Third World conflict and developmental issues. She is currently an independent journalist based in Pune.

Brides for sale

'Paro Pratha' is a poignant film on bride-trafficking, a shocking practice that is still rampant in the northern states of India, especially Haryana, where the sex ratio is skewed. The beauty of the film lies in its sensitive handling, writes
Shoma A. Chatterji.

Those who have never visited Haryana or do not have relatives living there may have never heard about "Paro Pratha" which translates as "the Paro Practice." I did not know either and then I happened to watch a short fiction film by Vijay Kumar called Paro at a film festival, and was shocked to hear from the director that his film is based on a true practice that is rampant in Haryana till today. Paro is another name for bride-trafficking where a girl is sold not once, but again and again through a hurriedly set up "wedding" to be sold to different "buyers" at different prices. The girls do not even know that this is an illegal practice, and that they can raise questions or even object to being trafficked from one family to the next.

Says director Vijay Kumar, "My college is at Rohtak in Haryana. I am thankful to creative writers and blog writers on internet. I read a headline once that went "when women are cheaper than cattle" and I began to research stories of bride trafficking on the Internet and decided to make my diploma film based on this story." Vijay Kumar graduated in Film Direction from SIFTV, Delhi, in 2017 and this is his Diploma film.

Paro is a low-key, very soft and tender story of a girl called Paro who is married off to a bed-ridden, middle-aged man one fine day. She is actually 'bought' by her 'mother-in-law' from an agent who buys and sells these "brides" in the so-called "marriage market". Marriage is therefore, reduced to a "mandi" where brides are bought and sold. She is enslaved to the family she is married to which covers every imaginable kind of household work, tending to her sick husband, cleaning the house and the cowshed and so on. She hardly talks



but is friendly with the young stepson and a much younger kid, also her stepson. But her mother-in-law does not like her easy and warm relationship with the older step-son though the relationship is healthy and caring. So, she decides to sell off Paro once again after her "husband" dies. It is strange that her mother-in-law does not allow Paro to touch her or her food or to cook for her because she does not know what caste the girl belongs to. Yet, has no compunctions about making her work like a slave.

Haryana, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan are the states where bride-trafficking is still quite rampant and the law turns a blind eye because there are hardly any complaints filed in police stations against the practice. "Paro is just a metaphor, a microcosm of hundreds of girls who are sacrificed so easily and traded like cattle to be sold from one family to another. I had to shoot it in seven days and it was a tough challenge," says Vijay Kumar.

The brides often called "paros" or "molki" (one who has a price) are sold for anything between

₹4,000 to ₹30,000 depending on their age, beauty and whether they've been previously sold. Young adolescents are in great demand, since virgins are considered premium and therefore fetch the best price. It is chilling to think that girls as young as 10 have been sold into this sordid trade. But the numbers are hard to ignore. According to a National Crime Records Bureau report data, more than 22,000 girl children and women between the ages of 10 and 30 were kidnapped for marriage in 2012.

He adds that he went to a college in Rohtak, and had heard about it but had not actually seen it happening. "I happened to meet a young girl who, I guessed, was a trafficked bride. But when I tried to speak to her, all I met with was silence that convinced me how much this girl had internalised this torture. It was as if she had pulled down the shutter on her life and locked herself up in a dark room", says Vijay Kumar.

(continued on page 35...)

Romeo and Juliet in a new avatar

The new Hindi play 'Romeo Ravidas and Juliet Devi' is an unconventional love story that focuses on the still-prevalent feudal mindset of Indian society. Despite the distressing story, watching the play is a pleasant experience because of its outstanding performances, pleasing music, eye-catching costumes, and arresting visuals, says Prof. Avinash Kolhe.



A still from the play

William Shakespeare's 'Romeo and Juliet' has inspired many cinema versions and theatre adaptations. Even today artistes are not tired of taking the plot of that love story and contemporise it. This happens all over the world. And India is no exception.

