



Topic (2)
Is Democracy A Joke With Caste-Based Reservations?

1st

S. Murugaraja

IS DEMOCRACY A JOKE WITH CASTE-BASED RESERVATIONS ?

The genuine intention of our Constitution makers was to create an institutional mechanism and principles that would allow diverse people of the world's most complex

pluralistic society to live together as citizens of India. That is the reason why they, in fact, laid down provisions for reservation i.e. positive discrimination to ensure socio-

COMPETITION SUCCESS REVIEW, APRIL 2008

economic justice. However, they clearly stated that such positive discrimination through reservation policies should be continued only for a limited period after which it should be stopped. Unfortunately, what our founding fathers desired with a sensible approach towards reservation has not happened because of vote bank politics. What was perceived as a limited measure for a limited period has become an inalienable feature of the socio-political system. The sphere of operation of this so-called positive discrimination mechanism was further extended by Mandal Commission.

Reservation, in spite of all the claims of social justice and equity, seems to be a face-saving posture and a curtain to cover the failure of our political machinery to create a conducive atmosphere for an equitable socioeconomic development. Incessant caste-based reservation indicates nausea of a vibrant democracy like India and its inability to include a large section of society into the mainstream through natural democratic process even after 60 years of independence.

Divisive nature

Reservation at the time of independence was only meant to be a measure for the ultimate goal of "healthy societal development". However the experience of last sixty years has shown that the measure and the means have become an end in itself resulting in further atomization of the society on caste lines which was never the objective with which special provisions for elevation of the underprivileged had been incorporated.

The classification of people based on castes is being made to extend certain benefits—in educational institutions, in public services and also to become members and the representatives of the people. By treating caste as the only medium of oppression and hence by focusing all remedial measures on caste alone, we have only added to the longevity of caste as the determining factor of social identity. Caste in reality is only one of the features of identity at the individual level. However it has been turned into the indispensable identity of individual citizens. It is harmful for the cause of a modern social democracy as well as to the cause of individuals who are in dire straits and seek socio-economic justice through affirmative action. The present policy of "positive discrimination" divides the whole society into two broad categories: Oppressed and Oppressors, which creates an environment of victimhood and mistrust. Understandably, this policy is a major hindrance for national integration.

The real essence of democracy lies in promoting a society where a division on the basis of caste has no place, where "birth mark" is not given any weightage. Caste-hatred in the country has in fact increased over the years as the government itself does the job of identifying and certifying who is a lower caste and who is not. Caste-based reservation instead of eliminating caste perpetuates it. This defeats the very basic objective enshrined in the Preamble of our



S. Murugaraja

First prize winner of CSR Super Brain Youth Contest 2008 (3) : Topic 2

Mr. S. Murugaraja, a resident of Dindigul, Tamil Nadu, masters a fairly mercurial and piercing style of expression characterised by fluent language and magnificent analytical knack. Holder of a Bachelor's degree in Leather Technology, he has won a number of prizes for his stellar performance at different levels in course of his impressive academic career.

Constitution which declares India to be of a sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic and republican polity.

Anti-progressive nature

Caste system is the greatest hindrance in the way of our progress to egalitarian society. In a mad pursuit towards the privileges offered by the caste-based reservations almost every caste in India wants themselves to be called as backward caste. How can a democracy with so much backward people survive? As rightly pleaded by the Chairman of First Backward Class Commission, Kaka Kalelkar, the reservations and other remedies recommended on the basis of caste would not be in the interest of society and country.

Besides castes, there are a large number of groups whose members may be classified as backward educationally and economically, but still there may be others among them who cannot be so classified. Similarly, among the so called upper and advanced classes there are in fact a large number of

those who are more backward educationally and economically and even among the backward classes some groups are more forward than the so called upper and forward castes. India as a progressive, modern welfare State, cannot afford to tolerate backwardness anywhere irrespective of caste, creed or religion and should aid all the poor and deserving in the country, irrespective of caste, sex or denomination.

The assumption of the backwardness limited to certain castes is wholly deceitful and should not be allowed to continue. If caste is used as a test for backwardness, it would result in the needy swamped by the multitude and would hardly receive any special attention or adequate assistance which is the very basis of providing affirmative action. This poses a serious disaster to enliven democratic way of life.

No checks and balances

The quota system, created to facilitate the poor, is wrongly being utilised by those who are better off and they corner the benefits of reservation policy. Why is it that the 'forward' among the Scheduled Castes or persons above a particular 'family income' do not want to voluntarily opt out and make place for more deprived members of their own caste group? The main reason behind this is, once used to these privileges they are not ready to give them up. Even the concept of creamy layer created to overcome such limitations is not crystal clear in tune with the societal requirements. Thus caste based reservation policy has failed in bringing an egalitarian social transformation.

Justice as fairness

According to John Rawls, "Justice is not an ethic of rewards but an ethic of redress." Hence, justice in a democracy lies in fair treatment of the populace. Democracy is not intended to serve a particular class but to serve the larger interest of all. The immediate need of the hour is to depart from the present "Group Centric" affirmative action to "Individual Centric" benefits. Caste based

(Continued on page 173)

COMPETITION SUCCESS REVIEW, APRIL 2008

SUPER BRAIN YOUTH CONTEST 2008

(Continued from page 58)

reservation has resulted in the formation of diabolic "caste based" vestibules which are against the integrity of our democracy. Emphasis on extension of benefits has to shift from "the conditions that a group satisfies" to the conditions that "an individual satisfies". The state has to lay down conditions which apply to all individuals irrespective of their caste, religion, sex, place of birth etc. This is the real spirit of Articles 15(4) and 16(4) which provides for positive discrimination. As rightly remarked by India's first Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru: "..... It is the backward individual citizen that we should help. Why should we brand groups and classes as backward and forward....."

Caste is not the only obstacle in the way of development of an individual. Economic conditions, educational opportunities and gender discrimination also contribute to the denial of opportunity to express one's true merit and worth. As observable in Southern India, the members of royal families, ruling classes, landlords, and rich businessmen are considered to be backward by the government because of their castes. They were kings and rulers for generations. Can we say with absolute certainty that poverty amongst the so-called upper castes has been eradicated? What an irony?

