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OPINION

Relevant for: Ethics | Topic: Human Values - Lessons from the lives and teachings of great Leaders, Reformers and Administrators

Later this week, India will celebrate the 150th birth anniversary of [Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi](#), who is also accorded with the reverential moniker of “Father of the Nation”. It is indeed a poignant moment for the nation to remember an individual, who notwithstanding what his critics claim, was among the most influential thinkers to shape the independence movement that freed India from its colonial shackles.

There is much this nation can learn by recalling some of Gandhi’s contributions. Top of the heap has to be his undying commitment to communal harmony—in fact, if anything, it was his deepest disappointment that despite his heroics, he was unable to prevent the communal carnage which forever scarred the sub-continent. So was his commitment to tackle the deep divide of caste, which, tragically, in recent years has assumed destructive proportions—further straining the frayed social fabric of a nation desperate to eke out a modern narrative.

Very little though is known of Gandhi’s economic thought, excepting about how he pioneered civil disobedience by challenging the prejudiced colonial economic laws. Gleaning from the works of a few scholars, it is apparent that Gandhi did profess a vision of economic thought which was couched in his own spiritual interpretation of issues. Interesting they are, if nothing, more relevant today as an India struggles to script new economic conditions to meet the rapidly growing aspirations of its denizens.

Gandhi was someone who opposed the idea of social and economic inequality. The latter has got little resonance in public policy, with the attention being cornered by the bid to end poverty. Material growth, riding on an unprecedented surge in global economic growth, together with an era of entitlement pursued in the first decade of the millennium by the [Congress](#)-led United Progressive Alliance, dealt a significant blow to absolute conditions of poverty. At present, they are down to about 20%, compared to a little over 40% at the turn of the millennium.

However, this also coincided with the phase of incredible consumerism combined with the accrual of rentier incomes to a select few through the capture of natural resources. Given the poor state of social infrastructure—especially education and health—it is not surprising that the relative gap between the haves and the have-nots has widened even while the country as a whole is materially better off. It is precisely what Gandhi feared and had warned when he said that while there were enough resources on earth to meet everybody’s need, it was insufficient to meet everyone’s greed.

The change of regime with the arrival of the Bharatiya Janata Party-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) has effected a recalibration of public policy. While entitlement, despite initial reservations, has continued, the NDA has pursued empowerment too. The launch of [Ayushman Bharat](#), coincidentally just a week ahead of the 150th birth anniversary of Gandhi, is one such big policy initiative. In scale and ambition, the programme is staggering by seeking to provide health insurance cover to 500 million people—or just under one in two Indians. At the moment, most Indians, as captured in a superb book by Anirudh Krishna, professor of Public Policy in the Stanford School of Public Policy, are just one disease away from poverty. As a result, while the level of poverty has remained the same, its composition keeps altering—worse, even those above the so-called poverty line are not insulated from such fiscal shocks. Providing healthcare is clearly an important step in empowerment.

Similarly, the move to universalize banking by expanding the scope of financial inclusion is contributing to a reset in the definition of a social safety net. The financial savings accruing in a formal institutional framework, as argued in a previous column (bit.ly/2xIJKLB), empowers in an incredible way. It would, however, be naive to assume that these baby steps can overcome the divide of inequality. Yet, it does give hope that status quo is being challenged while echoing Gandhinomics.

Anil Padmanabhan is executive editor of Mint and writes every week on the intersection of politics and economics. His Twitter handle is @capitalcalculus

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GANDHI FOR THE YOUNG

Relevant for: Ethics | Topic: Human Values - Lessons from the lives and teachings of great Leaders, Reformers and Administrators

Planning to buy a mid-range smartphone? Honor 9N is the notched beauty you need

Every year on October 2, I feel somewhat uneasy. From Rajghat to Parliament, from the declaration of “pro-people” policies to the empty slogan initiated by the political class, I experience the death of Gandhi. As the packaging of the “official” Gandhi becomes the norm, I do not find the real/living Gandhi — the “experimental” Mohandas who could acquire the courage to resist the dictates of the “caste association”, and choose to go to England for higher studies; the pedagogue Gandhi in Tolstoy Farm seeking to integrate the “mental” and the “manual” for nurturing the foundations of “integral education”; the creative Gandhi transforming the everydayness of “salt” into a mass movement; and the determined Gandhi with his frail body walking through the villages of Noakhali with a lamp of truth amid the all-pervading darkness. Instead, the ritualisation centred on Gandhi, or the attempt to reduce him into a statist symbol, I fear, has kept many — particularly, the radical youth — separated from him.

Even though they speak of Bhagat Singh and Ambedkar, and romanticise Marx and Che, it is not so easy to find them engaging with Gandhi in a meaningful and creative way. It is sad that, because of a massive pedagogic failure, Gandhi, for many of them, is being perceived primarily as a “non-modern” “puritan” conservative with all sorts of “impractical” postulates. As a teacher and concerned citizen, I believe that this must change, and we ought to invite them to the world of living Gandhi — not a perfect, fossilised, museumised Gandhi, but a Gandhi with follies and contradictions, and yet endowed with immense possibilities.

Before I go further, it is important to see the relationship between radicalism and the spirit of courage. As we read Bhagat Singh’s diary — particularly his note on why he was an atheist — we experience an inspiring illustration of courage. The courage to retain the clarity of thought and conviction even amid the worst form of psychic turmoil, or the courage not to find “false consolation” by deriving the idea of God and “next life”.

No wonder, it attracts the young. But then, what about Gandhi? Well, his religiosity was no less an illustration of courage — the courage to retain the spirit of cultural syncretism even at a time when the likes of Savarkar and Jinnah were engaged in communalising the socio-political sphere. While Ambedkar’s “Mahad satyagraha” was an inspiring example of courage — the courage of the subaltern to defy the Brahminical principles — Gandhi sought to inject yet another notion of courage in our consciousness, the courage to fight the aggression of the hyper-masculine colonial modernity through the spirit of “non-cooperation”, the ethics of satyagraha, and the cultivation of the qualities like endurance and even the “art of dying” by reducing oneself to “zero”.

Marx died in the late 19th century. Yet, with the dynamic character of modern capitalism with its hegemonic apparatus and culture industry, creative Marxists like Antonio Gramsci and Herbert Marcuse reinvented Marx, and made his essential spirit of criticality relevant for our age. Likewise, I believe, it is not altogether impossible to reinvent Gandhi in the changing times, and evolve a new language of resistance. From Gandhi’s time of colonialism, religious reform and nationalist movement, we seem to have moved towards a new reality characterised by what I would regard as a mix of neoliberal capitalism and militant cultural nationalism, and market-driven consumerism and technocratic developmentalism. See its consequences as manifested in the politico-cultural landscape: While the seductive slogan of “good governance” hides the

growing cleavage between the rich and the poor, the city and the village, and techno-managers and farmers, the practice of cultural nationalism promotes the militarisation of consciousness, and the expanding culture industry transforms the aspiring middle-class into greedy consumers and non-reflexive recipients of all sorts of “apps” and techno-solutions. The result is violence with diverse manifestations ranging from the emergence of a “risk society” with environmental degradation to the normalisation of the brute practice of stigmatising the “other” through lynching and cow vigilantism, from the rapidly growing pornographic mentality to all sorts of conservatism relating to caste, religion and gender. The question is whether the sensitive youth can find something in Gandhi to come out of this insanity.

It is in this context that I would refer to two important ideas of Gandhi — “soul force” and “gentle anarchy”. In Hind Swaraj, Gandhi contrasted “soul force” with “brute force”. While “brute force” is based on intoxication with endless craving for all sorts of “needs”, “soul force” cultivates the power of the self, our inner resources, and our ability to have control over body, diet and life’s needs. If we refer to Erich Fromm, he too would agree with Gandhi, and speak of “having” and “being”. While modern capitalism and consumerism intensifies the “having” mode of existence, it is inherently violent. Every relationship, be it with nature or other fellow beings, becomes instrumental. In contrast, the “being” mode of existence, like Gandhi’s “soul force”, helps us to find the treasure within, and regain our moral strength. Think of the way we are losing control over ourselves. With an almost neurotic preoccupation with gadgets, or the intensification of the desire for the ever-expanding “manufactured” needs, we lose the courage to resist the way technocratic capitalism with its seductive consumerism enslaves us. I believe that Gandhi’s “soul force” — if meaningfully reinvented in our times — can give the youth an effective philosophy and practice of resistance against this new form of social control.

There is something remarkable in Gandhi’s “gentle anarchy” — his scepticism towards the gigantic power of the state with its inherent centralising/bureaucratic tendencies. In a way, as Gandhi thought, it disempowers people, and, as Hind Swaraj suggested, makes them terribly dependent on “courts and lawyers”. His plea for what he regarded as “oceanic circles” or self-reliant decentralised communities, I admit, has to be critically scrutinised. Yet, the spirit of it — I mean the ethico-political power of the people rather than a bureaucratic state or an all-pervading “authoritarian personality” — has immense potential for democratising our society and eradicating the seeds of authoritarianism.

On January 30, 1948, when he was walking to attend the prayer meeting in Birla House in Delhi, he was trying to see sanity in the insane Subcontinent. It is, however, a different story that Nathuram Godse or the militaristic ideology of nationalism that created him, thought otherwise. Do the youth realise that killing Gandhi is like killing a dream, a possibility; and this demonic force has not yet disappeared from our society?

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THE VOICE THAT IS GREAT WITHIN US

Relevant for: Ethics | Topic: Human Values - Lessons from the lives and teachings of great Leaders, Reformers and Administrators

Truth, Satya, was the central axis of the Gandhian system of thought and practice. For Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, everything turned on Truth — satyagraha, swaraj, ahimsa, ashram, brahmacharya, yajna, charkha, khadi, and finally, moksha itself. In a fine introduction to a new critical edition of the Mahatma's *An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, Tridip Suhrud, closest to Gandhi among all contemporary scholars, lays out the intricate web of ideas arranged around the axial principle of Truth: "Truth is not merely that which we are expected to speak and follow. It is that which alone is, it is that of which all things are made, it is that which subsists by its own power, which alone is eternal."

In a recent interview, Mr. Suhrud points out that Indians today continue to have "the need that he should always be available to us. When there is a crisis in our collective life, we expect Gandhi to provide an answer." Both of Mr. Suhrud's insights — that Truth is the key to Gandhi's philosophy, and that we rely on Gandhi even decades after his death and long after his supposed lapse into political irrelevance — are essentially correct. I started making a note of the crises in Indian democracy and in global politics that sent me immediately to consult Gandhi.

