



Vol No. 43 | Issue No. 11 | November 2022 | Price 30/-

# PROUT

A Journal of Proutistic Views and Neo-Humanistic Analysis



ISSN2321-6786



## Women Iran's New Revolutionaries



Scan the code with  
mobile/tab using  
QR Code reader

12

"FORCED VEILING WAS  
UNPOPULAR WITH MANY IRANIAN  
WOMEN FROM THE BEGINNING."

32

"PAKISTAN CAUSES LESS THAN ONE PERCENT OF  
GLOBAL CARBON EMISSIONS, BUT A THIRD OF ITS  
LAND IS NOW UNDERWATER."

# With Compliments From



# ELEVEN.O.ONE

**1101-ELEVEN.O.ONE Ethical | Sustainable Fashion Clothing**  
**1101 \_ ELEVEN.O.ONE : Shop Lates [elevenoone.in](http://elevenoone.in)**



## Contact Us

Apparel Connection, 37/25 Marol Cooperative Indl Estate  
Behind Kanakiya Sevens Andheri Kurla Road Saki Naka, Mumbai



[www.elevenoone](http://www.elevenoone)



[1101\\_elevenoone](https://www.instagram.com/1101_elevenoone)



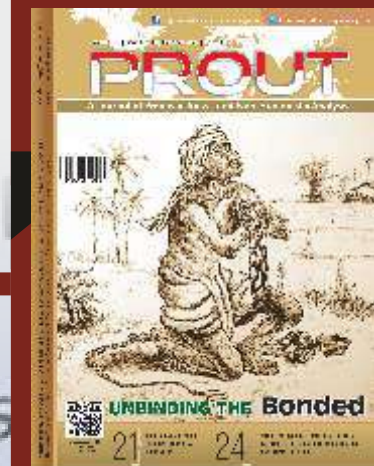
[1101-Eleven.O.One](https://www.facebook.com/1101-Eleven.O.One)



# Contents

VOLUME 43 | ISSUE 11 | NOVEMBER 2022

12



## WOMEN IRAN'S NEW REVOLUTIONARIES

### Feature

#### 08 RATIONALITY

Revolution Against Dogma



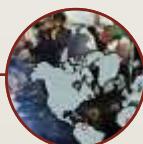
#### 16 PROUTNOMICS

Problem is Wealth Concentration,  
Not Misdistribution



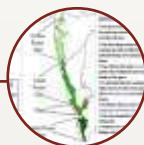
#### 20 PROUT ANALYSIS

Revisit Nationalism for the  
21st Century



#### 23 ECOLOGY ISSUES

The Western Ghats is Waiting



#### 27 WOMEN'S WORK PROBLEMS

The Jute Press



#### 29 MICROFINANCE

How Ghana's Susu System Helps  
The African Diaspora



#### REGULARS

05 Editorial  
06 Letters

07 Inspirational  
45 Activities  
50 Prabhat Samgiita

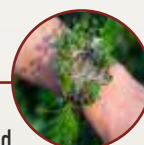
#### 32 Ecology

Pakistan's Floods Show the  
Climate Crisis is Also a Debt Crisis



#### 34 NATURE WATCH

The Rights of Nature  
Movement Cannot Be Stopped



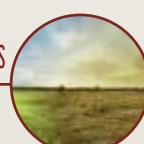
#### 38 HIDDEN AGENDA

Union Govt. Tells SC : 'Don't Push  
for Mandatory Rules to Curb  
Pharma-Doctor Nexus



#### 41 CLIMATE CHANGE & FARM YIELDS

Climate Change Drives Down Yields  
and Nutrition of Indian Crops



“Culturally advanced people may not necessarily be civilized if there is a lack of rationality, reasoning and control. Similarly, so-called culturally backward people may not necessarily be socially backward.”  
– Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar

# Fundamental Principles of PROUT

- 1 No individual should be allowed to accumulate any physical wealth without the clear permission or approval of the collective body
- 2 There should be maximum utilization and rational distribution of all mundane, supra mundane and spiritual potentialities of the universe
- 3 There should be maximum utilization of the physical, metaphysical and spiritual potentialities of unit and collective body of the human society.
- 4 There should be a proper adjustment amongst these physical, metaphysical, mundane, supra mundane and spiritual utilizations.
- 5 The method of utilization should vary in accordance with the changes in time, space and person and the utilization should be of progressive nature.

## Editor

Ācārya Santosānanda Avadhūta

## Editorial Board

Ācārya Acyutananda Avadhuta / Ācārya Vedaprajanananda Avadhuta / Sohail Inayatullah / Steven Landau / Surender Reddy

General Manager : Pranav Koul

Circulation Manager : Ramkesh Choudhary

Correspondents : Kanhu Charan Behura / Ravindra Singh

Layout & Design : Suman Kumar

## Rate (INDIA)

Newstand Price	- ₹ 30/-
Annual Subscription	- ₹ 324/-
Two Years Subscription	- ₹ 612/-
Three Years Subscription	- ₹ 864/-
Five Years Subscription	- ₹ 1350/-
Ten Years Subscription	- ₹ 2520/-

## Overseas (BY AIRMAIL)

Annual	- US\$ 45
--------	-----------

## Overseas (By Paypal)

US	- US\$ 45
Others	- US\$ 50

Payments in India may be made by cheque favouring **Neo-Humanist Education Foundation** mailed to **Acarya Santosananda Avadhuta**, Prout Bhawan, JC-48, Khirki Extension, Main Road, Malviya Nagar, New Delhi -17  
For outstation remittance from non computerized banks/branches add Rs 30.00 for bank clearance charges.  
Or amounts may be deposited directly to any branch of the State Bank of India as per details below:

**Neo-Humanist Education Foundation, State Bank of India, Malviya Nagar Branch, C-30 Malviya Nagar, New Delhi 110017**  
A/C No. 30379188250 IFSC SBIN0001493

Overseas remittances may be made by Paypal using id **prout.am@gmail.com**  
or electronic bank transfer referring above details and **Swift Code SBININBB382**



Head Office : Prout Bhawan, JC-48, Khirki Extension  
Main Road, Malviya Nagar, New Delhi - 110017  
Mobile No. : 09212199658, 9810625082 Email : prout.am@gmail.com



For enquiries, please contact :  
Mobile No(s) : 9999626164, 9350860274  
Email : proutcustomercare@gmail.com

Printed & Published by A'ca'rya Santosananda Avadhuta on behalf of Neo Humanist Education Foundation and printed at Royal Press B-82, Okhla Industrial Area Phase-1, New Delhi-110020 and published from PROUT Bhawan, JC-48, Khirki Extension, Main Road, Malviya Nagar, New Delhi - 110017  
Editor : A'ca'rya Santosananda Avadhuta



## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

# TURMOIL IN IRAN

Iran one of the cradles of human civilization is in turmoil today. In 1979 there was a revolution in Iran that ousted the Shah and the dogmatic rule of the clergy followed. Oppressed were mostly women who were literally treated as second class citizens and forcibly subjected to medieval rules of dressing.

The current protests transcend social sectarian boundaries, bringing together a much broader strata of Iranian society than seen before. According to state media 40 people have died since the start of demonstrations in mid-September. Rights group Amnesty International says at least 52 have been killed. Over 1,000 people are believed to have been detained, including journalists and artists.

Compared to previous uprisings in 2009, 2017 and 2019 that killed 1500 people, the current protest is gaining momentum every day. The latest demonstrations follow similar, but less widespread, protests against the government and have spread to almost all cities and towns of Iran. Several factors about this uprising is totally different to all riots of last 44 years. The main different feature of this movement is participation of women. Girls as young as sixteen all over Iran are removing their compulsory scarves and burning them.

It all started in the capital Tehran which has been convulsing with demonstrations since the death on September 16 of Mahsa Amini, the 22-year-old Kurdish-Iranian woman who was detained by the country's Morality Police for how she was dressed. Two days later social media video showed cars filling the streets shortly after news spread of the crackdown on students, horns blaring in solidarity with protesters as the showdown unfolded at the university, known for educating Iran's best and brightest students.

Secondary schools and universities around the country are flashpoints, and women and girls have been taking off their mandatory headscarves, known as hijabs. "These oppressors think that our generation is the previous generation. We are not. Let me assure you," a protester from Tehran's prestigious Sharif University of Technology told CNN, referring to Iranian police who had violently cracked down on demonstrators on campus, and detained scores of young people.

For decades, women's veiled heads have embodied the state's pervasive authority. But now, the young women of Iran are calling the regime's authority into question with every uncovered braid. Worn by law the veil has long served as a reminder of the Islamic Republic's power. But now, stripped off and waved in furious protest by young women, it has come to symbolize the gulf between the population's demands and what the government is willing, or even able, to provide.

The root cause behind all this, however, is the injustices against women with respect to their social rights and because women are economically crippled, they have been exploited since thousands of years. The current protests by young women are a reflection of this in the dogmatic society of Iran, where women's freedom and feelings are suppressed by force.

The current protests may eventually be quashed or simply lose momentum, but analysts say Iran can expect another cycle of nationwide demonstrations in months to come. No one can predict what is going to happen, what is obvious is that there are not any signs of surrender. Rightly so as Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar Prout's founder said, "A handful of unprincipled, power-hungry men propagated these doctrines in order to paralyse women's reasoning, and to inflate men's vanity. This doctrine is against nature and we have only to look out into this wide world to find numerous proofs against it. Can anybody drape a burkha over a tigress? Is there anyone with enough courage to do it? Can anyone dictate to a tigress, you cannot cross this boundary, or you cannot take part in games and sports, for this is prohibited to women"? In today's age there can be no place for such medieval concepts. ●



## Mental Complexes and Psychic Exploitation

Harming and exploiting fellow human beings is the most serious of crimes as per cardinal human values. But, unfortunately, man-made laws protect the exploiters, and in all spheres of life, this creates serious problems of mental balance in society. Right-thinking people need to recognize this, guard against it, and lead society away from such tendencies.

- Swarnima Sen, Kolkata

## Unbinding the Bonded

It is sad that despite UN mandates, this practice of slavery continues in India today. What is even more unfortunate is that law enforcement agencies do not enforce it and look the other way in collusion with the exploiters, especially in the case of child labour. Children should be in school learning, playing, having fun, and not doing backbreaking work for a pittance.

- Sagarika Sharma, Sonapur

## Building a New Era

An excellent sequel to the article published in the October issue. The issues raised are significant and need to be addressed immediately.

- Rachel D'Souza, Goa

## Party-less Democracy

It's an old but good concept and needs to be implemented urgently to elect proper people to Office.

- Hariharan SK, Vellore

## Sri Lankan Crisis

The crisis in neighbouring Sri Lanka is caused mainly due to corrupt people in power. It's sad that a country that was rated high on the quality of life for its people finds itself in this difficult position, deep in national debt and the corrupt leaders having fled.

- SR Mahalingam, Kochi

## Welfarebies

It is very true. Freebies are distinct from Welfare. Free education is not a freebie nor free nutritional meals for school children in rural areas. It's a pity that what the government should have done on their own, the Courts are now stepping in to tell them.

- TS Vimal Kumar, Chennai

## Noida Twin Towers Demolition

It's a shame that a Court order had to bring down the heights of the illegally constructed residential towers. It is such a criminal waste of Mother Earth's resources, and why was it allowed to happen in the first place? That a symbol of the height of corruption became a national spectacle on TV is equally bad.

Ashu Singh, Noida

## Democratic Governance System

It is an excellent and incisive article by Acarya Dhanjoo Ghista. The new governance solutions he advocated are very plausible and can be quickly tried out for the benefit of the mass of people.

- Felicita Diishama, Raipur

## Ministry of Equality

What a novel concept in Columbia. Though no two persons can be equal, it is against nature. It could perhaps be the first step towards the rational distribution without

discrimination of earth's resources for economic upliftment and welfare.

- Garcia Simmones, Costa Rica

## Sex Work and Dignity

The author has done excellent work highlighting this problem. The picture quotes on page 39 say it all. Prout's founder said: "Because of injustices against women with respect to their social rights and because women are economically crippled, a section of women is compelled to take to prostitution". It is an injustice that one should remove. There is hardly any point in legalizing this profession, as that would not help solve the issue.

- Arun Prakash, New Delhi

## Prabhat Samgiita Divas

Regarding activities on the auspicious occasion of Prabhat Samgiita Divas the very insightful talk on Prabhat Samgiita by Arun Prakash ji, this great odyssey of Baba started with *Bandhu He Niye Calo*, the first Prabhat Samgiita, on September 14, 1982, in Deoghar and continued until the penultimate day of his worldly life, October 20, 1990. The 5018 Prabhat Samgiita songs express the innermost devotional feelings of the devotee. Prabhat Samgiita opens a new vision of how we are all brought together and connected to the Divine Entity and, thereby, to spirituality and immortality. Prabhat Samgiita promotes many novel themes: universal welfare for poor people, social commitment and love for all beings, neohumanism opening to universalism, and mysticism endeavouring to link with the ultimate reality. We need to offer a course on Prabhat Samgiita, for which we need to set up our new-era university. Then, doctoral students will look into the deeper meanings of these songs and develop a new spiritual understanding of the people and this world. ●

- Acarya Dhanjoo Ghista, USA



# TIME BANK

A student in Switzerland writes: While studying in Switzerland, I rented a house near the school. The landlady Kristina was a 67-year-old single lady who had worked as a teacher in a secondary school before she retired. Switzerland's pension is good enough not to worry about food and shelter in her later years. However, she found "work" - to take care of an 87-year-old single old man. I asked if she was working for money. Her answer surprised me: "I do not work for money, but I put my time in the 'time bank', and when I cannot move in my old age, I can withdraw it."

The first time I heard about this "time bank" concept, I was inquisitive and asked the landlady more. The original "Time Bank" was an old-age pension program developed by the Swiss Federal Ministry of Social Security.

People save the 'time' taking care of the elderly when they are younger, and when they become old, ill or need care can withdraw it. Applicants must be healthy, good at communicating and full of love. Every day they have to look after the elderly who need help. Their service hours will be deposited into the social security system's personal 'time' accounts. She went to work twice a week, spending two hours each time helping the elderly, shopping, cleaning their rooms, taking them out to sunbathe, and chatting with them. According to the agreement, after one year of her service, "Time Bank" will calculate the aggregate period she has worked and issue her a "time bank card". And, when she needs someone to take care of her, she can use her "time bank card" to withdraw "time and time interest". After proper verification, "Time Bank" will assign other volunteers to care for her at the hospital or home.

One day, I was in school, and the landlady called and told me that she had fallen off the stool while wiping the window. I quickly took leave and escorted her to the hospital for treatment. Unfortunately, the landlady had a fracture in her ankle and needed to stay in bed for a few days. While preparing to apply for a home to take care of her, the landlady told me I need not worry about her. She had already submitted a 'withdrawal' request to the "Time Bank". Sure enough, in less than two hours, "Time Bank" sent a nursing worker to come and take care of the landlady. The nursing worker took care of the landlady daily, chatted with her and made delicious meals for her. Under the meticulous care of the nursing worker, the landlady soon recovered her health. After recovering, the landlady went back to "work". She said she intends to save more time in the "time bank" while still healthy.

In Switzerland, using "Time Bank" to support old age has become common. The Swiss government also passed legislation to support the "Time Bank" scheme. What a Beautiful concept! I hope it gets adopted all over the world too!!! ●

*Author unknown*



“

*“Women are considered second class citizens in each and every religion. If equal status is given to women, it will be very difficult to exploit them.”*”

G

add is a very ancient verb that means doing something without following any logic. When the human intellect was undeveloped, cunning people used to infuse various kinds of fear complexes, irrational ideas and unhealthy, selfish tendencies into the people's minds to stop them from following the path of logic and reason. Sometimes people were prevented from following the path of rationality, and on other occasions, they were won over through magic shows, sleight of hand or so-called miraculous feats.