Though independent India has witnessed some social changes here and there, by and large the feudal mindset of Indian society has sadly remained intact. Even in the second decade of 21st century, caste-wars are reported quite frequently in which lower caste people are punished, beaten and humiliated if they carry markers of upward mobility and are often killed if they marry into 'higher' caste.

Sharmishta Saha, a trained theatre person, has recently started a drama group 'Kissa Kothi' under whose banner she has produced a

play 'Romeo Ravidas and Juliet Devi' in Hindi. She was the resident artist at 'Studio Tamaasha' in February 2019, where she developed this play which is a two-hander featuring Dilip Pandey and Priyanka Charan in the eponymous parts. The play is loosely based on two real life recent incidences. In April 2018, Pradeep Rathod, a Dalit youth of Timbi village, Umralla tehsil, Gujarat was killed by villagers who belonged to upper castes. Rathod's crime? He bought and brazenly rode a horse in the village, something a Dalit boy is not supposed to do. Dilip Pandey's character is modelled on Pradeep Rathod.

Second incident took place in Udumalpet town, Tirupur district, Tamil Nadu. On March 13, 2016, V. Shankar was attacked ruthlessly by hired goons. The attack took place in broad-day light at a crowded place. He died in this attack. His crime? Two years ago he married Kausalya, a 19-year old girl belonging to the most

backward caste of Agamudaiyar. The killers were paid by her parents, a case of honour killing. Kausalya stood firm and pursued the case, testified against her father. Today six accused including her father have been given capital punishment. Priyanka Charan's character is modeled on Kausalya. The play has only two actors who play some minor roles.

Since the play is inspired by these two instances, some parallels with the real life story are inevitable. Romeo Ravidas, a young son of a farmer from *chamar* community, loves to ride his horse in his village, Dumari, Bihar. He calls his horse Juliet. In a peculiar way, he meets Kaushalya who was once known in her college as Juliet. Kaushalya belongs to Thakur community who are Kshatriyas. This Romeo-Juliet story is not a conventional love story. Romeo Ravidas and Kaushalya aka Juliet share their life stories with each other in order to be in this dream journey. Their stories tell each other the different way of life they share. Romeo's life is nothing but deprivation and more deprivation, whereas Kaushalya's life is nothing but a life of all possible privileges. She tells Romeo how her father got Shankar, her lover from college days, killed. This play has brilliantly used autobiographical narratives from Omprakash Valmiki's autobiography 'Joothan: a Dalit Life' and Aravind Malagatti edited 'Government Brahmana'. This is how the play moves between the fictional world and the real and the hyperreal life.

The play has been written by Sharmishta Saha and Shubham Sumit, and is directed by Saha. She has used minimalist approach while putting the play together.

There is a huge backdrop of a horse on a curtain with a window. This backdrop also serves as wings where the artists disappear when not needed on the stage. The window is used to communicate with the players on the stage. Music by Aman Nath and costumes and scenography by Reema K., add value to the play.

The real credit goes to the two outstanding performances by Dilip and Priyanka who fill the auditorium with their sheer energy. Add to

this the natural beauty of Bhojpuri dialect of the dialogues, and it becomes easy to understand as to why the audiences were completely riveted to their seats through this two hour performance.

Having said this, one must also mention that the play in its totality becomes a pleasant theatrical experience with pleasing music, eye-catching costumes and arresting visuals. Are these pleasant elements necessary in communicating gory

experiences of caste-based atrocities? Do they not take away the seriousness of the story? But then, this decision should be best left to the director.



Prof. Avinash Kolhe retired as Associate Professor in Political Science from D.G. Ruparel College,

Mumbai.

Brides for sale

(continued from page 33...)

Way back in 1999, Rohit Parihar did a deeply investigative article for India Today under the heading Men from Backward Communities in Rajasthan Buy, Sell Brides with Impunity (March 8, 1999). He actually spoke to many of the girls trafficked as brides again and again, through agents. He says that the custom began as *nata* (relationship), where a married woman could choose to enter into a live-in relationship with another man with the first husband being paid a token sum as compensation. This money known as *jhagda* was meant to signify reimbursement for the expenses he incurred on the wedding.