The ongoing controversy in the United States about the proposed appointment of Federal Judge Brett Kavanaugh to the U.S. Supreme Court as the nominee of the Republican Party, even as he stands accused of sexually assaulting Christine Blasey Ford, in 1982, when they were both teenagers, hinges exactly on the truth of her testimony versus his defence. Only one can be true. As became clear in the Senate hearings on September 27, the palpable veracity of Professor Ford's account over Judge Kavanaugh's denial would likely still not change the Republican Party's nomination of him (the outcome of the proceedings, including an FBI investigation, is pending as this article goes to press).

Effectively, the U.S. appears on the verge of replacing Truth with perjury as an acceptable value, even in the apex court of the criminal-justice system, shaking the very bedrock of American constitutionalism. When Truth is rendered negotiable and dispensable, the balance of justice — in this case, between genders and between political parties — is disastrously upset. The scales tip wildly without any kind of mechanism to orient men and women or Democrats and Republicans back into an equitable relationship with one another within a shared political context that ought to be egalitarian and fair.

Like other democratic institutions in the Donald Trump presidency, the U.S. Supreme Court seems poised on the verge of destruction. Arguably Americans, too, could have recourse to Gandhi, though perhaps not in the way that we in India might. Mr. Suhrud describes how Gandhi strained to hear the "small, still voice" within himself, the voice belonging to one he called "antaryami", "atma" or "God" — an inner prompt, the self as a guide and a compass — so that he could keep moving ever closer to Truth.

It was this voice that he followed, sometimes to the bafflement of others who could not hear it. This was the voice that made him undertake life-threatening fasts his health wouldn't permit; withdraw from active politics at the most crucial junctures of India's anti-colonial struggle; leave factual errors and narrative inconsistencies in texts he wrote after readers had pointed out obvious mistakes; and, most difficult to understand, embark on life-long ordeals of a sexual nature, involving not just his own celibacy and asceticism, but also that of his wife Kasturba, his fellow Ashramites, and his sons and their families.

Even close and loyal associates like Jawaharlal Nehru and Vallabhbhai Patel were often confounded by Gandhi's actions and decisions; more sceptical and antagonistic peers like M.A. Jinnah and B.R. Ambedkar couldn't make sense of his motivations at all. In his monumental new history, *Gandhi: The Years that Changed the World, 1914-1948*, Ramachandra Guha delves deep into these knotty episodes, where the voice of the Mahatma's interior conscience and the compulsions of nationalist politics pull in opposite directions, and no power on earth is able to steer Gandhi away from his self-charted path towards Truth.

Mr. Guha calls Gandhi's move to have his young grand-niece Manu sleep next to him, as he travelled through ravaged Hindu and Muslim settlements in Bihar and Bengal during the height of communal violence on the eve of Partition, "the strangest experiment". No matter what the reactions of his colleagues, for Gandhi it was not strange, precisely because it was one of his 'experiments with truth' (in Gujarati, *satya na prayogo*).

Of late, many musicians in south India have faced vicious attacks from rightwing Hindutva groups for singing hymns and psalms, thereby allegedly hijacking "Hindu" Carnatic music for "Christian" evangelical aims. This despite the fact that the violin, central to the Carnatic system in modern times, is a European gift to Indian music, and both Christian and Muslim religious lyrics and poetry have been a constitutive part of the Carnatic repertoire throughout the 20th century, if not before.

Gandhi made great use of the Bible in his prayers, teachings, writings and Ashram liturgies. He was often accused of being a crypto-Christian. However, he flatly refused to give preference to the Vedas over the Bible. Mr. Suhrud quotes from Vol. 31 of the *Collected Works*: "He is no *Sanatani* Hindu who is narrow, bigoted and considers evil to be good if it has the sanction of antiquity and is to be found supported in any Sanskrit book."

Outside India but not far from it, Indologist David Shulman has been reporting consistently on the brutal violence of hardline Zionist settlers as well as the Israeli army against unarmed Arab shepherds and villagers in the Jordan Valley. Mr. Guha delves into Gandhi's difficult correspondence with philosopher Martin Buber and the intellectual J.L. Magnes in 1938-1939, just before the Kristallnacht. Gandhi advised European Jews to relocate to Palestine and make it their homeland only with the cooperation and goodwill of native Arabs, and not otherwise. This appalled even sympathetic Jews like Buber and Magnes, who had admired and supported Gandhi at the time of the Salt March in 1930, before the Nazi takeover of Germany.

How could Gandhi oppose the Zionist project, with Jews being sent to death camps in Hitler's murderous regime? But now the tables are turned, and a rightwing Israeli state under Benjamin Netanyahu seems hell-bent on exterminating the Palestinians. Gandhi's counter-intuitive Truth informs the civil disobedience, passive resistance and non-violent protest of both Arab and Jewish activists who oppose the continuing occupation and takeover of dwindling and defenceless Palestinian territories by bellicose Israeli forces.

The multilingual translator, editor and interpreter Suhrud (who works in all three of Gandhi's languages, Gujarati, English and Hindustani, and has earlier produced a critical edition of *Hind Swaraj*), and the historian and biographer Guha (who has already written two other massive books in the past decade, about Gandhi in the first phase of his life, and about postcolonial India, "after Gandhi"), have together provided ample materials this year — leading up to the 150th anniversary of Gandhi's birth in October 1869, and the 70th anniversary of his assassination in January 1948 — that we can continue to consult Gandhi on all manner of issues that may trouble our individual or collective conscience. It might have been "small" and "still" in his own perception, but even today, Gandhi's is the voice that is great within us.

Ananya Vajpeyi is a Fellow at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, New Delhi

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THE MAHATMA'S ECONOMICS

Relevant for: Ethics | Topic: Human Values - Lessons from the lives and teachings of great Leaders, Reformers and Administrators

Planning to buy a mid-range smartphone? Honor 9N is the notched beauty you need

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born at a time when a nonviolent economic system was almost unthinkable. A hundred-and-fifty years later, there is a growing clamour to reconfigure the world's economic systems in ways that minimise violence on people and the planet, while fostering actual well-being rather than wealth-as-money. Why is Gandhi's intellectual and activist legacy vital to these contemporary struggles?

Gandhi was born 12 years after the revolt of 1857 just as the British crown was consolidating its power over India. Globally, imperialism with its flagrant claim that "might is right", was more deeply entrenched than at any time since Christopher Columbus sailed westward in 1492. Volume One of Das Kapital had been published just two years before Gandhi's birth. However, the Marxist challenge to the systemic brutalities of capitalism and imperialism was not non-violence but the dictatorship of the proletariat. In 1869, the book that was to shape Gandhi's thinking on the equation between samaj, sarkar and bazaar was the subject of ridicule. Unto This Last by the prolific art historian John Ruskin was a response to the depths of degradation which most working class Britishers experienced in the mid-19th century. The cause of this degradation, Ruskin argued, was a delusion that lies at the heart of the modern science of political economy. As paraphrased by Gandhi, "the social affections are accidental and disturbing elements in human nature; but avarice and the desire of progress are constant elements." John Maynard Keynes validated this prognosis when he wrote in 1930 that: "For at least another 100 years we must pretend to ourselves and to every one that fair is foul and foul is fair, for foul is useful and fair is not."

Finding nonviolent ways out of this dimension of modernity was Gandhi's life mission. Ending British rule in India was a relatively small part of this endeavour. Gandhi's most widely-known economic ideas were revitalisation of village industries and local economies while promoting the concept of trusteeship by owners of large industry. Behind them were two fundamental principles which now hold the key to the survival of our species. One, redefining wealth so it is equated with actual well-being rather than units of exchange value. Two, purity of means in creation of such wealth.

In the 70 years since Gandhi was killed, there have been important milestones in this audaciously ambitious mission. The least known of these is Economy of Permanence, a book by Gandhi's contemporary and disciple J C Kumarappa. This was one of the inspirations for E F Schumacher and his famous text, Small is Beautiful.

In 1972, the first report by the Club of Rome marshalled data to reconfirm Gandhi's prediction that one Earth is not sufficient for all people to live like the Western nations — and he was referring to consumption levels in the 1940s. The 1980s saw the rise of the Socially Responsible Investing (SRI) movement in the Western countries. It created mechanisms to enable institutional and individual investors to make choices based on the social and environmental impacts of companies, not merely their monetary profits. After a slow start, the SRI sector now has approximately US \$23 trillion under management. This process has been aided by the concept of Triple Bottom Line, a term coined by John Elkington in the late 1990s, and the adoption of the United Nations Principles of Responsible Investing by some of the world's largest corporations in 2006.

However, even while more and more companies adopt such measures, the process of mineral extraction and industrialisation continues to result in violent displacement of people and destruction of ecosystems. The globalised economy, while creating new money-wealth for some, is at war with local economies everywhere. Thus, today the cutting edge of that larger mission initiated by Gandhi is not so much the SRI phenomenon but a mobilisation around the deliberately chosen shock-word, “Degrowth”. What began as a platform of West European intellectuals in 2008 is now a global network of activists and social entrepreneurs who are convinced that a combination of environmental degradation and lack of adequate livelihoods is poised to plunge our species into chaos.

Their answer is to urge governments, corporations and societies to rapidly redefine growth — partly by abandoning Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as a measure of economic progress and replacing it with a measure that gives primacy to social and environmental well-being for all. Some of the groundwork for this approach has been done over the last two decades by the development of metrics like Genuine Progress Indicators in North America and the related concept of ecological footprint.

Not surprisingly, the Indian equivalent for Degrowth has been identified as “Sarvodaya”. The African equivalent is “Ubuntu,” which can be roughly translated as “You Are Therefore I am”. The Latin American equivalent for “Degrowth” is “Buen Vivier” or Good life for Humans and Ecosystems.

Are all these endeavours, even if taken together, ready to push the world towards nonviolent economic systems of the kind that Gandhi believed are possible? If this question is addressed with only the present in mind, the answer will be a depressing “no”. But then “might is right” was the norm when Gandhi was born; that is no longer acceptable. Yes, there is a bitter struggle to stop the actual violations; this includes the repression of many who challenge the supposedly “development” projects on humanitarian grounds and are pilloried by the powers that be as “anti-progress” and “anti-national”.

These struggles may or may not be drawn to nonviolence as a method of protest. But they are a living continuation of Gandhi’s legacy because, like him, they seek to build a new kind of economics rooted not in mechanistic redistribution of resources but in moral animation.