By concocting many spurious and absurd stories, the cunning exploiters made others dance according to their wishes, like marionettes dressed in gaudy, coloured clothes in a puppet show. The exploiters would pull the strings from behind the scene. And the common people would move their hands and feet according to the whims of their masters. The people kept dancing, stamping their feet and gyrating their hips, so they could never find the path of rationality. The very attempt to

# Revolution AGAINST Dogma

Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar



find the path of rationality was considered blasphemous.

A Movement devoid of logic and reason is called "dogma," and a collection of dogma is called an "ism." When the advocates of dogma and the followers of isms lacked sufficient charisma to convince people through the power of their personalities, they tried to persuade them by taking the name of God. They openly exploited others in the name of the Supreme. Sometimes they said, "I

have received certain instructions in a dream. God's commandments are that you should follow these instructions." At other times they would intimidate people saying, "If you violate these commandments you will suffer eternal damnation." Thus, they created complexes in people's minds, forcing them to accept all kinds of dogma and follow them out of fear.

They also created many fanciful and appealing stories and



demanded that people accept them as the truth. They declared that those who listened to these stories with reverence, holding a copper pot containing Gaṇḡā water and basil leaves, would attain heavenly bliss, while those who showed any disrespect or disregard for them would be annihilated. Common, fearful people accepted such dogma without the slightest protest and believed that absurd, mind-boggling stories were spiritual discourses.

Sometimes the exponents of dogma raised slogans supporting particular theories, even though most people were convinced that they were impractical and could never be applied in the real world. When the people did not get any benefit from them, they were told that they would have to work even harder. Such impractical theories ignored the fundamental characteristics of the human mind, so their proponents tried to encourage the greed of the exploited people and berated them with ideological jargon. Thus, dogma has had an extremely negative influence on ordinary people. It is the consequence of the play of dogma.

I have said before that isms

can never help establish universalism. Rather, they merely whip up artificial differences among human beings. By arousing narrow sentiments, the adherents of dogma hope to fulfill their selfish aspirations. Isms are nothing but a collection of dogma. Modern, educated people must be liberated from all sources of dogma and petty isms. They should reject the worn-out shackles of the past and welcome the new, crimson dawn with an open mind. It will prepare the way for all-round success in human life and attaining the highest fulfillment.

The followers of dogma do not want people to tread the path of rationality. You must have noticed that the flag-bearers of dogma do not support scientific development. Although some scientific theories are based on dogma, and although some scientists are hesitant to leave the labyrinth of dogma, dogma has, comparatively, little influence on science. The worst propounders of dogma – the kings of dogma – do not want people to develop mental clarity. They do not wish for the penetrating illumination of the sun's light to pierce through the

mists of dogma. They do not want people to bathe in the radiant light of the day and stand under the clear, unclouded sky.

If you examine this issue deeply, you will observe that today's young generation is unwilling to accept outdated, dogmatic theories and isms. If the knowledge of Bhagavat Dharma (the path of spirituality) is infused in young minds at the first flush of the new dawn, it will tear dogma asunder in an instant.

The upholders of dogma partly realize that clear, penetrating vision portends their doom. Consequently, some even exhort their followers, "Do not read such and such books... Do not even touch those books... They will cloud your judgement and confuse you." However, the facts speak differently. Simply browsing through such books may or may not influence peoples' minds, but studying them properly will definitely break the shackles of dogma.

### **The Rudimental Cause of Religious Dogma**

Religious dogma gave new meaning to the concept of life after death. People were taught that they



*Galileo facing the Roman Inquisition*

were poor because they had committed sinful acts in their past lives and that they were rich because their past deeds were virtuous. Such teachings blocked any revolt against social disparity. Do you see how dangerous religious dogma was and still is today? Analyse every aspect of life that has been infected by religious dogma. You will find that the advocates of dogma are always motivated by the psychology of exploitation.

Should one dogma be replaced by another dogma of the same order or another order? Should a dogma of a positive order be replaced by a dogma of a positive order or by a dogma of a negative order? A dogma is an illogical, irrational sentiment. All dogma must be replaced by non-dogma. Gautam Buddha said that anger should be overcome by sweetness, miserliness by generosity, falsehood by truthfulness, hatred by love and sorrow by happiness. If we adopt the same approach, does this mean replacing a negative dogma with a positive dogma? No, because these attributes are mental propensities, not dogma. As Buddha advocated, positive ones should replace all negative mental propensities. It is the proper approach.

All human beings want to lead a secure, harmonious life and have the opportunity to express themselves and progress. However, religious dogma goes against these fundamental human aspirations. Some priests, for example, say that if women dance, their feet will become useless. Therefore, they should not dance. It is dogma. Other priests force people to worship particular deities out of fear. People are told that if they do not worship the prescribed deity, a calamity will befall their families, and the deity will even take revenge on them. But can a deity take revenge, just like bad people do? If it can, how

can it be a deity? It is all dogma.

Women are considered second-class citizens in each and every religion. If equal status is given to women, it will be tough to exploit them. So to avoid this happening, women are kept oppressed. The exploitation of women has been continuing for centuries. Some religions say that if the husband is virtuous, the wife benefits, so the wife does not have to do anything herself. Other religions say that men can go to heaven, but women must remain at heaven's gate. All this is dogma. Intelligent people know that nobody can share the virtues or vices of others. Everybody has to move with their own *samskaras* or reactions to past actions.

As I have said, a collection of dogma is called an "ism." Where

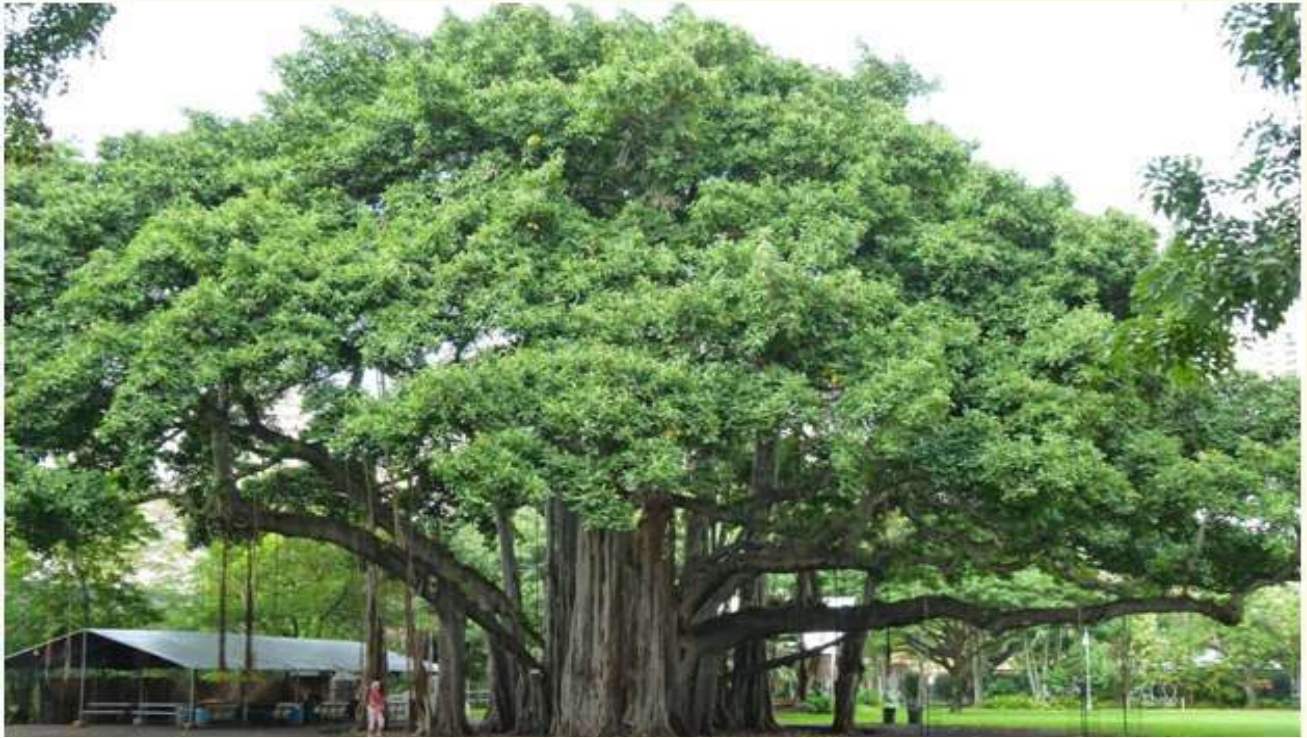
there is no logic and reason, dogma arises, whatever form it may take. Isms go beyond their small periphery when they are permeated by feelings for humanity – and not only humanity but feelings for all living beings. The gigantic dinosaurs of the past and the tiny ants of today have the same existential value. Whatever humans do in this world must be done for all creatures, including the largest animals and the tiniest insects.

You have to utilize all your skills to elevate all creation. You must think for all, plan for all and act for all. From the Absolute perspective, there is no difference between one person and another, between humans and animals and between living beings and non-living beings. You cannot draw a



*Buddha painting in Ajanta caves*





line of distinction between movable and immovable objects.

Any narrow ism may be transformed into universalism and accepted by all only when all physical barriers, psychic hindrances and spiritual impediments have been removed from the periphery of that ism. I have explained a new idea in the book called “The Liberation of Intellect – Neohumanism.” The term “Neohumanism” has been used in that book, keeping this new idea in mind.

Not even a tree branch is useless – it has feelings of pleasure and pain. Therefore, we should only cut the branch of a tree when it is absolutely necessary. Just as you have the right to live, so do others. The lives of others are as important to them as your life is to you; another person's life is as important to him or her as my life is to me. You should keep this idea in your mind when you think of others.

Similarly, the life of a goat is as important to it as my life is to me. During religious festivals, many innocent goats are killed and offered as sacrifices to various

deities. The remaining goats are made to chew on leaves as they watch in wide-eyed fear, knowing they will soon meet the same fate. Now, put yourself in the same situation. Imagine that a few demons have captured you and some others. Then, as you are fed rice and pulse, the demons systematically slaughter you all, one after another. The horrified reaction that will arise in your mind as you wait to be butchered is the same as that experienced by the captive goats. If people still want to kill innocent goats in their religious sacrifices after realizing the cruelty of this practice, tragically, there is nothing that anyone can say to them.

Rich, selfish people sometimes suppress the poorer sections of society by binding them with illogical ideas to accumulate greater wealth or enjoy more luxury. The caste system in India has been used to exploit people in this way. In the past, for example, high-caste people propagated the idea that it was a sin for so-called low-caste milk vendors to give them water. It was done to ensure that the high-caste

people were supplied with pure, undiluted milk. However, it was not considered a sin for high-caste people to take water from so-called low-caste sweet vendors. Otherwise, high-caste people would not have been permitted to consume the numerous delicious sweets prepared from milk and water.

The privileged classes invariably think of their own comforts. So they infuse the poorer sections of society with inferiority complexes to exploit them and then force them to become their obedient servants. But eventually, the poor people revolt against such exploitation, even if it takes one, two, three or more generations. People will always rebel against those things that go against human psychology. Revolution is inevitable when oppression crosses the limits of human tolerance and endurance.

All dogma must be rooted out. So you should start a revolution against dogma. But to start a revolution, you need courage. So gather that courage and start a revolution against dogma. ●



# WOMEN IRAN'S NEW REVOLUTIONARIES

 Karunakshim Vatsalam

“

*“Forced veiling was unpopular with many Iranian women from the beginning.”*



*An Iranian woman without hijab addresses demonstrators for equal rights for women in 1979.*

**I**ran, one of the cradles of human civilization since the Persian Achaemenian dynasty founded by Cyrus the Great (6th to 4th century BC), is in turmoil today, and at the forefront are young college and school-going women who are taking on the authorities of a dogmatic and repressive regime.

The immediate trigger of the protest was the death of a 22-year-

the hospital in a coma, with bruises on her face and blood dripping from her ear, were shared online, they quickly went viral — and provoked fury. After she died a few days later, the protests exploded into the largest mass demonstrations Iran had seen for years.

The hijab is mandatory in Iran — though in 1936, Reza Shah Pahlavi — the father of the Shah of Iran deposed in the 1979 revolution — barred women from

wearing the veil, or hijab, in public to Westernize Iran. Women who wore the veil in public could have it forcibly yanked off their heads, which effectively confined many religious women and those from conservative families to their homes. The law was so unpopular that it lasted only a few years. But it was enough to cement the hijab as a symbol not just of religious identity but also of battles over national identity.

## Repressive Politics

But further repressive politicization of the veil began with the Islamic Republic's law mandating it and enforcing it in a crude oppressive manner. Women deeply resented it. After the 1979 revolution, the hijab again took centre stage in Iranian politics as a symbol of the new government's Islamic identity. Then, unveiled women symbolized the secular, Western character of the Shah's regime. Now, veiled women symbolize the Islamic national identity of the post-revolution Islamic Republic, a visible symbol of the government's level of control over society — black-clad personifications of state power.

Forced veiling, it's important to note, was unpopular with many Iranian women from the beginning. One of the first major post-revolution protests occurred when women demonstrated against a mandatory hijab law. It was not until years after the Iran-Iraq war had allowed the government in Tehran to consolidate internal power in the face of an external enemy that the regime put new modesty rules into place. "Compulsory veiling becomes law, but it also becomes a part of the central identity of the Islamic Republic," said Narges Bajoghli, a professor of Middle East Studies at Johns Hopkins University and the author of "Iran Reframed: Anxieties of Power in the Islamic Republic."

Long before protests started spreading across Iran last month, the hijab — the Islamic headscarf that Iranian law requires women to wear in public, along with modest loose-fitting clothing — had been at the centre of conflicts over national identity, religious authority and political power for decades. And for decades, women's veiled heads have embodied the state's pervasive authority. But now, the young women of Iran are calling the regime's authority into question with every uncovered braid. The hijab rule had been relaxed when the more reformist Hassan Rouhani was in power, but since the hardliner President Ebrahim Raisi took over in 2021, enforcement has been strict. According to Iranian experts, the young, educated, and more internationally exposed Iranians have been protesting against the hijab, and other restrictions for a long, and Amini's death served as the last straw.

Chanting "Women, Life, Freedom", the leaderless protests have spread from town to town, crossing provincial, class and ethnic boundaries. Moreover, it directly targeted the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khomeini, - in whom are vested - the enormous religious, political and military might of a state, and where the regime can punish political dissent with death.



## Regime's Response

Iran is known for its iron-fist response to protests. In 2019, during agitations against inflation, security forces killed around 1,500 people, Reuters has reported. This time, the state has yet to unleash its full might, though it has made no outreach towards the supporters. Some experts believe this is because the government is unsure how to respond, with brutality likely to fan the flames further. Others have said the indecision is because of factionalism amid the power circles. The ayatollah is in his 80s and reportedly sick, and his successor has not been picked yet.

This time on the ground, several activists and journalists have been arrested or detained, though there is no clarity on the numbers. According to an Associated Press report, an Oslo-based group called Iran Human Rights "estimates at least 154 people have been killed, though that includes an estimated 63 people killed in violence in the eastern Iranian city of Zahedan. Iranian authorities have described the Zahedan violence as involving unnamed separatists."

Even though supportive of the current regime, many right-thinking people are saying, "Why are we doing this to our children? This doesn't make sense anymore for this religion, for this generation". Even Hassan Khomeini, a grandson of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the founder of the 1979 Islamic revolution, had issued a public statement supporting Amini and calling for the government to engage in dialogue.

