



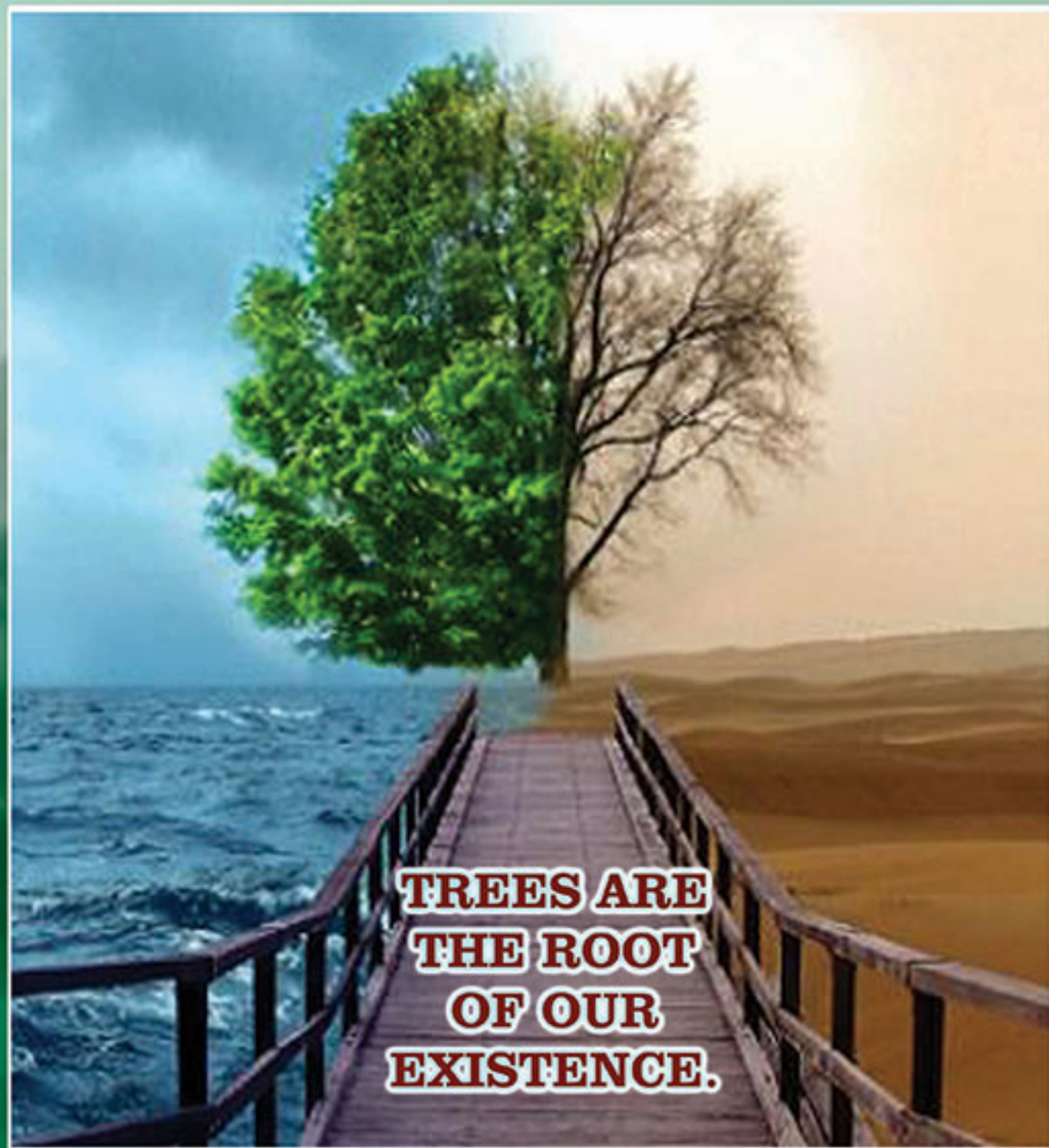
HERITAGE Explorer

LET KNOWLEDGE COME FROM ALL THE SIDES
VOL. XII, NO. 06 JUNE 2013

A Monthly News Bulletin



**PLANT A TREE,
GROW A FLOWER,
LET'S GIVE MOTHER-EARTH
BACK HER POWER.**



**TREES ARE
THE ROOT
OF OUR
EXISTENCE.**

Heritage Explorer

A Monthly News Bulletin

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Articles on Eternal Faith &
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Drumbeats of Antiquity

-Neelim Akash Kashyap

Arguably, the dhol is considered to be the most important musical instrument of Assamese folk culture, and is also considered to be an instrument of the gods. In folklore, it is said that the dhol was created in Mount Kailash, the abode of Lord Shiva, and was brought down to Earth by Aruna, one of the Pandavas. Dhol-like instruments are played almost everywhere in the world. However, the Assamese dhol is distinguished by its small size, and the comparatively loud sound it produces, combined with its varied usage. The dhol players are considered to be the best life-partners for girls, which indicates that it is the symbol of masculinity. The dhol is also linked to human fertility.

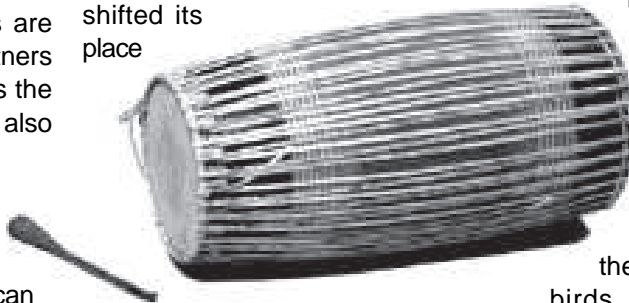
The dhol is an ancient instrument of Assam. Considering the extensive use of bamboo and timber in the dhol, it can be deduced that the dhol is an input of the Mongolian culture, though no reliable evidence has been found on the use of the dhol and its place in folk culture in the ancient times. However, a *malita* of the dhol says —

Satya juge patisil Hara Gauri biya,
Tetiya bojaisil dhol Anadi dhuliya.
Treta juge patisil Sri Ramehandrar biya,
Tetiya bojaisil dhol Binandi dhuliya.
Dwaporata patisil Rukminira biya,
Tetiya bojaisil dhol Nandi dhuliya.
Kili juge devabangsi Raja naami jai,
Sodhan Ojai dhol bai anile nomai.

We may translate the above *malita* to English as: In the Satyajuga, Lord Shiva and Gauri got married and Anandi dhuliya played the dhol there. In the Theta yuga, when Lord Sri Ramchandra got married, Binandi dhuliya played. In the Dwapar yuga, when Rukmini tied the nuptial knot, Nandi dhuliya played the dhol. In the Kali yuga, the King of the Gods descended, and Sodhan Oja welcomed Him with his dhol.

The dhol players always take the

lead in the Bihu and huchoris. The dhol is played not only with the Bihu dance and songs, but also to accompany the playing of other lead instruments like the pepa, gogona, etc. The dhol and the taal (cymbals) are played throughout a Bihu or huchori performance while other instruments are played intermittently. Apart from Bihu the Oja Dhol was an indispensable part of any marriage ceremony or religious function in the Assamese society. Now a days, the Oja Dhol has shifted its place



from marriage ceremonies to the stage. The Oja Dhol bol (notes) are more difficult than the normal Bihu Dhol's notes the ojas produce different sounds on the dhol, such as roars of animals, etc, to entertain the audience. The dhol is also considered to be a holy instrument, and is played in marriages, different religious celebrations by the satras such as during the Raas Utsav, Phalgun Utsav, etc. The dhol is even played during traditional buffalo fights and cock fights in different parts of Assam. The contribution of the Ahom kings (Swargadeu) was vital in popularising the dhol in Assamese folk culture. The *malitas* of the dhol speak about the guru of all dhutiyas, Sodhan Oja, who is believed to have played the court of the first Ahom King Sukapha. Even other *malitas* of the dhol often mention the Ahom kings. It can be derived from here that the dhol enjoyed royal patronisation during that period. Even when the kings and officials of the kingdom went out, there was a custom of the dhuliyas leading the way, playing the dhol. A *seo* or musical piece called *dolakasoriya seo*, especially

developed for this purpose, is played even today. Moreover, it is so mentioned that the king's messages, orders and the news of state were to be communicated to the masses by the beating of the dhol.

Do you know that several types of dhol are used in Assamese folk culture? Significant differences exist in regard to their size, shape, style of playing and their use.

The Bihu Dhol or the Pati Dhol and the Oja Dhol: A small-sized dhol is used in Bihu.

The Oja Dhol, slightly bigger in size than the Bihu Dhol, otherwise similar, is used by the ojas (specialist dhol player the masters of the dhol) as a single lead instrument. The ojas produce the sounds of different animals, birds, vehicles and machineries, natural phenomena like thunderstorm, etc, with this dhol, and hence, the Assamese dhol got the colloquial name of "the talking drum".

Khram: The dhols used by the Dimasas and the Tiwa tribes of Assam, called the khram, are longer and parallel in shape. On the other hand, similar dhols used by the Bodos and the Rabhas are called the kham. Since both the khram and the kham look similar, and are played in similar situations, they are discussed under the same heading. The khram or the kham is usually played during religious ceremonies.

Dhepa dhol: The Dhepa Dhol, played by the dhepa dhuliyas at functions in the Darrang Mangaldai region of Assam, has some quite unique characteristics. One side of this dhol is covered with two layers of goat skin, and water is poured inside while playing. The playing of the Dhepa Dhol is a complete performance of its own, accompanied by dance, songs and acts.

Joy Dhol: It is a big-sized dhol with aloud sound usually accompanying
(Contd. to Page 4)

Safeguarding Heritage in Digital Age

-Ranjan K Baruah

In the age of digital era, can we think of safeguarding our art and culture? There are many options to do it, but can we really afford to safeguard our heritage which includes art, culture or our own language? Already we have seen threat to many languages around the world. Killer language like English or others are destroying our mother language which is an integral part of our life.

Bohag, which is an exclusive month for fun and entertainment, is losing its value. The mesmerizing Bihu is now more seen in the artificial stage or in the screen of televisions. Will there be celebration in the natural way? If yes, who would take the initiative? Can we think of organizing it ma natural way in the years to come? We need to think how we can organize it in true spirit, not in the spirit of corporate/business houses through their sponsorship all the time.

Young people have lots of responsibility in safeguarding the rich heritage of Assam, from language to other things. One of the best things that we can do is travel around the state and under-stands the topography and place well. It may not be possible but let us make it possible that whenever we get time, instead of travelling to other parts of the country or the world, first we make sure that we travel all over as sam. This will give us an idea of the food, dress, people and what not. There are many different ethnic communities in the state, be it Bodos, Dimasas, Karbis, Rabhas, Misings, etc. All these communities have different food habits and dresses and together it makes our states a beautiful one.

We have to promote our heritage and culture in the market in a proper way. There should not be action any misinformation when we share things related to our heritage. Once we travel to the nooks we would feel more about the importance of our rituals and traditions. Different recipes of the

State, musical instruments, ways of living, traditions are to be learned by us though they are not part of our study. If we do not learn about our tradition then there might be a day soon when many things might become extinct.

There are many organizations led by young people who have started working for the promotion of the Assamese language. There are initiatives through the internet like various groups in face book or similar social networking sites. Many of the young people are active but they must travel around the state to get the pulse of the place. This is a month, I am talking about Bohag, which is New Year month and we have new things in mind. So as to begin let's start with travelling around the state to understand it more so that we can engage ourselves in the safeguarding the art, culture or heritage of the state.

Art and culture is safeguarded when people take initiatives and action. At present, with the growth of western culture more amongst young people, how do we think of protecting our culture? One is not against any culture, everything has its importance. But it is important how we safeguard our own culture and heritage before imitating others. We need to promote our art and culture to the people around the world. There are departments of the government but we cannot rely on those departments only. Can we make dances like Bihu popular so that it would get space in the movies of Bollywood or others? It's the responsibility of all the culture-lovers of the State to promote it such a way that others may include it and we get more visibility of our culture. But we need to be well learned when we promote our art and culture amongst other people around the world.

Young people have more responsibility in this regard. In the digital era where our young generation is tech savvy, it is important how best

we use the digital technology to reach out to more and more people. At the same time, we contribute in preserving our art, culture, language, etc. We need to have archives digitally which can be source of information for many others who wanted to know about the state or its culture.

One of the crucial things that we need not forget is the digital divide. Digital divide is the gap between people who are accessed to digital world and others who are deprived from it. In this regard, we have to see how best most of the people can use it in team if not individually to see the news or others in the digital era. Most of the things can be done in Assamese and English versions in the websites. We have seen most of the websites have many versions like English, French, Spanish, Hindi, etc. Our young people have to develop more sites in local languages to reach out to more people.