The practice has now been distorted out of all recognition, although villagers still cling to the old names. Selling women into extramarital relationships to claim huge sums – sometimes running into lakhs of rupees – is becoming a dangerous trend across villages in Tonk, Ajmer, Bundi, Bhilwara and Baran. In several cases, even parents of the girls are involved in this trade.

Families in the northern states of India, especially Haryana which has the worst sex ratio in the country with only 879 women for every 1,000 men, have come up with a quick fix to deal with the shortage of women to marry their sons. They “import” them from other states



A scene from *Paro*

where there are more women, and where the impoverished families of those women are ready to sell their daughters for a price. According to Dr. Anita Yadav, Director, Women Studies Centre (WSC), Maharishi Dayanand University, Rohtak, there are at least six to seven brides from outside the state in almost each of the 6,000 villages of Haryana.

Another inspiration for Vijay Kumar was an article by Danish Raza in The Hindustan Times with the heading, When Women Come Cheaper than Cattle (May 23, 2014.) Raza says, “The skewed sex ratio in Haryana, Punjab and western Uttar Pradesh has led to a flourishing trade in women from Assam, West Bengal, Jharkhand and Odisha, who are often bought for as little as ₹5000.”

Paro was shot entirely on location in Haryana over seven to eight days because Vijay Kumar had neither the funding nor the time. To choose the girl who would play Paro,

he conducted a workshop among students of acting and selected one of the students. “The mother-in-law is from theatre while the rest are all students from my school,” says Vijay Kumar. The beauty of the film lies in its low-key and sensitive handling which spells out the contrast in the harsh and inhuman subject it deals with. The cinematography avoids bright lighting or colour at any point and even the music, beginning ironically with a traditional wedding song, is excellent. There is very little dialogue but the silences speak for themselves. There are no slogans raised, no flags held aloft, no activism because there is hardly any activism as the victims do not even know that their rights are being violated. And all this is happening right under our noses in India in 2019.



Shoma A. Chatterji is a freelance journalist, film scholar and author. She has authored 17

published titles and won the National Award for Best Writing on Cinema, twice. She won the UNFPA-Laadli Media Award, 2010 for ‘commitment to addressing and analysing gender issues’ among many awards.

LT. GEN. INDERJIT SINGH GILL, PVSM, MC

An officer of high calibre (1922 – 2001)

Lt. Gen. Inderjit Singh Gill was born on 16 January 1922, in UK where his father Dr. G. S Gill had gone to study medicine, and had married an English lady. Dr. Gill returned to India and joined the Indian Military Service (IMS). The IMS was abolished in 1930 and he became Superintendent of Jail, a post which then had to be staffed by a doctor.

Inder finished school in Chennai with good grade and got admission in engineering faculty in Edinburg University. He joined Royal High School in UK in 1939. War was declared in 1939, and he left the school to join the army. He joined the Black Watch Regiment on 29 January 1941. In the light of his school background, he was transferred to Engineers and granted commission on 5 April 1942. He was posted to 274 Field Company which sailed for Egypt on 15 June 1942.

Part of the supplies to Rommel's army in Africa was being sent by train to Greece, and from there on by ships. The allies were finding naval interception difficult due to control of the skies by the German Air Force. Operation Harling was planned to drop a team by parachutes to destroy one of the major railway bridges. Inder volunteered for the task and four volunteers were given a brief parachuting training. They took off in a converted Liberator bomber air craft from Cairo on 27 October 1942. The Greek villagers were instructed to light fire to demonstrate a friendly site. The team was dropped at a site next to the camp of Italian soldiers who had lit fire for their own comfort. The Italian soldiers struck out to search for the paratroopers but the team managed to reach the friendly Greek villagers. They could not bring their kit and had to collect explosives from the local sources. The team along with Greek patriots attacked the Italian guard on 26 November and destroyed the Gorgopotamos bridge. To avoid capture by three Italian columns, they travelled back by night along difficult mountain tracks. They reached the coast on 23 December. They were to be picked up by a submarine. One of the submarines had been destroyed by the Germans and they did not want to risk sending another submarine. They became British Liaison Officers with the British Military Mission in Greece and were instructed to work with the Greek patriots to disrupt communications.