Unscrupulous politicians mislead public opinion by projecting caste-based reservation as the only form of affirmative action. Affirmative action has to "avow" the social will to rectify inequitable structures and patterns in existence. Pluralist society like India has a multiplicity of such structures and practices. Any programme of affirmative action has to harness all these factors and not elevate any one factor to the level of a political "fetish". To ensure socio-economic justice to the really deserving people, reservation policies should be in the holistic context of much needed social engineering and reconstruction and not to convert it into a hoodoo of 'political correctness'. Whom to blame—politicians or people?

Caste-based fragmented politics is a double-edged weapon. It is not that "Politics uses Caste", at the same time "Caste also uses Politics". The voters expect the ministers to help their caste folk. They seem to be saying "We want benefits in return for what we have done". Voting provides a platform to castes to assert their influence. This really makes democracy a mockery. It is we the public who is to be blamed for this sorry state of our democracy.

As revealed in the Preamble of our Constitution, the Constitution derives its authority from the people of India. In a democracy the real power lies in the hands of public. Let us yield to intellect and liberality. We and we alone can change things through collective action. We have to develop good governance in our system which is the real panacea for all the ills that deride us. The time is ripe to put an end to casteist politics and strive towards establishing a truly egalitarian society wherein all the poor and deserving should, and could, be helped. This alone would enrich the democratic essence and make the democratic way of life meaningful.

CSR

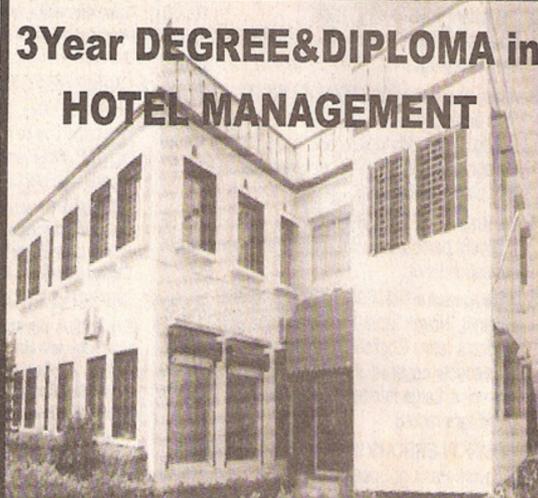


IHRM

Approved By AICTE, Ministry of HRD, Govt. Of India

College of Hotel Management

3Year DEGREE & DIPLOMA in HOTEL MANAGEMENT



B.Sc. Hotel Management, Catering Technology & Tourism [Recognized by UGC]

Diploma in Hotel Management & Catering Technology

[Diploma Awarded by W.B.S.C.T.E.]

1 Year Certificate Course in Food Production and F&B Service

ELIGIBILITY: 10+2 passed / appeared from any recognized board or pursuing graduation.

PROSPECTUS: Rs.250/- by cash or DD for Rs.300/- to be drawn in favour of 'Institute of Hotel & Restaurant Management' payable at Kolkata. Prospectus are also available at leading branches of State Bank of India.

PLACEMENT: IHRM has a very active Placement Cell which organizes on-the-job Training and Campus Interview for placement of students in leading 5 star and Deluxe Hotels in India including Shipping and Airlines. Till date, all pass out students are well placed in reputed Hotels in India & abroad.

CITY OFFICE: 131, Kanungo Park, Garia, Kolkata 700084. Telefax: 24305612. Mobile: 9831819621. E-mail: ihrmadmissions@gmail.com. Website: www.ihrmcal.org

CAMPUS: Sonargoan Park, P.O.: Ramkrishna Pally, Tegharia, Sonarpur, Kolkata - 700150. Telefax: 24346885/7138/7214. Mobile: 98305 29846

CSC ESSAY CONTEST - ALL INDIA FIRST PRIZE OCTOBER 2006**IMPORTANCE OF VALUES IN EDUCATION**

“Education is a process to develop man’s faculties, especially his mind, so that he may be able to enjoy the contemplation of supreme truth, beauty and goodness.” - **Aristotle.**

In olden days education was given to create supreme wisdom. In the Gurukulas of the past, instructions were provided for right living, spiritual advancement and moral conducts. Students were trained to lead lives marked by humility, sense control, virtue and discipline. The system of education dealt more with truth and totalities and helped to purify the process of learning.

With the advent of scientific and technological developments human life has been transformed beyond all imaginations. Information technology has shrunken the gigantic world into a global village. No body can deny the fact that a gene clad future is on the anvil. This technological advancement has led to a radical change in human values. Loss of moral and socio-ethical values is being reflected in every sphere of human life. Today human life is facing a crisis of identity. The trend of education today is to train the minds in knowledge, ideas and skills which can be utilized in the future to further our materialistic ambitions and aspirations. We are tempted to assume that technological progress is the real progress and that material progress is the criterion of civilization. In this mad pursuit we have forgotten to realize that “Education is not an end in itself, but a means to an end”. The present day education has not been able to train and discipline our minds. As it was rightly said by B. Russell “A scientifically nurtured society, which has lost all its moral and spiritual values, is definitely bound to crack”.

At present education has become more a way of business. In the work-a day world, where the teachers work only for the wages they get, they don’t spend time to give to the students outside the scope of curricular brilliancy and that is the greatest stumbling block in the way of development of life and character of students. This is mainly due to the dependency of private educational institutions on academic performance in terms of marks, which help them in marketing. Parents and teachers have become careerists. Such careerist minded teachers and parents are infecting the young minds with materialistic attitudes. Legitimate educators are now becoming fast vanishing tribes. Undoubtedly the power of money, modernization and technological developments cannot be denied, but

not at the cost of a virtuous noble life. Are we to become a living dead living like robots in a world of concrete jungles? Students pass classes and acquire degrees without cultivating sensitivity, appreciation and wisdom. The present system of education fails to make students fit for a noble life. The whole system of education seems to go against the very nature of humanity. But ironically we are always trying to adjust the man in the system rather than adjusting the system to bring out the best in man.