Safeguarding our art and culture may be challenging in the digital age but being young people, we have to take up the challenge. This is a month of fun and entertainment. Let's think how best we can celebrate this best month with new initiatives. There was written history about Assam long before the coming of the British, during the days of the Ahoms. It's important for us now how best we use the digital age or the mechanism' to tell the rest of the world about rich art, culture or heritage of our State.

There might be threat to our language in near future, We bate to take responsibilities for the safeguard and promotion of our heritage. We need to think alternate ways with the growing demand of the market to popularize our art and culture. We must not forget that no one else would conic to safeguard our heritage; we ourselves have to take up the challenge to safeguard our heritage.

(The Assam Tribune - 25.04.13)

(Contd. from Page 2)

Drumbeats of...

the Deodhoni dance of Assam. In the Darrang-Mangaldai region of Assam, solo Joy Dhol performances by the joy dhuliyas, and the use of the Joy Dhol in Manasa or Maroi puja is common.

Madol: This dhol is used by the tea tribes of Assam to accompany the jhumur dance. Apart from Assam, the Madol is found in different tribal cultures of India.

Bor Dhol: As the name suggests, the Bor Dhol is the largest dhol in Assam, almost one and a half metres in length, the end diameter varying from half a metre to one metre. One side of the Bor Dhol is played with the hands, and the other side with a bow-shaped drumstick. In Darrang-Mangaldai and Kamrup regions, the bor dhuliyas display a single instrument performance of the dhol. Accompanied by songs and dance by the players, it is a popular social function. In the traditional puppet shows, the Bor Dhol is often played.

Kavi Dhol: The Kavi Dhol is a wide-faced dhol, played with long drumsticks. It is an accompanying instrument to Goalporiya lokageet — folk songs of the Goalpara region of Assam.

The body part of the dhol is made from wood. Usually, jackfruit wood is considered to be the best for the dhol. However, some people are also seen using mango wood. The middle part of the trunk of the tree, say the part at around 15 feet height, is chosen for making the body. The dakor basan suggests a method to select the timber for the dhol.

Baro haate dhol, tero hate dhol ... It translates as: Make the dhol from the part that is 12 hands from the ground and the khol from 13 hands from the same. It may be mentioned here that one haat or one hand is a rough measurement of length, usually the distance between the elbow and fingertip of an adult — which is almost 1.5 feet; and is used extensively in Assamese rural society for rough approximation. Later on, some formal definitions of haat were also known to

be developed. The timber is put in a wooden lathe to form the outer shape and then bored with chisels. Earlier, some traditional dyes like hengul, haital, etc., were used to give colour to the shell, but chemical paints are often used for the purpose.

For the tali side of the dhol, goat skin is used. The kobani is made from cowhide. Some special cobblers collect these skins from dead animals, cut, clean, season and make them ready for the dhol. The moluwa shaped part towards the kobani is made of leather and called the kural or the kobani gher. There are specific rules for the construction of the dholar mari. Generally, a stick made of matured bamboo is cut in shape, and then ground and finished to make the dholar mari. A bamboo node should fall on the middle part of the stick, which helps in maintaining the weight balance of the two ends. Traditionally, the dhuliya or the dhol player makes the stick himself, as per his own convenience.

Though the Bihu Dhol and the Oja Dhol are almost the same in construction, the notes of both the styles are different, as also the purpose and the level of expertise required. The ojas are often seen playing more than one dhol at a time.

A right-handed dhuliya should carry the dholar mari in his right hand, and the taali towards his left. He should carry the dhol on his left shoulder. The left heel is raised a bit, and the weight of the dhol is partially transferred to the left thigh, for the convenience of playing. If the strain on the kobani skin is more, the dhol doesn't yield the desired bass, so it has to be loosened a little, by pressing with fingers, or raw gourd leaves maybe ground and layered on it. Otherwise, the dhol can be kept in a humid place, with the kobani side lowered down for a while. This activity is known as Pelai lowa or lowering of the dhol. May be, because of this, the dhol sounds better at night.

It may be mentioned here that there are three bols of the dhol - ghin, khit and dao, respectively; or sometimes

four (taghen). On the other hand, since times immemorial, the land of Assam has been blessed with several gifted musicians playing the dhol, who with their talent and dedication developed the Assamese dhol to its present level. A few of them are: late Moghai Ojha, late Ratna Ojha, late Bogai Ojha, late Holiram Ojha, late Naraam Ojha, Karuna Ojha, Sarupai Ojha, Tulashi Ojha, Somnath Bora, Prasen Bora and Mahendra Chetia. Mohan Chandra Barman, well-known as Mohan Bhaira, a resident of Kaihati village, Nalbari, was also a dhuliya artiste of the Kamrupiya dhuliya culture.

(The Assam Tribune 11.05.2013)

(Contd. from Page 15)

Assam Records 316...

and children in need of care and protection — have become India's hell holes where inmates are subjected to sexual assault and exploitation, torture and ill-treatment apart from being forced to live in inhuman conditions. The girls remain the most vulnerable. It matters little whether the juvenile justice homes are situated in the capital Delhi or in the mofussil towns," Chakma added.

The 56-page report also highlights 39 emblematic cases of systematic and often repeated sexual assault on children in juvenile justice homes. Out of the 39 cases, 11 cases were reported from government-run juvenile justice homes such as observation homes, children homes, shelter homes and orphanages, while in one case a CWC member was accused of sexual harassment during counselling sessions. The remaining 27 cases were reported from privately/NGO run juvenile justice homes such as shelter homes, orphanages, children homes, destitute homes, etc. Majority of privately/NGO run homes are not registered under Section 34 (3) of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act (as amended in 2006).

(The Assam Tribune - 29.04.13)

Bali - That Every Indian Must Know

- Ram Murthy

Bali is a state of Indonesia, a secular country with the biggest Muslim population in the world. But the majority in the state of Bali, over 93 %, are Hindus. Bali is home to 4.22 million Hindus whose ancestors had to flee from other islands of Indonesia, after the great Indonesian Hindu Empire Majapahit was defeated and most of Indonesia was converted to Islam. Here are some interesting facts about Bali that every Indian Hindu must know.

1. Nyepi day, a day of total silence (mauna) once a year, when even the Ngurah Rai International Airport of Denpasar is closed from 6 am to 6 am. No cars, no traffic, no entertainment, no TV. Sit in the house, do contemplation, do prayers. Can we introduce that Nyepi Day in our noisy country?

2. The culture of Bali was begun by the Rishis of India, whose names are no longer taught in the schools of India but which are common in the schools of Bali - Markandeya, Bharadwaja, Agastya - the names we hear in the Puranas but they are part of the way the history of Bali is taught in the schools of Bali. How many Rishis can you name? Do you remember any one of the 402 names of the Rishis and Rishikas (female Rishis) from the Rig Veda (the most ancient and most sacred text of Hinduism), which are our ancestors and the forming fathers of our religion - Vaidika Sanatana Dharma?

3. The national Balinese dress for both, men and women, girls and boys, is Dhoti. No one can enter a temple without wearing a Dhoti. Except in some parts of South India, Dhoti is laughed at in India today. Why are we so ashamed of our heritage? Even most Indian priests change their dress after they are finished with the worship because they feel ashamed in a Dhoti?

4. The social, economic and political system of Bali is based on the principle of tri-hita-karana...three benevolent, beneficent principles- that every human being has three aspects ...the duty, the relationship that we

have with God [Parahyangan]; the relationship that we have with human beings [Pawongan]; and the relationship that we have with nature [Palemahan] and these are the three principles on which the entire culture of Bali is built. This was all established by the Rishis whose names are just about forgotten in India which are taught in the schools of Bali.

5. Trikala Sandhya (Sun worship three times a day) is practiced in every Balinese school. The Gayatri Mantra is recited by every Balinese school child three times a day. Many of the local radio stations also relay Trikala Sandhya three times a day. Can we even think of introducing something like this to our schools in India? How many Indian Hindus are aware of their duty of Trikala Sandhya? It is as central to our religion as the 5 times Namaz is to Islam, yet?

6. In Bali every priest is paid by the government. Despite the fact that Indonesia is a secular country with the biggest Muslim population in the world, the priest of every religion is paid by the government so every religion is supported by the government. That is the Indonesian form of secularism. Can we even think of this in India?

7. The national motto of Indonesia "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika. One is many and many is one." is inspired by an Indonesian Hindu scripture Sutasoma Kakavin. The complete quotation is as follows - "It is said that the well known Buddha and Shiva are two different substances; they are indeed different, yet how is it possible to recognize their difference in a glance, since the truth of Buddha and the truth of Shiva are one? They may be different, but they are of the same kind, as there is no duality in truth." Why can't we have "Ekam Sad Vipra Bahudha Vadanti" (The truth is one, but the wise express it in various ways - Rig Veda) as our national motto?

8. Bali is one of the world's most prominent rice growers. Every farm has a temple dedicated to Shri Devi and Bhu Devi (Lakmi the Goddess of wealth and mother earth - the two divinities

that stand on the either of side of Tirupati Bala ji in India). No farmer will perform his agricultural duties without first making offerings to Shri Devi and Bhu Devi. That is called culture, that Subak System. The agricultural and water irrigation plan for the entire country was charted in the 9th Century. The priests of a particular water temple still control this irrigation plan. And some World Bank or United Nations scientist did a computer model that would be ideal for Bali. And when they brought the model the Balinese said 'we have been practicing this since the 9th century. What are you bringing here?' And I don't know how many million dollars these WTO, these World Bank people, United Nations people, spent on creating that chart which was already created in the 9th century without any computers.... and that Subak System still continues. Such systems were in place in various parts of the country. Its remnants are still visible here in India. I have visited areas where there is no water for miles due to drought, yet the well at the local temple still provides fresh water.

9. In Bali Hindus still don't read a printed book when they perform Puja (worship). They read from a Lontar, which have traditionally been scripted by hand on palm leaf. When they recite the Ramayana Kakavin...where the book is kept, worship will be performed. There is a special ritual of lifting the sacred book, carrying it in a procession, bringing [it] to a special place, doing the bhumi puja, worshipping the ground there and consecrating the ground, then placing the book there. Then the priest will sit and recite the Ramayana.

When I was called to Bali it was to teach and preach the Vedic teachings. But I came back with a humble realization that I have to learn more from Bali than I can actually teach them.

Facts according to Swami Veda Bharati, a great master of meditation from the Himalayan Tradition.

(<http://www.ahymsin.org/docs2/News/1301Jan/03.html>)

Empowerment of Women and Girl Child

- Pranjal Kumar Bhattacharjya

Since long, women had been treated as second class citizens everywhere, whether in developing countries or developed one, despite the fact that they constitute about half the world population today. In the beginning of the civilization, women enjoyed a respectable position in the society at par with man. They actively participated in all activities in the society. Religious ceremonies were considered incomplete without women. The position of women gradually changed with the course of social development and men started to play a dominant role in the society and women were deprived of all freedom. In spite of all odds, women gained significant achievements in the field of health, as a pilot in the field of aeronautics, engineer in the field of engineering, scientist in the field of scientific research, etc. This achievement of women is credible because they achieved this pride in a highly adverse situation and at a cost of severe criticism. The empowerment of women has therefore been the call of the hour. The empowerment of women has been felt as a tool to bring about changes in their socio-economic condition.

Economic empowerment is the capacity of women to participate in, contribute to and benefit from growth processes, and increases women's access to economic resources. Women's empowerment is one of the essential components that promote human development, a broader measure of socio-economic progress of a nation. The Human Development Report (HDR) 1995 introduced the concept of gender-related development index (GDI) including gender empowerment measure. (India ranked a low 134 among 187 countries across the world with HDI value of 0.500). The State of Assam has been ranked 17 with HDI value 0.336 during 1999-2000 against rank 16 with HDI value 0.444 during 2007-08. Inclusive development cannot be attained unless women participate equally in the development process.