Inder's relations with the Greek guerrillas were good, and his ability to get on with the villagers won him many friends. They flew out of Greece in December 1943. For his work of disrupting communications in June 1943, he was awarded Military Cross (MC). He learnt about it on 2 February 1944.

Inder arrived in Italy from Egypt on 19 March 1944 and joined 42 Field Company. He was severely wounded on 2 July and was discharged from the hospital on 25 September. He carried a few splinters in the body. Years later when he was Lt General, the Security Staff in USA were alarmed to notice beep as he crossed the security alarm. His wife had to tell, them that he carried splinters in his body. They stood to attention when they read the passport and saw that he was a serving Lt. General in India. The war came to an end in May 1945. Inder gave up his commission in the British Army, after the war was over and joined the Indian Army in January 1948. He served in J&K Militia, 2 Parachute Battalion before taking over command of 1st Battalion Parachute Regiment. He had got married on 29 September 1949 to Miss Manmohini Kalsy daughter of Rai Saheb L. R. Kalsy.

He got high grading in various courses and attended Command and Staff Course in USA. He held key command and staff appointments and was noted for integrity and clarity of mind. He was GOC 17 Mountain Division in Sikkim. The people were greatly impressed by the relief measures organised by Inder and a road was named after him. He was Director Military Operations during the 1971 War.

He was awarded PVSM for his outstanding work.

Lt. Gen. Inderjit Singh Gill commanded IV corps and Western Command and left his mark on training and operational readiness. He retired on 1 June 1979 and settled in Chennai. He passed away on 31 May 2001.

- Brigadier Suresh Chandra Sharma (retd.)

MOHAMMED ZAHOOOR KHAYYAM

A poet of melody (1927-2019)

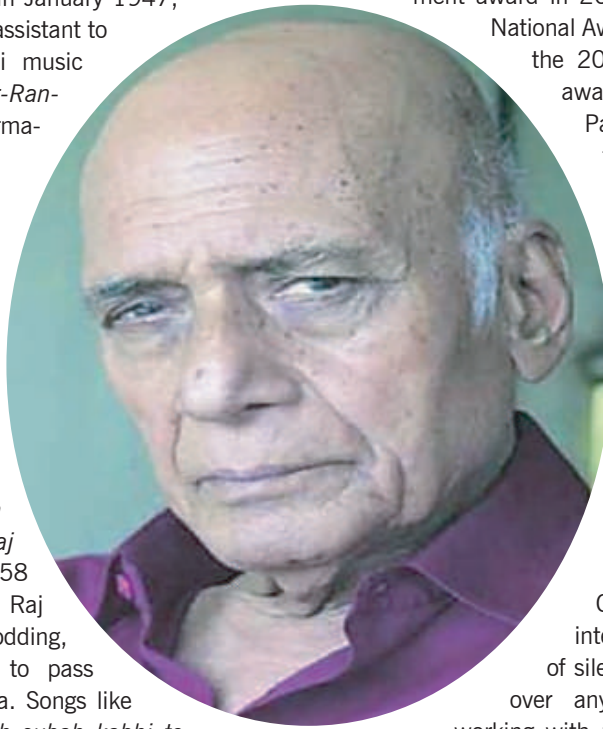
Music director and background score composer, spanning over four decades, Mohammed Zahoor 'Khayyam' Hashmi, was the last surviving musician of Hindi film music's golden era.

Mesmerised by K.L. Saigal, as a child, Khayyam dreamt of being the quintessential singer-actor, much to the chagrin of his family. He ran away from Rahon, Punjab to his uncle's house in New Delhi, when just 11, who helped him train under classical vocalist and composer Pandit Amar-nath. Joining the Indian Army in 1943, where Khayyam regaled his unit with his songs, in January 1947, he teamed up with Rahman, an assistant to Baba Chisti, a famous Punjabi music director, for their debut film *Heer-Ranjha* under the pseudonym Sharma-jji-Vermaji, in 1948.