## Regime's Existential Threat

The threat posed by these protests, analysts say, is existential to the regime and is one of the Islamic Republic's biggest challenges in years. "These are primarily very, very young people, a younger generation who have apparently



completely lost faith that this Islamic Republic can be reformed," said Trita Parsi, executive vice president at the Washington, DC-based Quincy Institute. "They're breaking from their previous generation who was seeking to reform the system from within," Parsi added. "This new generation seems to not have any faith in that at all."

### Political Changes

At the same time, the country was going through important political changes. In the revolution's early days, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini was very popular, and his hard-line faction easily found a broad base of support among the

population, Bajoghli said. But his successor, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who took office in 1989 and is Iran's current supreme leader, was less popular and less respected as a cleric.

Khamenei worked to build a base of support among the country's ultra-religious conservatives to shore up his power. But over time, as Iran has become a younger and more urban country, that base has grown smaller and shattered into competing factions, Bajoghli said. Today, the ayatollah is 83 years old and reportedly in poor health, raising the prospect of a succession struggle shortly. Nevertheless, he

is still believed to have the support of Iran's powerful and heavily armed Revolutionary Guard and many of its paramilitary militias. However, the reaction to Amini's death has highlighted the growing dissatisfaction even elite supporters of the Islamic Republic may have with his hard-line approach.

That has left Iran's hard-line faction in a political bind: It faces a shrinking political base and one that is increasingly out of step with society. Authorities have responded with intensifying violence to crush the dissent, apparently unwilling to allow any alternative vision of Iranian identity.



*Schoolgirls in Isfahan*

### Social Changes due to Education

But the veil requirements may have helped to set Iran on the path to the current protests in an unexpected way: by making conservative families more comfortable allowing their daughters to go to university. Narges Bajoghli, professor of Middle East Studies at Johns Hopkins University and the author of 'Iran Reframed: Anxieties of Power in the Islamic Republic' says: "All of a sudden, in their minds, society had become Islamic, and therefore it was safe for their daughters to leave home and go away for college," Today, women make up more than half of university graduates.

Education opened new opportunities for women to enter public life. And that, in turn, led many to become dissatisfied with the limitations they found there, such as rules that barred women from holding senior judgeships. "In the mid-1990s and 2000s, there's a lot of folks from within the religious components of society beginning to say, 'We need to rethink these laws because it's beginning to impact our peers'," Narges Bajoghli adds.





*Iran's Revolutionary Guards*

## Women, Life, Freedom

Mahsa Amini was Kurdish, and the slogan adopted by protesters, “Women, Life, Freedom,” originated with Kurdish militants. Voiced by the youth of Iran, it conjures a vision of a society that is more equal not just along gender lines but ethnic ones, as well, Bajoghli said.

The danger of imbuing restrictions on women’s bodies with such potent political symbolism, it turns out, is that women will seize that symbolic power for themselves. Women’s veiled heads have embodied the state’s pervasive authority for decades. But now, the young women of Iran are calling the regime’s authority into question with every uncovered braid.

## Millennium Generation is Different

The generation born in the 2000s is different in its outlook, methods of protest, and demands. It is confirmed in conversations with Iranians. A 68-year-old retired high school teacher residing in northeastern Mashad said: “These protests are very different than anything I have witnessed before. I didn’t see such scenes even during

the 1979 revolution. What I see from this generation born after the 2000s is unbelievable. Over the past 40 years I have taught several generations of students all over my city, but this is a different generation.” A 36-year-old female principal of a girls’ high school in Mashad told us: “Our students have a distinct approach that in my opinion is very transparent and direct. This is a big difference with my generation who were born in the 1980s. I even see this in their interactions with their parents. As a result, they become very united during protests and very clearly and directly express their demands and anger.”

Amini’s death sparked the protests, but the tinder that turned them into a conflagration was a series of changes that has been playing out for decades in Iran, leaving the hard-line government increasingly out of step with the demands of the population. It was much more than anger over a tragic, scandalous death. The protests, led by women, have galvanized a broad swath of Iranian society to rise in one of the most significant political movements the Islamic Republic has seen since its founding in 1979. And the protests are underpinned

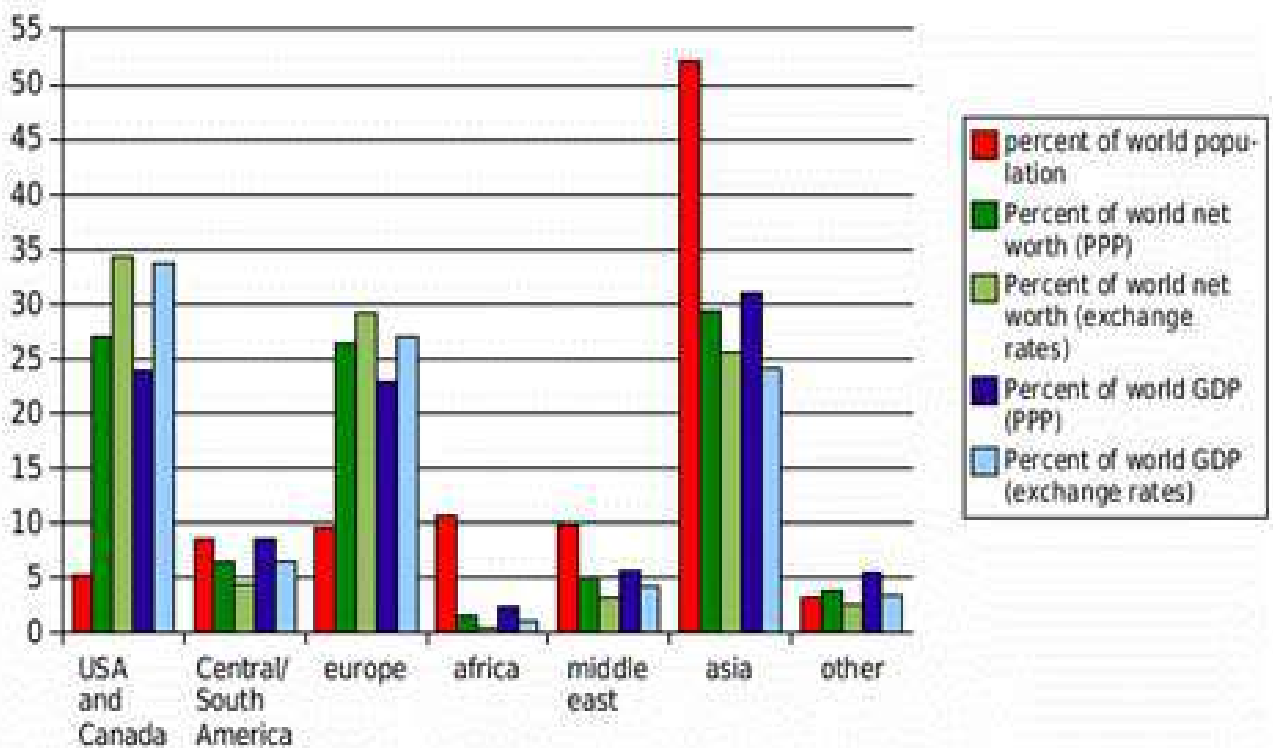
by pervasive economic distress. Crippled by sanctions ever since its nuclear deal with the US broke down in 2015, Iran is witnessing both high inflation and high unemployment. Many Iranians feel that the effect of the sanctions has been worsened by domestic mismanagement and corruption. Anger had been building up as jobs became hard to come by, and the cost of daily items rose and is now fuelling the current protests.

Iranian authorities believe that a combination of internet shutdowns, mass arrests, and some violence against protesters will slow the protests’ momentum. However, no one can predict what will happen. The state has loyal enforcers who can be called upon and are willing to kill their fellow citizens to end this round of protests. However, the protestors and their supporters are defiant. There appears to be no sign of surrender from these leaderless protests that have spread across all sections of society and ethnicities in Iran.

Here it is worthwhile to reiterate the words of Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar; “Can anybody drape a burkha over a tigress? Is there anyone with enough courage to do it?” ●

# Problem is Wealth Concentration, not Misdistribution

Prabhakar T Øverland



**M**ost alternative economic thinkers seem to think there is something seriously wrong with how wealth is distributed today. They say

prosperity should not be reserved for a few. Instead, it should be the property of many – the world’s riches should be more evenly distributed. PROUT does not agree with these “wealth distributors”:

“PROUT suggests that increases in per capita income are not a sufficiently reliable and scientific index to determine the standard and progress of a particular socio-economic unit. Rather, this approach is misleading and deceitful because it refers to a

***“Conventional socialists intend to distribute wealth equally; social democracies of western European depend on capitalism to sustain their social welfare programs.”***

simple mathematical calculation of total national income divided by the total population. Therefore, it does not give the correct picture of the standard of

living of the people of a particular socio-economic unit, as the wealth disparity in society is concealed.”

“Purchasing capacity is the real index of how a person’s economic needs can be met by their income. All PROUT’s plans and programmes in the socio-economic sphere should be aimed at increasing the purchasing capacity of the people. Note that

PROUT stresses increasing purchasing capacity and not per capita income.”



## Wealth Distribution

In particular, wealth distribution is the darling of statisticians and materialist socialists: Statistics – The chart further below shows that wealth is unevenly distributed worldwide. For instance: Africa holds just above 10 percent of the world's population and hardly any wealth. Asia is the home of more than half of us but holds just a bit more wealth than the US and Europe. The US is home to five per cent of the world's population and holds up to one-third of the world's wealth. The uselessness of such figures and the thinking behind them are indicated in the quote above.

Socialism – Conventional socialists intend to distribute wealth equally. They state that by distributing wealth more evenly, social justice will increase. The two main problems with their concept seem to be: – Wherever egalitarian distribution has been attempted. It has resulted in extreme concentration of wealth in

### Year on year

- 2030 : The richest 1% will control two-thirds of the World's wealth. (House of Commons, UK library figures).
- 2019 : The world's 26 richest people own the same wealth as the poorest half of humanity. – Oxfam
- 2018 : The super-rich accumulated 82% of the wealth created the year before – the poorest half of world got nothing. – Oxfam
- 2017 : World's Eight richest men are as wealthy as half the world's population.
- 2016 : World's richest 62 people as wealthy as half of the world population. – Oxfam
- 2015 : 1% of the world's population will own more wealth than the other 99% by next year. – Oxfam

### In Russia 25 years after the collapse of Communism:

- 1% of the Russian population controlled 71% of all wealth.
- 110 persons controlled 35% of all wealth.
- More than 9 out of 10 Russians owned less than the equivalent of Ten Dollars

(source: Credit Suisse 2013)

the hands of the representatives of the public: State capitalism and state dictatorship were and are still rampant under communism, leading to the same level of brutality and injustice, if not more than under capitalism.

The social democracies of western Europe depend on capitalism to sustain their social welfare programs. Consequently, their dream of providing some measure of welfare even for their poor is cracking at the seams now





that capitalism faces collapse. Socialist distribution tends toward increasing stagnancy as people get used to having their basic needs met without making a real effort to earn their way. In a system where everybody receives according to need and is required to “produce according to capacity”, - the number of people who care to contribute to the collective diminishes. Consequently, the number of people who develop themselves significantly decreases in such a system.

### Wealth Concentration

World distribution of household wealth in the year 2000. Source: Wikipedia .Wealth is indeed concentrated in a few hands today. Only on the financial side, in 2007, 147 companies controlled nearly 40 percent of the monetary value of all transnational corporations. The essential problems with the ownership of “the one per cent” are:

Resources are kept away from those who could use them for: Survival, Development, and Realizing fresh potentialities. The

income gap, generated by the increasing number of unemployed and relatively and absolutely poor who cannot fend properly for themselves and serve their debts, becomes an albatross around capitalism’s neck.

In times of uncertainty, the super-rich withdraw their vast resources, leading to recessions and depressions with severe consequences for the middle classes and the poor. Monopolies breed monoculture, particularly in agriculture and throughout markets in general. Wealth concentration is a grave problem. Nonetheless, its solution requires us to think of something more practical than the utopia of uniform distribution of wealth:

Firstly, thinking in terms of economic equality would be as wishful as believing that God’s invisible hand will regulate capitalism’s markets for the good of all. Secondly, materialist socialism has already proved that the idea of equal distribution is a great economic evil, as indicated above. Thirdly, social, mental, and other more subtle existential

challenges are not resolved in materialist and self-centred systems such as the modern welfare states of Europe; rather, such problems are rampant there.

### Unlimited Wealth

PROUT recognizes the need to limit individual wealth accumulation for a different reason than the “wealth distributors” do. As the world’s physical wealth is limited, one person’s accumulation will surely result in scarcity for others. Hence PROUT’S first fundamental principle states the need for the limitation of wealth accumulation.

What we require to devise a rational approach to wealth distribution is a system that recognizes the physical world’s limitations and the boundlessness of other, more subtle potentialities. PROUT aims at such a system by, first of all, decentralizing the physical economy: The initial step would be to recognize the right of local people to control their economic life to ensure maximum utilization of existing resources and skills and to develop more



dormant potentialities. A second step would be to organize the large majority of production, distribution, sales, trade, etc., through Cooperatives. For this to happen, we must abolish the ideas of capitalism and materialist socialism.

### Capitalists and socialists

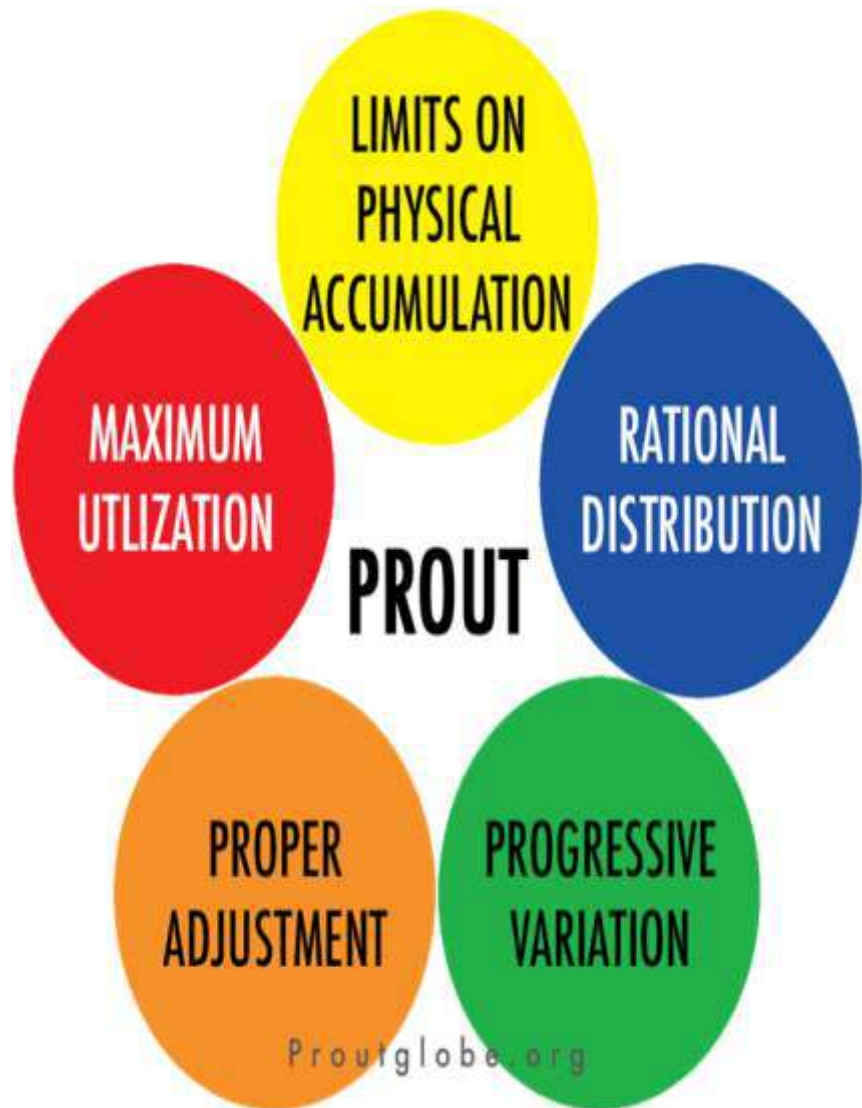
Capitalists will find no scope for capitalism in PROUT. Therefore, they will have to decide between joining this radically different, progressive-minded socio-economic setup or forgetting about capital management and taking up another vocation instead. Those who choose the former route will find that their particular capitalist skills will be recognized and utilized for the good of all but that their ability to accumulate private wealth will be strictly limited.