Developing countries like India face huge gender inequalities which have a direct impact on their human development. GDI accounts for inequalities between men and women in the same dimension as those of HDI. It is a gender sensitive HDI — the higher the gender inequality the lower the GDI. India's gender inequality index was 0.600 which is the highest in South Asia. No society can progress till women, a major constituent of society, lag behind. Education is a great determinant in empowerment of women. Women have to be educated first to be aware of their rights and privileges in an advanced modern society. Education can bring about awareness related to women's social status, injustice, differentiation with men, violence against women, etc. The most important task is to educate the girl child. The share of girls in the total enrolment at primary and upper primary level was 19% and 46.5% in 2005-06 in the country. But this has increased to 48.5% and 48.1% during 2009-10. In general, at the national level, the number of girls enrolled in all levels i.e. primary, secondary and higher education is less than their male counterpart. However, the female-male ratio in education in the country has been steadily improving over the years. Girl child education in the State has gradually been improved due to innovative steps taken by the Govt. in the education sector. As per 2011 Census, the literacy rate of the state for population above 7 years is 73.18% showing an increase over 2001 but lower than national average of 74.04%. The male literacy rate is pegged at 78.81% against the female literacy of 67.27% which is higher than the all-India female literacy rate (65.46%) showing positive sign of female literacy in the State. It is pertinent to note here that the female literacy has increased at a faster rate during the period 2001-2011. Although there is improvement in respect of out-of-school children in the State, yet some more works are yet to be done for the dropout girl child in the State.

It is noteworthy to mention that the Govt. has given lot of emphasis for the all-round development of women in the State. 50% reservation of seats for women has been made in the Panchayats for bringing gender equality and removing gender bias in the State. The Govt. has also taken some innovative schemes in the health sector which is an important component of human development. Health of women is one of the major issues for bringing stability in a household and, thereby, in the society. Health of a mother has a direct impact on Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) and Infant Mortality Rate. With the introduction of 'Janani Suraksha Yojana' for institutional delivery of women, 'Majoni' for new born girl child and 'Mamoni' for pregnant women, the scenario of the health sector in Assam has dramatically changed and is marching ahead for a new era. With the introduction of these innovative schemes in the health sector, the institutional delivery system in the State has increased by 212% in 2011-12 as compared with 2005-06, as per NRHM. The MMR per one lakh live births in the State also started decreasing slowly. Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) is another important health indicator which was 74.5 for the State during 2000 against all India 67.8. IMR for the State improved during 2011 and as per SRS 2011, it is 55 per 1000 live births for the State against 44 at all-India level.

Educating and empowering one woman sets off a chain reaction that transforms the life of her family and the community she lives in. An exemplary model is the network of trained Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) created under the National Rural Health Mission which has played a crucial role in improving the health of women and children across the country. For empowerment of women, economic independence is a pre-requisite. As per 2001 population census, Indian workforce is over 400 million consisting approximately 39%

(Contd. to Page 7)

'Witch-hunting is Not About Superstition'

Women lynched, sexually exploited and forcibly evicted from their homes after being branded witches. Witch - hunting is not about a stray report tucked away in a corner of the newspaper but an increasingly worrying pan-India trend that specifically targets women in a patriarchal society, say experts.

With reports of witch-hunting coming in from villages and even towns across the country, sociologists, women activists and others believe that it is another form of gender-based violence. And women who stand out from the crowd, either because they have property, are good looking or independent are specifically targeted.

There have been increased instances of single women/widows being branded witches and murdered when they refused sexual overtures of someone dominant in the village or in the family. In some cases, relatives branded them witches to grab their property.

NGOs working in rural areas have found "beauty and wealth" to be the prime reasons behind witch-hunts.

"It is less of superstition and more of a conspiracy, either to grab the property of the woman or to take revenge for unfulfilled sexual intent in the case of younger women," social activist Shravani told IANS.

Shravani has been working with rural women in what is now Jharkhand for the past 20 years. She said victims

in most cases were young, good looking widows or single women/widows who had huge property in their names and were childless.

"Saloni Khujoor of Mandar village, an educated single woman, was branded a witch and killed because society could not tolerate a woman being the heir of her father's property and people don't want to see women being self-dependent," said Shravani.

Several NGOs in Jharkhand said that most cases go unnoticed and unreported as they are hushed up.

Renowned Wiccan priestess Ipshita Roy Chakraverti blamed "vested interests like property, personal interest in the woman" as the reasons for women being branded witches.

"More than 800 women have been killed after they were denounced as witches across the country since 2008. This is the official figure. The actual number may be higher," Chakraverti told IANS.

In a patriarchal society, an independent single woman is a threat, warranting immediate elimination.

Keeriti Roy, a social worker from West Bengal, said almost all the cases of witch killings in the state had a close connection to property or other vested interests - and that rejection in love was also a reason.

City-based sociologist Bula Bhadra described witch killing as "genderised mass murder".

"The overall evidence makes plain that the panic of the witch craze is inseparable from the misogynist stigmatisation of women as evil. Women who seemed independent from patriarchal norms have been targeted as witches. Labeling women as witches effectively diverts attention from the daily multifaceted atrocities on women in India." Bhadi'a said.

According to the National Crime Records Bureau, 243 women have been killed after being denounced as witches across India in 2011, with Karnataka registering the maximum with 77 cases, followed by Odisha with 41 and Jharkhand with 36. Many other states are also in the list.

G. Vijayan of The Atheist Centre in Andhra Pradesh said settling old scores was a primary reason for witch-hunting besides land grabbing. Often, there is official neglect.

"In some parts of the Telangana region, when a woman is killed after being branded a witch, a case is not even registered," he said.

According to All India Democratic Women Association Odisha secretary Pushpa Das, witchcraft is rampant in the state. "In 2012 alone, around 50 such cases came up and most of the victims were single women."

"The government needs to be proactive. Without the administration - coming forward, such killings cannot be prevented." Shravani said.

(The Sentinel - 11.05.13)

(Contd. from Page 6)

Empowerment of Women...

of the total population of the country Sex differential is significant among the number of male and female workers in the total workforce in the country. The 2001 census results reveal that 26% of the total women population is worker in our country In the rural areas, it is 31% while in urban areas it is 12%. Analyzing the female workers activity-wise (2001 census), it has been observed that 32.9% of the female workers are deriving their livelihood as cultivator against 31% male workers, 38.8% females as agriculture labourers against 20.8% males and 6.4% females engaged in household industry against 3.1% male counterpart, signifying dominance of women workers in these activities in the country. Similar trend is also observed in respect of the State. Data available from the 5th Economic Census 2005 for the State reveals that adult female workers account for 11.64% of the total persons employed where rural adult female workers constitute 73.5% of the total adult female work force. Also 17.5% constitutes adult female among the total hired workers as per 5th Economic Census conducted in the State.

Women demonstrate great innovation, skill, intelligence, hard work and commitment and if these attribute of women can be harnessed effectively, India's growth can be more inclusive and equitable.

(The Assam Tribune - 11.05.13)

Centre Ignoring IB Report on Influx

- R Dutta Choudhury

GUWAHATI, May 8 – It is shocking that the Government of India is sitting over a crucial report of the Intelligence Bureau (IB) on the threat posed to Assam and Nagaland by illegal migration from Bangladesh and this proves the lack of sincerity on the part of the Centre to protect the security of the nation, said the chairman of the North East Students' Organization (NESO), Samujjal Bhattacharya.

Referring to the report, which appeared in The Assam Tribune on Government's inaction on an IB report on illegal migration, Bhattacharya, who is also the adviser of the All Assam Students' Union (AASU), said that the report once again proved the point that illegal migration is still taking place. He said that the Centre must take effective steps to seal the border with Bangladesh and to detect and deport the foreign nationals from Assam and other parts of the North

East region to protect the region.

It may be mentioned here that RV Ravi, who recently retired as the Special Director of the IB, conducted a detailed study on illegal migration way back in 2006 and submitted the report to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) pointing out that migration is still taking place. The report said that the migration is making Assam and Nagaland politically sensitive and vulnerable from the security point of view.

Meanwhile, the NESO chairman said that even after a report by the IB, the Government failed to take effective steps to deal with the situation, which is very unfortunate and the situation deteriorated further with continuous infiltration. He pointed out that very often the Courts were forced to issue directives to the Government for the deportation of the illegal migrants. The political leaders are

patronizing influx of foreigners to create vote banks, while, the recent statement by Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi advocating shelter to those who came to India on the face of harassment would only encourage migration. The political leaders including the Chief Minister are not only compromising with the interests of the indigenous people but also with the security of the nation as the IB report had pointed out the fact that migration was making the region vulnerable from the security point of view, he added.

The NESO chairman further pointed out that the Government is not only sitting over the report of the IB for six years, but is also sitting over the report that then Governor SK Sinha submitted to the President of India on the issue way back in 1998, which proved that the Centre is not at all sincere in dealing with the problem.

(The Assam Tribune 9.5.2013)

'Myanmar Nagas Not Part of Chin Tribe'

DIMAPUR, April 23 – The Nagas of Myanmar have strongly rejected the statement made by the Myanmar Deputy Minister for Immigration and Population in Parliament whereby he had clubbed the Nagas as one of the 53 minority tribes of the Chin ethnic group.

Deputy Minister U Win Myint, replying to a question raised by MP U Aung Thein on the 135 tribes in the country during the first session of Parliament recently, had included the Nagas among the 53 tribes of Chin ethnic group, said a joint statement issued by the Myanmar Naga organisations.

The statement strongly pointed out that Naga people are an indigenous group of people in Myanmar and India having their own dialect, culture,

customs, long history and distinctive identity. It, moreover, pointed out that the region in which the Nagas are residing in Myanmar has been recognised as the Naga Self-Administered Zone in the 2008 Constitution of the Union of Myanmar according to their culturally distinct identities, geographical territory and population ratio.

The Naga bodies, therefore, said the Minister's reply in Parliament in which the Nagas have been included among the 53 tribes of Chin ethnic group is totally unacceptable, while adding that the 'baseless, unacceptable and non-logical reply of the Deputy Minister of Immigration and Population can impact on the national unity'.

Stating that it fully rejects the recognition of Naga people as a tribe

of another nationality, the Nagas in Myanmar have asked that an amendment be made in the nationality list issued by the State.

Furthermore, stating that the Nagas are being displayed and featured as a tribe of Chin nationality in the Union National Races Village and Naga traditional attires, tools and utensils, etc, are displayed as Chin traditional items, the Naga bodies have requested for these displayed items to be withdrawn and corrected at the earliest.

Meanwhile, the Eastern Naga Students Association has also strongly condemned the statement of the Myanmar Deputy Union Minister and termed it as a shock and an insult to the Nagas, particularly in Myanmar.

(The Assam Tribune - 24.04.2013)

SC Gives Centre Three Months' Time

NEW DELHI, May 8 – The Supreme Court on Wednesday asked Government of India to complete the modalities for update of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) within three months and report back.

According to president of the Assam Public Works (APWs), Abhijeet Sharma, the Supreme Court's direction came after Government of India said in its affidavit that modalities along with forms which would be used for update of NRC would be finalised within three months. Thereafter a notification would be issued for commencement of work of update of NRC in Assam, which would be

completed within three years from the date of issue of notification.

The Government of India's counsel informed that a meeting was convened on April 8 by Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of Assam and Registrar General of India (RGI).

The Government of Assam's counsel said in its affidavit that update of NRC and detection of foreigners are two distinct processes to achieve separate distinct objectives of the Assam Accord.

Sharma told newsmen that the apex court instructed Government of India that the three months' time would be over in the month of July and by the

next date of hearing, they should be ready with all documents for submission.

The Supreme Court remarked that it was a very serious matter and it would continue to monitor the progress.

The APW had submitted an additional affidavit on April 26 stating that Rule 4A of the Citizenship (Registration of Citizenship and issue of National Identity Cards) Rules 2003 is completely flawed as it is ultra vires of the Constitution. Sharma said they had pointed out that unlike in other states, in Assam people have to apply and prove that they are Indians.

(The Assam Tribune 9.5.2013)

Tibetan Leader Asks US to Engage China in Talks

DHARAMSALA, May 7: Tibetan Prime Minister-in-Exile Lobsang Sangay on Tuesday appealed to the US to engage China to restart a dialogue on the Tibet issue, even as 117 Tibetans have set themselves on fire in four years.

"I urge the US Congress to further strengthen its efforts to encourage the Chinese government to enter into a meaningful dialogue to resolve the Tibet issue peacefully," the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) website said, quoting the political successor of the Dalai Lama.

Sangay said: "It would be extremely helpful if Congressional foreign policy committees could hold hearings on Tibet."

According to him, 117 Tibetans have set themselves on fire since March 2009. The common cry of all self-immolators is the return of Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama to Tibet and freedom for Tibetans.

Quoting the US Commission on International Religious Freedom's annual report, Sangay said: "Tibetans have every reason to believe that China wants Tibet but not the Tibetan people".

The April 2013 commission

report states the religious freedom conditions in Tibetan areas are worse now, than at any time over the past decade.

Sangay said members of the Congress have legislated over the years to help Tibet.

"This has given political, moral and financial support to the Dalai Lama's vision of a peaceful solution to the Tibet problem though the 'middle-way' approach that would provide for genuine autonomy for Tibet within the framework of Chinese constitution."