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IN BAD COMPANY

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Planning to buy a mid-range smartphone? Honor 9N is the notched beauty you need

In Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, the narrative is about how an entire town is well aware that two brothers are out to kill Santiago Nasar to avenge their family honour. All of them know about the spot where he is to be killed and the timing. Yet Nasar did not recognise the omen. The unravelling of infrastructure conglomerate IL&FS over the last few days, with the potential risk of contagion in the financial sector, is a bit like that.

Like Nasar, the omen was not recognised for long by its institutional shareholders, the board and by the government and regulators, though it was evident to many in the financial sector who could not or did not call it out. With a new board appointed by the government in place to restore, as it says, the credibility and solvency of the group in the eyes of the financial markets and investors, a restructuring is inevitable. That will then possibly mark the end of yet another infrastructure financing firm promoted by the government or state-backed entities over the last three decades, after the likes of the old development financial institutions, such as IDBI, ICICI, IFCI and later IDFC, exposing the underbelly of India's model of infrastructure development.

As pressures mount to stop yet another bail-out of a hybrid institution — one which positioned itself as a private professionally run infrastructure developer and financier when it suited it and as a sovereign backed group at other times — there is little reflection on the cost of erosion of the huge amount of capital originally deployed either by the government in some of these institutions or by banks or investment institutions, which the government controls and the value destruction presided over by successive governments.

Consider this: As early as 1997, the government and the RBI contributed Rs 1,000 crore as capital to a new infrastructure institution which was promoted, IDFC, to provide innovative solutions to financing infrastructure projects. It is curious that, on the way, the RBI exited much before the institution finally morphed into a bank. And as each of these term lending institutions fell by the wayside, the response was to promote another one — the last one being IIFCL.

It is not just the design flaws, evident in the fall of IL&FS or other institutions before that, which should be reason for worry. Rather, this crisis is about the models to achieve economic goals — state-run businesses, family or promoter driven entities, and firms with diversified shareholding that are professionally managed. As the government stakeholders and regulators go about trying to work out a resolution plan and contain the damage, they should also take a closer look at what appears to be the weakness in the Indian model of what were seen as professionally managed or run firms without a dominant promoter or diversified shareholding. Over the past year, there has been a serious dent to this model purely because of governance and leadership flaws, subservient boards and integrity issues. It is not just IL&FS where professionals who ran the group for over two decades are under the scanner. Metres away from the firm's headquarters, another professional, the CEO of ICICI Bank, too, is facing charges of conflict of interest and quid pro quo. And over the last year, at two other institutions which were helmed by professionals — Axis Bank and the National Stock Exchange — CEOs had to move out because the regulators forced them to.

In the post reforms period, with delicensing and deregulation and with the state exiting many businesses, successive governments and regulators encouraged the diversified shareholding model and professionally run, board-managed firms. But over a period of time, as the original

promoters in some of these listed firms — mostly government-owned banks or investment institutions — started diluting their holdings, with no dominant shareholder, the CEOs of some of these companies acquired a larger-than-life role helped by so-called independent boards meekly acquiescing to the decisions. Rather than the democratisation of wealth which is what was celebrated in the glory days of India's top software services and other firms including some private banks, this was over the last few years limited to a small club of senior management professionals with little or no relation to the performance of their companies, thus widening the divide. The refusal to list in some cases on lofty grounds only led to greater opacity with little oversight by either the board and the shareholders even as risks started building on the balance sheets. In the case of banks, especially, managements and the boards of companies have a fiduciary responsibility to report accurate results. In the West, divergence on numbers is seen to be as good as fudging with severe consequences. Thankfully, the Indian regulator has started acting against some of these CEOs.

Three committees have over the last two decades spelt out what needs to be done on the corporate governance front. The last one — the Kotak committee which submitted its report last year — had said that good corporate governance primarily helps overcome potential agency problems, which can occur if managers who are agents of all shareholders pursue their personal interests to the possible detriment of investors' interests. An earlier committee headed by N R Narayana Murthy in 2003 defined this concept as being about commitment to values, about ethical business conduct and about making a distinction between personal and corporate funds in the management of a company. And it had an important message — the cost of governance reforms may be high but the failure has a cost beyond regulatory problems. But more importantly, it rightly said that corporate governance is beyond the realm of law. "It stems from the culture and mindset of management and cannot be regulated by legislation alone".

It is that openness, integrity and accountability which is on test now as also the models of business and leadership and the challenge arising from the fact that there is no pure play infrastructure financing institution now. Yes, fat cats should be punished but getting the mindset and governance culture right — be it in state run or professionally run companies — will matter most.

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GANDHI AND GULLIVER'S TRAVELS: AN INDIAN SAINT AND AN IRISH PRIEST

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Planning to buy a mid-range smartphone? Honor 9N is the notched beauty you need

[Mahatma Gandhi](#) in a letter dated May 18, 1911 advised his nephew and disciple Maganlal Gandhi to read Jonathan Swift's masterpiece *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) again and again. One may wonder why Gandhi, then a civil rights activist residing in South Africa, would recommend a satire, later read primarily as a child fable, to his twenty-eight-year old close associate Maganlal. In Gandhi's letters, the effusive praise for Swift, an Irish author and priest, is a refrain, for in *Gulliver's Travels* he found an 'effective condemnation' of modern civilization and colonial modernity. Though Gandhi's worldview was forged by several authors like Ruskin, Thoreau, Tolstoy, Marx, and others, Swift was the only one, who like Gandhi, directly suffered and stood up to British colonialism. His fascination with Swift's quasi-travelogue allows us to revisit and unearth not only the similarities between the Indian saint and the Irish priest but also its relevance in contemporary times.

It is self-evident that modern civilization is characterized by industrialization, imperialism, rationalism, individualism, and promotion of a scientific culture. Jonathan Swift's views on colonialism, modernity, science and governance sans ethics appear to have immensely influenced Gandhi during his formative years in South Africa (1893-1914).

Swift and Gandhi both were incisive critics of colonialism; both perceived the achievements of modernity and the Enlightenment sceptically; they both acknowledged the role of religion in shaping their viewpoints. They thought of rationalism as a false and destructive doctrine. They also shared the double burden of being both victims as well as beneficiaries of colonial modernity. Initially, during his stay in England as a law student, a young Gandhi lived like an Englishman, wore a suit, kept a silver-headed cane and took lessons in dancing and violin. When he reached South Africa as a young barrister in 1893, he thought of himself 'as a Briton first and an Indian Second,' writes Arthur Herman in his book *Gandhi and Churchill* (2008). But soon the cultural pride that Gandhi drew on his English education and way of life began to fade away after undergoing racial discrimination, when he was thrown off the first class compartment of the train at Pietermaritzburg.

Though as a white man, Swift did not have to undergo any kind of racial discrimination yet Ireland was brutally subjugated by England in every possible way. Swift, despite his Irish identity, initially thought of himself as an Englishman and constantly sought favour from the British establishment. To please the British Queen, he even wrote a pamphlet *A Tale of a Tub* (1704), an allegory on various branches of Christianity. To his utmost surprise, the satirical representation of the English Church infuriated Queen Anne so much that all his chances of promotion within the English Church ended forever. What Pietermaritzburg did to Gandhi, *A Tale of a Tub* did to Swift, making him painfully aware of his colonized identity.

This publishing debacle has been humorously fictionalised in *Gulliver's Travels*, where Swift briefly recasts himself as Gulliver and the British Queen as the queen of the imaginary island Lilliput. On the one hand, Swift's pamphlet scandalized the queen, and on the other, his fictional creation Gulliver had to face the wrath of the queen of Lilliput for extinguishing the palace fire by urinating on it. There are several parallels between Swift's gradual disenchantment with his

English lineage and Gandhi's disillusionment with a borrowed English identity.

Swift satirises the colonization of Ireland in the Book III of *Gulliver's Travels*, with reference to a flying island called Laputa. The given island, a fictional representation of England, symbolizes a totalitarian state, which is totally divorced from its subjects, and chooses to govern its subjects scientifically, and not morally. Governance without morality invariably leads to an authoritarian state. The self-absorbed Laputan King and his entourage may be disconnected from the real world but they are quick enough to crush any rebellion by ensuring the universal destruction of the dissenting subjects.

Swift examines the dire consequences of divorcing science and governance from morality and the immediate concerns of the masses. The scientists of the island are so absorbed in their unproductive pursuits like extracting sunshine out of cucumber, or reducing human excrement to its original food that they cannot address even their practical needs of speaking and listening. They hire a domestic servant who tells them when to listen or to speak. Their bizarre and illogical experiments lead to large swathes of barren land and impoverished masses.

Swift, as a satirist and master of irony, takes his critique of abstract science to an extreme, and enables the readers to easily comprehend the absurd ways of a totalitarian state. It was this impoverished and shallow morality of modern civilization and colonial state that Gandhi denounced in *Hind Swaraj* (1909) as fundamentally rotten. Gandhi calls modern civilization 'Satanic', 'a Black Age,' for it primarily focuses on securing bodily comforts but fails miserably even in doing so. He unambiguously and plainly rejects the imperialist, exploitative, materialistic, individualistic and violent side of the machine driven age as directionless and purposeless. Though the idea that an abstract science and philosophy in an absolutist state may lead to unspeakable violence originated in the eighteenth century Europe, it became a harsh reality for Indians during the heyday of colonialism. This Swiftian narrative became a recurring metaphor in Gandhi's oeuvre.

The inner paradox of modernity is more palpable than ever today, when India, on the one hand, has emerged as the third largest economy, and on the other, it ranks abysmally low in the World Happiness Index (133rd) and the Human Development Index (130th). To understand the catastrophic outcome of the abuse of science and reason in contemporary times, it makes good sense to follow Gandhi's advice –and revisit *Gulliver's Travels*.

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LET'S FULFIL BAPU'S DREAM OF A CLEANER, GREENER FUTURE

Relevant for: Ethics | Topic: Human Values - Lessons from the lives and teachings of great Leaders, Reformers and Administrators

Today we mark the beginning of the 150th birth anniversary celebrations of our beloved Bapu. He remains a shining beacon of hope for millions of people across the world who seek a life of equality, dignity, inclusion and empowerment. The impact he left on human society has few parallels.

Mahatma Gandhi connected India, in letter and spirit, in thought and action. As Sardar Patel rightly said, "India is a land of diversity. There is no land with such diversity as ours. If there was one person who brought everyone together, made people rise above differences, to fight colonialism and enhanced India's stature at the world stage, it was Mahatma Gandhi. And, he began to do this not in India but from South Africa itself. Bapu could see ahead and could understand the larger picture. He remained committed to his principles till his last breath."

