

Some Stray Thoughts

J.C Pant IAS (Retd.)----26.1.1997

- The Constitution of India is a MANIFESTO FOR TOTAL REVOLUTION evolved by the freedom fighters for India's war of independence. How have the various instruments of the Constitution functioned in the last 47 years? A review would throw a lot of light on what the country has been upto. Each institution should address this on its own, apart from outside experts also evaluating their role and performance.
- The leading lights of the freedom movement Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, Sri Aurobindo, Raman Maharshi, Rabindra Nath Tagore, Sir Syed Ahmed, Subhash Bose, Jawaharlal Nehru and others saw the liberation of India as essential for the whole world. Indian Independence signaled the end of colonialism, and political domination of one country by another. Where does India stand vis-à-vis the rest of the world now after 50 years of independence? Has India's Foreign Policy kept track of this aspect?
- India's history through the ages has been characterized by a war between her culturally integrating social forces (centripetal forces) and external disintegrating forces (centrifugal forces). The last 2000 years have witnessed this process on an unprecedented and increasingly higher scale, rising now almost to a crescendo level. A special study of the external disintegrating forces operating on India during the last 50 years, and how the country has countered them so far, needs to be carried out.

- A study of the funding of Political Parties so far would throw valuable light on the dynamics of political processes and how they have affected social cohesiveness and whether the vision of an egalitarian social system put forth by the founding fathers of the Constitution is anywhere in sight. Faculties of Political Science in various Indian Universities can take up this subject for doctoral theses. How the political processes have affected the economic development of different groups and communities in India may also be addressed.
- There are many intellectuals who view India's growing population as its biggest problem. Is this perception well understood? How has the country taken care of its women and children?
- Promotion of Sustainable Agriculture through maximization of rainwater conservation and Cattle Care, as a strategy for promoting Sustainable Development leading to Poverty Alleviation to ensure availability of clean air, drinking water, nutritious food, clothing, shelter, irrigation for agriculture, horticulture, agro-forestry, etc. and employment for all, is not picking up in spite of policy pronouncements.
- Rural poverty in large parts of India and migration to urban areas has generated what are known as the 'urban slums', where life is lived at its worst. Can reverse migration be engineered, and if so, how? This will also help in breaking the hold of the caste-system in the rural areas.
- The Primary Health Care System in the country is crying for attention. Propagation of the tenets of a healthy lifestyle would reduce this pressure

on the PHC System which can be taken up by voluntary groups.

- Primary or Elementary Education as it is understood today may become impossible to give to the children in future. Similarly, school and college education as well as University education also appear to be heading towards becoming more and more inaccessible. How does the country propose to educate its children in future? Voluntary initiatives as distinct from Government efforts have to come forth.
- The elite of the country are proud of sending their educated children abroad. How is this 'brain drain' affecting the country?
- The NRIs are keen to serve India, but a proper mechanism to help them do so is still not in place. Why? Perhaps lessons could be learnt from Israel.
- Mahatma Gandhi, Vinoba Bhave and other leaders laid stress on evolution of 'Lok Shakti' as distinct from 'Rajya Shakti'. Why has evolution of 'Lok Shakti' been so retarded? Voluntary movements such as the Arya Samaj and Sarvodaya have literally petered out. Why has 'Rajya Shakti' mesmerized voluntary initiatives?
- Decision-making on considerations of merit seems to have literally vanished from the governmental sector and public life in general. There is need for putting in place a "procedure legislation" in decision-making in government to ensure transparency and adherence to norms of merit and good governance, on lines of Procedure Act of USA.