Today the genes of honesty and sympathy are getting eliminated from the population at a rapid rate. All our activities are based on profit-loss calculations. Even many of the NGO's (Non Governmental Organizations), which are supposed to be service minded, have become profit-motivated organizations aiming at exploitation for self-benefits. Love has become market place transaction. Due to loss of reciprocating sentiments between parents and their children nowadays our senior citizens are dwelling in old age homes longing for love and affection.

The human values in our day today life are more conspicuous by their absence. Unless they become part of our life and way of living the situation will continue to worsen at the peril of human kind. As a matter of fact modern man's eternal danger is not so alarming as his own spiritual and moral bankruptcy, has made him ethically barren and completely devoid of inner values which make up the sum total of the essence of human personality. Educators if they wish to be legitimate ones, must seriously scrutinize these undercurrents and stand guard against them. Neglect of imparting values in education shows that we are not anxious to show our youth the noblest ways and means of living. This requires our urgent attention. The only way to correct the situation is to incorporate study of the human values as a core subject in our education system right from pre-primary, primary to higher education.

We need to nurture core inner values like discipline, dedication, meditation, mutualism, earnestness, simplicity, helpfulness, patience, appreciativeness, right speech, modesty, love of justice, honesty, sincerity and similar other virtues in our young tender minds. Values related to inter religious interaction and social cohesion need to be imparted to the igniting minds. It is the utilization of these qualities, which moulds the personality of an individual. The ultimate human value is to achieve peace and prosperity for all.

The National policy on education launched in 1986 has categorically stated "The growing concern over erosion of essential values has brought to focus the need for readjustment in the curriculum in order to make education a forceful tool for cultivation of human values." Value based science is of paramount importance to realize the highest ideals of education and to develop full potential of the students.

As Swami Vivekananda said rightly "Education is the manifestation of the perfection already existing in man." Value based education does that manifestation perfectly. Education is the unfolding of the infiniteness inherent in man. It is the blossoming of the flower of divinity within. Education that develops human beings, as symbols of humanity is true education. Such education is the need of the hour. It is the cure for all the ills that deride our being and our society. Education is an all-round drawing out of the best in the child and the man- body, mind and spirit. This definition includes the physical, intellectual and spiritual aspects of human existence.

Yogic concepts are like the software programmes of a disciplined personality. Patanjali's Yogasutra says, "Yoga is nothing but anushashan, yoga is nothing but discipline." This discipline is physical and mental as well as spiritual. The yogic form of education must be incorporated into our formal education system.

Towards the aim and principles of ideal education all of us have a role to play. It is the duty of parents and teachers to resonate, to vibrate with the noble human values and then to animate the young minds at home and school with the same. The prime responsibility lies with the teachers. They are the torchbearers of the future generation. They must understand that theirs is the noble profession, a holy service to the salvation of humanity. The real work of the teachers lies in fashioning the young minds with human values rather than killing their brains with cartload of books.

Infact the concept of human values in education is highly complex and delicate issue. Value merely perceived is valueless. It must be lived. Adherence to socio-ethical values is necessary for an honorable life. The very existence of the nature is for the education of the soul.

Education devoid of values is detrimental to society in the long run. Education is called vidya, which means, "that which give light". Vidya is the light that one needs to destroy the inner darkness. What world needs today is neither a new order, a new system, a new society, nor a new religion. The remedy lies in a sober, sane and logical scientific outlook coupled with man's appreciation of the principles of sociological truth. This can be achieved only through "Proper Vidya".

The function of the universities is not merely to send out technically skilled and professionally competent men, but it is their duty to produce in them the virtue of humanity.

"A university stands for humanism, for tolerance, for reason, for progress, for the adventure of ideas and for the search of truth. It stands for the onward march of the human race towards even higher objectives."- Jawaharlal Nehru.

S.MURUGARAJA

107, NO. 2, CHANDRASEKHAR STREET,
 CHENNAI, TAMIL NADU, INDIA
 600 002
 E-MAIL: smurugara@gmail.com



GLOBAL WARMING- ITS CAUSES AND EFFECTS

Essay contest-252

"Western India suffers worst floods in a century. Mumbai is deluged with 940mm of rain in 24 hours". July 26, 2005.

"Katrina devastates New Orleans". August 29, 2005.

"980 people are to leave South Pacific Carterets before atolls are swallowed by sea". November 25, 2005.

The above captions were the headlines of leading newspapers in the very recent past. These headlines spell the disastrous nature of Global warming. A scientific report claims that global warming is one of the major factors that contributed towards the deadly disastrous effect of Tsunami that happened a year ago.

If you have ever felt the piercing cold of the clear winter night sky and wondered why you feel warmer on a cloudy winter night, you have experienced the atmospheric greenhouse effect firsthand. Of the sunlight that strikes the earth, the planet and its atmosphere absorb about 70%, while the other 30% is immediately reflected. If the earth did not re-radiate most of this newly absorbed energy back into space, the world would continue to get warmer. Instead, an energy balance is maintained. Clouds and greenhouse gases keep the earth warm. Once warmed, their molecules then radiate a portion of this heat energy back to earth, creating more warming on the surface of our planet. It is this radiation, which causes atmospheric gases to move back to earth that scientists call the "greenhouse effect". Without a natural greenhouse effect, the temperature of the Earth would be about zero degrees F (-18°C) instead of its present 57°F (14°C). Therefore, the concern is not with the fact that we have a greenhouse effect, but human activities are leading to an enhancement of the greenhouse effect. Global warming is also known as the "Greenhouse effect". Global warming refers to an average increase in the Earth's temperature. Earth has warmed by about 1°F over the past 100 years. Why? And how?

CAUSES

CO₂ (Carbon dioxide) contributes about 50% to the greenhouse effect. Trees are the largest land-based natural mechanism for removing CO₂ from the air. One tree absorbs about 13 pounds of CO₂ per year. However, when trees are burned, the carbon locked in the structure is released into the air in the form of CO₂. Deforestation is now out of control. Global CO₂ levels rise approximately 0.4 percent each year, to levels not experienced on this planet for millions of years. Clearly, Earth's natural mechanisms for absorbing CO₂ from the atmosphere cannot handle the large quantities of CO₂ being added by modern man. Automobile exhaust gases and industrial process exhausts are major sources of CO₂. A continuing build-up of CO₂ greenhouse gases in the air, lead to more global warming. The other greenhouse gases are methane, chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and nitrous oxide (N₂O)

Methane is released during coal-mining activities, oil exploration and when vegetation is burnt during land clearance. Since the 1960s, the amount of methane in the air has increased by 1% per year - twice as fast as the build up of CO₂.