In the 21st century, the thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi remain as essential as they were in his time and offer solutions to several problems the world faces. In a world where terrorism, radicalization, extremism and mindless hate are dividing nations as well as societies, Mahatma Gandhi's clarion call of peace and ahimsa have the power to unite humanity.

At a time when inequalities are not uncommon, Bapu's emphasis on equal and inclusive growth can herald an era of prosperity for the millions on the margins.

In an era where climate change and environmental degradation have become central issues of discussion, the world can refer to the thoughts of Gandhiji. More than a century ago, in 1909 he differentiated between human wants and human greed. He urged both restraint and compassion while utilizing natural resources and, he himself led by example in doing this. He cleaned his own toilets, ensuring clean surroundings. He also ensured minimal wastage of water and when he was in Ahmedabad, he took great care to ensure that unclean water did not merge with the Sabarmati.

Sometime back, a crisp, comprehensive and concise document penned by Mahatma Gandhi caught my attention. In 1941, Bapu wrote the *Constructive Programme: Its Meaning and Place*, which he subsequently modified in 1945, when there was renewed fervour around the freedom movement. In that document, Bapu has talked about a wide range of topics ranging from rural development, strengthening agriculture, enhancing sanitation, promoting khadi, empowerment of women, economic equality, among other issues.

I would urge my fellow Indians to have a look at Gandhiji's *Constructive Programme* (it is widely available both online and offline) and make it a guiding light on how we can build the India of Bapu's dreams. Many topics in the *Constructive Programme* are absolutely relevant today and the government of India is fulfilling many of the points venerable Bapu raised seven decades ago but remain unfulfilled even today.

One of the most beautiful aspects of Gandhiji's personality was that he made every Indian feel that he or she is working for India's freedom. He instilled the spirit of self-belief that a teacher, lawyer, doctor, farmer, labourer, entrepreneur, in whatever they were doing they were contributing to India's freedom struggle.

In the same light, today, let us embrace those aspects we think we can act upon that will fulfil Gandhiji's vision. It can start with something as simple as ensuring zero waste of food to imbibing values of non-violence and togetherness.

Let us think about how our actions can contribute to a cleaner and greener environment for the future generations. Almost eight decades ago, when the threats of pollution were not as much, Mahatma Gandhi took to cycling. Those in Ahmedabad recall Gandhiji cycling from Gujarat Vidyapith to Sabarmati Ashram. In fact, I read that one of Gandhiji's first protests in South Africa was against a set of laws that prevented people from cycling. Despite a prosperous legal career, Gandhiji would use the bicycle to travel in Johannesburg. It is said that when a plague hit Johannesburg, Gandhiji rushed to the worst affected spot on a cycle and immersed himself in relief work. Can we emulate this same spirit today?

The festive season is here and people across India would be shopping for new clothes, gifts, food items and more. While doing so, remember the wise thoughts Gandhiji gave us in the form of his talisman. Let us think about how our actions can light the lamp of prosperity in the lives of our fellow Indians. By buying what they make, be it a khadi product, or a gift item or food stuff, we are helping our fellow Indians in pursuit of a better life. We may never have seen them or may not do so for the rest of our lives. However, Bapu would be proud of us that in our actions we are helping fellow Indians.

Over the last four years, 1.3 billion Indians have paid tributes to Mahatma Gandhi in the form of the Swachh Bharat Mission. With the hard work of each and every Indian, the Swachh Bharat Mission, which completes four years today has emerged as a vibrant mass movement with commendable outcomes. Over 85 million households now have access to toilets for the first time. Over 400 million Indians no longer have to defecate in the open. In a short span of four years, sanitation coverage is up from 39% to 95%. Twenty-one states, Union territories and 450,000 villages are now open-defecation free.

Swachh Bharat Mission is about dignity and a better future. It augurs well for crores of women that their troubles of having to hide their faces every morning while answering nature's call in the open are history and for the children of India who were prone to several diseases due to lack of sanitation.

A few days ago, a *divyang* (differently abled) brother from Rajasthan called me during the *Mann Ki Baat* programme. Not able to see from both eyes, he narrated how having his own toilet made an extremely positive difference in his life. There are several *divyang* sisters and brothers like him who have been saved from the inconvenience of going to public open defecation spots. The blessings I received from him will remain etched in my memory.

An overwhelming majority of Indians today did not have the good fortune of being a part of the freedom struggle. We could not die for the nation then but now, we must live for the nation and do everything possible to build the India our freedom fighters envisioned.

Today we have a great opportunity to fulfil Bapu's dream. We have covered substantial ground and I am confident we will cover a lot more in the times to come.

One of Bapu's favourite hymns was *Vaishnav jan to tene kahiye je, pir padayi jaane re*, which means "a good soul is one who feels the pain of others". It was this spirit that made him live for others. Today, we, the 1.3 billion Indians are committed to working together to fulfil the dreams Bapu saw for a country for which he gave his life.

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EDUCATION MUST INCULCATE VALUES, MORALS & ETHICS: VICE PRESIDENT

Relevant for: Ethics | Topic: Role of Family, Society and Educational institutions in inculcating values

Vice President's Secretariat

Education must inculcate values, morals & ethics: Vice President

Develop a habit of caring and sharing; be responsive to societal needs;

Addresses Annual Convocation of Presidency College

Posted On: 11 OCT 2018 3:56PM by PIB Delhi

The Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu has stressed on the need to provide education that inculcates values, morals and ethics. He said that Education is not just accumulation of knowledge from textbooks and quoted Albert Einstein saying that education is not just the learning of facts but the training of the mind to think.

Delivering the Annual Convocation address at the prestigious Presidency College in Chennai today, the Vice President lauded the contributions made by the noted alumni of the institution. He appreciated the college for their policy of inclusive education and for their zeal in promoting research and scientific spirit.

The Vice President said that that sometimes, asking the right questions is more important than having the right answers. He urged the students to grow up with courage and conviction to question the irrational and critique the illogical. He added that students should develop the moral fibre and strength of character to have and hold their own opinions and viewpoints.

The Vice President assured them that marks obtained in texts and examinations were not true measures of their calibre. He insisted that the students never restrict themselves from pursuing their goals because of their marks.

The Vice President said that young graduates should know how to work in a team and learn to trust and be trustworthy. He commented that nothing was more important than developing the ability to put the needs of the group ahead of one's personal requirements. Students should be well-rounded people, they should develop a taste in arts, in music, in painting and in dancing. He added that art would refresh, relax and comfort a person and grant solace.

Asking the youngsters to be responsive to the needs of the less fortunate, the Vice President asked them to develop the habit of caring and sharing from a young age. He also asked them to adopt noble missions such as Swachh Bharat and take lead in making India clean. Such initiatives should take the shape of a people's movement to realise the dreams of Mahatma Gandhi, he added.

The Minister for Fisheries and Personnel and Administrative Reforms, Tamil Nadu, Shri D. Jayakumar and other dignitaries were present on the occasion. More than 1000 students, faculty members and researchers were present at the convocation that witnessed the presence of the Vice President.

Following is the text of Vice President's address:

"It gives me great pleasure to be here amidst all of you on the momentous occasion of the convocation, the day that marks the successful culmination of the students' journey in the prestigious Presidency College and their graduation. Convocation is a crucial rite of passage, a critical juncture in the life of any student. At the outset, let me congratulate each and every one of the young graduates on their achievement.

The convocation day is important not only to students, but also to the teachers who toiled to bring forth the best in every pupil, to the college who would be adding several more illustrious names to the glorious list of alumni and to the parents of the graduating students whose countless sacrifices bear fruit today.

Dear students,

It is truly the day when dreams come true. When you, the students stepping out of the portals of this great institution, walk up to this dais today to receive your degrees, kindly know that the gown you don today, the cap you wear and the scroll that would be handed over to you, places upon you a great responsibility.

Apart from building a great career for yourself, you may have to take on the daunting but extremely rewarding task of nation building which would soon be placed in your able hands. It is your hard work, determination, dedication and creativity that will bring the collective aspirations, the billion dreams of this country to fruition.

You are privileged to be graduating from Presidency College which has a history of more than 178 years. It was the first government college in South India established along with the other two Bombay and Calcutta Presidency Colleges by the then British government in 1840. Started merely as a Preparatory School, the institution has blossomed into a centre of excellence for higher education.

You must be proud of the fact that you belong to an institution that has produced thousands of eminent personalities including Nobel and Abel Laureates, Bharat Ratnas, Padma Shree awardees, SS Bhatnagar awardees, Prominent writers, Celebrities, Bureaucrats, Corporate Administrators, Politicians and Scientists. It is my privilege to mention a few of them - Sir C.V. Raman, the first Nobel prize recipient from India, Abel Laureate Shri Srinivasa Varadhan, Statesmen like Shri C. Rajagopalachari, Smt. R.S. Subbulakshmi, the first woman graduate from the University of Madras, Shri. R. Chidambaram, former Principal Scientific Advisor, General Cariappa and many more.

Your college has also had a great lineage of illustrious faculty members many of whom were eminent writers, translators and thinkers. The most prominent among them is "*Tamil Thaatha*" U.V. Swaminatha Iyer.

The Presidency College, Chennai, also enjoys the reputation of having been the mother of the University of Madras established in the year 1857.

While initiating the move to start the Presidency College, Lord Elphinstone, the then Governor of

Madras Presidency, is reported to have expressed his beautiful vision for the college. He said: "Education is to train and to qualify the native for the higher duties of life in an enlightened nation. If the society is to consist of responsible human beings capable of using their ability and creativity constructively, there must be a solid base for general education." It is with this mission in mind that the 49 Principals of this college right from Eyre Burton Powell to Dr. R. Ramanan have been striving hard. All their efforts have no doubt enabled this institution to produce thousands of patriotic and socially responsible graduates for the past 178 years.

I am delighted to know that this great institution is home to more than 4000 students. Presidency College today hosts 700 research scholars who are engaged in the pursuit of new knowledge aimed at the betterment of the human condition.

What is even more heartening about this institution is that more than 90% of the students here hail from socially and economically weaker sections of the society, who are mostly first generation learners. I am told that it is with the help of scholarships given by the both the state and the central governments that the students from rural and poor backgrounds are able to pursue their higher studies.

Another feather in the cap of this institution is the focus it places of inclusivity.