Socialists, on the other hand, would have to embrace the importance of the individual to the community: The value of society lies in the individual and vice versa; the state exists for the individual. In our time and age, no society can sacrifice individual worth at the altar of the collective body without having its own existential value questioned.

In economic life, handouts would only be available to the severely handicapped and aged. Employment would be how to establish oneself in society in a dignified way. PROUT's economic system is not profit-motivated but geared towards basic consumption for all. Beyond that, its goal is for all to realize their potentialities to the fullest. To live off others in perpetual unemployment will simply not be an option in PROUT's progressive system.

### Progress

Real progress denotes movement towards an increasingly subtle state of being. Hence the spiritual nature of human beings is the yardstick of any type of Proutistic



development – political, socio-economic, cultural and so on.

While physical wealth is limited, mental and spiritual wealth are in abundant supply. The socio-economic system of PROUT promotes the utilization of all this precious wealth, both for securing a fair and progressive utilization of physical wealth and for the individual and the collective's realization of life's higher potentialities.

PROUT's way of distributing wealth is intimately tied up with the need to accelerate socio-economic dynamics rather than slowing them down. In the process, PROUT seeks to adjust the utilization of physical, mental and spiritual potentialities with

each other.

While the immediate goal of PROUT's progressive socialism is to secure basic necessities for all – food, shelter, clothing, medical care and education – PROUT beckons humanity to keep progressing towards the realization of subtler and still more subtle and subtle powerful resources.

PROUT recognizes that all human beings harbour great potentialities for mental and spiritual development. The proper adjustment of the physical, mental and spiritual utilizations of individual and collective potentialities is what makes PROUT the Progressive Utilization Theory. ●



# Revisit Nationalism for the 21ST CENTURY

Prof. R.P. Singh

**T**he present Russia-Ukraine war has put the prevalent concepts of nationalism into question. Moreover, many nationalisms oppose each other: the names we hear today are Ukraine, Russia, USA, China, Taiwan, North Korea, South Korea, Israel, European Union and Japan. As a result, the concept of nationalism is under serious challenge.

Does nationalism promote ego clashes between nations for superiority over each other? Is nationalism a persistent threat to global peace and prosperity? Even after the end of the Second World War, we see the nations are always in a clash, leading to heavy disturbances and violence against innocent people on both sides. But,

has nationalism not been used frequently just as a tool to satisfy the power hunger of dominant leaders? nationalism promote ego clashes between nations for superiority over each other? Is nationalism a persistent threat to global peace and prosperity? Even after the end of Second World War, we see the nations are always in clash with each other leading to heavy disturbances and violence against the innocent people on both sides. Has Nationalism not been used frequently just as a tool to satisfy the power hunger of dominant leaders?

Further, nationalism has always protected and promoted the historical agonies and clashes among groups based on the differences of racial, ethnic,

linguistic, religious, colour or other superficial identities. The present Ukraine war is a clear testimony to this. In addition to the earlier annexation of Crimea in March 2014, the new annexation of four Ukrainian states—Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson by Russia on September 30th, 2022. The worldwide reaction and the Ukrainian counter will complicate the scenario worse. It is these nationalist differences which could not be possible to be controlled by the UNO at the time leading now the world to the brink of nuclear war. The nationalism-oriented polity is increasingly failing to resolve issues with globalised economies and digitally connected humanity,





“

**“Nationalism is an infantile thing. It is the measles of mankind.”**

**- Albert Einstein**

proving detrimental to humanity's welfare.

In this crisis, two categories of forces are at work in their own way. One is the monstrous materialist forces in the garb of capitalist and communist factions, which have polarised the nations, for example, the Russia-Ukraine war. On the other hand, there are extremist dogmatic forces, for example, Iran, North Korea, and Israel. So now we find India is at a crossroads with fuzzy economic and socio-political agendas. But on the optimistic side, these developments worldwide will surely enlighten positively and drive the harassed masses towards a universal outlook and exemplary leadership. It is hoped ultimately will lead to a better Cooperative world.

***“Nationalism is just racism with a flag.” - Peter Joseph***

### **Democracy and Governance:**

Not only this, but we also see that the nationalism of the USSR earlier and now Russia has always been anti-democratic supporting virtual monarchy. The United States of America, apparently the greatest supporter of democracy, has sacrificed democratic



traditions several times to protect its national interests. The UNO and, more so, its UN Security Council has been dominated by a few powerful nations - a mockery of democracy. The so-called nationalist proponents of democracy have themselves shown bad faith in democracy on the ground. Nationalism suits the power holders as it has helped in the past promotion of imperialism, colonialism and capitalism.

### **Economic Implications:**

The nationalist clashes have long been a heavy burden on the world's economy and nations. But, as things are going, there is a high possibility of escalation of this Russia-Ukraine war in other areas and dimensions. It can go to the extent of the Balkanisation of Russia and China. There are bound to be severe economic and social implications of massive population dislocation and loss of jobs, wealth and life.

Presently we see crises of gas,

energy, electricity, food, medicines, clothes and housing, particularly in the western world. Russia is reported to be suffering a severe shortage of superconductor chips. These chips are crucial to any smart equipment, including weapons. These are manufactured chiefly by Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, China and USA. Hence, Russia is bound to align with China to fulfil its interests.

The brotherhoods of extremists, fanatics and dogmatic faiths will complicate things more with rising violence and bloodshed.

### **Economy Numbers - Covid and War:**

The governor of RBI, Shaktikanta Das, mentioned during the announcement of the Monetary Policy Statement, 2022-23 on September 30, 2022, that the world is now facing another crisis besides COVID and the Ukraine war - the stringent monetary policy followed by many central banks

has higher interest rates on borrowings to control worldwide inflation, mainly arising from these two existing crises.

Based on an assessment of the current and evolving macroeconomic situation, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), at its meeting, decided to: Increase the policy repo rate under the liquidity adjustment facility (LAF) by 50 basis points to 5.90 per cent with immediate effect.

The American Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) raised the federal fund's target rate by 75 basis points (bps) to a range of 3% to 3.25% in its Sept 20-21, 2022 meeting, with its inflationary estimation at 8.5%. It was the third consecutive 75 bps rate hike and the fifth rate increase this year alone on behalf of the Federal Reserve.

### World Governance:

Nationalism has posed a significant threat to world peace and global governance. Unfortunately, the United Nations has not proven effective enough, just as happened to the League of Nations earlier.

Nations have emerged from geo-political or geo-cultural aspirations. Yet, ironically, the same concept of nationalism has been utilised everywhere to suppress the local aspirations of socio-cultural-geographical nature, and nationalism has been used more as a tool for dominance over other countries leading to inevitable clashes between nations and societies.

### The Solution:

Tight monetary or fiscal policy may be a tactical solution for the time being, with side effects such as reduced economic activities in terms of higher unemployment, poverty, economic inequalities and further dissatisfaction among affected, retrenched and dislocated people.

The concepts of nation and nationalism are by nature unnecessarily aggressive, highly wasteful, and destructive to neighbouring countries everywhere. Rather the world should be organised based on socio-economic similarities (as eco-regions/ bio-regions/samaj/social units) and not on power and political aggression.

### Universalism (Vasudhaivkutumbakam):

World Parliament and Government, comprised of socio-economic units or 'samajas' as propounded by Shri P R Sarkar with 'Samajniti' over 'rajniti' (polity) and 'Socialization' over 'Nationalization/Politicization' are the enduring solutions, of course, with the required direction.

Shri P. R. Sarkar has given a broad outline for the gradual establishment of the world government, emphasizing certain supportive factors like cosmic patrimony, cosmic brotherhood and the samaj movement. His directions greatly help resolve ticklish issues in this multi-polar, diverse and multi-phased pursuit and inputting refreshing philosophical and practical insights in this ever-evolving effort.

Moral activists worldwide and in India must play a crucial role in resolving the multiple crises, minimising humanity's losses and sufferings from evil deeds and consequences, confronting human society. ●





The Western Ghats (WG) is waiting for a new development model to survive the onslaught on the flora, fauna, and the humans sheltered by them and to stop the devastation caused by the name of development.

## The Western Ghats facing the threat of development:

The present development model focuses on utilitarian values, short-term gains, and self-centred philosophy. Unfortunately, it resulted in centralized planning for the benefit of a few at the cost of many while ignoring the existential value of plants and animals. As a result, the local people dependent on nature and forestry for survival have suffered due to irreparable damage to the subtlety of the Western Ghats.

Here is a short list of such damage:

- Influencing rainfall patterns
- Increasing landslides, floods, droughts, damage to water sources and agriculture, thus negatively affecting the livelihoods of the people living in those areas
- Loss of habitat for large mammals
- Breaking canopy intactness crucial for endangered avifauna (such as Malabar pied Hornbill) and arboreal life forms in the area
- Higher light penetration and desiccation
- Greater diurnal temperature fluctuation
- Causing soil erosion and compression
- Altering topography
- Modifying geo-hydrology and Upsetting microclimate, etc.

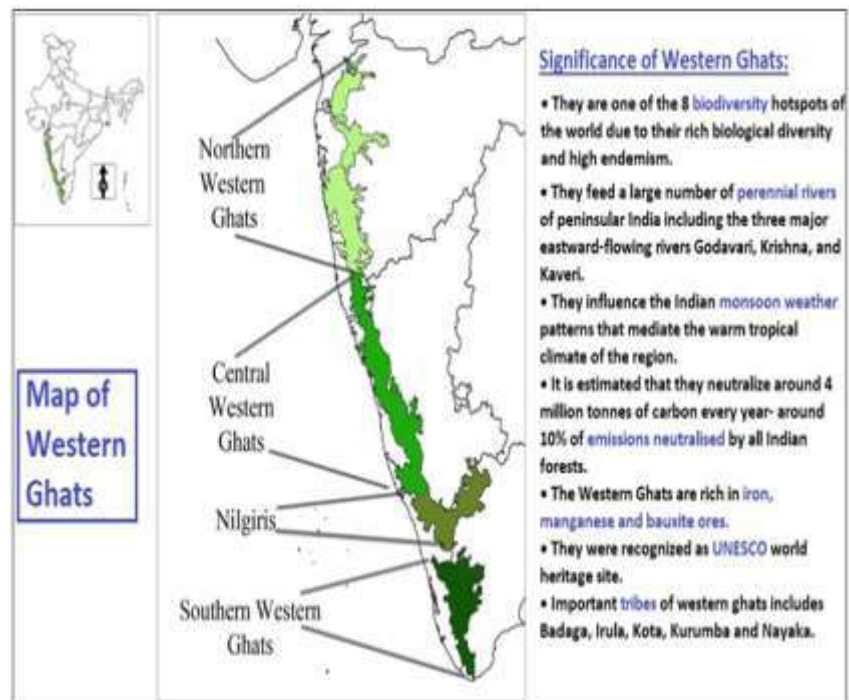
**Human-wildlife Conflict:** Farmers close to these forests lose approximately 10 to 40 percent of their annual crop production due to raiding elephants, wild boars, monkeys, and other wild animals.

**Climate Change:** The changes in land use and deforestation have led to significant variations in the duration and intensity of rainfalls. Intergovernmental Panel on

# The Western Ghats is WAITING

Ganesh Bhat Sirsi

UNESCO declared 'Western Ghats' World Heritage Site



Climate Change (IPCC) report says that the South Asian monsoon has weakened in the second half of the 20th century and adds that “human activities affect all the major climate system components, with some responding over decades and others over centuries”.

According to another research, Climate change in the next half a century could severely reduce the extent of suitable habitats for wildlife endemic to the Western Ghats. Furthermore,

mindless construction in the Western Ghats is worsening climate disasters, evidenced by the recent floods and landslides devastating life and assets in Kerala, Karnataka, Goa, and Maharashtra. In addition, the eviction of native tribes of the Western Ghats from their homelands is resulting in the erosion of the tribal culture.

## The Western Ghats:

The Western Ghats, or the Western Mountain range, from Tapi in





Gujarat to Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu, covers an area of 160,000 square km in a stretch of 1,600 km along the Indian West Coast. It traverses the States of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu. The Western Ghats are also known as Sahyadri in Maharashtra and Karnataka, Nilgiris in Tamil Nadu, and Sahya Parvatham, Annamalai, and Cardamom hills in Kerala.

The northern portion of the narrow coastal plain between the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea is known as the Konkan Coast. The central portion is called Kanara, and the southern portion is called the Malabar region or the Malabar Coast. The foothills region east of the Ghats in Maharashtra is known as Desh, while the eastern foothills of central Karnataka state are known as Malanadu. The Western Ghats emerged from a chain of events beginning when the ancient landmass of Gondwana land broke up in the early Jurassic age. Far older than the Himalayas, its eroded, time-worn rock formations rise straight up in surreal shapes and craggy cliffs to the Deccan Plateau on their East.

As India became an isolated landmass and subsequently fused with Eurasia, unique biodiversity evolved, exceptionally profuse flora and fauna endemic to the region, and found nowhere else in the world. According to UNESCO, the Western Ghats “contains some of the best representatives of non-equatorial tropical rainforests anywhere”.

### Specialties of Western Ghats

According to UNESCO, it is a World Heritage Site and is considered one of earth’s eight “hotspots” in terms of its global importance for biodiversity conservation. It has over 7,402 species of flowering plants, 1,814 species of non-flowering plants, 139 mammal species, 508 bird species, 227 reptile species, 179 amphibian species, 290 freshwater fish species, and 6,000 insect species. Many undiscovered species likely live in the Western Ghats. This region is home to more than 1500 endemic species of flowering plants and 500 species of endemic fishes, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals, i.e. they are found nowhere else in the world.

At least 325 globally threatened flora and fauna species occur in the WG, which include 229 plant species, 31 mammal species, 15 bird species, 43 amphibian species, five reptile species and one fish species.

WG is home to India’s two biosphere reserves, 13 National parks, several wildlife sanctuaries and many Reserve Forests.

Significance of Western Ghats (WG):

### Climate

Apart from their stunning beauty, the WG performs a critical function in regulating weather and ecological patterns over the entire Indian peninsula. However, the area under forests is reduced to around 30 percent. Running parallel to the western coast from Gujarat to Kerala, the WG “influence the Indian monsoon weather patterns that mediate the warm tropical climate of the region, presenting one of the best examples of the tropical monsoon system on the planet”, according to UNESCO. Furthermore, the Ghats have an average elevation of around 1,200 m and act as a critical barrier, intercepting the rain-laden monsoon winds that blow from the southwest during late summer. As a result, the Western Ghats play a significant and crucial ecological function in the sequestration of atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> and hence have an essential role in climate change.