Nitrous oxide comes from both natural and man-made processes. Man influenced sources, which represent about 45% of output to the atmosphere, are mainly fossil fuel combustion, as in power stations. N₂O contributes about 6% to the greenhouse effect now.

Chlorofluorocarbons found in fridges, air conditioners, aerosols etc. are extremely effective greenhouse gases. CFCs trap more heat. A CFC molecule is 10,000 times more effective in trapping heat than a CO₂ molecule; methane is about 30 times more effective. Methane molecules survive for 10 years in the atmosphere and CFCs for 110 years. It is this that warns us to ban CFCs completely.

Feedback processes involving the green house gases further enhance the rate of global warming. About half the CO₂ released by burning fossil fuels is absorbed by the oceans. It is taken up by minute sea creatures or dragged to the ocean depths by the circulation of water. Recent research suggests that as the earth heats up, the oceans will be less efficient in absorbing CO₂, leaving more in the atmosphere and so adding further to global warming. As global temperatures become greater, so large quantities of methane stored in the frozen tundra of the north may be released. In addition, methane trapped in the seabed may be freed by temperature rises. As the world warms, it causes feedback processes.

3

Increases in temperature cause the liberation of CO₂ and methane, which then cause further warming.

WHAT ARE ITS EFFECTS?

The effects are already showing - the ten hottest years since the 1860's have been in the last two decades. By the end of next century, temperatures could have reached those of the time of the dinosaurs and it is doubtful if humans could survive. The United Nations and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) created the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 1988 to assess the risk of global warming due to human activities. In 1990, the IPCC predicted that if present rates of emissions of carbon dioxide continue, the Earth will experience a 1°C (1.8°F) warming by 2030 at the latest, and a 3°C (5.4°F) increase in temperature before the end of the next century. This amounts to a warming rate 10 to 100 times more rapid than the fastest warming period in the last 10,000 years. There is an increase in extreme climatic events.

Storms and hurricanes will become more frequent and stronger as oceans heat up causing more water to evaporate. Evidence is building up at an alarming rate. In September 1991 Typhoon Murielle, its worst for 30 years, hit Japan. Then in September 1993, it was hit by Typhoon Yancy - the 13th that year, and the worst for 50 years. In March 1993, the 'Storm of the Century' hit America, causing \$1.6 billion in damage from Canada to Cuba.

The northern hemisphere contains more land area than the southern hemisphere, and hence faster heating over the northern hemisphere and at higher latitudes than the global average, causing extensive evaporation of ground moisture is highly predicted. In effect, lake and river levels will be lower. Some reports predict the level of the Great Lakes will drop between 2 and 10 feet. Drought and drier soil conditions, along with a proliferation of weeds and other agricultural pests because of heat stress and drought caused by global warming is most likely to threaten the global food security.

Sea levels are already rising at a rate of 1 to 2mm each year due to expansion of the top layer of the oceans as they warm and the melting of the polar ice caps. The predicted rise by 2050 is between 20 and 50cm. This will cause increased flooding in coastal areas and river estuaries such as Bangladesh and the Nile Delta. Even with the level of greenhouse gases present today, the earth may warm enough in the next 50 years or so to completely melt the sea ice located on the poles.

A study of mountain plants in the Alps (Europe) shows that some cold-loving plants are starting to move to higher and cooler altitudes. That is a possible response to increasing temperatures. Global warming has great effect on crops and weather conditions around the world.

Most plants and many animals thrive under specific climatic conditions in particular habitats. Many ecosystems may simply disappear. Surviving ecosystems are expected to be less diverse and complex and present networks of parks and natural reserves may no longer be habitable in a greenhouse world. Migration routes will be either blocked or made difficult by human land use patterns. In addition, salt marshes and wetlands, the essential habitat of countless birds and aquatic life would be permanently flooded.

Fresh water aquifers could be contaminated by salt-water intrusion from a sea level rise, placing fisheries that lie near the ocean at risk. Ozone depleting chemicals are also greenhouse gases. This, in turn, would lead to a relative increase in ozone depletion and the frequency of ozone holes.

It has been claimed that global warming will probably extend the favorable zones for vectors conveying infectious diseases such as malaria. An example of this is the increase of Hantavirus infection, Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever, tularemia and rabies in wide areas of Russia during 2004-2005 associated with a population explosion of rodents and their predators.

Property insurers are predicting that worsening storms caused by global warming could eventually bankrupt the insurance industry.

Global warming may also have positive effects. Plants utilize the sun's energy to convert water, nutrients, and CO₂ into usable biomass. Plant growth can be limited by a number of factors, including soil fertility, water, temperature, and CO₂ concentration. Thus, an increase in temperature and atmospheric CO₂ can stimulate plant growth in places where these are the limiting factors. Melting Arctic ice may open the Northwest Passage in summer, which would cut 5,000 nautical miles from shipping routes between Europe and Asia. This would be of particular relevance for supertankers, which are too big to fit through the Panama Canal and currently have to go around the tip of South America. However, there is no denying the fact that negative effects of global warming outweigh the probable positive effects.

4

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Unfortunately, the imbalance that we have created between our lives and the Earth is already showing the signs of disaster. "Earth in the Balance" is moving to the "Earth in imbalance" which, in the end will cease to exist. No longer can we afford to be serene and tacit on the issue of global warming. The warning bells are sounding in high pitches and it is up to us humans to save our home or else, even God with his omnipotence will not be able to save us. Greater ecological awareness and environmental literacy should be achieved. Of late, however concerns over global warming have been loudly voiced. A large number of global deliberations have taken place to find ways and means to preserve the global ecosystem. Yet for the most part, responses remain inadequate to the needs.