It enjoys the privilege of giving quality education to nearly 300 differently abled students in an inclusive set-up. I especially congratulate the differently abled members of the faculty who truly are sources of inspiration to all the youngsters present here. Your service to this great nation makes you really special. As a recognition of its continued efforts to provide quality education without any discrimination, the college has won several accolades.

I am happy to learn that NAAC has honored the college with a 4 Star status and an 'A' grade. It is encouraging to note that in the NIRF Ranking recently declared by the Ministry of HRD, Government of India, the Presidency College is placed in the fifth position.

Friends,

India today stands at the cusp of a tremendous demographic opportunity. 65% of India's population is under 35 years of age. For this demographic dividend to be effectively realized, quality education is a necessary precondition.

Education is not just the accumulation of knowledge from textbooks. Albert Einstein once said that education is not the learning of facts but the training of the mind to think. Sometimes, asking the right questions is more important than having the right answers.

You should grow up with the courage and conviction to question the irrational and critique the illogical. You should develop the moral fiber and strength of character to shape and develop your own opinions and view points. To develop these qualities and sustain them, you must always remain students at heart, always ready to learn and forever open to new experiences.

I have always maintained that you as youngsters should never be content with the status quo.

You should always challenge that which needs to be changed. We today have a government that is very receptive to the voices of the youth, a government that is acutely sensitive to the aspirations of young India and has come forward with a number of diverse schemes ranging from 'Skill India' to Make in India to '*Khelo India*' to leverage the creative energy and zeal of the youth. So, you have a very positive environment around you and an array of great opportunities. It is up to you to make yourself capable of utilizing these opportunities to the fullest possible

extent.

I wish to draw your attention to something I consider important. The marks that you obtain in tests and examinations do matter. They are the manifestations of the excellence you have achieved in your academic pursuits. But they are not the only things that matter. You are much more than those numbers. So if you are a Chemistry graduate, never stop yourself from playing the violin or studying law. Please develop your personality in as many ways as you are capable of.

India has since time immemorial been open to absorb the best thoughts from all over the world. You, as youngsters, should imbibe these values in your thoughts, your speech and your actions. In many ways, you are the flag bearers of India before the world. Never compromise on your identity of 'Indianness', for it is an identity that is unique and worth possessing. Let humility, tolerance, love and respect for all life be the guiding principles of your life. Rabindranath Tagore once said that "the highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence". Learn to live in harmony with your fellow human beings and more importantly with nature. Let this harmony that you nurture within you be the harbinger of peace to the world.

Our country faces a number of challenges today, from rampant poverty to debilitating environmental pollution. These challenges are by no means small or easy to tackle. It is not possible for one single person to tackle these challenges. It will take our combined will power, collective intelligence and shared resources to solve the great problems of our time.

Always build a team, learn to trust and be trustworthy. There is nothing more important than being a team player, having the ability to work effectively as a part of a group, to be able to put the interests of the group ahead of your personal requirements.

We are today building 'Team India', a new India where development is inclusive and sustainable. This task demands your utter devotion and small but not insignificant sacrifices for the greater good.

Friends,

I leave you with a parting thought. Confucius once remarked that real knowledge is to know the extent of one's ignorance. Along with what you know, be intensely aware of what you don't know and in this knowledge, may your humility be firmly rooted.

Quest for excellence, quest for truth, quest for harmony.

As the Vedic sages have said,

"Arise, awake and stop not till you reach your goal."

I wish you all the very best in your endeavours.

Jai Hind!"

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THE AGRARIAN REFORMER

Relevant for: Ethics | Topic: Human Values - Lessons from the lives and teachings of great Leaders, Reformers and Administrators

Gifted Recommendations: A Realme for every Indian during Flipkart's Big Billion Days sale

The father of Bhakra Dam, Sir Chhotu Ram, has many firsts to his credit. He conceived of the Bhakra Dam way back in 1923, to rid the farmers of the so-called economic plague-spots of erstwhile Punjab state. He was also the originator of the concept of compensating the farmer for at least the expenses incurred by him on farming; the concept has now evolved into "Minimum Support Price". This was revolutionary in those times as farmers were entirely depending on rains and seasonal vagaries coupled with other working conditions that had made their lives miserable.

He brought nine enactments to improve the financial and social status of farmers. Modern concepts like debt settlement boards, caps on interest, basic fairness to the tiller were included in these 1930s laws. The Punjab Relief Indebtedness Act, 1934 and The Punjab Debtors' Protection Act, 1936, were created way back in the 1930s by Chhotu Ram. It won't be an exaggeration to say that he gave shape to a bloodless revolution in the field of agriculture and farming.

Not only was he very active in fighting for the rights of poor and downtrodden in northern India, he was also very vocal on issues of national importance. In a powerful communication, Sir Chhotu Ram wrote to Gandhiji about the consequences that would follow if the demand for Pakistan after the liberation of the country is accepted. The 10-page letter written on August 15, 1944 had logical, well thought-out arguments against Partition. He wrote: "The provinces that are most intimately affected by the advent of Pakistan are the Punjab and Bengal and yet these provinces were never consulted before the formula was devised. The formula is expected to furnish a solution of the communal tangle and the present political deadlock. As already stated above, it will do neither." Because of Sir Chhotu Ram's opposition to the two-nation theory of Jinnah, Sardar Patel once remarked to Sri Ram Sharma that he would not have worried about any of Punjab's problems had Chhotu Ram been alive.

Born on November 24, 1881, in the village of Garhi Sampla, Rohtak, Sir Chhotu Ram was knighted and conferred with the title of "Sir" in 1937 in recognition of his contribution to society and the region. He graduated from St Stephen's College, Delhi in 1905 with a distinction in Sanskrit. He did his LLB from Agra College in 1910 and began his practice as an advocate in 1912.

Sir Chhotu Ram rightly recognised the causes of the deteriorating economic conditions of the agricultural classes in his time. Some of these as described by him included burden of unfair taxation and high rate of land revenue, inability to secure fair prices for their production, crushing burden of indebtedness, expenses on litigation, illiteracy and ignorance, under-representation of the class of peasantry in the public services, corruption and frequent occurrence of famines. All these factors compelled the agriculturists to borrow money from the moneylenders and to live under debt throughout their lives. There was no universal adult franchise and voting rights were given on divisive grounds. Peasants had no voice in the legislative set-up. Basically the peasant community was so isolated and downtrodden that it had no motivation to come up and claim its rightful status in the society.

In such times, Sir Chhotu Ram emerged as the country's first big agrarian reformer who stood

up and fought for the rights of agriculturists. His contribution assumes added significance as he single-handedly worked for betterment in the lives of poor and forsaken farmers. His sustained and dedicated efforts resulted in bringing the farmers out of their miserable, poor and deplorable living conditions and gave them a life of dignity and self-respect. He exhorted peasants to shed their inferiority complex and fatalistic outlook and become assertive and self-confident. He played a very significant role in the organisation of the Jats as a self-conscious community and helped them acquire self-confidence and self-respect.

To tackle the problem of unemployment, both in rural and urban areas, and to improve the lot of the peasantry, Sir Chhotu Ram advocated the need for agriculture-based industries as well as the development of cottage industries. What impressed him the most was Iqbal's concept of khudi (self) and he used to recite the following lines of the poet quite often, Khudi ko kar buland itna ki har taqdeer se pehle/ khuda bande se khud pooche bata teri raza kya hai (Raise thyself to such a height that God may himself ask you what do you wish to achieve).

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QUALITY & COMPASSION - ETHICS & EQUITY SHOULD BE GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR DOCTORS: VICE PRESIDENT

Relevant for: Ethics | Topic: Ethics in Private and Public relationships

Vice President's Secretariat

Quality & compassion - ethics & equity should be guiding principles for Doctors: Vice President

Doctors must spend more time with their patients;

Medical professionals should be active researchers, innovators and thinkers;

Doctors to never compromise on making affordable and quality healthcare accessible to all;

Addresses 9th Annual Convocation of JIPMER

Posted On: 12 OCT 2018 1:38PM by PIB Delhi

The Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu told graduating doctors that quality and compassion as well as ethics and equity should be the guiding principles that light their path in life. He was addressing the 9th Annual Convocation of the Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education & Research (JIPMER), in Puducherry today. JIPMER is a 200 year centre of excellence in medical education and patient care and is among the top five medical schools in India.

The Vice President appreciated the institution for managing a hospital that caters to the poorest of poor where 90% of the treatment is totally free. He added that this 6th best hospital in the country would be a great boon to the poor people of the region including those from neighboring states. He also congratulated the institution for the large number of innovations they have initiated in Tele-Medicine and teleconferencing services, connecting themselves to almost all medical colleges in India and the BIMSTEC Countries.

The Vice President said that JIPMER should aspire to become a model for health

systems in India through innovations in education, patient-oriented research and service excellence, in tune with their mission statement which speaks about compassion, ethics and selfless service. He observed that the frontiers of medicine were expanding continuously and rapidly. Hence the graduates should be always open to new learning and be active researchers, innovators and thinkers in addition to being lifelong students of their chosen disciplines.

The Vice President lauded the yeoman service for the treatment of cancer done by the Regional Cancer Centre which provided expensive treatments like bone marrow transplantation and Rapid Arc High Technology totally free of cost. Appreciating the good work done by the alumni of JIPMER, he urged them to serve their alma mater and the patients it cared for.

Describing the transformative phase India is going through, the Vice President suggested that we should focus more and more on expanding basic services, including health care, to all our citizens. He added that forging public private partnerships actively could help accelerate the progress. Reminding the graduates that the healthcare needs of our vast and diverse population were huge, he requested them to never compromise when it comes to making affordable and quality healthcare accessible to all.

Wishing the graduating students, the faculty and the institution the very best, the Vice President said that the young doctors had the knowledge and skills needed to transform human lives, having been mentored in a great institution like JIPMER. He reminded them to always have a ready smile for the sick and infirm who would be looking for a smile and a kind word. He added that doctors could bring hope to the most desperate.

The Lt. Governor of Puducherry, Dr. Kiran Bedi, the Chief Minister of Puducherry, Shri. V. Narayanasamy, the Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare, Shri J.P. Nadda, the Minister for Health, Puducherry, Shri. Malladi Krishna Rao, the Leader of Opposition, Puducherry Legislative Assembly, Shri N. Rangasamy, doctors and medical students and their parents were present on the occasion.

Following is the text of Vice President's address:

I am happy to be here on the momentous occasion of the 9th Annual Convocation of

this illustrious Institution that has grown over the last 200 years into a centre of excellence in medical education and patient care.

I am very happy that Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education & Research (JIPMER) is among the top five medical schools in India.