When Rahman opted for Pakistan, Khayyam feeling protected, continued to compose music under the pseudonym Sharmaji. Adopting the name Khayyam, on poet and film lyricist Sahir Ludhianvi's suggestion, he came into his own in Zia Sarhadi's 1953 film *Footpath* with *Shaam-e-gham ki kasam, Aaj ghamgin hain hum*. For his 1958 production, *Phir Subah Hogi*, Raj Kapoor on Sahir Ludhianvi's prodding, chose Khayyam, but he had to pass Kapoor's test of tuning a tanpura. Songs like *Cheen O Arab hamara* and *Woh subah kabhi to aayegi, Aasman pe hai khuda aur zameen pe hum* were hallmarks. *Aakhri Khat* (1966), directed by Chetan Anand, which was Rajesh Khanna's debut film and Khayyam's last Hindi film before his eight-year sabbatical, boasted *Baharon mera jeevan bhi sanwaro*, and *Aur kuch der theher*.

Yash Chopra signing Khayyam for *Kabhie Kabhie* in 1976, reportedly asked him to pray as he was considered unlucky, but the film and its songs were a huge hit. Rajesh Khanna liked the music so much that he gifted Khayyam one of his cars. *Noorie* (1979), Manmohan Krishna's only film as director was a huge hit. *Chori, chori koi aaye*, with Khayyam's lilting melody captured poet Naqsh Lyallpuri's innocent evocation of first love. *Thodisi Bewafaii* (1980), his only film with Gulzar had sad songs of separation *Hazar raahen mud ke dekhin* and *Aaj bichhde hain*.

Ahista Ahista (1981), directed by Esmayeel Shroff had great songs *Kabhi kisi ko muqammal jahan nahin milta* and *Mana teri nazar mein*. Muzaffar Ali's blockbuster *Umrao Jaan* (1981) cemented his place in Bollywood. The evergreen music *In aankhon ki masti ke, Ye kya jagah hai doston*, and *Dil cheez kya hai* took two years to create. For the Kamal Amrohi directed film *Razia Sultan* (1983), the song penned by Jan Nisar Akhtar and Nida Fazli *Aye dil-e-nadan* is considered a milestone. He won three Filmfare awards for Best Music direction in 1977 for *Kabhi Kabhie* and 1982 for *Umrao Jaan*, and a lifetime achievement award in 2010. In 1982 he also got the National Award for *Umrao Jaan*. Awarded the 2007 Sangeet Natak Akademi award in creative music, he got the Padma Bhushan in 2011 and the Hridaynath Mangeshkar Award in 2018.



Khayyam's music had the touch of ghazal, but rooted in Indian classical music, never drowned the lyrics. The compositions soulful, melodious and emotional; the songs rich in poetry and purpose and the style noticeably different from the then popular brand of music. Conjuring intricate tunes interspersed with perfect pauses of silence, he didn't compose music over any instrument, and preferred working with renowned poets having strong background.

Married to singer Jagjit Kaur in 1954 in one of the first inter-communal marriages in the Indian film industry, their son Pradeep, sadly died of a heart attack in 2012. They set up a trust with 10 crores in 2016, on his 89th birthday, the 'Khayyam Jagjit Kaur Charitable Trust', to help artistes and technicians in need. After the Pulwama border attack, he decided not to celebrate his birthday and donated 5 lakh to the kin of the martyrs. Despite his success, Khayyam from 1947, composed for only 57 films, not wanting to compromise on quality. He died aged 92 in Mumbai following a cardiac arrest. Khayyam just lived his music.

- A.Radhakrishnan is a Pune-based freelance journalist, short story writer and poet.