Human activity is at the root of the problem, but Human intelligence is the only hope for a solution. There is still time to reverse the warming trend and avoid global environmental and economic catastrophe-but only if we immediately avail ourselves of renewable energy sources, and demand eco-friendly alternatives. We need to stop deforestation and start replanting trees (afforestation) to soak up carbon dioxide. We need to eliminate CFCs altogether.

The Kyoto Protocol intends to cut global emissions of greenhouse gases. It is an agreement negotiated as an amendment to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC, which was adopted at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992). The treaty came into force, effective February 16, 2005. Strict adherence to Kyoto Protocol would be a laudable measure in the direction of combating the global warming. The two major countries currently opposed to the treaty are the USA and Australia.

The developing countries are reluctant to participate in any CO₂ emission reduction plans, arguing that they did not create global warming and that it is the responsibility of developed countries to cut their own emissions or to support developing countries with financial aid. All the developed nations should properly aid the Third World by all techno-commercial means to develop cleaner energy options.

The Asia Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate is an agreement between six Asia-Pacific nations: Australia, the People's Republic of China, India, Japan, South Korea, and the United States. It was introduced at the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), regional forum on July 28, 2005. The pact allows those countries to set their goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions individually, but with no enforcement mechanism. But the pact will be effective only with strict enforcement measures.

"Our duty is to save our environment in its natural balanced form. We are the managers of the environment and not the owners of the environment".

ESSAY CONTEST-6

WHAT AILS INDIAN SPORTS ?

S. MURUGARAJA

If only we analyse our performance at each mega sport event, we will find enough skeletons tumbling out of the cupboard. If sporting standards are any indication of health of this country, one wonders, where does India exist. It is a matter of deep shame that, India with 1/6th of the world population, has not been able to glitter in the medal tallies, in any mega sports event, even after five and a half decades of independence. One need not perform any herculean task to search reasons which have jettisoned our efforts to put India on world's sports map, political rhetoric notwithstanding.

Singh in Manipuri that he should remember all the insults he had to undergo and channelise the energy into his punches. He had done us all proud. If ever any international sports body institutes an award of a gold medal for bureaucratic red tape, India is sure to win it hands down. World billiards champion



Ist WINNER



Name : S. MURUGARAJA

Address

Qualification : B. Tech.

Neither our government nor those concerned to develop sports culture have any set agenda or goal that can make India one among the Frontline sports nations of the world. Our's is the only country where you have more of politics in sports and less of sports in politics. Regionalism, linguism and favouritism are all

Geethsethi had his own bitter experience at XIIIth Asiad.

Even a week after his team's arrival in Bangkok, they did not receive the

and favouritism are all made. In Indian sporting panorama, strings are pulled by lackadaisical bureaucracy while players move as pawns on a chess board. Pot-bellied politicians, moneybags or other heavy weights, who have little to do with sports rule the roost. Does anyone know what the weight lifter Kunjarani Devi advised her compatriot Dingko at Bangkok? Before the finals she told Dingko

the official T-shirts and track suits. It is not that T-shirts matters so much. But the thing is as a team dressing smartly as others is so vital that reflects the nation's pride.

Also we have seen various training programmes die a lingering death starved for funds. Our budgetary provision for sports is incredulously below 1%. We cannot spot, nourish and nurture talent even in the initial stages. Whoever hits the spotlight mostly

does on his own. He or she has done it on one's own merit. Talent has to be unearthed at school level itself and glazed under experienced hands of coaches so that full blossoming takes place. An important reason for excellent performance in sports by developed nations is that they invest in them and on the part of their sports persons, they perform equally well by training early and working hard. In such a scenario, privatisation

CHANAKYA CIVIL SERVICES TODAY, MARCH 2003 ■ 141 ■

In such a scenario, privatisation of sports and games is the only remedy.

Then, there is a lack of professionalism in Indian sports and games. Much needs to be said or unsaid about the way those who select our sports persons for international events. Sports should be accredited to the status of industry.

Parental emphasis on studies at the expense of sports and game, is another cause for the desperate state of Indian sports and games. A sports person is considered no good unless he or she is academically above par, if not brilliant. Our duty is to create an awareness of sports and games in the minds of the people if things are to improve in times to come. Otherwise we are likely to sink deeper into the morass with the passage of time.

We cannot forget the sad end for India in the recently held 14th Asian Games Busan when Sunitha Rani (athlete) was stripped of her medals, after having been failed to pass the dope test. What went wrong with her is a matter of deep investigation. The New Year beckons Sunita and Indian athletics in the Post-Busan phase that in many ways had been an eye-opener. We hope Sunita will bring more

laurels to the country without the talk of dope distracting anyone. We have proved to the World that Indian athletics is "clean". To save our sports persons and the country from such disgrace in the future, the sports organisations should publicise a list of banned drugs. Our athletes need doctors and other experts who can monitor their diet and training and prevent inadvertent intake of illegal substances.

It is not that we do not have talent people to excel in the international sports arena. If healthy and conducive atmosphere is created and selections properly made we can do a lot in this field. We should extend every possible facility to our sports persons and encourage them to take up sports and games more seriously.

Needless to say, a subtle change in masses and governments non-chalant attitude could provide a boost to country's image and Indian name could glitter in medal tallies.

How far has Democracy in India Delivered the Goods

by S. MURUGARAJA

DEMOCRACY IS more a way of life than a form of government. Defined by Abraham Lincoln as the government "of the people, for the people and by the people", it is a form of government in which the sovereign power is in the hands of the people. They exercise either directly or indirectly through their representatives. In a democratic form of government adopted in India, each citizen, irrespective of caste, creed, sex or religion gets full opportunity for expressing his/her choice at election time. He is assured—both social and economic justice.

For India, democratic ideals are not new. It is as old as India—a concept which has been carried from century to century, till the Constitution of India documented it. The archaeological discoveries Cholas, Cheras and Pandyas regimes in South India have revealed that democracy and its spirit were both practiced in equal measure. As enunciated by Uttaramerur inscriptions, voting and the system of elections were also practiced.