It is not only imparting undergraduate and postgraduate medical training but is also managing a hospital that provides inexpensive medical care to a large number of patients.

Established in 1823 by the French government, it was one of the earliest institutions of tropical medicine. Later, for a short period it was called the Dhanvantari Medical College, and finally on July 13, 1964, it was rechristened as the Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research.

It is gratifying to note that JIPMER has completed a decade as an Institution of National Importance and is now ranked as the Third Best Medical College in the country.

Dear faculty members and students,

You have set for yourself a broad vision to become a “model for health systems in India through innovations in education, patient-oriented research, population health and service excellence”.

Guided by this vision, you have been making consistent efforts, as you have mentioned in your mission statement, “to develop compassionate, ethically sound health professionals and provide service of the highest order across the health care continuum”. I congratulate the Director and his team for all the efforts they have been making in shaping this institution as an institution of excellence.

Building an institution is a long, arduous process in which the entire team must work towards a common goal. Cooperation and collaboration, initiative and innovation,

reflection and reform are key elements that can make an organization grow in stature.

Today, I am glad to note that about 200 students are graduating from the two campuses of JIPMER. I congratulate each one of them on their successful completion of a rigorous course of study.

I congratulate the dedicated faculty who have mentored them over the course of the last few years and the proud parents of all the students who have selflessly contributed to their success.

Dear students,

You are fortunate to be among the select few in this country to have had the benefit of such a high quality education.

I am sure you have received excellent grounding in the fundamentals of medicine and are ready to specialize in the fields of your choice. With the frontiers of knowledge expanding continuously and rapidly, you need to develop the capacity to access and absorb the latest from around the world.

You must not only be aware of the innovations in medicine but also be active researchers and thinkers who will be able to add to the pool of knowledge and expertise so that you emerge as frontline leaders in your chosen domains.

I do hope you will keep the spirit of curiosity and yearning for excellence alive throughout your professional careers.

Dear faculty members and students,

It gave me great pleasure to learn that this Institute has achieved great progress in research and there are various national and international collaborations on projects as well as filing of patents. Under the able guidance of your President Dr. Bhan who

is a great academician and researcher, I am sure this Institute will scale new heights.

I am pleased that the hospital services of this Institute are rated very high and you have been ranked the 6th Best Hospital in the country. The OPD attendance of nearly 10,000 patients per day, the Emergencies of nearly 1000 per day and even the deliveries of nearly 100 per day stand testimony to the confidence reposed by the patients coming from Puducherry and the adjoining districts of Tamil Nadu and even from the neighbouring states of Kerala, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. I am told that this Institute caters to the poorest of poor and over 90% of the treatment is totally free. This is really a great boon to the poor people of this region.

It is gratifying to note the number of innovations you have initiated in tele-Medicine and teleconferencing services connecting your institution with almost all medical colleges in India and to the BIMSTEC Countries.

I foresee a bright future for this Institute which is clearly poised for great growth in the areas of organ transplantation and trauma care services.

I am happy that the Government of Puducherry has allotted a 50 Acre Land for the Second Campus which will specifically cater to the establishment of these centres. The Karaikal and Yanam Centres of this Institute would be additional feathers in the cap of this institution serving the poor people in these area of the UT of Puducherry.

The Regional Cancer Centre has done yeoman service for the treatment of cancer especially to the poor patients by providing expensive treatments like bone marrow transplantation, Rapid Arc High Technology, radiotherapy and chemotherapy totally free.

Dear faculty members and students,

I am told that you have an active JIPMER alumni some of whom are present for this event today. Today, all of you, new graduates, will be joining this proud and accomplished group. You will have ample opportunities to serve your alma mater and the patients it serves. I hope you will take keen interest in the growth of this Institute even after you leave its portals.

Dear students,

Our country is in a transformational phase. We are focusing more and more on expanding basic services, including health care, to all our citizens and we are seeking to actively forge public private partnerships to accelerate progress.

The healthcare needs of our vast and diverse population are huge. Any visit to our primary healthcare centres or super specialty hospitals like yours and AIIMS, makes it clear that there is so much more to be done. The access to quality healthcare is not yet universal. Nor is high quality treatment affordable to many segments of the population. In order to deliver good quality health care to every one and make it affordable, the Government of India has initiated the ambitious Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana recently. It is an unprecedented initiative in scope and scale. Effective implementation of this programme can change the health care landscape in India. In this great thrust towards affordable quality health care, institutions like yours have a key role play.

In fact, I am glad that JIPMER has been at the forefront of providing excellent health care at affordable cost to a vast multitude of our population for a long time.

In addition to continuing your good work, I urge you to move into a higher leadership orbit.

I believe that even for the best, there is always a possibility to be better.

I would like to see more focus on original research and patient centered clinical transformation.

Let quality and compassion as well as ethics and equity be your guiding principles and touchstones of progress.

Dear faculty members and students,

I wish you all the very best in your future endeavour. You have the knowledge and skills needed to transform human lives.

You have been mentored in this great institute by some of the best academic leaders.

You are now stepping out into the real world where the sick and infirm will be looking for a smile, a kind word and medical intervention that will restore them to good health.

Believe me, there can be no greater challenge than this in the world. Nor can there be a greater opportunity.

You can make a difference between hope and despair.

You can make a person's life more livable and enjoyable.

You can make the pain and suffering more bearable.

You can add new meaning to life.

I am sure you have opted for this profession because you have the 'aptitude' for this exacting but exciting work.

I hope your professors have inculcated the 'attitude' necessary to carry out the responsibilities you are about to shoulder.

I am confident that you will reach the 'altitude' you aim for in your professional career if you can keep your sight clearly on your goals and take firm confident steps with passion, compassion and ceaseless quest for greater competence.

My best wishes to each one of you.

Jai Hind!

ÄKT/BK/MS/RK

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CHILDREN LEARN EMPATHY FROM PARENTS

Relevant for: Ethics | Topic: Role of Family, Society and Educational institutions in inculcating values

Less parental warmth and more harshness in the home environment affect how aggressive children become and whether they lack empathy and a moral compass, a set of characteristics known as callous-unemotional (CU) traits. In a study of 227 identical twin pairs, the research team analysed small differences in the parenting that each twin experienced to determine whether these differences predicted the likelihood of antisocial behaviours emerging. They learned that the twin who experienced stricter or harsher treatment and less emotional warmth from parents had a greater chance of showing aggression and CU traits. The work builds on a growing body of work to assess a variety of aspects of parenting. The findings have been published in the *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*.

It's adorable to see an 11-month-old who's just learning to walk, glide across the room in his walker, all smiles, hands flapping in glee. But that

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RENT-SEEKING THROUGH REVOLVING DOORS

Relevant for: Ethics | Topic: Ethics in Private and Public relationships

Many people today view government officials as benevolent guardians of public interest. “From revolving doors to regulatory capture? Evidence from patent examiners,” a 2018 paper by Haris Tabakovic and Thomas G. Wollmann circulated by the National Bureau of Economic Research, however, suggests that the reality may be far different from this common belief.

The paper argues that there is a “revolving door” between the government and the private sector, through which people who work for the government later move on to jobs in the private sector and vice versa. This often leads to a serious conflict between public and private interests.

Government officials with dreams of landing high-paying jobs in the private sector in the future, for instance, have a very good reason to neglect their official duties. A top bureaucrat with the powers to affect how existing regulations are applied may favour certain private companies that promise to offer him high-paying employment in the future.

This risk of regulatory capture makes it quite hard to rely on government regulators to regulate private businesses in a fair manner. While all this is known to most economists, the paper tries to find hard data to prove its actual truth.

In particular, the authors study data from the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office to find out whether examiners favour the patent applications filed by certain companies over others. They find that patent examiners “grant significantly more patents to the firms that later hire them”, clearly suggesting the presence of strong rent-seeking behaviour.

In further support of their thesis, the researchers also find that ‘revolving-door examiners’ are more likely to grant patents to companies that are located near their residences. This clearly suggests that the personal interests of patent examiners affect their official decisions. ‘Revolving-door examiners’ are also found to be more likely to grant patents to friendly firms when hiring for positions is strong.

The study raises serious questions about the ability of the government to act as an arbiter of intellectual property rights. In fact, if the findings of the study are to be believed, it may be said quite strongly that government regulators are actively working to undermine the public interest.

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Last week Ram Kadam, a BJP MLA from Maharashtra, told the men in an audience that if they were interested in women who didn't reciprocate the feeling,

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HEALTH ON GEM WORKSHOP ORGANISED

Relevant for: Ethics | Topic: Challenges of corruption

Ministry of Commerce & Industry

Health on GeM workshop organised

Posted On: 17 OCT 2018 1:06PM by PIB Delhi

The six-week long National Mission Series concluded with a workshop on Health on GeM in New Delhi yesterday. The workshop organized by Government eMarketplace (GeM), in partnership with Ministry of Health and Family Welfare was aimed to sensitise potential vendors, suppliers and buyers from various parts of the country and different government agencies on the proven benefits of GeM and encourage them to procure more using this platform.

Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Preeti Sudan, in her inaugural address, urged GeM to further expand their products and services to cater to a larger set of buyers. She said that GeM is a platform where government has matched technology with transparency and the need for procurement from the government's point of view along with all the stakeholders in the business. She said that 400 products have been identified which are commonly consumed and the list has been given to Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) to set out standards for them, so that there is no scope for discretion and buyers and suppliers know what they have to adhere to it.

Secretary, Commerce, Dr. Anup Wadhawan, said that procurement has been a very critical and sensitive subject in Government, notwithstanding the volume of rules, regulations, procedures, cross checks, safeguards and the various precautions taken by government officials. He said that GeM offers the way forward to overcome all these pitfalls and it is a transparent platform with the possibility of procurement with some accountability for both vendor and procurer.

Speaking on the occasion, CEO, GeM, Radha Chauhan, said that it is a great opportunity for GeM to have such a platform to openly interface, interact and deliberate on health. Presently, GeM records close to 15000 transactions for healthcare products which is about Rs 220 crore worth of business and there is a tremendous scope for this business to flourish through GeM over the next few months.

Two panel discussions were held during the workshop. The first panel discussion focused on the challenges in transforming procurement of medical equipment, medical devices and drugs through GeM. The second panel discussed issues from sellers' perspective on how GeM can be a game changer in making the public procurement in the health sector open, inclusive and efficient.

The workshop endorsed the transformation brought in by GeM in making the procurement of medical equipment, medical devices and drugs, more transparent, efficient and economical for government and manufactures. The participants also resolved to work together in ensuring that the benefits of the open transparent online market place is maximised in providing affordable health care to the people of the country.