A CTA spokesperson told IANS that China and the Dalai Lama's envoys have held nine rounds of talks since 2002 in efforts to resolve the Tibetan issue.

The last round of talks, the ninth, was held in Beijing in January 2010 and since then deadlock continues between both sides.

In November 2008 the discussion between the two sides collapsed after China's rejection of the Tibetan demand for autonomy, the spokesperson added.

The Dalai Lama has lived in India since fleeing his homeland in 1959. The Tibetan government-in-exile is based in this Himachal Pradesh hill town.

(The Sentinel - 08.05.13)

NESO Seeks Special Constitutional Status for NE

NEW DELHI, May 10 – The North East Students Organisation (NESO) has called for special Constitutional status for the people of North-East with right for land and resources.

Winding up their tour, chairman, secretary general and adviser of NESO, Samuel Jyrwa, Sinam Prakash and Dr Samujjal Bhattacharya said that they have urged the Prime Minister to grant special Constitutional status to the people of the North-East that must delegate federal authority to the State Governments including rights over land and its natural resources.

As part of their strategy, the NESO leaders have decided to call on leaders of major national and regional political parties. During their current round they met the Prime Minister, Leader of Opposition, Sushma Swaraj, president of BJP, Rajnath Singh, Congress vice president, Rahul Gandhi, Election Commissioner, H S Brahma among others.

Briefing newsmen, the leaders said that they have impressed upon the Central leaders about the urgency of the situation and fast changing demography of the North Eastern States, where the ethnic people are being displaced by illegal migrants from Bangladesh and Nepal. The NESO has also registered their opposition to the land transfer deal with Bangladesh and demanded the repeal of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act.

(The Assam Tribune - 11.05.13)

Tribal in State Means Only Indigenous

SHILLONG, April 16: Hill State People's Democratic Party (HSPDP) legislator from Nongkrem, Ardent Miller Basaiawmoit today objected to the fact that tribes from other parts of the region apart from the indigenous tribes are entitled to buy land in the State. "Section 2(e) of the Meghalaya Transfer of Land (Regulation) Act, 1971 has been wrongly interpreted," Basaiawmoit said.

As per the section 2 (e) of the Act, "tribal" means a person belonging to any of the Scheduled Tribe pertaining to Meghalaya and as specified in the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order 1950, as amended from time to time and, for the purpose of this Act shall also include the Rabhas, Kacharis (and Koches) resident in Meghalaya. The Nongkrem legislator also asked from the Government whether it was contemplating to specify the name

"tribal". "Government received suggestion and petition and we have constituted a joint committee on matter relating to amendment to the Act," Deputy Chief Minister in-charge Revenue and Disaster Management Prof RC Laloo said. Prof Laloo also said that the Government was not aware that other tribes apart from the indigenous tribals are acquiring land in the State. (*The Sentinel* 17.04.2013)

We Feel Proud as Assamese: Garo National Council

GUWAHATI, May 12: Addressing a press meet here in the city today, the Garo National Council (GNC) has vehemently opposed the demand of Garo Hills State Movement Committee (GHSMC) of including a few villages of Kamrup (R) and Goalpara in Garoland.

Garo Hills State Movement Committee is a newly formed organisation of Meghalaya, has included a number of Garo dominated villages from adjoining Kamrup (R) and Goalpara districts of Assam in its proposed plan of Garoland. The Garo people of these villages have vehemently opposed this move and said that they are Assamese people like any other indigenous tribes of the state.

"There are around 3 lakh people in greater Assam and we are as Assamese as the Koch, Rajbangshi, Brahmin, Mishing, Kalita, Rabha, Karbi, Bodo or Ahoms. We do not

support the GHSMC demand of including our villages in the proposed Garoland. We agree that the district administration or the State Government has done very less for the Garo people and that they have misused the fund allocated for the development of the Garos. Still, we do not want to separate ourselves from Assam. We feel proud to be recognised as Assamese and do not want to be a part of the proposed Garoland," said GNC Working President Tarman G Momin.

"We want to aware the government about this Garoland demand and want to say them that instead of being part of a separate state, all we demand is for an autonomous council. We demand that, the villages which are included in the proposed Garoland should immediately be removed," Momin further added.

The GNC further opposed the

Rabha Hasong elections and said that until and unless the Garo dominated villages included in the Rabha Hasong are not scrapped, they will not allow the elections to take place.

"There are about 274 Garo dominated villages included in the Rabha Hasong. A census report states that around 30-40 villages, included under Rabha Hasong, do not have a single Garo people. But in reality, these villages do not have any Rabha population and these are completely Garo dominated villages. Villages at the Goalpara districts like the Amjunga Susiyapara, Ramsapara, Garibhupa, Bhelbari, Kalapara and Baalsira do not have any Rabha population, but the census report claims just the opposite and state about zero per cent existence of Garo people. This is not correct," said President of Garo Mothers' Union Soma N Marak.

(*The Sentinel* - 13.05.13)

Vivek Rath Recalls Ideals of Vivekananda

- Raju Das

SHILLONG, April 27 – Thousands of people here yesterday walked through the route, Swami Vivekananda undertook 112 years ago in Shillong, while recalling the saint's ideals.

The procession called "Vivek-Rath" began from Bilasipara in Assam on April 23 and covered Chapar, Dhubri, Dudhnoi, Gauripur, Goalpara and Guwahati before culminating here. The Rath began in Shillong at 8 am where thousands of people from different parts of the State and country converged at Laban where Swami Vivekananda had stayed during his visit

here 112 years back.

The procession with women, men, children and monks of the Ramakrishna Mission traversed from Laban through IGP Point, Police Bazaar and converged at Quinton Hall for a public meeting where Swami Vivekananda had delivered a lecture on this day in 1901. Several dignitaries recalled the ideals of the saint and urged the gathering to imbibe his teachings.

"Swamiji said that any country which doesn't respect its women cannot achieve greatness now or in the

near future," Keya Sengupta, Director of the Indian Institute of Management said. She said that "self-discipline is the medicine of all the scourges afflicting the society today." The IIM Director also said that the importance of practicing self-discipline as taught by Swami Vivekananda has become all the more relevant in the present context.

PP Srivastava, member of North Eastern Council termed the congregation at the venue here a "historic occasion."

(*The Assam Tribune* 28.04.2013)

Panel Raps Centre on Porous Indo-Bangla Border

NEW DELHI, April 28 – The porous Indo-Bangladesh border continues to remain vulnerable to unabated influx because of inadequate border fencing, with the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) coming under sharp criticism for having realised nothing regarding the ground realities.

“For a long time now it has been stated on the part of Government of India that fencing work, construction of border roads would be completed, however, on the ground, nothing has been realised.” This comment is not from any political entity or student organisation, but from the Department Related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs in its latest report tabled in both the Houses.

What is even more interesting is that a top official of the Home Ministry said he was not sure if Government of India would be able to seal the Indo-Bangladesh border completely within the specific time, citing various obstacles.

The India-Bangladesh border is infested with illegal migration, smuggling and trans-border movement of insurgents, which pose a serious threat to the security of the country. The Government of India has sanctioned 2502 km of fencing under Phase II along the international border against which 1065 km has been completed. Likewise, 2840 km of flood lighting has been sanctioned. At least 834 BOPs have been constructed as against the sanctioned 1185 BOPs.

The Secretary, Border Management told the Committee they have a typical problem on the Indo-Bangladesh border. The Zero Line construction was cited as the most crucial problem. At many of the places, the border is passing right through the heart of the city including Assam. Bangladesh authorities are not allowing India to set up the fence on the border. “They say we have to go 150 yards inside the border,” the secretary reported.

“If we go 150 yards inside the border then, the population of India gets outside the fence, towards Bangladesh. We want to avoid that. There are 185 such spots. We have requested Bangladesh Government to allow us to do Zero Line construction,”

he said.

“The Home Secretary during the last round of talks had requested them for clearance. And, if they do not give clearance, then we are considering whether we could put the fencing on the Zero Line or not,” he said.

“The terrain on the India-Bangladesh border is unique. It is riverine and full of hills. It is full of undulations. So, there are some places where we are not able to do construction. For them we are adopting technical solutions. We are looking at whether we can put some laser guns or something through which physically people cannot come. If they come, we are able to, at least detect them.

“Thirdly, there is also resistance from the local people in Meghalaya, at some places in Assam, as also in Tripura. They are not allowing us to do fencing for various reasons,” the official said.

The Home Secretary, who also briefed the Parliamentary panel, said that there were three types of problems. One is the land acquisition. There is a certain stretch in West Bengal and some stretches in Tripura and Meghalaya, where land in question is an issue. It is taking time, he remarked.

The second issue is environment clearance. Now, the Government has got the clearance.

The Home Secretary informed the Committee that for long-term solution of border infrastructure works, MHA was in the process of drafting the Border Infrastructure Development Bill, which would fast track the work of both land acquisition and environment clearance.

But the Parliamentary Committee remarked that the main objective of the effective border management is to secure the country from the ulterior motives of enemy countries such as illegal migration, infiltration and smuggling. While facilitating legitimate trade and commerce across the border.

About the Indo-Bangladesh border, the Centre was told to sort out all the bottlenecks at the earliest and complete remaining works of fencing and flood lighting as targeted in a given time-frame. The Committee

recommended that the Government of India should diplomatically approach and negotiate with Bangladesh Government for border fencing within 150 yards along the border. An early decision may be taken in the matter.

(The Assam Tribune - 29.04.13)

(Contd. from Page 16)

Intimidate the...

nation. By declaring China an enemy, Indian government can impose ban on imports and exports from and to China and on Chinese companies getting award of contracts in India. Sensing economic importance of India for China, it is significant that China also played down the recent border standoff in Ladakh ahead of Premier Li Keqiang's visit to India, saying that the two sides have the ability to prevent such issues from affecting overall growth of ties, while working “very hard” to find a solution at an “early date”.

Though, Ministry of Commerce has been talking about ‘China Strategy’, in the wake of rising trade deficit with China and thereby imposing ban on import of telecom equipments and power plants and some Chinese products. However, in the past also such talks had been made, without making any headway in that direction. Issue of security risks due to import of Chinese telecom equipments were also raised, but without any concrete action.

By mere showing, an intention to do the same can change the attitude of Chinese policy makers, as China cannot afford to lose a huge Indian market. Until the time India declares China an enemy nation, we can definitely go ahead in imposing ban on Chinese products and Chinese companies on security and health issues. India stands to gain in two ways, one that China would be penalised for its immoral acts and two, India's trade deficit, which has reached US\$ 200 billion in 2012-13, would be taken care of, though partially.

(The writer is Associate Professor, Department of Economics, PGDAV College, University of Delhi.)

Refugees Likely to Return Home to Mizoram from Tripura

Aizawl / Agartala, May 6: Despite uncertainties among refugees, the Mizoram government has agreed to resume the rehabilitation of over 40,000 tribals who had sought refuge in Tripura for about 16 years, a home ministry official said on Monday.

In view of the growing ethnic troubles, the Tripura government has been repeatedly telling the centre that the long stay of the immigrants was causing socio-economic and law and order problems.

In contrast, refugee leaders have been insisting that without a formal agreement between the governments of the states of Mizoram and Tripura, the union government, and tribal leaders, the rehabilitation of refugees would remain uncertain.

"Mizoram government's core committee on refugee repatriation headed by Parliamentary Secretary for Home Lalrinmawia Ralte last week held a meeting and decided to resume return of refugees this month-end," a Mizoram home department official told IANS.

The official said: "The core committee has asked the district administration of the Mizoram's Mamit district to finalise the schedule of the return after discussion with counterparts in Tripura."

The official said the union home

ministry has asked the Mizoram to re-start the stalled rehabilitation of refugees, in coordination with Tripura.

The issue was also taken up at the chief ministers' meeting with union Home Minister Sushilkumar Shinde in New Delhi last month.

Tripura Chief Minister Manik Sarkar told the meeting that the continuous presence for over 16 years of about 41,468 tribal refugees from Mizoram has been a matter of concern for his state.

"The long stay of the refugees in Tripura has its own socio-economic and law and order implications. The state government is providing necessary support for early repatriation of these families. However, the process has been extremely slow," Sarkar told IANS.

According to an official report of the union home ministry, the central government had sanctioned Rs.17.86 crore to the Mizoram government during the past two years for the rehabilitation of refugees in their original areas in Mamit district, western Mizoram.

Mizoram Bru Displaced People's Forum (MBDPF) president A. Sawibunga said: "We would not create any impediment in the repatriation process, but a large number of common refugees are not fully

influenced by the verbal assurance of the central and Mizoram governments."