Today India is the largest democracy in the world with a population of over 100 crore. However, it lags behind in many respects. It is a crying shame that nearly 30 per cent of our people are still living Below the Poverty Line (BPL) even after more than five decades of independence. There must be something wrong in our democratic system where the majority of the electorate wielding real power live and die in abject poverty. The hungry man is periodically asked to choose between the ballot and his daily bread; given a choice, he would any day prefer the latter. We may claim from rooftops that the country has achieved stupendous progress in agricultural and industrial spheres, but the fruits of this progress have been monopolised by only a handful. It is a fact that, with each passing year, the rich are becoming richer and the poor are becoming poorer. This lopsided distribution of wealth has generated cynicism among the people—a portentous signal that poses a threat to our democracy.

In spite of the conflicting and diverse nature of the interpretation, certain para-

"For those who haven't experienced dictatorships or Saddam Hussein-style elections—where every voter votes and votes for the only candidate—democracy may sometimes seem a bit of a yawn. Indeed, it lends itself to boring attitudes and facile questions. Unlike, say, the United States where the affluent and educated vote in larger numbers than other—fulfilling their role as the vanguard, it would appear—upper class, urban Indians tend to treat election day with a cynical apathy. They settle into holiday mood, exclaiming, "But does my vote count?" The answer is simple enough; your vote counts only as much you want it to. In the broader view, to walk to the polling booth is to indulge an emotion—anger against an incumbent, passion for a party, belief in a candidate. Above all, it is a celebration of being Indian. There can be no better reason to vote."

—Courtsey : The Indian Express

First Prize

Congratulations, Murugaraja!

S. Murugaraja () is a Leather Technologist in Chennai. His hobbies : Reading books and magazines and writing articles and essays. He wins the First Prize of books worth Rs. 600/-. Address :



[Redacted address information]

meters have come to be associated with a truly democratic society. These include universal adult franchise, free and fair periodic elections, multi-party system, independence of press and judiciary, fundamental rights of the people, freedom of dissent, tolerance of opposition, etc.

India today proudly proclaims its position as one of the foremost democratic nations of the world. India after independence had decided to adopt the parliamentary system of government. The founding fathers, truly inspired by egalitarian zeal, had ensured universal adult franchise without any discrimination. India had its first general elections in 1952 and the democratic processes have been vigorously functioning ever since.

There are certain other cardinal facts that make democracy in India strong. The Parliament represents the people. The Election Commission is a powerful constitutional body to conduct free and fair elections. The accountability of the Parliament maintaining the cultural identity of minorities, the Fundamental Rights as a whole, independent judiciary, secularism, etc., are known the basic features of the Constitution. These tenets of basic structure are supposed to be the strong cementing force of the Indian democracy and they do mean that the people of India are wedded to democratic way of living in harmony.

India has got a multi-party political system. Political parties, big or small contest elections to the State Legislative Assemblies and Parliament. During the last few years, the single party rule has almost come to an end. This may be due to the springing up of many regional political parties and also that the people have become more and more politically conscious. Coalition Governments with minimum programmes can have a large representative spectrum and also that the reins of power are not within the absolute grip of one political party.

Now after more than half a century of Independence most of the citizens are wondering as to what extent the solemn promises enshrined in the Constitution have been kept and

Contest Essay 231

in which direction our democracy is going.

There are people who feel that the system has not been successful in a big way and the very aims of democracy have not been achieved. The charges made are that a very large number of people are illiterate. Nearly about 26 per cent of the people are below poverty line. There is a wide gap between the rich and poor. Large number of people have no gainful employment. There is no limit to such assertions. They just show that how mixed up their expectations are with the success of the democratic system. There is illiteracy in many Afro-Asian and Latin-American countries which have either military governments, dictatorships or are totalitarian states.

The reasons are not far to seek. The liberal humanistic principles which can result in the establishment of a just and human society have been subjected to criminal negligence. The process of election has become suspect. It has been marred by the allegations of rigging, booth capturing and bogus voting. Communalism, casteism, religious fundamentalism and inter-caste tensions have been carefully cultivated by the get rich quick politicians and false democrats. They have created an environment in which the future of democracy has become bleak. This is a direct fallout of the criminalisation of politics and politicisation of crime.

The role of opposition is crucial in successful working of democracy. Today the constructive opposition, which is one of the essential democratic elements, has withered.

Multiparty system has become more a bane than a boon. For the proper functioning of democracy, a healthy opposition is needed. Besides that is needed educated electorate, independent judiciary, free press and, above all, unimpeachable moral integrity. Does the Indian democracy possess all these? The answer, unfortunately, is negative.

But, to our credit, it can be said that we have had thirteen general elections so far and have had a fairly representative government as well as a viable Opposition. Democratic values, enshrined in our Constitution, are our beacon light and our leaders follow them to the best of their ability within the given constraints of economic, ethnic, religious and cultural diversity as well as their political considerations. In this sense, the future of democracy in India is very bright.

It is, however, a crying shame that we still fight over silly things. In a secular country, with no official religion, communalism raises its hydra head time and gain with the result that people lose all sense of values. A new dimension has recently been added to the destabilisation process of the world's biggest democracy in the form of terrorism, which has now entered the hi-tech era. This must be stopped forthwith and all our energies be channelised towards nation-building activities. We must gear ourselves to work for the amelioration of the poor.

*The topic was in the UPSC Civil Services (Main) Exam., Oct. 2003. For more details, please read Career's Advanced Essays. (Hindi Edition also available).

ESSAY CONTEST ANNOUNCEMENT

Essay Contest : 234

Subject : How should a civil servant conduct himself?

UPSC Civil Services (Main) Exam, Oct. 2003]

First Prize : Books worth Rs. 600/-;

Second Prize : Books worth Rs. 400/-

Third Prize : Books worth Rs. 200/-;

Consolation Prizes (3) : Books worth Rs. 100/- each.

Bright Careers Institute awards Merit Certificates to the winners. It serves as a lasting and useful testimony of distinction for the successful participants.

Last Date : June 8, 2004

Entries should not be of more than 1000 words and should be neatly typed on one side of the paper. Attach a passport size photograph and write full name and address along with brief bio-data on the first page of the essay. Prize-winning entries will be the exclusive property of Competition Refresher. Special attention will be given to the candidate's grasp of material, relevance to the subject and his/her ability to think constructively and present his/her ideas concisely, logically and effectively. Edited version of prize-winning entries will be published. Entries should be marked ESSAY CONTEST-234, and sent to Competition Refresher, 2767, Bright House, Darya Ganj, New Delhi-110002.