MM/SB

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CVC ANALYSES 100 TOP BANK FRAUDS – IDENTIFIES LOOP HOLES- SUGGESTS SYSTEMIC IMPROVEMENTS

Relevant for: Ethics | Topic: Challenges of corruption

Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions

CVC analyses 100 top bank frauds – identifies loop holes- suggests systemic improvements

Posted On: 16 OCT 2018 6:07PM by PIB Delhi

Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) has reviewed and analyzed Top 100 Bank Frauds, as on 2017.



Sharing the details Dr. T.M. Bhasin, Vigilance Commissioner, CVC informed that the Commission has sub divided the study into 13 sectors comprising of Gems and Jewellery, Manufacturing, Agro sector, Media, Aviation, Service Sector, Discounting of cheques and bills, Trading sector, IT Sector, Exports sector, Fixed deposits and Demand Loan etc.

Dr. Bhasin said that as a conscious decision and with a view to maintaining discreteness, the names of borrower accounts/entities and the names of the Banks have not been disclosed in the report. However, steps are being taken for all encompassing actions such as investigation by the Premier investigative agencies, fixing staff accountability and recovery measures, etc. for effective action.

Dr. Bhasin said that the modus operandi of these loans has been thoroughly analysed and various loopholes/lapses have been identified. Based on the findings, various industry specific suggestions for systemic improvement have been given in the final report, which have also been sent to Deptt. of Financial Services (DFS) and RBI, in order to plug the loopholes observed by the Commission. The measures suggested include strengthening of SOPs, monitoring system and also highlighting the role of controlling offices, so as examine the aspect of quality of business.

Dr. T.M. Bhasin said that this analytical study was initiated by the Commission as a Preventive Vigilance measure so as to minimize the occurrence of such type frauds in future. RBI has also confirmed to the Commission that inputs given by CVC are very useful and shall be used for systemic improvements to mitigate the risks. Dr. Bhasin said that the intention of the Commission is to bring about awareness among the field functionaries by enhancing their knowledge towards the existing lapses, so that the frauds of similar nature do not recur. These studies have been done by the Commission as a preventive Vigilance tool by utilizing its vast

experience of handling various cases of frauds and Staff accountability related matters.

A copy of the Analysis of Top 100 Bank Frauds by CVC has been uploaded on CVC website for ready reference:

<http://www.cvc.gov.in/sites/default/files/new1111.pdf>

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OPINION

Relevant for: Ethics | Topic: Challenges of corruption

Many facts of the “Rafale scandal” are yet to come out and it is entirely plausible that the full picture will never be known. It is also impossible to predict right now what, if any, political fallout the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) suffer. However, regardless of whether the allegations are true or false, they will end up impairing India’s national security.

As many have pointed out, future governments, afraid of getting embroiled in another scandal, will be more cautious and slow when approving new defence purchases, thus ensuring that the military is saddled with obsolete equipment. The most effective way to ensure that scandals don’t obstruct national defence is transparency. Unfortunately, successive governments have shied away from this solution repeatedly. The all-pervasive governmental obsession with secrecy and close-door decision-making, best characterized by the current administration, has effectively blocked any path to meaningful defence acquisition reforms.

From the “Jeep scandal” of 1948 to the “Bofors scam” of the late 1980s, defence acquisitions have always been one of the most toxic aspects of Indian politics. Aware of this uncomfortable fact, governments have tried to shield themselves from corruption allegations by making the defence acquisition process slow, cumbersome and bureaucratic. A wait time of 10-15 years for acquiring weapons has become common. And given how the current scandal has shaped up, many in the government will likely conclude that the solution lies in waiting even longer in the future.

It is tragic because the obvious solution to preventing future defence scandals lies not in more bureaucratic checks but in simple transparency. This is how many countries have ensured that their national security isn’t regularly held hostage by politics. Several common sense practices can be implemented like clear articulation of defence requirements, publication of white papers and reports, debates in parliamentary committees, involvement of outside experts, and greater media access. Thus, the government can check corruption and maintain the credibility of defence deals so as to withstand bogus allegations.

However, to implement such a culture would require a deeper reform of India’s defence establishment. It would require the government to open up about national security itself. Any public discussion about defence purchases would necessarily have to begin with a discussion on the government’s thinking on security, a topic on which it has been tight-lipped for decades. Successive governments have rarely bothered to officially explain their threat perception or the rationale behind their security policies.

This is not new. Even Jawaharlal Nehru did not openly discuss the reasoning behind some of his most important security policies, like the Kashmir issue or India-China border dispute. Since then, the penchant for secrecy has steadily amplified. Until the 1970s, the government still felt it necessary to provide a public explanation for major security decisions; by the next decade, even this perceived necessity started disappearing. Before the 1971 war, Indira Gandhi spoke to the press often, preparing the country for the war and explaining the government’s concerns. In the late 1980s, Rajiv Gandhi rarely held public discussions to explain the logic behind India’s three-year intervention in Sri Lanka. Since the 1990s, the Indian public has been kept so ignorant that even well-informed citizens today can’t concisely explain the government’s long-term goals on major security issues.

Remarkably, this tendency to conceal the strategic logic holds true within the government as

well. Since the 1970s, security decision-making was increasingly centered in the prime minister's office and the group making these decisions kept growing smaller. By the late 1980s, even senior officials like the army chiefs or defence ministers were sometimes being kept out of the loop. This secrecy culture has pervaded the lower levels of government as well. Several recent security crises—from the Kargil war to the Doklam standoff—have shown that various arms of the government are not in sync even on the most fundamental issues.

Arguably, the previous two governments tried to correct this trend by holding candid public discussions and making the internal decision-making process more inclusive. Under both governments, new institutions were created, crucial documents were declassified, policy statements were made public and semi-official discussions were held. However, these steps were half-measures at best. In any case, the correction has since been reversed by the Narendra Modi government, which puts a premium on close-door decisions. Today, there are likely to be only a handful of officials who can confidently explain the government's thinking when deciding to carry out surgical strikes, for instance.

As long as this culture of silence persists, regular eruption of “defence scandals” will remain a part of the Indian political life. Wrapped in secrecy, these multi-billion dollar deals will lack credibility in the public eye and thus remain vulnerable to legitimate and illegitimate corruption charges. Worse, this culture of opaqueness is ultimately detrimental to Indian national security. Without the pressure to develop security rationales robust enough to withstand public scrutiny, governments will always be tempted to choose vague, narrow-minded and short-term policies since no one will be looking over their shoulders.

Sandeep Bhardwaj is a researcher, Centre for Policy Research.

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FROM PLATE TO PLOUGH: SARDAR'S UNFINISHED TASK

Relevant for: Ethics | Topic: Human Values - Lessons from the lives and teachings of great Leaders, Reformers and Administrators

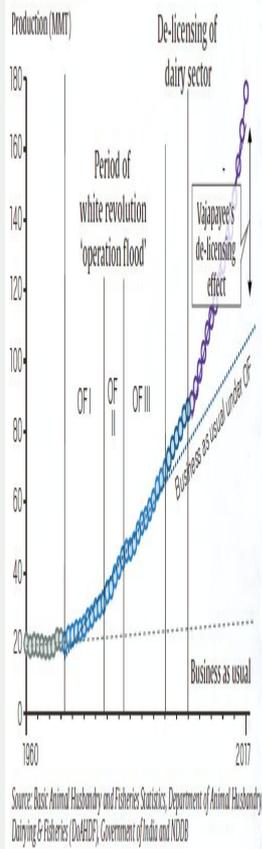
Help my 8-year-old daughter fight Thalassaemia with a Bone Marrow Transplant

On October 31, Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#) will unveil the world's tallest statue, the "Statue of Unity," in the memory of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. One may recall that when Modi started his campaign for the 2014 general elections, he appealed to farmers to donate their used farm implements for the construction of this statue that would remind the country about the role played by Sardar Patel in not only unifying a divided country but also his devotion to the cause of farmers. Some Opposition leaders have criticised the project on the ground that the statue uses imported Chinese bronze, and not iron from farmers' used instruments. We do not touch upon that controversy, but want to focus on Patel's message on agriculture. If the Modi government heeds that message, it will be offering a real tribute to the Sardar.

It would be interesting to recollect Patel's contribution to Indian dairy farmers. In 1942, safety concerns drove the colonial government to tap a private dairy, Polson, in order to procure milk from Kaira district in Gujarat and supply it to Bombay, some 350 km away, where the Britishers were stationed. This marked the beginning of the government's Bombay Milk Scheme (BMS) and the creation of a market for Kaira's milk producers. But this established Polson's monopoly over the Bombay market, as a seller. Polson also became a monopsony, as a buyer from Kaira farmers. As a monopolist and monopsonist, the company extracted large rents by squeezing the prices it offered the farmers, who approached Sardar Patel for help. Patel urged them to organise cooperatives and cut supplies to Polson. He asked his deputy, Morarji Desai, who, in turn, asked Tribhuvandas Patel, to carry the struggle forward. In 1945, agitated farmers held a 15-day strike against BMS. They spilled milk on the streets, instead of supplying it to Polson. This broke Polson's monopsony. The Bombay market was opened for direct supply of milk from Kaira farmers. This access to a lucrative market incentivised farmers, and they formed the first farmers' integrated dairy cooperative — the Kaira District Co-operative Milk Producers' Union, which was registered in 1946. Verghese Kurien, the father of the White Revolution, joined the cooperative as a general manager and set up the first processing plant at Anand to convert excess buffalo milk into milk powder and cheese — a technological wonder at that time.



ALL INDIA MILK PRODUCTION AND PHASES OF OPERATION FLOOD



On Patel's birth anniversary in 1964, the then Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri was invited to inaugurate Gujarat's first cattle-feed compounding factory. He reached Anand a day before the event and spent the night among villagers. Impressed by the district's transformation, he urged Kurien to spread the message of Kaira's business model across India. As a result, the architecture of "Operation Flood" was laid down, and a new institution, the National Dairy Development Board (NDDDB), was formed on July 16, 1965, with Kurien as its chairman. Kurien spearheaded the operation by compressing the value chain and scaling-up vertical coordination between farmers, processors and consumers through cooperatives. He mobilised funds through sale proceeds of skimmed milk powder and butter donated by the European Economic Commission, loans from the World Bank, and subsidies from the government and invested them in strengthening the dairy value chain. As a result, cooperatives, especially in Gujarat, managed to ensure the highest share of the consumer's rupee (75-80 per cent) to the farmers.