ARUN JAITLEY

An eloquent orator and a humane leader (1952-2019)

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) still reeling from the untimely demise of former External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj, suffered another mortal blow when Arun Jaitley, former Finance Minister who had been battling a host of ailments succumbed on the 24 August 2019. Jaitley was born to a lawyer father on 26 December 1952, and had his early education in Delhi where he graduated with an Honours degree in Commerce. Later he secured his law degree from the Faculty of Law, University of Delhi in 1977. An avid debater during his college days, Jaitley took active part in the activities of the Akhil Bhartiya Vidyarthi Parishad. The young attorney later plunged headlong into Jayaprakash Narayan's anti-corruption movement and served a nineteen month term in jail during the emergency. He then joined the Jana Sangh after his release from jail and thereafter became a full-fledged member of the Bharatiya Janata Party.

Arun Jaitley's career as a lawyer flourished after he began to appear in the Supreme Court, representing a clutch of clients based both in India and abroad. He also held the post of Additional Solicitor General in the government headed by Prime Minister V. P. Singh. But after he was designated as the Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha in 2009, he gave up his lucrative practice to concentrate wholly on his political career. Jaitley held several positions in the party and was appointed as a Minister for Information and Broadcasting (Independent charge) in the NDA ministry led by Atal Bihari Vajpayee. He was also entrusted with vital portfolios like Commerce & Industry and Law & Justice during the five-year tenure of the Vajpayee government.

The former Finance Minister shot into prominence as the leader of the opposition in the Rajya Sabha, during the second stint of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government under Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh. Working in tandem with the late Sushma Swaraj who was the BJP's leader of the opposition in the Lok Sabha, Jaitley used his oratorical prowess and his legal acumen to advantage to put the treasury benches on the mat on several occasions. Jaitley who had not contested elections to the Lok Sabha early on in his career as he was always elected to the Rajya Sabha

tasted defeat in the only elections that he fought in 2009 where the present CM of Punjab, Captain Amarinder Singh defeated him by a margin of more than one lakh votes in the Amritsar constituency in Punjab.

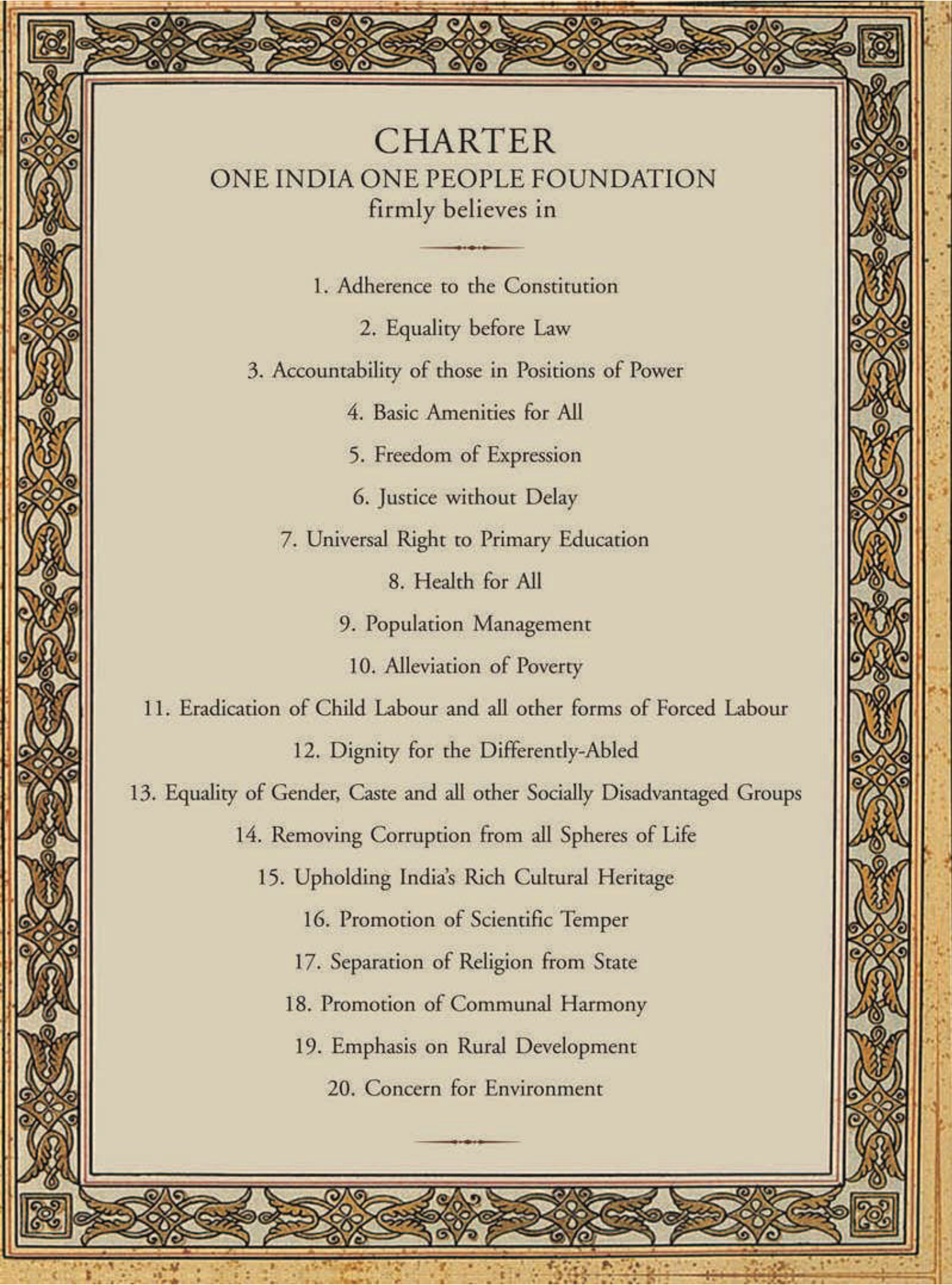
The defeat however did not come in the way of his inclusion in the cabinet and being instrumental in the elevation of Narendra Modi to the PM's post, Jaitley was saddled with the portfolio of Finance and Corporate Affairs. Later Modi also entrusted him with portfolios like Defence. Jaitley played a stellar role in the introduction of the Goods and Services Act (GST), demonetisation, merger of the