CONSOLATION PRIZES

(Books worth Rs. 100/-)

(i) V.P. Maneesh (23) has done B.E. (EEE) from Bharadhidasan University, Trichy.

(ii) Purnima Padmasna (24) has done B.Sc in Biochemistry from Government Science College, Jabalpur.

(iii) Priyanka Mishra is doing M.Com from C.C.S. University.

FOCUS (Contd. from Page 33)

Impact on Other Nations

However, the result of the elections has a more direct impact on India in particular and South Asia in general. Unfortunately, all the major countries of the subcontinent—India, Pakistan, Nepal, and Bangladesh—are suffering from the ethnic conflicts and terrorist activities. Though India is taking a close look on the newly shaped arrangements made by the President Kumaratunga, the emergence of Sinhala cultural nationalism may push already deteriorated situation to a brink. The recently concluded elections has opened the chinks where reconciliation between Sinhalese and Tamils are not visible on the horizon as Kumaratunga is heavily banking on ultra-nationalism of Sinhalese to get her political mileage.

India cannot ignore the worsening security in the region particularly the new developments in Nepal where the Maoists

are attacking the non-Nepali nationals. A proactive and discreet policy by Sri Lanka will be welcome by all the SAARC countries. A new Government in Sri Lanka, with assured representation to all major political entities in Sinhala, Tamil, and Muslim societies and Buddhist monks, will have a better base to deal with the neighbouring countries. If, with the possibility of better relations with Pakistan, India can have assured peace in Sri Lanka, probably things would improve in Nepal and Bangladesh also. The four countries then can have better economic relations and the trade in the sub continent would be manifold. However, Indian policy makers concern is that Sri Lanka may go back to a situation of 70s where Tamils were slaughtered in the name of national stability and ultimately gave birth to LTTE and a perpetuate scenario of instability in the

islands. The elections in Sri Lanka have brought more insecurity and confusion than it was thought of.

Thus, India, which has kept a low-profile involvement in Sri Lanka's peace process, has now stepped up its activity after the new government was elected. The Indian High Commission in Colombo is playing a major role in helping the new government secure a majority in Parliament, according to political observers. The recent statements from the new Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse indicate that Sri Lanka is looking for greater involvement by India. "We want an active role for India," Rajapakse told reporters. "I have been saying since the mid-1990s that India should have a more prominent role in the peace process," Rajapakse said. □

About the Author : A.B. Mahapatra is the India Defence News Agency.

Criminalisation of Politics

by S. MURUGARAJA

WHEN INDIA breathed the fresh air of freedom on Aug. 15, 1947, nobody would have thought this very fresh air would get contaminated to such an extent that it would poison the whole of the country's democratic atmosphere and the responsibility of governing this largest democratic machinery would be in the hands of scoundrels turned politicians.

The criminalisation of politics today has cast its long shadow on the quality of Parliament and parliamentarians. The important aspect of this development is that it has happened almost clandestinely over the past couple of decades with voices being raised against it now and then but without any concerted effort being made at the social and political level to check its growth. One can cite the well-established fact that Lok Sabha today has a larger number of history-sheeters (that is, those against whom criminal and other charges have been filed) than ever before, and then ask the question whether this is good or bad for the country. Social activists say that up to 47 per cent of parliamentary candidates are facing criminal charges filed against them. Parliament and Legislative Assemblies now consist of a number of ruffians, rapists, robbers, dacoits, rowdies, smugglers, terrorists and traitors.

Politics today has become not the last but the first resort for the scoundrels, as it is one of the best ways to solve the cases pending against them and to wipe off their otherwise tainted backgrounds. It has become the inevitable part of our democratic polity that law-breakers have become lawmakers. One of the main reasons for the rapid criminalisation of the polity is that criminals have understood the mechanics of the electoral process and have themselves become contenders for power.

To buy votes, to force people to vote for a certain person or party, to ensure the victory of a certain candidate, to terrorise the opposition to submission, the unscrupulous politicians engage gangsters and goondas, and gradually these criminals themselves enter our political machinery legitimately, democratically and make laws of the land. The underworld dons and scoundrels who

Criminalisation of politics has tarnished the image of Parliament.

The presence of criminals in the political machinery shows the abysmal standards of the Indian polity. Debates and discussions are bound to get violent and directionless when we have bandits, goondas and desperados as members of our legislature. This increasing criminalisation of the political and social fabric is the main danger to Indian polity.

contested the polls either from jail or in hiding were elected, with big margins in many Lok Sabha and Assembly constituencies. Some of them were even brought from the jail by policemen for the swearing in ceremony at the assembly building. Such is the sorry state of the largest democracy in the world.

Today India at 58 is in a sad and unhealthy state due to criminalised political machinery. The main reason why political parties are not averse to fielding Mafia dons is their winability. A virtual impression seems to have gained ground that you could commit crime and getaway with it, if you have political patronage. It is a tragedy that the police and investigating officials who are at the mercy of politicians for their survival

First Prize

Congratulations, Murugaraja!

S. Murugaraja is a Leather Technologist in Chennai. His hobbies: Reading books and magazines and writing articles and essays. He wins the First Prize of books worth Rs. 600/- Address: C/o Plot



are prevented from applying correlatives or making use of acquired information, intelligence to curb the perpetration of crime. With politics and crime intertwined, bureaucracy and the police have also become part of nexus. This unholy nexus is having a malignant effect over the public life and poses a serious threat to the democratic structure of the country. To our astonishment Phoolan Devi, among several others with similar backgrounds was elected to Lok Sabha. To add to our discomfort, there are a number of scams that keep on adding new feathers on its cap. Tehelka case had featured on the front page of the leading dailies for an appreciable period of time. Most astonishingly our ex-Defence Minister, one of the main accused, resumed office after a mock resignation drama.

Politicisation of religion is a direct consequence of criminalisation of politics. Political hypertension due to the recent arrest of the Kanchi Shankaracharya in a murder case is nothing but an act of politicising crime. Our political masters are not letting the law to take its own course. Politicisation of crime is an extended tentacle of criminalisation of politics. Criminalisation of politics has become an essential part of the election process. At this juncture, a set of intriguing questions leave us benumbed.