Operation Flood (1970-96) has had a significant impact on milk production. It rose from 20 MMT in 1970-71 to 31.6 MMT in 1980-81 to 44 MMT in 1985-86 and 69.1 MMT in 1995-96 — a jump of nearly 50 MMT in 25 years (see figure). As Kurien would often say, organising farmers was an easy task, but accessing lucrative markets was a challenge. As production expanded, Kaira farmers tapped markets as far as Calcutta. The milk travelled 2,000 km by rail on specially-designed tankers.

But despite the success of Operation Flood, less than 10 per cent of the total milk production was being processed through cooperatives. The success of milk cooperative remained largely confined to Gujarat, despite the preference given to cooperatives in allocating licences for dairy processing plants. It was only in 2002 that the dairy sector was fully de-licenced by the [Atal Bihari Vajpayee](#) government. This created competition and the processing capacity created by the private sector outstripped the cooperative's capacity.



However, the organised cooperatives and private sector are still processing less than a quarter of milk production in India. India is now the world's largest milk producer — 176.4 MMT in 2017-18, leaving the US (98 MMT) and China (45 MMT) far behind. However, food safety concerns with regard to milk remain.

Today, the farmers have to suffer low prices of farm produce, ranging from milk to pulses and oilseeds and cotton. The Modi government has announced minimum support prices (MSPs) based on a formula that gives at least 50 per cent margin over Cost A2+FL. But unfortunately, market prices remain 10 to 50 per cent below these MSPs. The real tribute to Patel would be to carry out large-scale structural reforms in agri-markets that can ensure a higher percentage of the consumer's rupee going to farmers, be it through cooperatives, or any other marketing channel. If the Modi government can effect this reform, it would have paid a real tribute to Sardar Patel from the farmers' standpoint.

END

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5AS - AMBITION, ABILITY, AGILITY, ACCOUNTABILITY & ACHIEVEMENT ARE THE IMPORTANT TO REFORM GOVERNANCE SYSTEM: VICE PRESIDENT

Relevant for: Ethics | Topic: Ethics in Private and Public relationships

Vice President's Secretariat

5As - Ambition, Ability, Agility, Accountability & Achievement are the important to reform governance system: Vice President

Setup realistic but ambitious goals to stand up to aspirations of 600 million young Indians

Addresses 64th Annual General Body Meeting of IIPA

Posted On: 26 OCT 2018 7:06PM by PIB Delhi

The Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu has said that Ambition, Ability, Agility, Accountability and Achievement, are five important directions in which the country must move forward to reform our governance system cautioning officers not be complacent with current achievements.

Addressing the 64th Annual meeting of the General Body of Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA), as its President, the Vice President stressed the need to acquire skills to increase efficiency and effectiveness while implementing schemes. He tasked officers with an aim to take the benefits of the programmes to the needy, most vulnerable populations.

The Vice President said that the bottom line of a development programme is the impact on human lives, the transformation it brings in the dignity, capability and prosperity of each citizen. He said resource institutions like the IIPA must take lead in order to make a leap forward in the way we govern ourselves.

The Vice President called for setting up of realistic but ambitious goals to stand up to the aspirations of the 600 million young Indians. He called on the civil servants and administrators to make efforts to meet the challenges such as the urban rural divide, the gender divide, discrimination against women and social groups like Scheduled castes, pockets of poverty,

malnutrition, illiteracy and etc.

There is a need to develop the ability to adapt, improvise, innovate to create programmes and strategies to make them effectively address the challenges. We must be agile and pro-active, he added.

The Secretary to the Vice President, Dr. I.V. Subba Rao, the Chairman of IIPA, Shri T.N. Chaturvedi, the Vice President of IIPA, Shri Shekhar Dutt and other dignitaries were also present on the occasion.

Following is the text of Vice President's address:

"I am happy to be with all of you at the 64th Annual meeting of the General Body of this Institute that has been striving to extend the frontiers of knowledge to improve governance in the country.

As the President of this historic Institute, I am happy to note that IIPA has been extending support to Government especially to the Ministries of Urban Affairs and Housing, Science and Technology, Electronics and IT, Panchayat Raj and Rural Development, Environment and Forests, Consumer Affairs, Public Enterprises and Health.

It is also heartening that IIPA is collaborating with Governments and institutes abroad in Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Vietnam, Japan, Germany, Netherlands, France and China.

I congratulate IIPA for its efforts to build a culture of excellence and to blend academic rigour with practical policy orientation.

Dear friends,

Our country has many strengths and competencies that can easily propel us into higher development trajectory. Our rich human resource is one of them. We have a strong steel frame in the shape of a competent civil service created by our constitution makers led by Sri Sardar Patel.

The civil service has the mandate to translate the policy intent of the legislature into implementable programmes. It has the duty to monitor and evaluate, suggest mid course corrections and ensure that the programmes yield the desired results. It has done so in quite a remarkable way over the last seventy years.

Yet, there is so much more to be done.

There are so many gaps to be bridged, so many dots to be connected.

The rural-urban divide, the gender divide, discrimination against women and social groups like Scheduled castes, pockets of poverty, malnutrition, illiteracy, ill health persist.

Basic issues like sanitation, clean drinking water, clean environment and dependable power remain key challenges in many parts of our country.

While we have moved up the league table in making our business environment more investor-friendly, there is considerable room for improvement.

Dear friends,

India is at cusp of a major transformation. The economy is growing at rate much faster than many major economies of the world. The World Bank in its 2018 Report has noted that India's GDP growth is projected to reach 6.7 percent in 2017-18 and accelerate to 7.3 percent and 7.5 percent in 2018-19 and 2019-20 respectively. At the same time, there are challenges of translating economic growth into inclusive development.

We need a fresh look at the way we govern.

The Swarajya for our country was a hard earned outcome of a persistent struggle waged by countless patriotic women and men. It was led by men and women of rare vision, dedication and national pride.

Su-Rajya for our people is an equally challenging task that requires enlightened leadership at various levels, aware citizenry, a vibrant civil society, a robust institutional framework and a learning, forward looking governance structures.

Unlike Swarajya, where the goal post was clear and unmoving, Surajya has constantly moving goal posts. Good governance is a process that has no finality. We have to keep improving upon the past accomplishments.

Dear friends,

The world is changing at an unprecedented pace and there is no option for us except to move with the times and, if possible, stay ahead of times by proactive action.

Clearly, this poses innumerable, complex challenges to those who are responsible for the governance of the country.

We cannot continue with the 'business as usual' approach.

Our systems have to be reformed, our mindsets have to be altered and the focus of our actions has to be clearer.

The governance ethos has to be radically different from what exists today.

I would suggest five important directions in which we should move forward to reform our governance system.

They are: **Ambition, Ability, Agility, Accountability** and **Achievement**.

At the outset, we must set realistic but ambitious goals. This is especially necessary when we have an aspirational India driven by the dreams of 600 million young people. We should aim high and not be complacent with our current achievements.

Second, we must imbibe the skills required to increase our efficiency and effectiveness. We

must be competent practitioners with the state of the art knowledge drawn from good practices around the world.

Third, we must have the ability to adapt, improvise, innovate to create programmes and strategies to make them effectively address the challenges. We must be agile and pro-active.

Fourth, we must constantly evaluate the successes and failures. We must enhance the accountability through a culture of measurement and evaluation and improvement – oriented monitoring.

Fifth, we must focus on the ‘outcomes’ or actual results on ground. Very often, we lose sight of this important aspect. We do not carry our initiatives forward till results are achieved.

The journey from Swarajya to Surajya is an arduous one. But it is the duty of each one of us who share the fruits of a free India to make this mission possible.

I am glad that IIPA has planned, on my suggestion, a number of national Consultations with Central Ministries, State Governments, Universities, Civil Society and professional institutes besides industry associations and local peoples’ representatives to discuss the current status of some key governance issues and come up with solutions for the consideration of Central and State governments. We started with a national consultation on problems of implementing the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments in Hyderabad in March this year. We had the second National Consultation in June at Pune on ‘Making agriculture more profitable and sustainable’. Both these consultations were very well attended and generated a number of interesting ideas.

I request the IIPA to complete the process of obtaining further inputs from the state governments and take forward this series of National Consultations in the coming months.

As I have said, there has to be a review of our governance structures. The change that Sardar Patel desired and Pandit Nehru, the first President of the IIPA Society dreamt of, is today a multi-dimensional challenge.

There has to be a change in the way we set goals, benchmarks and objectives.

There has to be a change in the way we enhance our competence.

There has to be change in the way we learn from the best practices around the world and adapt them to our changing socio-economic contexts.

But beyond these changes, the big change that we should attempt is to focus on ‘results’.

We should not merely look at the activities or the money being allocated and feel contented.

The development agenda is incomplete if we don’t achieve our goals, our mission objectives.

The bottom line of a development programme is the impact on human lives, the transformation it brings in the dignity, capability and prosperity of each citizen.

In order to make this leap forward in the way we govern ourselves, we need resource institutions like IIPA.

IIPA has a six decade long history of being a think tank but I suggest we look at the way we reposition it in the light of current and emerging challenges.

The Chairman and Director can constitute a small task force to prepare an approach paper and then have wide ranging discussions with different stakeholders. We have to come up with a sound strategy for institutional reform and make IIPA a fit organization to catalyze the new wave of governance reform.

I am glad IIPA has a strong network of institutes at state and local levels as well as a growing number of distinguished alumni. I suggest that we should strengthen these networks and collaborations. The state governments must be brought on board and be active partners. So also the local bodies in cities and rural areas. Good governance must percolate down to the lowest level. It must become a way of life for institutions we have established for our country's governance.

I wish to see IIPA set new ambitious goals in the next few months, benchmarking itself against the best institutions with similar mandate around the globe.

I am glad to honour 9 eminent administrative and managerial leaders who have distinguished themselves in their careers with the Paul H. Appleby Award.

I do hope each one of you will be able to contribute to the new wave of governance reforms underway in our country and to the re-structuring of IIPA into a centre of excellence.

Infact, the Director IIPA could get useful suggestions from eminent practitioners and academicians who have been given this award and complete the process of preparing a set of recommendations in about three months time.

I am happy to be amidst this galaxy of prominent figures in the field of public administration. I congratulate the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Director, IIPA on steering this institution so well. I wish you a very exciting productive year ahead as you navigate through a complex but fascinating sea of reform and innovation.

Thank you.

Jai Hind!"

AKT/BK/MS/RK

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