### Hydrological

The peninsular Indian states receive most of their water supply from Fifty-eight rivers originating in the Western Ghats. It forms the catchment area for complex riverine drainage systems that drain almost 40% of India. Some rivers originating in WG and flowing towards the west are Periyar, Bharathappuzha, Netravati, Sharavathi, Mandovi, etc. The rivers that arise in the Western Ghats and flow towards the east include three major rivers.

The Godavari, Krishna, Kaveri, and many smaller tributaries/ rivers such as Tunga, Bhadra, Bhima, Malaprabha, Ghataprabha, Hemavathi, Kabini, etc.

These rivers mainly irrigate the valleys for paddy, areca nut, various vegetables, fruits, and other crops.

### Economical

The Western Ghats (WG) is rich in iron, manganese, and bauxite ores. The Western Ghats' forests are an important timber source and support many forest-based industries such as paper, plywood, poly-fibres, and matchwood. Pepper and cardamom, which are native to the evergreen forests of the WG, have been taken up as plantation crops on a large scale. Other large-scale plantations include areca nut, tea, coffee, oil palm, and rubber. In addition, the WG is home to a sizable population of tribal communities who have been deriving sustenance from the forest by

### Wayforward

We should adopt a balance between conservation efforts and development by accepting not only the utilitarian but also the existential values of all the living and so-called non-living entities, i.e. having a Neo-Humanistic mindset. Implementing a decentralized economic system of PROUT under its principle of the Balanced Economy can achieve this goal. Salient features are:

- Guarantee of minimum essentialities of life to everyone by providing suitable employment opportunities with assured purchasing power dispelling the uncertainties of the future.
- Block-level planning by utilizing the local resources to provide cent percent employment opportunities.
- Planning by utilizing the local resources to provide cent percent employment opportunities..
- By utilizing the local resources to provide cent percent employment opportunities.
- Rights over the resources to the local people to eliminate the abuse and misuse of the resources by outside profiteers.
- Encourage biodiversity-friendly farming, better manage human-wildlife conflict, and conserve forests and ecosystems.
- The principle of production for consumption and not for profiteering ensures the proper use of resources for sustainable development.
- Cooperation in production and distribution ensures social and economic justice.
- Emphasis on purchasing capacity rather than per capita income assures everyone an ever-increasing standard of life.



collecting non-timber forest produce (NTFP).

### Activities Hurting Western Ghats

The rich biodiversity in flora and fauna has made the Western Ghats a target for many corporate companies to gain resources. However, some activities responsible for severe environmental damage and social disruption are unsustainable, indiscriminate Mining for iron ore, manganese, Sand mining, and rampant Stone quarrying. In addition, environmentally disastrous development plans like infrastructure construction, railway lines, and mega tunnel projects in fragile areas destabilize the slopes and cause deforestation.

### River Diversion

Hydropower projects and large dams have submerged large chunks of forests. Secondly, converting forest land into agricultural or commercial lands (like tourism), illegal logging for timber, etc., depleted the forest cover. Plantations owned by private individuals and the corporate sector continue to grow in the WG, leading to the fragmentation of natural habitats.

### Encroachment by Human Settlements

(Politics; Consumerism; Poaching; etc.)

Efforts to Redress: Both the central and state governments have conveniently ignored the Western Ghats ecosystem's ecological significance while supporting crony capitalism. Action spearheaded by citizens to protect the Ghats has remained difficult and sometimes met active governmental resistance.

However, the circumstances forced the Centre to constitute the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP) headed by eminent ecologist Prof Madhav Gadgil. It recommended in 2011 that all Western Ghats be declared as Ecological Sensitive Areas (ESA) with only limited development allowed in graded zones. While protecting wildlife, biodiversity, and the environment, ESA integrates residents' rights.

Since these recommendations were not acceptable to the vested interests, the government constituted the Kasturirangan committee. It recommended (2013) that instead of the total area of Western Ghats, the administration should bring only

37% of the total area under ESA and a complete ban on mining, quarrying, and sand mining be imposed in ESA. Those politicians, who are the puppets of crony capitalists, are misleading and instigating the masses to reject the recommendations of both committees by creating fear that the conservation process would hamper the region's economic development and deprive a large number of people of their livelihood.

### Our Climate Future is in the Health of Western Ghats

Our world's climate depends more than ever on its few remaining biodiversity hotspots. Their natural ecosystems maintain the conditions for all species, including humans, to evolve and flourish. However, human-centred activities are breaking the symbiotic chain, threatening our existence as species interdependent with other species of animals and plants. India depends on monsoons to maintain its climate, water, and food, all of which are disrupted when the Western Ghats landscape is disrupted; We can save it only by implementing PROUT. The Western Ghats is also waiting for this auspicious moment to fulfil the duty assigned to it by the mother nature-Prakrti. ●





# THE JUTE PRESS

Chandrima S Bhattacharya

***“The most disturbing finding was the prevalence of not only sexual discrimination but also sexual harassment.”***

**W**hen an industry opens its doors to women workers, it can expose how regressive its factory floor is. The face of the jute industry in Bengal has changed over the last 50 years. Now more than ever, because of the significant presence of women. Once, these mills were known as “maagi kol” because of the substantial number of women employees, especially in the stitching department. Maagi Kol meant factories where women worked, maagi being a colloquialism and not necessarily a pejorative Bengali word for women. Mechanisation drove women away in the early 1960s. Now they are back, “manning” the new Chinese machines with huge output capacities.

“Among the 2,50,000 jute factory workers in Bengal, about 25,000 are women,” says labour activist Naba Dutta, who has worked for jute workers’ rights since the 1980s and is the founder of Nagarik Mancha, a citizens’ forum. It is difficult to arrive at a specific figure because an overwhelming number of temporary employees do not have their names on the payroll. The women are returning now, says Dutta, as the men opt out because they are dissatisfied with the daily wage — about Rs 400 — a little more than the minimum wage.

The entry of women is good for any management. Generally, they are found to be better workers, more pliant, and less prone to unionization, protests, absenteeism, and alcoholism. “Sometimes when I look up, I see only women around me in my shift,” says a young woman working in a jute mill near Naihati. A shift may employ hundreds of workers. About 55 jute mills remain functional in Bengal after decades of problems and closures. The British set up the mills in the 1880s, mainly along the banks of the Hooghly.

But what are the mills doing to the women?

Shampa Ghoshal (name changed), a woman in her 30s, single, with a child and family to support, works in the winding department of a jute mill near Calcutta. She is a graduate, but she could find no other job. So her name went up from the Employment Exchange to a jute mill. In the last three years, she has moved from mill to mill. Currently, she is working in the “B category” as a temporary employee but with benefits such as a Provident fund, gratuity and E.S.I. facilities. Ghoshal operates four winding machines at a time and works eight-hour shifts, including night shifts — something many women complain they are forced into — almost without a break. Everyone is given enormous targets. Sometimes a worker is not allowed even a toilet break because if the machines stop, the jute may get tangled. It would mean unmet targets and slashed wages.

In a good month, Ghoshal earns Rs 10,000. “But I may drop dead on the factory floor. I have lost 10 kilos in one year,” she says.

“It is a bit like Charlie Chaplin’s *Modern Times*,” says Debashish Paul, a former Anglo India Jute & Textile Industries employee at Kankinara and human rights activist. Paul is still attached to the labour office of the mill. “The targets are inhuman,” stresses Sandip Sinha Roy, a Bhatpara resident like Paul and a labour rights worker. Naseem Banu (name changed), a middle-aged woman who works in a mill in the Naihati area, says her daily target is eight pieces of jute, each 140 metres long, in eight hours. Ghoshal has to produce 450 kilos of jute thread every day.

Recently, a study was conducted by Sanhita, a gender resource centre in Calcutta, in partnership with Nagarik Mancha. They interviewed forty-six women in six jute mills around Calcutta. Of these, only two were permanent employees. They also interviewed several jute federations and jute mill union members. Jute mills suffer from the usual workplace problems for women workers: no maternity leave, earlier retirement age compared to men, no restrooms, and no changing room. “And this is not the unorganised sector. These women are on the margins of the organised sector,” says Soma Sengupta of Sanhita.

But the most disturbing finding was the prevalence of not only sexual discrimination but also sexual harassment — women being preyed upon by their male supervisors and co-workers. It works in many ways. Sexual favours are the currency with which women can buy little freedoms, be it unmet targets or a break. (Somehow, a man taking a smoke break is less illegitimate.) Women are just expected to give in. Ghoshal said when a supervisor did not get his way with her, and he



spread rumours that she was available for a few hundred rupees.

Pooja Singh (name changed), a single mother who also has to look after her ageing mother, works at the winding section of a mill near Bhatpara. She works 12 machines at a time, and her daily output target is 500 kilos. She fell in love with a colleague. He used his mobile phone to circulate a nude picture, which he claimed was hers. “I felt like killing myself. Log mujhe ganda cheez bolte hai. But I have to go on,” says Singh, tears stinging her eyes.

“Among the women we met, no one had ever heard of the 2013 Act against sexual harassment at workplace or the Vishakh Guidelines,” adds Sengupta. As Paul points out, women’s problems are often neglected because the general working conditions at jute mills are so appalling. Sengupta wants to address this very problem. She says that looking at sexual harassment as a “women’s issue”

is to marginalise it; it is a labour issue. At a time when World Bank projections put the female labour force participation in India at one of the lowest in the world, the number of women in jute mills is increasing. It shows their desperation.

The situation is doubly ironic given the history of women’s participation in the industry, says Dutta, who is researching the role of women in the jute industry and their disappearance. In the first decades of the 20th century, migrants from Bihar, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh settled in Bengal as jute mill workers. Their wives often joined the mills, creating a strong female workforce. Remarkable women such as Santosh Kumari Devi and Prabhavati Dasgupta came to lead the jute mill trade unions. Dutta says they may not have foregrounded gender in their work, but their presence alone must have introduced a new dynamic to the industry.

By the late 1940s, women were no longer in leadership positions. Dutta feels that the Left parties jettisoned them because they would not fit into the party straitjackets. By the 1960s, women workers, too, disappeared. “The industry was mechanised, but not modernised,” says Dutta. Until recently, neither mill management nor the government nor even trade union leaders would acknowledge that women are returning to jute mills. The invisible worker is the best; an organisation is the least accountable towards them.

But the women’s growing number cannot keep them invisible anymore. The workplace may be changing, too. One of the demands in the charter of demands placed before the Indian Jute Mills Association by several trade unions is for internal committees to be set up within mills to address sexual harassment in the workplace. ●



# How Ghana's Susu System

**I** was born in Nalerigu village in northeastern Ghana. For most of my life, I watched as my mother, Mariama, worked as a trader and used Susu to meet her financial needs. My mother used money from Susu to pay my school fees and to carry out her trade business. The people widely use Ghana's Susu system. Susu means "small small" in the Twi language. However, I only knew about Susu as a banking tradition in Ghana. I did not know that I would come to learn of its activity in a 'developed' country when I moved to Toronto, Canada, to carry out my doctoral studies in anthropology.

In Spring 2022, I was hired as a research assistant to work on a project to understand rotating savings and credit associations – ROSCAs. ROSCAs are voluntary mutual aid financial groups whose members distribute a lump sum of

## HELPS THE AFRICAN DIASPORA

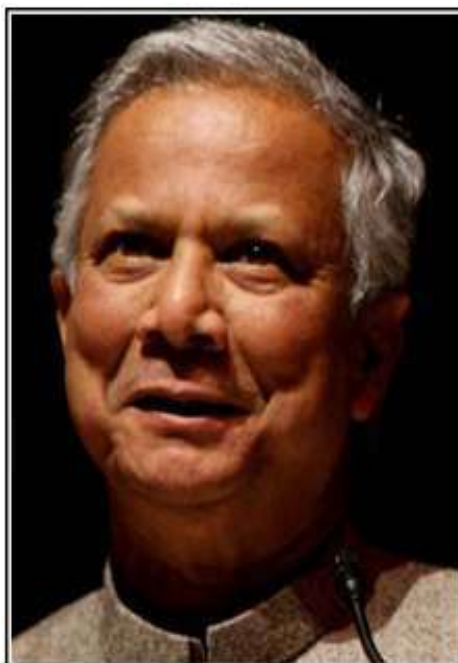
Amidu Mutaru

Savings to members of the group. ROSCAs have long been practised in countries in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific; and are culturally embedded in communal values of self-help, solidarity and reciprocity.

In my research, I learned that the ROSCAs that the 'Banker Ladies' organize are often their main banking mode. For more than a decade, University of Toronto Professor Caroline Shenaz Hossein has examined financial cooperatives in the Americas, such as Susu among the diasporas. In her work, she affectionately uses the term 'Banker Ladies' for the women who run and manage ROSCAs and holds that what they do is not simply a coping mechanism. Still, these women are taking a stand on how business is conducted and opting for collective finance. The documentary film 'The Banker Ladies' (Mondesir 2021), spotlights the ROSCA system among Black women in Canadian society, and this was when I learned that Susu is helping the African diaspora. It seems that the Banker Ladies of African heritage, from the Caribbean and Africa, use Susu-like systems out of desperation and by way of cultural affinities.

### Canadian Women Turn To Susu-Like Banks

In a meeting with Banker Ladies in Toronto, I learned how Black diaspora women depend on the Susu system for banking because they have limited



Microcredit has shown how you can reach out to people that conventional banking cannot. It has demonstrated that it's a doable proposition.

— Muhammad Yunus —

access to formal commercial banks. Commercial banks exist near them, but the racial and gender discrimination they endure to carry out mundane tasks makes them less interested in going to those banks.

I listened to Banker Lady Lorraine, almost in tears, recounting how women are invasively questioned and even refused the right to withdraw their monies from the bank. Another woman, Laylah, explained that she is stared at rudely, as if to say she does not belong in this bank. As a newcomer to Canada, I listened to these painful narrations. Still, I could not help but ponder: Why does a multicultural city like Toronto marginalize low-income Black women in such a way that they self-exclude from using commercial banks? Why does Canada offer financial exclusion expertise to countries like Ghana when they have an issue reaching Black women in their own backyard? To be sure, the financial exclusion of African Canadian women is acute, which is why Susu banks help them. Women in Ghana also use Susu because they, too, are excluded from commercial banks for a host of reasons.

### **Women Feel That They Must Hide The Susu System In Canada**

As a Ghanaian, it was strange for me to hear and take note that people hide their Susu system. My mother and women in Ghana are proud of Susu because it allows them to help themselves and others. Susu is built around trust and reciprocity and is not viewed as something wrong, or that should bring shame. However, in the meeting, I listened with great difficulty to the fears and traumas that Black Canadian Banker Ladies endure when they organize Susu.

The Banker Ladies explained that they feared the police and those neighbours who had never heard about Susu. The women clarified that people could report them and cause trouble when they meet, which is why they make great efforts to conceal what they do. A young Banker Lady Maymoun, wearing a hijab, recounted that the women in her Ayuuto, a Somali name for a Susu, are labelled as scammers or terrorists for organizing a cooperative. Two other Banker Ladies shared how their Susu was confused with drug money during police raids for drugs in an

apartment block. The ROSCA money accumulated by hard-working women is deemed 'illegal' by authorities who have never heard of a Susu system.

The Banker Ladies held a council meeting to figure out how they can make sure that there is education around ROSCA systems. A Banker Lady lamented: "Hmmm! We help the society and Canadian people a lot, and some of us organize housing and care co-ops, we organize Susu, and we support many people...but the government does not appreciate us!" Despite the work being done to inform society about the work of the Banker Ladies, policymakers are still confused about how they can incorporate these women into economic development efforts.