The refugees, lodged in camps in northern Tripura, 180 km north of Agartala, have sent several memoranda to the prime minister and union home minister and occasionally organised protest rallies in support of their 18-point demands.

The 18-point demands of the refugees include a written agreement between the Mizoram, Tripura and the central governments and refugee leaders, ensuring livelihood to the Reang tribals in Mizoram, and constitution of a monitoring committee to supervise the settlement of home-bound refugees.

Since October 1997, over 41,000 Reang tribal refugees, locally called Bru, have taken shelter in six camps in north Tripura's Kanchanpur sub-division, adjacent to western Mizoram.

After continued persuasion by the Mizoram and union home ministry officials, around 4,500 refugees of 850 families have returned to their villages in 2010 and 2011. After that, the process of return of refugees stalled.

The tribal refugees had fled their villages in Mizoram after ethnic clashes with the majority Mizos over the killing of a Mizo forest official 16 years ago.

(The Sentinel - 07.05.13)

Maoists Planning to Strengthen Base in NE

RANCHI, April 17 – The CPI (Maoist), on the back-foot after prolonged operations in Saranda forest in Jharkhand's West Singhbhum district, is planning to strengthen itself with tie-ups with insurgent groups in the North East, reports PTI.

A letter sent to 13 States, including Jharkhand, by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs on Maoist efforts to expand to new areas said that they planned to strengthen their Eastern Regional Bureau which was guiding the movement in all the States of the eastern region.

"...The North East is another region where the CPI (Maoist) is trying to

spread its wings ... with the objectives which include strengthening the outfit's Eastern Regional Bureau, procurement of arms/ammunition/communication equipment," the six-page letter said.

It noted that the CPI-Maoist had developed close relationship with the Manipur-based People's Liberation Army, which was not only in a position to procure weapons from foreign sources, but had also provided training to Maoist cadres. The NSCN (I/M) also appeared to have been used for training to the rebels, it added.

The letter, however, said it would not be easy for the Maoists to

establish themselves in the North East abounding in ethnicity based militias, but they could use their 'theoretical support' to 'nationalities' to gain a foothold in the region and forge relationships with ethnic militant groups.

The Maoists' presence was first noticed in Assam in 2006 with the ultras targeting the 'existing political movements', the letter said. It estimated that the banned Maoist outfit had around one hundred cadres, including 25 to 30 armed, in Assam with Mahesh, a Central Committee member from the Rabha community appearing to be in charge.

(The Assam Tribune 18.04.13)

ABSU Slams Govt. Rehabilitation Steps

- R Dutta Choudhury

GUWAHATI, April 24 – If any ethnic conflict takes place in the Bodoland Territorial Autonomous Districts (BTAD) areas in future, the State Government will be solely responsible for it as adequate confidence building measures were not taken during the process of rehabilitation of the people displaced in the clashes last year. This was the assertion of the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU).

Talking to The Assam Tribune, ABSU president Promode Boro said that the Government made the rehabilitation of the displaced people a political issue keeping in mind the 2014 general elections, but no effort was made to remove apprehensions from the minds of the indigenous people.

Boro said that the Government should have carried out proper scrutiny of the displaced people before they are settled as there is apprehension among the indigenous people that

some of the displaced people were of doubtful nationality. Such apprehension may lead to conflicts again in future and the Government will be solely responsible for any such incident, he added.

The ABSU had demanded that the Government should properly scrutinize the nationality of the displaced people before rehabilitating them, but that was not done. The Group of Ministers (GoM) has recently decided that the people who did not have their own land, would also get a rehabilitation grant and they would have to give affidavits assuring that they would not settle in forests and tribal belts and blocks. But is there any mechanism to check whether such people would not settle in forests after receiving the rehabilitation grant, Boro questioned.

Meanwhile, the Group of Ministers (GoM) constituted by Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi to review the rehabilitation of the people displaced in the ethnic

clashes in the Bodoland Territorial Autonomous Council (BTAD) areas yesterday had a meeting with the BTC chief Hagrama Mahilary and other senior members of the Council to review the progress of rehabilitation of the displaced people and decided to request the Government of India to increase the rehabilitation grant.

Official sources told The Assam Tribune that the meeting was of the view that the rehabilitation grant given to the displaced people were not adequate for proper rehabilitation of the affected people as the people not only lost their houses but also their cultivation during the clashes last year. The meeting decided to approach the Government of India to increase the rehabilitation grant so that the affected people belonging to both Bodo and Muslim communities can be rehabilitated properly in their native places.

(The Assam Tribune 25.04.2013)

The Misguided Hope

Revelations made by Wikileaks that India intentionally kept Arunachal Pradesh backward under the misguided hope of having the mountainous border State as a natural, physical buffer against the Chinese are convincing enough. It also exposes the myopic vision of the Government of India which had so naively hoped to ward off the aggressive agenda of the Chinese by simply keeping the resource-rich Arunachal undeveloped. It is only recently that the Government of India seems to be waking up to the reality that a prosperous Arunachal with a well-developed infrastructure stands to serve its interests - strategic and otherwise - much better. The decades of neglect meted out to Arunachal have considerably slackened the border State's development process. Transport and communication, in particular, remained a perennial constraint, and it is only recently that the Centre is giving some thought to address such concerns. Arunachal undoubtedly faces serious challenges from outside, with China making no secret of its aggressive agenda over this Eastern Himalayan region. Indo-China border talks have

also failed to yield any- positive outcome on the lingering border row, mainly due to China's adamant stand. The perennial infrastructure bottleneck plaguing Arunachal contrasts sharply with the developments taking place on the Chinese side of the border which has witnessed tremendous infrastructural expansion. The strategic importance of the State apart, Arunachal is a unique place in terms of its scenic beauty, biodiversity and ethnic multiplicity which offers immense scope for tourism promotion. But lack of connectivity has so far prevented it from taking a practical shape. The apology of an air service run by Pawan Hans helicopters had been nothing short of a deathtrap with an abnormally high incidence of accidents, ultimately resulting in discontinuance of the facility. It is time the Centre took cognizance of the reality and put in place a holistic, long-term mechanism to address the infrastructure woes of the State.

For countering the belligerent Chinese designs, India needs to be more assertive about its stand on Arunachal. Unfortunately its stand, when confronted with the

confrontational Chinese agenda, has not gone beyond merely stating that Arunachal is an integral part of India. At the international bra too, India should be more assertive about negating the Chinese claims over Arunachal. Thankfully the people of Arunachal have been steadfast in their allegiance to India — as testified to by the free and fair polls decade after decade. But, as Wikileaks suggests, there is a possibility that geographically alienated from mainstream India and ç lured by the greater economic prospects on the Chinese side, they may feel sonic growing bonds with China. The Government of India needs to be very serious about such developments and come up with long-term interventions so as not to encourage any secessionist tendencies. Hastening the development process will be the biggest moral booster for the neglected populace of Arunachal. At diplomatic levels, India needs to convey to the Chinese and the world community that the Chinese claims over Arunachal are not just ridiculous hut full of falsehood and a veiled attack on India's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

(The Assam Tribune - 18.05.13)

Muslim Parties Echo Minority Aspirations in Secular India

- Mr. Narayan Swamy

Six decades after India's partition made Muslim politics a dirty word, parties founded by Muslims to espouse the cause of the country's largest minority are again making a mark.

And with national elections barely a year away, leaders of these 10-odd parties – some of which remain largely unknown – point out that the mobilisation of Muslim votes must not be compared with the pre-1947 politics that led to Pakistan. They say they are only articulating the aspirations and also the anger among Muslims over their widely admitted socio-economic backwardness as well as "police high-handedness" after every terror attack.

"Muslims are not satisfied with any mainstream political party," explained Abdul Raheem Qureshi, president of Majlis Tameer-e-Millat, a five-decade-old socio-religious group in Hyderabad. "All the parties have failed to reflect the community's aspirations in Parliament and in State Assemblies," said Qureshi, reflecting a widely held view. "But this is not a repeat of history."

He and many others say there is nothing wrong in forming parties to secure the rights and the due share of every community, religious or otherwise. Muslims account for 14 percent of Hindu-dominated India. Their numbers, according to various reports, range from 150 to 177 million.

On paper, all the so-called Muslim parties are secular and don't close their doors to non-Muslims. Most also don't restrict themselves to just espousing the Muslim cause and take up other issues as well. Equally true in a country as varied as India, the majority of Muslims in India still vote for national and regional parties.

Only Jammu and Kashmir state – out of India's 28 States and seven union

territories – is a Muslim majority one.

Once the Muslim League died a political death in India following the creation of Pakistan, the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) emerged in 1948. Today, it is a mainstream player in Kerala.

The Hyderabad-based Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (MIM) was born in 1928 with a view to keeping

constituency last year. President Pranab Mukherjee's son Abhijit then scraped through by only 1,516 votes over his CPI-M rival.

In Tamil Nadu, the IUML has always been a fringe player, aligned mostly with the DMK. A new Muslim party, Manithaneyya Makkal Katchi (MMK), was formed in 2009 and is now with the ruling AIADMK.

The growing number of Muslim political parties "is a natural consequence of democracy", MMK legislator MH Jawahirullah said. He called for coordination of all Muslim groups in India.

With a scattered and largely urbanized 12 per cent Muslim population in Maharashtra, the Aurangabad-based Jamaat-e-Islami has not won any seat in the elections it has fought.

The dwindling Muslim representation in Parliament and State Assemblies in most places

worries Muslim leaders nationally.

In Uttar Pradesh, the All India Ulema Council was formed in 2009 but it failed to make any impact beyond Azamgarh district.

The Justice Party, formed later, created a stir in Uttar Pradesh ahead of the 2012 elections. It won three seats but was routed in 193 seats.

Activist Naiyar Fatmi said in Patna that while there was no scope for a Muslim party in Bihar, "on the national level there may be". He added that Muslims were frustrated with major political parties.

Added Asghar Nawaz Khan, a leading Muslim leader in Bangalore: "Yes, we are disenchanting by the mainstream parties because we do not matter to them except during elections."

Rashool Abdul of Muttahida Muslim Mahaz, a socio-religious outfit in Karnataka, complained: "We did not get any support from the Congress or

A list of political parties espousing the cause of the Muslim community among other issues:

- * Indian Union Muslim League (based in Kerala)
- * Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (Andhra Pradesh)
- * All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) (Assam)
- * People's Democratic Conference of India (from West Bengal, has merged with AIUDF)
- * Welfare Party of India (West Bengal)
- * Social Democratic Party of India (West Bengal)
- * Manithaneyya Makkal Katchi (MMK) (Tamil Nadu)
- * All India Ulema Council (Uttar Pradesh)
- * Justice Party (Uttar Pradesh)
- * Indian National League (Kerala)
- * People's Democratic Party (Kerala)

Hyderabad independent. It was outlawed after India's independence but got revived in 1958.

For decades, these were the only two Muslim parties in India and both had localized influence. The picture is changing – slowly.

In just six years after taking birth in 2005, the All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) became the main opposition party in Assam, eroding the Muslim base of the Congress and others. With 34 per cent of Muslim population in Assam, AIUDF legislator Sirajuddin Ajmal said with confidence that his party would form the next government in the State.

In West Bengal, the small People's Democratic Conference of India (PDCI) merged with AIUDF last year.

Two other parties – the Welfare Party of India and the Social Democratic Party of India – stunned pundits by winning over 66,000 votes in the Jangipur Lok Sabha

JD-S when young Muslims were harassed or arrested on false charges.”

This is a recurring theme in State after State, even where no Muslim parties exist.

In Kerala, where Muslims form a quarter of the population, besides the IUML, two other community-based parties exist: Indian National League and People's Democratic Party.

IUML legislator KNA Khader said major issues facing the minority communities in other parts of India were not getting addressed because of “the absence of a political party which works for them”. The IUML is trying to foray into neighbouring Karnataka while the MIM has expanded in other parts of Andhra Pradesh and also in Karnataka and Maharashtra, winning municipal seats here and there.

In Uttar Pradesh, most Muslims now tend to vote for the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party, a far cry from the times when they all rooted for the Congress.

In Jammu and Kashmir, the story is more of alienation with the Indian State than any resurgence of Muslim identity.

In some States, however, there is nothing resembling Muslim politics though disaffection within the community exists everywhere. This has also led to the rise of radical Islam in parts of India. But as community leaders point out, the Indian Muslim is not a monolithic entity. Like the Hindu, he is divided into many groups.

Despite recurring communal riots post-1947, the first major convulsion in the Indian Muslim political psyche followed the razing of the Babri mosque in Ayodhya in 1992 and the 2002 Gujarat violence.