Railway budget with the Union budget, Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, liberation of FDI norms etc. Consensus building across the political spectrum was his forte. It was to his credit that despite measures like demonetisation not having the desired impact apart from drawing flak from the opposition parties and the lay public alike, he would defend it with all the force at his command on the floor of the house. Jaitley also was a keen votary of the passage of the Woman's Reservation Act and the Lok Pal bill.

Jaitley excelled in parliamentary debates and his eloquence and fluency in both English and Hindi ensured that he was heard with rapt attention in both houses of Parliament. Suave, urbane and cultured, he built relationships cutting across party lines and was known to lend a helping hand to anyone in distress who approached him. Stories abound about his generosity towards his staff and his philanthropy that endeared him to one and all. A raconteur par excellence he was the life and soul in private and public gatherings, and had a very wide circle of friends not just from the legal or political fraternity but from the social milieu as well. A cricket aficionado, Jaitley also served the Delhi Cricket Association in several capacities with distinction. His untimely passing has robbed the country of a quintessential politician, a sharp legal mind, a patriot and warm human being, totally unselfish and caring for the welfare of all.

- C.V. Aravind is a Bangalore-based freelance journalist.





CHARTER

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firmly believes in

1. Adherence to the Constitution
 2. Equality before Law
 3. Accountability of those in Positions of Power
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 17. Separation of Religion from State
 18. Promotion of Communal Harmony
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WHO AM I?

Am I a Hindu first or an Indian first?

Am I a Muslim first or an Indian first?

Am I a Christian first or an Indian first?

Am I a Buddhist first or an Indian first?

Am I a Brahmin first or an Indian first?

Am I a Dalit first or an Indian first?

Am I a South Indian first or an Indian first?

Am I a North Indian first or an Indian first?

Am I the President of India first or an Indian first?

Am I the Prime Minister of India first or an Indian first?

Am I the Commander-in-Chief first or an Indian first?

Am I a supporter of any 'ism' first or an Indian first?

Am I a white-collar/blue collar worker first or an Indian first?

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Sadanand A. Shetty, Founder Editor
(Mayoer 9th 1930 – February 23rd 2007)
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