### **Recognize the Widespread Use of Susu in the Black Diaspora**

The Banker Ladies' in Canada have different names for Susu, depending on where they come from. For example, there is Somali Hagbad, Jamaican Partner, Indian Chit, Chinese Hui, etc. The Banker Ladies said they bring Susu-like systems from their homelands in Somalia, Sierra Leone, Jamaica, Guyana, Nigeria, India and other places where they had previously practised with their mothers. From the little I know, these ROSCAs practised in Canada are happening among various diaspora groups. Yet the state is ambivalent to learning about these systems.

And just as Susu benefits southern countries where they are common, they help make Canada a better place. ROSCAs fill the exclusionary void created by formal banking institutions by inspiring financial inclusion for all in Canada. Further, their embeddedness in self-help-based moral economies (economies privileging social relations over profit) has strengthened peace,







collectivity and cooperation, making Canada a better place.

What do the Banker Ladies of Canada want? The Banker Ladies stated: “We need financial freedom!” and others forthrightly stressed, “We need recognition by the state to practice our ROSCAs...and Co-ops.” And as stated above, ROSCAs, rooted in mutual aid and Cooperativism, are lifelines to socio-economic inclusion and social progress.

Collectivism and mutual aid are sine qua non for progress in all society; this is even more of a necessity in a neo-liberal capitalist state like Canada. More so, we haven’t even talked of their role in uncertain times, such as life under the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian-Ukrainian war with a high influx of forced refugees to Canada. Collectivity and self-help groups are needed in these times to

support one another. Innovative Co-ops and other cooperatives led by Black Canadian women care for society. It is what Canada’s Banker Ladies have been doing. Despite the erasure, negative labels, and indignities meted out by the state and Canadians in general, they have been working together.

For now, the Banker Ladies need a change; they need recognition via educating the public and the government about ROSCAs. By praise, they are not saying the government should formalize and ensure licensing of ROSCAs in Canada (which is not bad, especially in the distant future). But they implore that the state should allow them some space to practice and spread these solidarity economies that repair the brunt of racism and inspire social inclusivity. The state should see the Banker Ladies as legitimate and culturally distinct financial practitioners with good intentions to promote progress through collectivity, cohesion, cooperation, and mutual aid. In refusing to allow for the Banker Ladies peace, the state is complicit in erasing its contributions to social and economic development. ●



Microfinance stands as one of the most promising and cost-effective tools in the fight against global poverty.

— Jonathan Morduck —

# PAKISTAN'S FLOODS SHOW THE CLIMATE CRISIS IS ALSO A DEBT CRISIS

*"Pakistan causes less than one percent of Global Carbon Emissions, but a third of its land is now underwater."*

Heidi Chow

The flood in Pakistan is a humanitarian crisis of epic proportions. Entire towns, vital infrastructure, homes, farmlands, and crops are being washed away. With a third of the land under water, 33 million people affected, and the death toll over a thousand and rising, the human and economic cost is set to be astronomical. It is estimated that the extensive damage to the country will cost at least \$10 billion. In addition, the country faces the immediate challenges of massive displacement, homelessness, hunger, the spread

of water-borne diseases, and the longer-term costs of rebuilding and reconstruction. In addition, Pakistan faces a deepening debt crisis to pay the costs of a climate catastrophe it did not cause.

Sherry Rehman, Pakistan's minister for climate change, issued a stark warning that Pakistan is at the ground zero of 'flash foods, multiple glacial lake outbursts, heat waves and now the monster monsoon of the decade.' Pakistan has over 7,000 glaciers, the largest number outside the polar region. Global warming makes them melt faster and earlier, creating glacial

lakes and adding vast amounts of water to rivers and streams. As a result, this year's monsoon season started earlier and has lasted longer, as heavy torrents have added relentlessly to the build-up of excess water.

These factors make Pakistan the eighth most climate-vulnerable country in the world—yet it is responsible for less than one percent of global carbon emissions. Yet, despite this, the people of Pakistan are paying a deadly price for a crisis which is not their fault but has been created in the Global North





through centuries of fossil fuel extraction. Even with multiple warnings from experts and scientists to leave fossil fuels in the ground, new gas and oil projects continue to be approved in countries like the UK and the US, with fatal consequences for places like Pakistan that are most exposed to the dangers of the climate emergency.

Rich countries promised finance to help lower-income countries deal with the impacts of climate change as a recognition of their responsibility for historic carbon emissions. But the target of \$100 billion a year of climate finance by 2020 has never been reached - nor is it anywhere near the trillions of dollars needed to meet the scale of the crisis. To make matters even worse, the finance delivered has been chiefly in the form of loans, not grants.

Pakistan was already in a debt crisis before the flash floods unleashed widespread destruction—with \$12.5 billion of debt repayments due this year alone. International Monetary Fund loans have been used for years to make interest payments to reckless lenders—a further \$1.1 billion was released this week—while the debt has continued to grow. Moreover, the economic fallout of the pandemic has exacerbated the debt crisis. And soaring food and energy prices are driven by the war in Ukraine and speculation on commodities in financial markets.

Worsening global economic conditions had already pushed Pakistan to the brink of economic collapse. The debt crisis has meant that Pakistan continues to repay foreign creditors, even though essential resources are diverted away from building climate resilience and investing in essential public services, leaving the country at the mercy of climate disasters.

Without urgent action to



tackle the debt crisis, Pakistan will continue to take on more debt to meet the huge economic costs of the debt crisis and the damage created by the floods while still making repayments to its wealthy creditors. These lenders include Western banks and bondholders that have purchased bonds at knock-down prices. If repaid in full, they are set to rake in huge profits. Private lenders have long used these shamelessly predatory actions to profiteer at every turn. But One should never prioritise debt repayments to wealthy creditors over human needs—a fact even more true in the face of this extreme catastrophe.

Pakistan needs its debt repayments suspended immediately to ensure that much-needed resources are not sent out of the country to repay wealthy lenders at this crucial time. A longer-term solution would involve cancelling Pakistan's debts to a sustainable level to enable the government to put people's needs before the profits of wealthy creditors.

Rich governments must also stop shirking their responsibilities and scale up the climate funding

required to trillions of dollars. Crucially, rich countries should deliver this finance in grants, not loans. And rich, polluting governments should also set up a fund for loss and damage to enable lower-income countries to fund rebuilding and reconstruction following climate disasters. It is not a matter of aid or charity but compensation and reparations for centuries of fossil fuel extraction and carbon emissions of rich governments and corporations.

Pakistan is not an isolated case: 54 countries are currently in a debt crisis, and many of these countries are also on the frontlines of the climate crisis. The two crises of climate and debt are inextricably connected. Unless wealthy creditors such as the International Monetary Fund, rich governments, Western banks and hedge funds take concrete action on large-scale debt cancellation, debt will continue to act as an accelerator of climate chaos.

And rebuilding will be hamstrung by its \$12.5 billion in debt repayments due this year alone. The rich nations should cancel that debt. ●

The Ecuadorian constitution, since 2008, has stated: "Nature or Pachamama, where life is reproduced and exists, has the right to exist, persist, maintain and regenerate its vital cycles, structure, functions and its processes in evolution." This bold statement galvanized the rights to nature movement across the globe. Its growing reach and a precedent-setting court decision earlier this winter illustrate the power of invoking legalized rights in protecting endangered ecosystems.

The importance of the rights of nature is deeply rooted in Indigenous understandings of the interconnectedness of all life. In this century, the legal movement for protection has looped from the Navajo Nation through a small town in Pennsylvania to Ecuador, then across the world, returning to native communities of North America and back to Ecuador.

On Dec. 21, 2021, Ecuador's Constitutional Court ruled that



# THE RIGHTS OF Nature Movement Cannot Be Stopped

■ Pamela Haines

**“From the Navajo nation to a small town in Pennsylvania to Ecuador, then across the World, the idea of Enshrining the Rights of Nature is only growing.”**



mining activities pursued by a state mining company and its Canadian partner threatened the Los Cedros protected area's right to exist and flourish. As a result, the mining operation could not legally proceed because it violated the rights of nature. The global implications of this ruling are only now beginning to be unpacked.

Ecuador has a long and deeply conflicted relationship with mining. International mining companies have been working since the 1990s, often with state support, to get access to the country's mineral resources. And local communities have been resisting — lobbying local government officials, organizing marches and sit-ins, escalating to confronting mining officials,



blocking roads and going to jail. One fierce resistor remembers taking care of the younger children as a 12-year-old in 2006 while the grown-ups went off to confront the mining companies. She saw her father come home beaten up and her brother arrested. Now she fights on the frontlines on behalf of her own children.

“At a young age, we learned the value of our parents’ struggle, to teach ourselves the constitutional laws that guarantee our rights, to investigate how we can confront these companies,” Guachagmira told re: Wild. “We learned to think about the future, and not just for ourselves ... The companies have their weapons, and we have our dignity. We fight with the constitution, the truth and with our conviction. We are not fighting only for ourselves, but for all life on the planet.”

Hopes ran high in Ecuador in 2008 when the constitutional body included that clause on rights of nature in the new Constitution — the first of any country in the world. But then they faded, as that fine-sounding language rang increasingly hollow without follow-up enforcement. Instead, mining agreements between the government and private mining interests proliferated.

Grassroots Indigenous opposition continued with unabated intensity in the face of overwhelming odds. Then came December’s ruling. Now, not only do Ecuadoreans have aspirational rights language in their constitution, but they also have clear legal precedent, from the highest court of the land, for enforcement.

International headlines highlight the story of how the rights of nature movement has spread since 2008. In 2011, “Bolivia enshrines natural world’s rights with equal status for Mother Earth.” In 2017: “New Zealand river granted same legal rights as human beings.” In 2019: “Bangladesh supreme Court upholds Rights of Rivers.” In 2021: “Indian court Rules that Nature has Legal Status on par With Humans - and that Humans are required to protect it.”

Comparable Indigenous activity in North America can trace its recent origins to the Navajo Nation Tribal Council’s ban in 2005 on uranium mining, drawing upon previous codification of traditional law. In 2016, the Ho-Chunk Nation of Wisconsin’s General Council voted to add “Rights of Nature” to their tribal

constitution. In 2018, the White Earth Band of Ojibwe, part of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, recognized that wild rice has inherent rights. In 2020, in a spate of activity, the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin asserted that the Menominee River has the right to exist naturally, flourish and evolve. The Nez Perce Tribe’s General Council passed a resolution recognizing the Snake River as a living entity with rights; the Tsilhqot’in Nation enacted an Esdilahg Sturgeon River Law.

Still, the idea of enshrining the rights of nature into Western law was first pioneered in rural Pennsylvania. That unlikely story starts in 2006 with a school nurse in the old mining town of Tamaqua. While joining the borough council mostly to challenge an “old boys” network, she became increasingly concerned about plans for dumping toxic sewage sludge and coal fly ash in abandoned mines on the edge of town. It was shocking to discover how little power her town had to protect its people. How could a faceless out-of-town corporation have the right to come in and endanger a whole community’s air and water supply?

She learned the answer to that question at a Democracy School run by the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund, or CELDF, where the curriculum began in 1773. Towns all over the colonies were fed up with England writing all the laws to benefit the king and protect the profits of the East India Company. They wanted the right to make their own laws, for the benefit of their own communities. So dozens of them wrote resolutions that inspired the Declaration of Independence, a bold (and wholly illegal) challenge to the empire’s laws.

It turned out, however, that moneyed interests in the colonies were not ready to abandon a



system based on the rule of property — or to embrace popular democracy — and the 1787 Constitution brought back many elements of the British system. Instead, moneyed interests reintroduced the rights of property over people. As a result, they became increasingly entrenched in law over the decades — until, by the 1880s, corporations had gained the status of personhood, and keeping them from their profits became a violation of their rights. Over the same period, more and more local laws were pre-empted by state and federal bodies, and they steadily eroded structures of community self-government away.

Many communities now face outside corporate harm and turn to regulatory agencies for protection. Yet those agencies' function is to manage damages, not to oppose them, and public input at hearings has no legal status. So, what's a school nurse faced with big corporations that are threatening her community going to do? Propose a Community Bill of Rights, saying that we have a right to act to protect our community from external harm; that our human rights are inalienable and

take precedence over property rights. And while we're at it, let's assert that nature has rights too.

But is this legal? It's certainly as legal as the Declaration of Independence. In any case, the Community Bill of Rights passed a borough council vote (narrowly), the toxic sludge and fly ash corporations were told to stay away, and the world had its first example of legislation declaring that nature has rights.

Though the rights of nature movement have increasingly taken hold, it faces many obstacles. Fine-sounding laws on the books are only as good as their enforcement. It can be hard to set the boundaries of local jurisdiction over natural entities like rivers. The lack of legal precedent makes courts reluctant to act. And by threatening our nation's foundational attachment to private property rights, these campaigns are hard to win.

Consider manoomin, the wild rice sacred to the Ojibwe people. After the heartbreaking failure of the movement to stop the Enbridge Line 3 pipeline, a native lawyer who had been preparing for the possibility that the protests would not be enough filed a lawsuit:

Manoomin vs. the State of Minnesota. It asserts that wild rice has "inherent rights to exist, flourish, regenerate and evolve" and that permitting the pipeline's construction violated those rights. In the maze of a state court system, they lost, won, and then lost again. Then they filed in the tribal court. Citing lack of legal precedent, that court also ruled against them — a tough loss. Yet they continue to hold out hope as they await the results of an appeal.

This issue of legal precedent is what has right of nature experts so excited about the court ruling in Ecuador. According to Ben Price of the Community Environmental Defense Fund, the court's decision may only apply in this one case, but it still creates a template and model for future decisions, beyond just in Ecuador. "The precautionary principle switches the burden of proof from the victims," he said. "It's not going to be the expert opinion or scientific studies we will depend on, but the community itself. The people living within an ecosystem are the experts with the greatest knowledge of that ecosystem. This is a significant paradigm shift, a cultural shift."

Price sees each battle as an opportunity to deepen the level of understanding in the public mind. "Tamaqua, a small town with hardly any possibility of having an effect on any place in the world is now part of a worldwide movement that doesn't belong to anybody," he said. "It belongs to the natural world we're part of and trying to protect. We will meet the intransigence of the system. It's deep-rooted, but not as deep-rooted as the Indigenous respect for the natural world. We are part of a historic movement for emancipating the planet, emancipating nature from legal ownership. This is a historical moment." ●





National parties collected more than Rs 15,077.97 crore from unknown sources between 2004-05 and 2020-21, an analysis by the poll rights body Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) showed. The total income of national and regional parties from unknown sources for 2020-21 stands at Rs 690.67 crore.

ADR considered eight national parties and 27 regional parties for this analysis. The national parties comprised the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Indian National Congress (INC), All India Trinamool Congress (AITC), Community Party of India (Marxist) (CPM), Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), Communist Party of India (CPI) and National People's Party (NPEP). The regional parties included Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), All India Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK), All India Forward Bloc (AIFB), All India Majlis-E-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM), All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF), Biju Janata Dal (BJD), Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation [CPI(ML)(L)], Desiya Murpokku Dravida Kazhagam (DMDK), Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), Goa Forward Party (GFP), Janata Dal (Secular), Janata Dal-United (JDU), Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), Kerla Congress (M) [KCM], Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS), Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP), Naga People's Front (NPF), Paattali Makkal Katchi (PMK), Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD), Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF), Shivsena, Sikkim Krantikari Morcha (SKM), Telugu Desam Party (TDP), Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) and YSR-Congress Party (YSRCP).