Not every Muslim is for religious identity in politics.

“India is a secular country. Why should there be a separate party based on religion?” asked Abdul Kareem of the Goa Muslim Association.

Abid Rasool Khan, general secretary of the Congress in Andhra Pradesh, warned: “If there is polarization of the Muslim community, other communities will also polarize, which will be disastrous.”

(The sentinel - 18.05.13)

Assam Records 316 Rape Cases Between 2001-2011

GUWAHATI, April 28 – The Asian Centre for Human Rights (ACHR) in its report ‘India’s Hell Holes: Child Sexual Assault in Juvenile Justice Homes’ stated that sexual offences against children in India had reached an epidemic proportion and a large number of those were being committed in the juvenile justice homes run and aided by the Government of India.

The report has been submitted in advance to the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Rashida Manjoo who is conducting an official visit to India.

The 56-page report, citing National Crimes Record Bureau statistics, stated that a total of 48,338 child rape

cases was recorded from 2001 to 2011, and India saw an increase of 336 per cent of child rape cases from 2001 (2,113 cases) to 2011 (7,112 cases). These are only the tip of the iceberg as the large majority of child rape cases are not reported to the police while children regularly become victims of other forms of sexual assault too.

Among the States, Madhya Pradesh recorded the highest number of child rape cases with 9,465 cases from 2001 to 2011, followed by Maharashtra with 6,868 cases, Uttar Pradesh with 5,949 cases, Andhra Pradesh with 3,977 cases, Chhattisgarh with 3,688 cases, Delhi with 2,909 cases, Rajasthan with 2,776 cases, Kerala with 2,101 cases, Tamil Nadu with 1,486 cases, Haryana with 1,081 cases, Punjab with 1,068 cases and Gujarat with 999 cases.

Assam recorded 316 cases in the period. Among the other north-eastern States, Tripura recorded 457 cases, Meghalaya 452 cases, Mizoram 217 cases, Manipur 98 cases, Arunachal Pradesh 93 cases, Nagaland 38 cases, and Sikkim 113 cases.

“In most cases, sexual assault in the juvenile justice homes continues for a long period as the victims are not able to protest and suffer silently in the absence of any inspection by the authorities under the JJ(C&PC) Act. While authorities of the juvenile justice homes are the main predators, the absence of separate facilities, in many cases for boys and girls, and in most cases as per age, i.e., for boys and girls up to 12 years, 13-15 years and 16 years and above as provided under Rule 40 of the Juvenile Justice Care and Protection of Children Rules 2007 facilitates sexual assaults on the minor inmates by the senior inmates,” Subhash Chakma, director, ACHR said.

The ACHR blamed the Government of India, i.e., the Ministry of Women and Child Development and the State Governments for the continuing sexual assault on children in the juvenile justice homes.

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, State Commissions for Protection of Child Rights and the Child Welfare Committees intervene only after crimes are reported but there are no preventive mechanisms or regular inspections.

Many of the child rape cases take place in juvenile justice homes established under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000 and by the end of financial year 2011-2012, about 733 juvenile justice homes were fully supported by the Government of India under the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) of the Ministry of Women and Child Development.

“It will not be an understatement to state that juvenile justice homes – established to provide care and protection as well as re-integration, rehabilitation and restoration of the juveniles in conflict with law

(Contd. to Page 4)



Intimidate the Dragon

- Dr Ashwani Mahajan

Chinese new Prime Minister Li Keqiang is visiting India from May 19. Recently India's Minister of External Affairs Salman Khurshid had also visited China. Immediately before his visit, China had trespassed Indian Territory and came 19 kilometers deep in Ladakh, challenging India's sovereignty. Though government claims that issue is over after withdrawal of China's troops from Ladakh India has paid big price for the same, as Indian Government has conceded to their demand of removal of Indian camps from Indian territory itself.

China, as a neighbour is increasingly becoming a nuisance for India. After 1962 war, it has officially trespassed Indian Territory over 500 times. China has also been causing trouble in the form of floods, for India by building dams on Brahmaputra at several places. It has also been encouraging insurgency in various parts of India, by supplying arms and ammunition to the insurgents. More important is the fact that China has been trying to encircle Indian Territory by making military bases around India (from various territories, other than China's own). This is all part of China's policy of scaring India.

After imposing war on India and illegally taking possession of more than 42 thousand square kilometers of India's territory, China has always tried to create border disputes with India. By way of aggression deep into India's territory; questioning Prime Minister's visit to Arunachal Pradesh, constructing air bases in Pakistan occupied territories and pricking India in all possible ways, China has always been inviting ire of Indian people. Now trespassing deep 19 kilometers into Indian territory in Ladakh and questioning Indian Army's presence in the area, China has directly challenged India's sovereignty, which cannot be tolerated in any manner.

Indian government has not been fulfilling its duty in protecting the national interests by giving appropriate response. Even media also has not been doing enough to raise this issue

and registering the seriousness with Indian people, against unjust aggression on part of China. Rather, by calling China, a 'dragon', Indian people are being scared, as if we cannot face or counter China. Indian foreign minister has actually irked Indian people, by his silence over Ladakh row, during his official visit to China. While not rising to the occasion, Indian government's, body language is that of a 'scared government'. Now when Chinese premier is visiting India, our government needs to change its face and show prudent firmness and strength.

Chinese Economy in Doldrums

Perhaps armed attack is not required with China. We can deal with China, by intimidating China, not by our military might but by our economic might. However, perhaps Indian leadership is not ready for the same. We do have military might, but perhaps we do not need to demonstrate the same. What we need is the political will, which the present incumbent government lacks. Post slowdown in USA, China's economy is in doldrums. We know that China's economy is dependent heavily on foreign demand. USA and Europe have been big markets for Chinese products. Slowdown in these economies has caused havoc for Chinese economy too. In addition, China's economy, which was growing at the rate of 14-15 per cent in the past, has slowed down to nearly 8-9 per cent. Latest IMF's estimate says that in 2013, China is expected to grow at 8.3 per cent. Infrastructural development has come to a halt. Chinese government may not concede, but the fact is that China is facing worst ever inflation, causing rise in costs in industry and cost of living. Government is no longer in position to give any major subsidy to industry, as it is facing the problem of fiscal deficit. Chinese goods are becoming dearer day-by-day and demand for Chinese goods is at decline. General economic condition in China is not in good shape any more.

Need to Make Strategy to

Intimidate China

India has never attacked any nation, nor have we intimidated any nation in the past. But when China has been indulging in scaring and pricking India, challenging our sovereignty, Indian people cannot remain silent. We cannot tolerate challenge to our self-respect. We have to deal with enemies firmly. We should not forget that India is third largest economic power after USA and China. We not only have atom bomb, we have missiles too with range beyond Beijing. Our armed forces have the capacity to face any eventuality. Therefore there is no need to be scared of China.

However, we can use other measures, which may be termed as economic measures, or more specifically economic sanctions against China. Today we are importing nearly US\$56 billion worth of goods from China; however, we are exporting merely US\$ 16 billion worth of goods to China. Most of the import from China comprise of consumer goods, electronic, project goods, telecom equipment, infrastructural goods etc. Exports from India are mostly iron ore and other minerals, without any value addition. Goods, which we are importing from China, ranging from consumer goods to project goods can easily be replaced by domestic production.

India does not stand to gain by exporting its scarce resource, namely, iron ore etc. Today trade deficit with China has reached more than US\$40 billion. In addition to imports and exports, Chinese companies have been taking contracts for various projects in the country. It has been observed that Chinese companies are interested more in contracts at locations of strategic importance, putting India at security risk. Even security experts have also warned against such attempts by Chinese companies. Persistent efforts by China in raking border disputes and illegally occupying Indian territory gives ample reason to Indian government to declare China as an aggressor and enemy

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Philosophy of Environmental Education

- Dr Bhaskar Bhattacharya

By the concept philosophy of environmental education, we mean the awareness holistic relationship between man and the environment by the method of education. It is really important that we cannot do, think and feel anything in a systematic manner without a sound or a stable environment. We have abilities to actualize our potentialities for the betterment of ourselves in the narrower sense or for the betterment of our society or country in the broader sense; still we will be failed without a good environment. It has to be considered an important tool for a sustainable future. Therefore, we have a lot to do to beautify our environment.

It is very much evident from the palpable events continued in front of our eyes that our environment is not conducive to lead a peaceful life. So, the question automatically comes to our mind, who is responsible for that? And why are human beings engrossed in doing that kind of unwelcome duties? Are people leading a peaceful life by polluting our environment? In response it can be asserted that we are solely responsible for polluting our environment. It is needless to mention that never can one person do our environment pollute. It is by our joint efforts either consciously or unconsciously we are polluting our environment. Due to our erroneous and oblivious nature, we are forgetting that we are not the creator of the systematic, harmonious and beautiful nature in front of our eyes, but for our own benefit or to satisfy our selfish desires, we are destroying the nature. We are exploiting the valuable resources for our own benefit and as a result, frequent problems like flood, global warming, storm, etc., are increasing. We have no way out to get rid of the problems if we are not conscious of the bad effects of the polluted environment.

It can be emphatically said that people are not indeed happy in doing such harm towards nature. Because they themselves are suffering from the problems due to environmental pollution. People have a responsible and serious duty to perform to get rid of the bad effects of the polluted

environment. That is why people have to be literate in a real sense in case of performing our responsible and serious duties for the welfare of all by safeguarding and protecting mother nature.

It is in Indian tradition that we worship rivers, trees, rocks, sun, moon, sky, animals, etc. This undoubtedly indicates that our rich culture and tradition make us aware of the man-environment relationship. Today's concept of environmental education can be traced to the 19th century.

It is needless to mention that we celebrate World Environment Day every year on June 5. It is one of the prime sources through which United Nation sends messages to people to keep on working on the awareness about the environment. Besides, it encourages people to discuss the environmental issues so that people become aware to lead a pollution-free environment in order to enjoy a more prosperous future.

Therefore, this time UNESCO has selected a theme 'Environmental Education' to celebrate the auspicious World Philosophy Day in November next. It is superfluous to mention that population explosion is one of the main causes of the environmental problems. It not only promotes people to destroy the human resources but also the cordial relationship between man and environment. MK Gandhi significantly mentions that the Earth is enough for everyone's need but not for everyone's greed. Due to our lack of ecological awareness, we unconsciously or unknowingly do wrong actions in order to satisfy our needs. It is important to incorporate the teachings of environmental education from the grass-root level to the highest level of education so that everyone will become knowledgeable of environmental education.

The Finnish National Commission for UNESCO (1970) in its report mentioned, "Environmental education is a way of implementing the goals of environmental protection. It is not a separate branch of study. It should be carried out according to the principles of life long integral education," By the very concept of environmental education we generally mean the

awareness of environmental issues and its problems and also the possible solutions to sustainable development of our environment by the methods of education. Therefore, it can be mentioned that environmental education has a great role to develop human skills, attitudes, behaviours towards the link of man and its nature.

Hence, the main objective of philosophy of environmental education is to train people to safeguard the environment by making people individually self-conscious of the possible problems of the environmental degradation so that people can take protective measures to check the incoming threats of the environmental pollution. The Indian Education Commission recommended the inclusion of environmental education in school curriculum and it emphasizes that environmental activities will lead to study of natural sciences, physical sciences, geography, history and civics.

Apart from this, the constructive and creative skills will provide the basis for the practice of simple arts and crafts and the practice of healthy living will serve as the foundation of environmental education. Our constitution also focuses on the protection of our environment. It was included in the constitution under the list of fundamental duties. Article 51 A (G) provides: "It shall be the duty of every citizens of India to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wildlife and have compassion for living creatures."

Time has come to be conscious of our environment, otherwise we will be unable to think of an eco-friendly life in near future. Therefore, it can be viewed that environmental education should be incorporated not only in formal education but also in non-formal education as a mandatory concept in order to form a holistic approach so that no students will be deprived of the knowledge about its role and significance in life. It should be interdisciplinary in nature so that it can be studied from every perspectives of education.