Criminalisation of politics has tarnished the image of Parliament. The presence of criminals in the political machinery shows the abysmal standards of the Indian polity. Debates and discussions are bound to get violent and directionless when we have bandits, goondas and desperados as members of our legislature. This increasing criminalisation of the political and social fabric is the main danger to Indian polity. Democracy without morality is no more than the rule of the mob. Sadly, that is the direction in which India is headed. It is this nexus which needs to be broken and cannot be tolerated any

longer. The seeds of destruction have already been sown within the political system and their elimination must take first priority if the democracy is to continue to remain healthy for our children and their descendants.

Contest Essay 242

The solution probably lies in the political parties themselves not making such criminal nominations. But this, as experience shows, is easier said than done for a variety of reasons. If the parties cannot be urged into taking such a step, the electoral laws should be changed to enforce the measure.

In such a situation what electoral reforms should form the basis of democratic governance? The electoral reforms should address the following concerns on a war footing: Criminals contesting and winning elections with ease; the abuse of unaccounted money power; electoral irregularities of flawed electoral rolls, impersonating, false-voting, rigging and booth capturing; autocratic, unaccountable political parties; purchase of Rajya Sabha nominations; defections for personal gain and the deficiencies of an electoral system. It enables candidates and parties polling low percentage of votes to get elected and grab power.

Surely every citizen has a right to know the background details about a candidate (right to know and of informed voting under Article 21) which cannot and should not be hidden from the electorate. If candidates are afraid of their own background, they have no business to enter public life. There is sufficient precedent on both the right to know as well as the powers of the Election Commission (EC). The EC has the power to preserve the purity of elections (under Article 324). There is nothing wrong in candidates being asked to disclose their assets and liabilities and those of their dependants. Rule 16 of the Civil Service Rules requires this of bureaucrats. Why can it not be so for their political masters? If a person with a shady background cannot be selected for any public or private job, why so much relaxation for politicians? If the passport of a person is confiscated as soon as he is convicted of a crime, why not in the case of criminal-turned-politicians? The EC should outrightly reject the nomination papers of tainted leaders. This will enrich the electoral process and hence the democratic essence. Only radical electoral and judicial reforms can ensure a healthy democracy. A multi-pronged action is immediately needed to make our electoral process work against criminal elements trying to hijack our democracy.

The National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (NCRWC) has proposed the replacement of the present electoral system with a two-ballot system. The idea of introducing the latter system is borrowed from a recommendation made by the Law Commission in its 170th Report.

ESSAY CONTEST ANNOUNCEMENT

Essay Contest : 245

Subject : Should the courts regulate the legislature ?

First Prize : Books worth Rs. 600/-; Second Prize : Books worth Rs. 400/-

Third Prize : Books worth Rs. 200/-; Consolation Prizes (3) : Books worth Rs. 100/- each. Bright Careers Institute awards Merit Certificates to the winners. It serves as a lasting and useful testimony of distinction for the successful participants.

Last Date : June 8, 2005

Entries should not contain more than 1000 words. They should be neatly typed on one side of the paper! Attach a passport size photograph, and write full name and address along with brief bio-data on the first page of the essay. Prize-winning entries will be the exclusive property of *Competition Refresher*. Special attention will be given to the candidate's grasp of material, relevance to the subject and his/her ability to think constructively and present his/her ideas concisely, logically and effectively. Edited version of prize-winning entries will be published. Entries should be marked ESSAY CONTEST-245, and addressed to *Competition Refresher*, 4739/23, Bright Sadan, Ansari Road, Darya Ganj, New Delhi-110002.

CONSOLATION PRIZES

(Books worth Rs. 100/-)

- Arun Kumar Bhardwaj is a student of B.Sc (Third Year) from DAV College, Jalandhar.
- Vipin Kumar is a student of PUC from Government Higher Secondary School, Bhalra.
- Yeshi Gyesan has done his MA in Political Science.

Under this system, a candidate would not be declared elected unless s/he obtains the majority of the votes polled. If none of the contestants gets the majority, there will be a "run-off" election between the candidates in the first two positions. Former Chief Election Commissioner M.S. Gill backed a similar proposal. To tide over the initial implementation difficulties, the Commission's Report has suggested that to begin with, a candidate may be declared elected in the first round itself if he or she secures not less than 40 per cent of the votes polled. After the system stabilises, the threshold may be raised to 50 per cent plus, the paper suggests. The proposed system, the paper claims, will compel political parties to broaden their support base, thereby strengthening social cohesion. It would also strengthen the responsible character of an elected member.

The NCRWC findings basically point to serious defects in the electoral system. An order issued by the EC in Aug. 1997 clarified that disqualification of a person from contesting elections to Parliament and the State Legislatures under Section 8 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 (RPA) takes effect from the date of conviction by a trial court irrespective of whether the convicted person is released on bail or not during the pendency of an appeal. However, Section 8(4) of the Act exempts sitting Members of Parliament and State legislatures from such disqualification. To combat criminalisation, removing such lacunae should strengthen existing laws.

The EC should be vested with legal powers to supervise, verify and investigate the election expenses of candidates and initiate legal action if they exceed the prescribed limits. State funding of elections, with sufficient safeguards, will offer a level playing field to those seeking to contest elections without money power.

The reforms suggested by various committees and reports are having a sound sleep somewhere among the dusty files. Any government for that matter is playing a game of cat and mouse with the EC in implementing electoral reforms. Unethical political activities will erode the basic element of probity and trustworthiness, which is very vital for success of democracy. Our political masters should not politicise crime and they should let the law to take its own course. Honesty is the best policy is a truth that should be re-discovered in political life. Our MPs and MLAs should realise that we expect a lot from them as we have given them the right to speak for us.

The average law-abiding citizen must be wondering how law-breakers have been voted to become law-makers, and then he finds he has only himself to blame because without the voter's support no one can become a part of the country's political machinery. In a democratic country, all the powers lie in the hands of general public. An awakening among the general mass can only show the right place to such criminal politicians.

We want to see criminals in jail, not in Parliament.