The analysis conducted based on the parties' Income Tax Returns (ITR) and donations statements filed with the Election Commission of India (ECI) found that between FY 2004-05 and 2020-21, the national parties have collected Rs 15,077.97 crore from unknown sources. "For FY 2020-21, eight national political parties have declared Rs 426.74 crore income from unknown sources and 27 regional parties received Rs 263.928 crore income from unknown sources," it said.

During FY 2020-21, Congress declared Rs 178.782 crore as income from unknown sources, which is 41.89% of the total income of national parties from unknown sources (Rs 426.742 crore)," the analysis said. On the other hand, BJP declared Rs 100.502 crore as income from undisclosed sources, which is 23.55% of the total income of national parties from unknown sources.

The top five regional parties in unknown income are YSR-Congress with Rs 96.2507 crore, DMK with Rs 80.02 crore, BJD with Rs 67 crore, MNS with Rs 5.773 crore and AAP with Rs 5.4 crore. 47.06% of the total Rs 690.67 crore account for the income from electoral bonds. The ADR said the combined income of Congress and NCP from the sale of coupons between FY 2004-05 and 2020-21 stands at Rs 4,261.83 crore.

There are reporting discrepancies in the audit and contribution reports of seven political parties for FY 2020-21. These seven parties include AITC, CPI, AAP, SAD, KC-M, AIFB and AIUDF. In most cases, the share of donations above Rs 20,000 declared by parties in their contribution reports does not match such income shown in their audit reports. The ADR said that this makes it difficult to arrive at an accurate figure of their income coming from unknown sources.

"At present, political parties are not required to reveal the name of individuals or organisations giving less than Rs. 20,000 nor those who donated via electoral bonds. As a result, more than 36% of the funds cannot be traced and are from 'unknown' sources. While the National and Regional Political Parties were brought under the RTI Act by the CIC ruling in June 2013, they have still not complied with the decision. Full transparency is, unfortunately, not possible under the current laws, and it is only the RTI that can keep citizens informed," the ADR Report added. ●

# Union Govt. Tells SC : 'Don't Push for Mandatory Rules to Curb Pharma-Doctor Nexus'

 Banjot Kaur

---

*"The Uniform Code of Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices (UCPMP) prohibits pharmaceutical companies from giving 'freebies' to Doctors."*

---

The Union government has made it clear in the Supreme Court that it thinks the current voluntary code in place to prevent bribing doctors by pharmaceutical companies is 'adequate', The Wire has learnt. It has told the court that it was not in favour of making – 'in haste' – a law to this effect that will change the status of the code from

voluntary to mandatory. A Supreme Court hearing in August in an ongoing case where the petitioner demanded a legal instrument in this connection has brought the alleged physician-pharma nexus under a fresh spotlight. Apex court judge Justice D.Y. Chandrachud had described the issue as 'serious'.

At the heart of the issue is a code – Uniform Code of Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices (UCPMP) – which prohibits pharmaceutical companies from giving 'freebies' to doctors. It was put in place on January 1, 2015, and does not have legal backing. The code was initially brought for six months only so that we could review it afterwards. However, the code got an extension later, and it will remain in force as it is till another such instrument comes.

"It is humbly submitted that the writ petition gives an incorrect impression that the extant legal regime is insufficient and inadequate to protect the citizens from unethical marketing practices by the pharmaceutical companies in their dealings with healthcare professionals," the government has said in a reply in the Supreme Court. The government also said UCPMP is working 'adequately, as per the provisions of the Code.

By telling the court that the UCPMP is working just fine, the government has, in fact, gone back on its own position from 2017 – one which it had maintained for three years. There are many





instances which attest to this. The annual report of the department of pharmaceuticals (DoP) which was published in 2018, said: “The implementation of the UCPMP has been reviewed in consultation of all the stakeholders including NGOs/Civil Societies and it was felt that in order to implement it more effectively, it would be desirable to make it mandatory.”

The DoP functions under the union ministry of chemicals and fertilisers. It was not the first time the DoP had felt the need for a mandatory code. It had floated a proposal back in 2017 to have some sort of legal instrument in place instead of a voluntary code. Accordingly, the DoP presented to the Union law ministry a draft of the ‘Essential Commodities (Control of Unethical Practices in Marketing of Drugs) Order, 2017’. The idea was to make it a part of the Essential Commodities Act.

However, the proposal of DoP could not make a cut with the law ministry, which believed that the scope of the Essential Commodities Act was only to regulate the production, supply and distribution of essential commodities and not necessarily control the marketing aspect. But the DoP thought that taking recourse to the Essential Commodities Act was the best way; therefore, it sent a couple of reminders to the law ministry to expedite its proposal. “The Department has been sent a proposal to Department of Legal Affairs for vetting the draft Drugs (Control Marketing) order-2017 under Section 3 of the Essential Commodities Act 1955 vide its file of even number dated 28/06/2017,” a letter written by an official of the DoP on December 26, 2017, said. “May I request you to look into the matter and to expedite the same,” it added.

The DoP was consistent with its stance. In fact, replying to a Right to Information (RTI)



application filed by one Kameswar Rao, a Visakhapatnam resident, the DoP said on December 26, 2017, “...after reviewing the implementation of the Uniform Code for Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices (UCPMP) which is at present voluntary is being examined in consultation with Ministry of Law to make it statutory (sic).” Replying to a question in the parliament on May 10, 2016, the then Union minister for chemicals and fertilisers, Ananth Kumar, said, “The voluntary code was not working as expected.”

So for three years – 2016, 2017 and 2018 – the government maintained that the UCPMP was not working well. However, in 2019, it made a 180° turn with the Minister of State (MoS) for health and family welfare saying in parliament in reply to a question from Rajya Sabha MP K.C. Ramamurthy that all was well with the code. A year later, the government repeated the same thing in 2020 in the parliament and said the Code would not be mandatory.

What led to the change in the government's stance is unclear.

## Haste

The government's reply to the Supreme Court noted that lawmaking takes time. “It is pertinent to note that making the code statutory is a policy decision and a legislative act which necessitates extensive consultation between different ministries and government departments and requires an overall consensus,” the government said. “Thus, it is a time-consuming process which cannot be completed in haste,” it added. However, the consultation process between the DoP and the law ministry started in 2017 – five years ago. In addition, whether, at all, the government intends to make a law remains unclear because, in the parliament in 2020, it made itself clear that there was no plan to do so.

However, almost a month after the current Supreme Court case made headlines, and the government constituted a new committee. It stated in the court that a ‘high-level’ committee under the chairmanship of V.K. Paul, member (health), NITI Aayog, would go into the issue ‘holistically’ and submit its report

within 90 days. The committee was formed on September 12, 2022..

### Whither Punishment

That the UCPMP is toothless can also be gauged from the government's replies in parliament, even after it changed its stance to not framing a law. "The Uniform Code for Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices (UCPMP) is voluntary in nature and under UCPMP, there is no provision for Department of Pharmaceuticals to directly deal with complaints received regarding unethical Practices," chemicals and fertilisers minister D.V. Sadananda Gowda said in Rajya Sabha on September 18, 2020.

And there is no dearth of complaints against pharmaceutical companies. In replying to RTI applications filed by this reporter in 2019, DoP named 20 pharmaceutical companies against whom the government had received complaints about giving bribes to doctors of a whole range. Even the replies in parliament make it clear that the government has been receiving complaints. But what can it do as per the current form of UCPMP? Nothing. Except

for asking associations of pharmaceutical companies – of which the erring companies are themselves members – to take action against them. And what can these associations do at most? Suspend them from association membership and publish in the media the reprimand they gave. The latter is practically unheard of.

But what about doctors who accept freebies? As per Indian Medical Council (Professional Conduct, Etiquette and Ethics) Regulations, a registered medical practitioner is not allowed to receive gifts, travel facilities, hospitality and cash or monetary grants. The regulations came into being in 2002. Moreover, if a doctor is found guilty, his or her licence can also be suspended. It is the provision that the government claimed was good enough. But has that also happened?

Amitava Guha, one of the three petitioners of the current Supreme Court case, sent the DoP copies of airline tickets that a pharma firm had allegedly booked for nine doctors for round trips from Kolkata to Srinagar. He also gave copies of hotel bills and schedules of those doctors for days which were not remotely related to any medical conference. On other

occasions, he has shared copies of tickets of doctors for Vancouver and cash payments for trips to Australia – all allegedly paid for by pharmaceutical companies.

This unholy alliance between doctors and pharmaceutical companies has also come to the fore through Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) reports. One such report presented in 2015 said, "We noticed in 36 cases involving tax effect of Rs. 55.10 crores in seven States (namely, Andhra Pradesh, Gujrat, Karnataka, Maharashtra, New Delhi, Tamil Nadu and Uttaranchal) where the expenditure towards gifts/freebies to medical professionals were allowed despite being prohibited by law/not related to business."

While the petitioners of the case will file a response to the government's reply before the next hearing this month, the latter has already told the apex court that any direction to it of making a law would be tantamount to judiciary overstepping its mandate vis-a-vis the executive's domain. Whether the court would be able to wriggle out of this and show a way forward to curb a deep menace remains to be seen. ●







# Climate Change Drives Down Yields and Nutrition of Indian Crops

*“Rising temperatures and weather fluctuations may drive hunger and malnutrition in India unless the country acts urgently.”*

**Fateh Veer Singh Guram**

Rashpinder Singh, 36, is a farmer who owns 17 acres (almost seven hectares) of land in Punjab. He took up the profession of his forefathers after completing his M Tech degree. “I feel connected with the land. Farming is a part of my identity, since this is what I have been surrounded with all my life,” says Singh. However, for Singh, the last few years have been challenging. Rising temperatures and erratic rainfall have affected crop yields. With the blistering heat wave across large parts of India in March, April and May affecting the wheat crop, Singh is

worried about the future of agriculture.

“This thing, this climate change which everyone talks about, is very real. While farmers in my region usually get around 18 quintal [1,800 kilograms] of produce per acre of wheat sown, they got merely eight this year. The heat all but destroyed not just wheat, but crops like potato and mustard, too. Barely anything survived,” he says.

### **The effect of rising temperatures on food security in India**

As temperatures rise, the yields of food and cash crops in South Asia

are expected to decline, putting pressure on food security in the region. India, home to 1.4 billion people, is ranked 101 out of 116 countries in the Global Hunger Index, indicating a serious problem. Scientists and researchers project that a 2.5 to 4.9 degrees Celsius increase in temperature across the country could lead to a decrease of 41%-52% in the wheat yield and 32%-40% in rice.

Arun Joshi, the Asia representative at the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) explained that climate change, while pushing up

temperatures, also affects water availability through a decrease in seasonal rainfall and an increase in extreme rainfall events.

Farmers in my region usually get around 18 quintals of produce per acre of wheat sown but got merely eight this year. "This is bound to affect crops like maize, too, which is sensitive to temperature and moisture," he says, cautioning that global maize yields are expected to decline by as much as 24% by 2030.

The yields of crops like sugarcane and rice are also expected to decline. "The sudden increase in temperatures in March led to the sugar cane crop withering in many places. While we are expecting a decrease in yields of up to 30%, we are also expecting a decrease in sugar content because of rising temperatures," says VM Singh, a farmer and community leader from Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state. India is among the world's largest producers of sugar cane, with the industry impacting the livelihood of nearly 50 million farmers across the country.

Rice presents a unique challenge. While rice yields are expected to decline due to rising

temperatures, rice paddies are among the biggest emitters of methane, a greenhouse gas. Several strategies are being adopted to limit methane emissions from rice paddies and the amount of water used in cultivation. "A major source of methane emissions is the decomposition of fertilisers and crop residues in flooded rice cultivation. Inefficient application of nitrogen fertilisers promotes the release of nitrous oxide, a potent greenhouse gas, into the atmosphere," says Ranjitha Puskur, the country representative for India at the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI).

To combat this, IRRI developed the Rice Crop Manager. "This tool recommends just the right amount of fertiliser, which helps reduce emissions, saves costs for smallholder farmers and ensures soil health," Puskur says. Stressing the importance of rice in the diet of millions across the globe, Puskur believes rice should be part of the solution rather than being eliminated from cropping systems. "It is important to start thinking about crop diversification and focusing on diversified rice-based systems."

## Declining Nutrition

Data is sparse on the effect that global warming and erratic rainfall might have on the nutritional quality of grains. However, experts agree that an increased carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) in the atmosphere will have an adverse effect since elevated CO<sub>2</sub> levels interfere with processes necessary for plant protein synthesis. In addition, a decline in the nutritional quality of grains could exacerbate "hidden hunger", a form of undernutrition where a person's energy intake may be high enough. Still, their intake of nutrients like iron and zinc is so low that it negatively affects their health and development.

Experiments in the United States, Japan and Australia revealed that concentrations of iron, zinc and protein decreased in wheat, rice, maize, peas and soya beans when exposed to elevated CO<sub>2</sub> levels. Studies also indicate that, by 2050, nearly 140 million people worldwide could suffer from a zinc deficiency, while almost 150 million could experience a protein deficiency. Puskur advocates the use of rice varieties high in zinc and iron. "We must also make the food plate





more diverse to ensure nutrition security,” she says.

Madhura Swaminathan, who chairs the MS Swaminathan Research Foundation, concurs on the need for a more diverse diet which includes fruits and vegetables but points out that “the fight against climate change, from a nutritional perspective, will be different in the west and in India”. “In the west, people are calling for meat consumption to be reduced. However, in India, where per capita meat consumption is minuscule, we cannot have people foregoing the consumption of meat and eggs, since these are extremely important sources of nutrients.”

### Scientific Response to Food Insecurity

India needs to safeguard its food security while ensuring that the most vulnerable population has access to nutritious food. “One method of ensuring greater nutrition could be through genome editing combined with conventional breeding approaches,” CIMMYT’s Joshi, a former genetics and plant breeding professor at Banaras Hindu University, suggests. Genome editing is used to modify a crop’s DNA to produce heat-resistant varieties, for example. As a result, the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) produces chickpeas that are more nutritious and resistant to climate change. It is an

important development for India, where chickpeas account for nearly 50% of pulses grown in the country.

We can fight climate change while ensuring no stomach in the country goes hungry

Close cooperation between agricultural research centres and farmers is necessary to adapt to the changing climate. “Access to information will equip the farmer with [the] necessary tools to fight low productivity, or even the effects of rising temperatures,” Swaminathan says. However, with declining investment in climate-resilient agriculture in India, coming up with viable solutions could be a significant challenge.

The government pledged 550 million Indian rupees (USD 6.7 million) to the Climate Resilient Agriculture Initiative in the 2021-22 budget, which was reduced to INR 408.7 million in 2022-23.

While expressing concern over the lack of funding for research, Swaminathan voiced an optimistic note. “It is true that agricultural productivity in India is very low. We lag behind countries like Vietnam. However, this is also a cause for optimism, since if we can improve our productivity, we can ensure that issues related to food security can be fixed and we can fight climate change while ensuring no stomach in the country goes hungry.” ●



**“To all of you who choose to look the other way every day because you seem more frightened of the changes that can prevent catastrophic climate change than the catastrophic climate change itself.**

**Your silence is worst of all.”**

**— Greta Thunberg**





# AESTHETICS AND MYSTICISM

- Shrii Shrii Ānandamūrti

Dharma should be understood properly by all. And that's why I said there should be an immediate Tamil rendering; there should be renderings in all people's languages. Let people understand it properly and do it accordingly. Last night I said that above the – “beyond the”, not “above” – beyond the periphery of material mobility, there is the world of aesthetics; and beyond it, there is the world of mystics. The world of mystics and the world of aesthetics are for human beings. And each and every human being should get a proper chance, should get an adequate opportunity, to move into those worlds.