(The Assam Tribune 20.05.13)

श्री हुन अंडरसन मावरी जी का जीवन चरित्र

एच. रोबिन कुरबाह
(अनुवादक - डॉ विश्वामित्र)

श्री अंडरसन मावरी खासी जनजाति के थे। उनका जन्म 12 अप्रैल 1920 को लूममावरी लाइतुमखरा, शिलांग में हुआ था। 10 वर्ष की आयु में ही उनके माता पिता नंगथिमाइ नामक ग्राम में जाकर रहने लगे।

प्राइमरी स्कूल की परीक्षा में वे खासी-जयंतिया पहाड़ जिले में द्वितीय स्थान प्राप्त कर उत्तीर्ण हुए। 1940 में हाई स्कूल की परीक्षा में एवं 1942 में कलकत्ता विश्वविद्यालय से इंटरमीडिएट की परीक्षा (विज्ञान) में उत्तीर्ण हुए। 1943 से 46 तक उन्होंने भारतीय सेना की Indian Electrical and Mechanical Engineering (I.E.M.E.) में सेवा की व द्वितीय विश्वयुद्ध में भी भाग लिया। 1946 में सेना से स्वैच्छिक अवकाश लेकर शिलांग के सेंट एंथोनी हाई स्कूल में शिक्षक बन गए। साथ-साथ वे अध्ययन भी करते रहे तथा 1948 में गुवाहाटी विश्वविद्यालय से B.A. की उपाधि प्राप्त की।

1948 से 1966 तक वे राजकीय हाई स्कूल, शिलांग में शिक्षण करते रहे तथा जून 1966 में इससे त्यागपत्र देकर वे B.D. (Bachelor of Divinity) में अध्ययन करते हेतु थियोलॉजिकल कॉलेज, श्रीरामपुर चले गए। यह उपाधि प्राप्त कर वे प्रेसबिटेरियन चर्च में पास्टर (पादरी) बनना चाहते थे। वे श्रीरामपुर की गर्मी सहन नहीं कर पाए अतः वे वहां से चेरापूंजी आ गए तथा वहीं से B.D. की परीक्षा की तैयारी भी करते रहे। परन्तु यहीं पर उनके जीवन में क्रांतिकारी परिवर्तन आया। उन्हें अपने पाठ्यक्रम में

(1) आदिम सम्प्रदाय (Primitive Religious)
(2) सम्प्रदायों का तुलनात्मक अध्ययन (Comparative Study of Religion) विषय अत्यंत प्रिय थे। इनका अध्ययन करते समय आपको ज्ञात हुआ कि खासी सम्प्रदाय में भी अन्य सम्प्रदायों की भांति सम्पूर्ण तत्वज्ञान है। आपका अभी तक का जीवन ईसाई के रूप में व्यतीत हुआ था और उनको लगता था कि दुनिया में एक मात्र ईसाई सम्प्रदाय ही सम्पूर्ण सम्प्रदाय है। साथ ही साथ आपने चर्च के इतिहास का भी अध्ययन किया।

आपकी अपेक्षा के विपरीत यह इतिहास प्रेरणादायी न होकर यह गन्दगी का पिटारा था। इसमें आपके मन पर ऐसा परिणाम हुआ कि आपने चर्च को छोड़ने का निणय ले लिया।

आपने 31 मई 1969 को प्रेसबिटेरियन हाई स्कूल, चेरापूंजी के मुख्य अध्यापक पद से त्यागपत्र दे दिया। साथ ही आपने B.D. की उपाधि की परीक्षा को बीच में ही छोड़ दिया व चर्च से भी अलग हो गए। 1 जून 1969 से 31 दिसंबर 1990 तक आप नंगक्रेम हाई स्कूल में मुख्य अध्यापक रहे। नंगक्रेम में रहकर ही आपने अपना लेखन, अध्यापन, व खासी सम्प्रदाय के पुनर्जागरण का कार्य सम्पन्न किया। 1972 में आपकी पहली पुस्तक 'पिरखात ऊ खासी' (खासी विचार) प्रकाशित हुई। आज यह पुस्तक B.A. के पाठ्यक्रम का अंग है। 1973 में आपने 'ऊ खासी बाद ला का नियाम' (खासी व उसका धर्म) नामक पुस्तक प्रकाशित की। इसके बाद तो पुस्तकों के लेखन व प्रकाशन की श्रृंखला ही बन गई। आपने खासी भाषा में नौ पुस्तकें व अंग्रेजी में तीन पुस्तकें (i) The Essence of the Khasi Religion (ii) A Glimpse of things to come (iii) The Eastern concept Vis-a vis western concept of culture प्रकाशित की।

25 दिसंबर 1977 में आप चर्च के विरुद्ध व खासी धर्म के पुनर्जागरण हेतु मैदान में उतरे। सन् 1979 में आपने नोंगतालांग नामक ग्राम में पहली जनसभा संबोधित की व खासी मत का दृढ़ प्रतिपादन किया। इसके बाद व अपनी मृत्यु तक इस कार्य में लगे रहे। उन्होंने मात्र खासी-जयंतिया ग्रामों का ही भ्रमण नहीं किया अपितु कल्याण आश्रम के सहयोग से दो बार भारत भ्रमण भी किया। यही नहीं 1981 में वे हॉलैंड व बेल्जियम भी गए जहाँ International Association of Religions Freedom में 'सैंग खासी' संस्था का प्रतिनिधित्व किया और विश्व समुदाय के सामने खासी मत का जोरदार ढंग से प्रतिपादन किया।

वे 1980 में कल्याण आश्रम से जुड़े व इसके द्वारा संचालित प्रकल्पों को देखा। वे यह देशकर अत्यंत प्रभावित हुए कि देश भर में जनजातीय बंधु कल्याण आश्रम के सहयोग व मार्ग दर्शन से अपने-अपने मूल धर्म व परंपरा की रक्षा हेतु कार्य में जुटे हुए हैं। उनके सहयोग से ही 1985 में कल्याण आश्रम का कार्य मेघालय में प्रारंभ हुआ तथा लाईकोर में चिकित्सा केन्द्र प्रारंभ हुआ जिससे खासी-जयंतिया पहाड़ के कोने कोने से आए रोगी लाभान्वित हो रहे हैं। उनको 1988 में बड़ा बाजार कुमार सभा पुस्तकालय, कलकत्ता द्वारा 'विवेकानन्द सेवा पुरस्कार' प्रदान किया गया।

वे जिस संस्था से सर्वाधिक सनेह करते थे वह है - 'Ka Seng Khih Lang' (सैंग खिहलांग)। वे 1988 में इस संस्था के अध्यक्ष बने व फरवरी 1988 में 'युवा सम्मेलन' का आयोजन किया। अब यह सम्मेलन प्रति वर्ष अप्रैल माह में आयोजित होता है और खासी जयंतिया पहाड़ के कोने-कोने से हजारों की संख्या में आबाल बृद्ध स्त्री-पुरुष इस सम्मेलन में भाग लेने आते हैं व प्रेरणा प्राप्त कर स्वधर्म के संरक्षण व जागरण कार्य में सक्रिय होते हैं।

वे 26 मई 1991 को संक्षिप्त बीमारी के बाद स्वर्गवासी हुए। परन्तु रुग्णावस्था में भी उनके पूरा मन लाबान, शिलांग में हो रहे 'युवा सम्मेलन' में था। उनकी मृत्यु के बाद शव यात्रा में शफेद झंडे पर 'Nga la jop' अर्थात् 'मैं जीत गया' लिखकर सैंगखासी के युवक चल रहे थे। उन्होंने स्वधर्म के पुनरुत्थान का जो संकल्प लिया था उसे अपनी आँखों के सामने साकार होता हुआ देख कर आप प्रयाण कर गए। उनका शव खासी परंपरा के अनुसार ही अग्नि को समर्पित किया गया। श्री अंडरसन मावरी जैसे प्रतिभासम्पन्न महापुरुष विरले ही होते हैं, जो अपने समाज व संस्था को नया जीवन व दृढ़ आधार देकर शांति पूर्वक महाप्रयाण करते हैं। ऐसे युगपुरुष को शत शत प्रणाम।

डेगन की दादागिरी

चीन अपने विस्तारवादी मंसूबों को पूरा करने की अपनी राज्य-नीति पर कायम है। तिब्बत को हड़पने वहां तिब्बती जनता पर हर तरह की जोर-जबरदस्ती करने, वहां की जनसांख्यिकी बदलने के साथ ही उसने भारत-चीन सीमा के पूर्वी और पश्चिमी सेक्टर में अपने साम्राज्यवादी मंसूबों को अंजाम देना जारी रखा हुआ है। पिछले साल चीनी सैनिकों ने भारतीय सीमा का करीब 400 बार उल्लंघन किया जिसमें से 90 फीसदी सीमा अतिक्रमण लद्दाख में देखने में आया। उधर पूर्वी सेक्टर में अरुणाचल पर चीन रह-रहकर दावा जताता आ रहा है। चीनी इस इलाके को अपने यहां 'दक्षिणी तिब्बत' कहते हैं।

उल्लेखनीय है कि अरुणाचल से चीन जाने वाले भारतीयों को चीन ने यह कहकर वीसा जारी करने से इनकार कर दिया था कि 'वह इलाका तो चीन का ही है'। अक्टूबर 2009 में प्रधानमंत्री मनमोहन सिंह के अरुणाचल दौर के वक्त भी चीन ने भड़काऊ बयानबाजी करके माहौल बिगाड़ने की चाल चली थी। लेकिन चीन ने पश्चिमी सेक्टर में लद्दाख में जिस तरह की जमीनी सैन्य घुसपैठ की है वैसी हिम्मत पूर्वी सेक्टर (अरुणाचल) में फिलहाल उसने नहीं दिखाई है। उधर दक्षिण चीन सागर में भी चीन अपनी दादागिरी दिखा रहा है। जापान के टापुओं पर चीन अपना अधिकार जमाता है। अभी पिछले हफ्ते उन टापुओं के आसपास तीन चीनी जहाज देखे जाने के बाद जापान और चीन के बीच गर्माहट उभर आई है।

लद्दाख इलाके में चीन की सैन्य घुसपैठ की ताजा हरकत 15 अप्रैल को देखने में आई। चीनी सेना के करीब 30 सैनिकों की टुकड़ी भारत-चीन सीमा के पश्चिमी सेक्टर में पूर्वी लद्दाख के दौलत बेग ओल्दी इलाके में बर्थे नामक स्थान पर 10 किलोमीटर

अंदर तक आ गई। इतना ही नहीं, उसने वहां अपने रहने को तंबू भी तैनात कर लिए। पता चला है कि 15 अप्रैल की रात चीनी सैनिकों का एक दस्ता भारत-तिब्बत सीमा पुलिस (भातिसीपु) को कुछ घंटे तक गोलीबारी में उलझाए रखने के बाद लौट गया था। लेकिन इस अफरातफरी का फायदा उठाते हुए चीनी सैनिकों के एक दूसरे दस्ते ने वहां से तीन किलोमीटर दूर सीमा के 10 किलोमीटर अंदर तीन तंबू तान दिए जिनका पता भातिसीपु को अगले दिन सुबह ही चला। भातिसीपु का निकटतम शिविर वहां से 20 किमी दूर है। चीनियों ने इस तरह भारतीय सीमा के अंदर तंबू लगाने की कोशिश इससे पहले 1986 में ही की थी।

भारत के लिए बेहद गंभीर स्थिति है और इस चीनी घुसपैठ पर संसद में हल्ला भी मचा। रक्षा मंत्री ए. के. एंटोनी ने हालांकि बयान दिया है कि मामले पर नजर रखी जा रही है और हालात जल्दी ही काबू में आ जाएंगे। लेकिन साउथ ब्लाक तलब किए गए चीनी राजदूत वूई वूई के रवैए से साफ जाहिर होता है कि चीनी अपनी इस हरकत के लिए कतई शर्मादा नहीं हैं। चीनी विदेश मंत्रालय के प्रवक्ता हुआ चुनयिंग ने 22 अप्रैल के बेजिंग में बयान दिया कि चीन के सीमा रक्षक ...दोनों देशों द्वारा मान्य वास्तविक नियंत्रण रेखा का पालन कर रहे हैं... और रेखा पर चीनी हिस्से में ही गश्त कर रहे हैं।

इस साल की बात करें तो अब तक चीनी घुसपैठ की 100 के करीब घटनाएं हो चुकी हैं। एक वरिष्ठ अधिकारी की माने तो चीनी सेना ने सीमा पर पांच अतिक्रमण किए-एक हल्के वाहन से, दूसरा भारी वाहन से, दो बार पैदल और एक बार चीनी हैलीकाप्टर से। ये सभी एक ही सेक्टर में अलग अलग इलाकों में किए गए। भारत के वरिष्ठ रक्षा विश्लेषक बी. रमन इस

घुसपैठ को फिलहाल किसी बड़े चीनी हमले की आहट नहीं मानते। लेकिन अगर चीनी सैनिक वहां तंबू लगाए जमें बैठे रहे और उन्होंने स्थायी रक्षा ढांचे खड़े किए तो यह मामला गंभीर हो सकता है।