So you boys, you girls, you intellectuals, this should be your duty – so that common people's worldly burdens are minimized, and they may get ample chance to move into higher worlds and utilize their energy for higher and subtler pursuits. The entire aesthetics is the only charming entity in human life. Had there been no aesthetics, human life would have been just like a desert. So a slight touch of aesthetics in this anxiety-[ridden] life of human beings is just like an oasis in a desert. Art, architecture, literature, music – everything – had its origin, starting point – where? – Just at the common point of aesthetics and mystics. That's why in ancient India, both in Āryavarta music and Dakṣīnatya music (commonly known as Karnataka music), music was devotional. Music used to get its inspiration from mysticism.

You should revive all these subtler expressions of humanity. You should remember that human life is not like a flower, it is like a collection of so many flowers, and that collection of so many flowers is the charm of human life. Human life is not like a flower; it is like a beautiful garden of so many flowers. So let all those flowers develop, and let the final movement of all those expressions of charm and fascination be goaded unto Parama Puruṣa. Whatever I do, whatever we do, whatever we will be doing, just to please the supreme charmer, just to please the Supreme source, just to please the Supreme Progenitor – there cannot be any other aim of human life. ●





## International Seminar Held on Psycho-spiritual Well-being



Udaipur: Society for Microvita Research and Integrated Medicine (SMRIM) Udaipur, Rajasthan, India, organized an International Seminar on "Psycho-spiritual well-being" on the Zoom platform 2nd October 2022. The Seminar started with playing a Prabhat Samgiita no. 2304, 'Se Kon Prabháte Dhálile...'. In the beginning, SMRIM President and convener of the Seminar, Dr S. K. Verma, welcomed all the participants and the Keynote speakers of the Seminar.

The first eminent speaker was Dr Ashu, an Ayurveda Practitioner at Jamshedpur. She discussed various plants such as giloy, shankhalu, imli, kalami sag, punarnava, thankuni, lajwanti, ghi-karela, bhumikushmanda etc., mentioned in Yaogic Cikitsa book by Shrii P. R. Sarkar for treatment of various mental conditions. Dr Ashu also showed that some aromatic plants can also affect mental health and what kind of dietary changes are required for a person with mental ailments. She also said that plants had been used to maintain mental health since ancient times, and today modern evidence proves their efficacy for such conditions.

The second distinguished speaker, Dr Sid Jordan, joined the virtual seminar from the USA. He spoke on the Sacred quartet of Physical, Psychic and Spiritual Well-being. He said that a plant-based diet, proper yaogic postures (Asan), good company and neo-humanist service, tantra and yoga-based spiritual practice for the development of mental layers (kosha) of mind, and creating balance (prama) in physical, psychic and spiritual spheres in the individual and collective arena and overall applying subjective approach through objective adjustment is required for psycho-spiritual well-being. Dr Jordan further discussed the role of positive microvita in psycho-spiritual solutions for wellness in both individual and collective life. Finally, he proposed various experiments to be carried out through an interdisciplinary approach for the impact of microvita on psychic development leading to spiritual upliftment; in a nutshell, the progressive journey from unit consciousness to supreme consciousness.

Shefali Prabhakar, a Senior scientist in the USA, was the third eminent speaker, and she discussed how food affects the body and mind through the lymphatic system. She said a good Lymphatic system is required for a disease-free mind and body. Lymph has two main functions: providing immunity and controlling inflammation, which is responsible for developing modern diseases such as diabetes, metabolic disorder, arthritis, cancer, obesity etc. She discussed the importance of plant-based diets and antioxidants in improving thymus functions in light of modern scientific research.

The organizing secretary of the Seminar, Dr Vartika Jain, said that this Seminar is planned on Mental Illness Awareness Week which is usually observed in the first week of October in the USA. As mental ailments increase exponentially, psycho-spiritual well-being is the need of the hour. The Moderator of the talk, Dr Urvansh Mehta, said that more than 60 participants attended the Seminar from the country and abroad. Admin also streamed the program live on Youtube. In the end, Dr Vartika extended heartfelt thanks to all the speakers for delivering excellent deliberations. All participants' queries were also resolved in the question and answer session.



## UPLF, Gen. Sec. Y. V. Singh Passes Away

On 22nd September, General Secretary of Universal Proutist Labour Federation (UPLF) Yaduvansh Singh Kushwaha passed away in his native village in Bihar. He was not keeping well for some time.

He had been associated with the proutist movement since 1966, and had a good understanding of Prout philosophy and its implementation.

Having retired from Air India, he joined UPLF and became its general secretary to work full-time to educate the labourers about their rights and duties. He organized them to fight for their rights and against their exploitation at work place.

The office-bearers and activists of UPLF met at the UPLF office in Okhla, Delhi to pay tribute to him Acharya Santosananda Avadhuta was also present on this occasion.

Proutist Yaduvansh Singh will be surely remembered for his contribution to the cause of Prout.



## Online Meet on Personal Experiences with Kiirtan by AMPS, Udaipur

An online meeting on "Personal Experiences with Kiirtan" was organized by Ananda Marga Prachark Samgha (AMPS), Udaipur, Rajasthan, India, on 8th October 2022, on the occasion of the 52nd year of 'Baba Naam Kevalam' Ashtakshari Siddha Mahamantra Kiirtan given by Tarak Brahma Shrii Shrii Anandamurtiji. The meeting started playing the Prabhat Samgiita no.4463 and Kiirtan for five minutes.

In the beginning, Shrii Pradyman Narayan Singh from Purnea, Bihar, shared his personal experiences related to Kiirtan and said that Baba gave this eight-syllable Kiirtan mantra on 8 October 1970 for the welfare of all without any discrimination of caste/creed/colour or between literate or illiterate, rich or poor or a sympathizer or non-sympathizer. Anyone who does the kiirtan with heart while concentrating on the beloved Lord will definitely be elevated spiritually. He said that Kiirtan is done to give happiness to the Lord. Then, Shrii Harananda Sinha from Gurugram shared the incidents with him during his College times related to Kiirtan and said that singing Kiirtan reduces fear and dispels the problems occurring in life.

Avdhutika Ananda Krishan Acarya, currently working as Diocese Secretary (Ladies) of AMPS, Udaipur, also shared her life experience when she was a young kid and how she realized the importance of Kiirtan. Shrii Dinesh P. Sharma from Bhinder said that he got an exhilarating experience with kirtan during his visit to DMS at Anandnagar at midnight, which led him to realize that Kiirtan affects the subtle propensities of the mind and accelerates the mind towards the Supreme consciousness.

In the end, Bhukti Pradhan, Udaipur, and Dr S. K. Verma shared the historical Kiirtan events held at Udaipur Jagriti since 2020. He said that after the lockdown in March 2020, daily one-hour kiirtan was being held at Jagriti. In 2021, the Birth centennial year of Shrii P. R. Sarkar, 200 Akhand Kiirtan of 3 hours each were organized. Notably, this year, a constant 3 and 6 hours of Kiirtan was also done by a person alone. Then, in 2022, devotees did 1150 hours of Kiirtan, along with a unique 3 hours of Aavart Kiirtan was also held for the first time in Jagriti. Dr Verma said that the miraculous kiirtan flow is incessantly maintained in Udaipur and gave lots of supra-mundane experiences to spiritual aspirants who did Kiirtan with complete dedication. Dr Verma explained the experiences gained by doing kiirtan are, in fact, the grace particles (microvita) of Param Purusha (Lord), which are mediated through five inferences of sound, touch, form, taste and smell. Finally, he thanked all the participants who joined the meeting from all corners of the country. Everyone appreciated this effort of bringing experiences of Kiirtan as an inspiration for all on the common zoom platform.





## PCAP and PBI Working Together for Environmental Awareness

On 26 September, Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and Plants (PCAP) Foundation, as a part of its ongoing tree plantation and environmental awareness program called 'Vriksha Sankalp', unveiled a plaque at 'Jai Stambh Chowk', the martyr's memorial situated at the main crossing in Ghatanji, Vidarbha.

Built in the memory of great revolutionaries, the memorial had been deprived of even bare minimum upkeep for several years. After Proutist Bloc, India's Vidarbha Convener Madhukar Nistane raised his voice and drew the attention of the concerned authorities towards the pathetic condition of the memorial, the Municipal Corporation Chief Roger Narekar and SHO Manish Divte personally took up the task of its renovation and beautification, after removing the encroachment around it.

On this occasion, Good Morning Group's founder and Yoga teacher Ishwar Lal Drona planted a tree. His organization is supporting PCAP's Vriksha Sankalp program.

Since PCAP organized this program in collaboration with Proutist Bloc, India (PBI), the members and supporters of the party, namely, Moreshwar Vatile, Adv. Gajendra Dhavale, Prof. Dinesh Thackeray, Raut Guruji, Diwakar Chaudhary, Manish Bhaskarwar, Dr. Prajay Ugle, Anil Dhone, Pandurang Kirnapure, Ganesh Sabapure, Pradeep Vakpaijan, Pawan Varhade, Singewar, Swapnil Bhandari, Subhash Wankhade, Bhagwan Chaudhary and others were also present on this occasion.





## UPLF Gets New General Secretary

In a meeting held at Prout Bhavan, Delhi, the office-bearers of UPLF unanimously selected advocate Prakash Kahar as the general secretary of the organization. The post had fallen vacant after the demise of Yaduvansh Singh Kushwaha, the last Gen Sec.

## AMURT Feeds Flood Victims and Distributes Clothes

Allahabad: On 12th October, Ananda Marga Universal Relief Team (AMURT/AMURTEL) distributed cooked food among 500 flood victims devastated by the recent flood in Madhya Nagar, Shravasti district of Uttar Pradesh. The relief team was by RS, Allahabad, and local AMURT Volunteers.

Bangaon: On 28, 29 and 30 September, Ananda Marga Universal Relief Team (AMURT/AMURTEL) distributed clothes among the needy at Ananda Marga School, Bangaon and local AMURT/AMURTEL Unit, Kandi, West Bengal. The relief material was arranged by local AMURT volunteers and activists.





## Mesmerizing Cultural Program by RAWA in Purulia



RAWA organized an annual cultural program based on Prabhat Samgiita at Ananda Marga College, Ananda Nagar, Purulia on 29 September.

Prof Raj Kumar Modak, Department of Philosophy, Sidhu Kanho University, Purulia was the chief guest. Acharya Priyakashnananda Avadhuta, Central Secretary of Ananda Marga Pracharak Samgha presided over the program. Shri Tapan kumar Chattopadhyaya, Teacher Incharge of Ananda Marga College, Acharya Tathagatananda Avadhuta and Mohananda Avadhuta were also present on the dais.



The program commenced with a Prabhat Samgiita song. The college students presented a lively dance based on Prabhat Samgiita. A drama titled 'Bachar Adhikar - Right to Live' written by Acharya Nityasatyanananda Avadhuta was also presented by the college students.

Prof. Raj Kumar highlighted Shrii Shrii Anandamurtijii's multifarious contribution to humanity. He further explained the basic philosophy of Shrii Shrii Anandamurtii. Prof. Modak said that Shri Sarkar's philosophy is a blending of Yoga and Tantra, and talked at length about the salient features of Prabhat Samgiita, composed and tuned by Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar. Its lyrical excellence and melodious beauty are unparalleled, he said.

Lastly Acharya Priyakashnananda spoke on the moral and ethical values of human life. He also talked on Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar's Neohumanist Education System. Around 700 hundred people attended the program.

Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar



## Right ahead on a lofty peak

PRABHU, TOMÁR NÁMER BHAROSÁ NIYE  
 AGÁDHA SÁGAR PÁRI DOBO  
 BÁDHÁR UPAL CÚRŅA KARE  
 TOMÁR GIITI GEYE JÁBO  
 AGÁDHA SÁGAR PÁRI DOBO

SUMUKHA PÁNE UCCA SHIRE  
 SUMUKHA PÁNE UCCA SHIRE  
 TOMÁR KETAN HÁTE DHARE  
 LALÁTE JAY TÍIKÁ PARE  
 NAVYA MÁNAVATÁ RACIBO

THÁKABE NÁKO DVANVA DVIDHÁ  
 THÁKABE NÁKO DVANVA DVIDHÁ  
 TRIPTA HOVE SABÁR KŚUDHÁ  
 SABÁR PRÁNE BÁRIYE SUDHÁ  
 BÁNCÁR DÁVI MENE NOBO

Lord with faith in thy name  
 I shall cross the great ocean  
 Pulverizing barriers and stones on the way  
 I shall keep singing Your songs.

Right ahead on a lofty peak  
 Holding Your pennant in the hand  
 A symbol of victory on the forehead  
 I shall spread neohumanism.

There shall be no dissension or conflict  
 Everyone's God shall be satisfied.  
 Increasing the nectar in everyone's soul  
 I shall recognise their right to existence.





# ANDSLITE®

Solar LED Home Lightings | Solar LED Lanterns | LED Bulbs | LED Torches

## ADD SUN TO YOUR LIFE

Andslite is dedicated to brighten up your lives. For years, we've been creating effective ways to harness solar energy to provide you cost-effective electricity. Another effort in this course are Andslite provide quality and economical products.

### UNIQUE FEATURES :

- Energy efficient lighting products • Strong ABS body & PC glass • High power focused torch lights for long distance coverage
- Long backup rechargeable Study lights • Solar lanterns and emergency lights for lighting homes & offices, etc.
- More than 50 LED lighting products with 1 year warranty\*

\*Conditions apply

Lighting by  
**JAPANESE & USA**  
LEDs



### Manufacturers of :

- LED Solar Home Lights and Lanterns • LED Study Lights
- LED Torch Lights & Head Lights • LED AC Bulbs & USB Laptop Light • Solar Modules (3 Wp to 300 Wp)

**ANDSLITE PVT. LTD.**

AN ISO 9001:2008 CERTIFIED COMPANY

Registered Office: 103, 2nd Floor, FIE, Patparganj Industrial Area,  
Delhi - 110092, INDIA | Tel.: +91-11-22156913 | Fax: +91-11-42141253

Manufacturing Unit: Plot No. 1D - 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, Sector-7, IIE,  
SIDCUL, Haridwar - 249403 (UK), INDIA

Tel.: +91-1334-239231, +91-9997739011 | Fax: +91-1334-239823

www.andslite.com | andslite.led@gmail.com | Call: 1800 11 6913 (Toll Free)



Scan to watch our film



Like Us on Facebook:  
[facebook.com/AndslitePvtLtd](https://www.facebook.com/AndslitePvtLtd)





# SUPREME GROUP

## | SUPREME IMPEX

Supreme Impex a well known Govt. recognized Star Export House in the apparel exports Industries in India. There are more than 800+ workers engaged in the process of export. The company is fully equipped with latest machines and technology with fully in-house merchandiser and sampling. An experienced and strong management team is turning all stones unturned under the guidance of Chairman and Managing Director Mr. Prem Singh Rana who believes that sky is no limit. Supreme Impex has two in-house factories, one in Faridabad (Haryana) and one unit at Okhla Industrial area (Delhi) specializing in women wears. Further to this, we have in-house capabilities from cutting to stitching, labeling, washing, finishing and packing.



## | SUPREME HOSPITAL



Supreme Hospital is a 225 bedded, 5 OT multi super specialty Tertiary care hospital, focusing on medical and surgical super specialties of neuro sciences, cardiac sciences, gastro sciences, renal sciences, critical care, ortho-trauma, mother and child, ophthalmic, ENT and many more. We are a patient centric organization, providing international quality healthcare by compassionate professionals at affordable price, in full compliance with international quality standards / guidelines. So the Supreme Hospital Is The Top Hospital In Faridabad.