हैरानी का बात है कि भारत सरकार इस मुद्दे पर अपने उसी पुराने ढर्रे पर कायम है कि सीमाएं स्पष्ट न होने से चीनी सैनिक भटककर इस तरफ आ जाते हैं। लेकिन सरकार चीन की उस हेकड़ी भरी फरमाइश पर चुप क्यों है कि भारत पूर्वी लद्दाख के विवादित इलाके में से अपनी कुछ पक्की चौकियों को हटाए तभी चीनी सैनिक देपसांग घाटी में बनाए अपने अस्थायी ठिकाने हटाएंगे? 23 अप्रैल को भारत चीन के बीच सीमा अतिक्रमण को लेकर हुई फ्लैग मिटिंग चीनियों की इसी शर्त के कारण बेनतीजा खत्म हो गई। खबर है कि भारत के विदेश मंत्री सलमान खुर्शीद 9 मई को चीन जाएंगे जहां वे इस मुद्दे पर चीनी अधिकारियों से बातचीत करेंगे। लेकिन चीन के इस दादागिरी पर भारत सरकार को जिस तरह की प्रतिक्रिया करनी चाहिए, वह नदारद है। सरकार के इस ढुलमुल रवैए और चीनी अतिक्रमण पर गंभीर चिंता जताते हुए भाजपा ने सरकार को पूरी निडरता से अपनी बात रखने को कहा है। 24 अप्रैल को भाजपाध्यक्ष राजनाथ सिंह ने कहा कि इस चीनी अतिक्रमण को लेकर पूरा देश चिंतित है। देश जानना चाहता है कि सरकार इस परिस्थिति पर क्या कार्रवाई कर रही है। इस मुद्दे पर सरकार को निडरता के साथ अपना पक्ष रखना चाहिए। इस पर भाजपा और पूरा देश साथ है। भाजपा की सलाह है कि चूंकि फ्लैग मिटिंग बेनतीजा रही है इसलिए इस मुद्दे को राजनीतिक स्तर पर आगे बढ़ाते हुए भारत-चीन सीमा विवाद को सुलझाने की कोशिश होनी चाहिए।

(पाञ्चजन्य 05.05.2013)

इस्लाम और वंदे मातरम

- सैफुल्लाह

मुस्लिम समाज हमेशा से ही अपनी मूर्खता के कारण विरोधियों को मौका देता आया है इसमें एक मूर्खता 'वंदे मातरम' को लेकर भी है। एक बार फिर एक मौका दे दिया गया जब लोकसभा में एक बसपा सांसद ने राष्ट्रगीत 'वंदे मातरम' का सम्मान करने से इनकार कर दिया। 'वंदे मातरम' को लेकर विवाद नया नहीं है स्वतंत्रता पूर्व से इस पर विवाद होता रहा है।

क्या है विवाद ?

'वंदे मातरम' बंकिम चंद्र चटर्जी द्वारा लिखित उपन्यास 'आनंदमठ' का एक गीत है चूंकि कई इतिहासकार के अनुसार बंकिम चंद्र चटर्जी एक अंग्रेजी समर्थक वेतनभोगी थे इसलिए इनके लिखे गीत पर विवाद उठना स्वभाविक है। भारत में कई तरह के इतिहास हैं। हर विचारधारा के लोगों के पास अलग-अलग इतिहास है इसलिए इतिहास के ऊपर विवाद होते रहते हैं। लेकिन असली समस्या इतिहास से नहीं बल्कि धर्म से है। ठीक उसी धर्म से है जो समस्या पैदा करने के लिए पूरी दुनिया में कुख्यात हो चुका है। बिल्कुल सही पहचाना आपने। इस धर्म का नाम है - इस्लाम। इस्लाम के कई विद्वान वंदे मातरम को इस्लाम विरोधी करार दे चुके हैं और मुसलमानों को इसे ना गाने की हिदायत दी है। इसका कारण यह है कि इन विद्वानों के अनुसार, वंदे मातरम में देश की पूजा करने को प्रेरित किया गया है और इस्लाम में एक अल्लाह के सिवा किसी और की इबादत नहीं की जा सकती। अगर इस तरह देखें तो इस्लाम के अनुसार, मुसलमानों को 'वंदे मातरम' नहीं गाना चाहिए। लेकिन किसी मुद्दे को गहराई तक जाने बिना कोई निष्कर्ष निकालना सही नहीं है।

इबादत या पूजा का अर्थ - इबादत किसे कहा जाता है? इसका पता कैसे लगाएं। कौन किसकी इबादत करता है? कोई मूर्ति को अगरबत्ती दिखाता है तो कोई काबा के चारों तरफ चक्कर लगाता है तो कोई धर्मग्रंथ को चूमता है, इनमें पूजा कौन सी है और कौन सी नहीं? इसका पता कैसे लगाएं? इस्लाम के अनुसार अल्लाह के 99 गुण (सिफत) होते हैं। इन्हीं 99 गुणों से अल्लाह की पहचान होती है।

जब कोई इन 99 गुणों को अल्लाह के सिवा किसी और को साझीदार बना लेता है तो इसे शिर्क समझा जाता है, और इसी को ही गैर-अल्लाह की इबादत कहा जाता है। अगर 'वंदे मातरम' गाने वाला इन 99 गुणों में से किसी गुण में देश को साझीदार नहीं बनाता है तो यह इस्लाम के अनुसार इबादत/पूजा नहीं है। और जहां तक मुझे 'वंदे मातरम' के दो पदों का अर्थ मालुम है इन दो पदों में ऐसी कोई बात नहीं। इसलिए 'वंदे मातरम' को गाने में मुसलमानों को कोई समस्या नहीं होनी चाहिए।

एक शब्द के कई अर्थ - एक शब्द के ही कई अर्थ होते हैं। समय के अनुसार शब्दों के अर्थ बदलते रहते हैं। एक कुरान के ही कई तरह के अनुवाद हैं बिल्कुल एक-दूसरे के ठीक उलट, लेकिन कोई कुरान पढ़ना बंद नहीं करता। हर कोई अपने अर्थ के अनुसार कुरान को पढ़ना पसंद करता है। अगर किसी ने 'वंदे मातरम' का 'इस्लाम विरोधी' अर्थ लगा लिया तो भी मुसलमान इसे 'इस्लाम समर्थक' अर्थ के साथ गा सकते हैं।

इस्लाम सम्मान करना सिखलाता है - अगर कोई सम्मान के लायक है तो इस्लाम उसे सम्मान करने का आदेश देता है। पैगंबर, माता-पिता, भाई-बहन, या देश बिना मुहम्मद साहब को नबी (पैगंबर) माने कोई मुसलमान नहीं हो सकता। जो मां-बाप का नाफरमान होता है वह जन्नती नहीं हो सकता। इसी तरह देश का सम्मान करना भी हर मुसलमान के लिए अनिवार्य है।

यह एक अच्छी बात देखने में आई कि केवल एक सांसद ने इसका विरोध किया जबकि लोकसभा में 28 मुस्लिम सांसद हैं। अगर किसी को 'वंदे मातरम' पसंद नहीं है तो उसके लिए चुनाव न लड़ना ही बेहतर है। बिना वजह छोटी-मोटी बातों पर इस्लाम को कटघरे में करने की जरूरत नहीं है। न तो 'वंदे मातरम' गाने से कोई देश भक्त बन सकता है और न गाने से कोई देशद्रोही, और न ही इस्लाम की जड़े इतनी कमजोर हैं कि एक गीत से ही खतरे में आ जाए।

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परेश बरुवा का सनसनीखेज खुलासा नब्बे के दशक से हैं अल्फा व माओवादियों के रिश्ते

गुवाहाटी, 25 अप्रैल - अल्फा और माओवादियों के बीच संपर्क सत्रह साल पहले से है। राज्य के प्रमुख पत्रकारों में शुमार रहे पराग दास के माध्यम से सबसे पहले 1986 में एक शीर्ष माओवादी नेता अल्फा के शिविर में रणनीतिक मदद की आस से पहुंचा था।

यह खुलासा एक स्थानीय न्यूज चैनल में वृहस्पतिवार की शाम जारी अल्फा सेनाध्यक्ष परेश बरुवा के टेलिफोनिक साक्षातकार से हुआ। वार्ता में बताया गया है कि अल्फा के स्थापना दिवस के मौके पर यह मुलाकात हुई थी।

बता दें कि शीर्ष अल्फा नेताओं तक पहुंच बनाए रखने वाले पत्रकार पराग दास की बाद में कथित तौर पर एक पूर्व अल्फाई ने कर दी थी। आज जारी अल्फा सेनाध्यक्ष के मुताबिक शीर्ष माओवादी नेता संगठन के शिविर में पराग दास के साथ गया था। कुछ दिन वहां रुका भी था। न्यूज चैनल के पत्रकार को अल्फा सेनाध्यक्ष ने बताया कि राज्य में फिलहाल 30 से 40 माओवादी कैडर होंगे। उनके पास 20 से 30 हथियार होंगे। लेकिन अभी उनको स्थिति यहां खास मजबूत नहीं है। साथ ही असम और अरुणाचल प्रदेश आदि के जंगलों में कोई माओवादी नहीं है।

यह पहली बार है जब अल्फा के सबसे प्रमुख नेता के हवाले माओवादियों से संगठन के पुराने संपर्क का खुलासा हुआ है। इस खुलासे के बाद राज्य में माओवादियों की मौजूदगी का एक और पुख्ता प्रमाण मिला है। फिलहाल इस पर शीर्ष पुलिस अधिकारियों की कोई टिप्पणी नहीं मिली।

(पूर्वोदय - 26.04.2013)

रेवाड़ी के व्यापारियों ने दिया चीन की घुसपैठ का जवाब

रेवाड़ी जिले में स्वदेशी आंदोलन का इतिहास एक बार फिर दोहराया जा रहा है। विदेशों, खासकर चीन के आयात किए जाने वाले सस्ते सामान का विरोध यहां मुखर हो चला है। लोगों को भी बताया जा रहा है कि किस तरह चीनी ड्रेगन हमारे व्यापार और उद्योगों को खा रहा है। देश को सबसे अधिक शहीद और सैनिक देने वाले रेवाड़ी जिले से यह शुरूआत होना जायज भी है, क्योंकि यहां के व्यापारी और लोग भारतीय सीमा में चीन सैनिकों की नई घुसपैठ से नाराज हैं। सोमवार को सुबह 11 बजे ही मोती चौक व्यापार संगठनों से जुड़े छोटे बड़े व्यापारी जुट गए थे। गुस्से से भर व्यापारी कह रहे थे कि अब और नहीं सहेंगे। सरकार चीन के सामान पर रोक लगाए या नहीं लगाए, लेकिन अब हम चीन का सामान बिलकुल नहीं बेचेंगे।

सभी ने इस मौके पर संकल्प लिया कि वे चीन की हरकतों को देखते हुए उसे अपने स्तर पर सबक सिखाएंगे। सबसे पहले

उसे भारतीय बाजार से खदेड़ेंगे। यह हमारा दुर्भाग्य है कि चीन से उत्पादित सैकड़ों आइटम हमारे बाजार में आ चुके हैं। लेकिन सरकार आंख बंद किए हुए है। व्यापारी संगठन के प्रधान अमित यादव ने कहा कि हम सीमा पर जाकर तो नहीं लड़ सकते, लेकिन चीन की दादागिरी को सबक सिखाने के लिए बाजार में जंग के मैदान की तरह देश के लिए लड़ेंगे। मोती चौक व्यापार संगठन के प्रधान अमित यादव का कहना है कि इस मुहिम में सभी व्यापारी संगठनों से पूरा सहयोग मिल रहा है। जल्द ही बैठक कर शहर से चाइना सामानों की बिक्री पर पूरी तरह से रोक लगाएंगे। इसके बाद ग्रामीण व्यापारियों से सहयोग मांगेंगे। इस मौके पर महासचिव विनय सैनी, कोषाध्यक्ष अजय जुनेजा, पूर्व प्रधान रमेश मित्तल, विकेश भार्गव, कृष्णा मेहता, हरीश गुप्ता मौजूद रहे।

इनेलो के प्रदेश कार्यकारिणी सदस्य एवं पूर्व जिला प्रमुख सतीश यादव ने कहा कि हम इस पहल का समर्थन व स्वागत करते

हैं। सरकार को इस पहल से सबक लेना चाहिए और तत्काल इस दिशा में कड़े कदम उठाए। इनेलो पहले भी एफडीआई का विरोध करता रहा है। वरिष्ठ नेता एवं पूर्व मंत्री जसवंत सिंह ने कहा कि हम इस पहल स्वागत करते हैं। चीन जिस तरह से विश्व के बाजार में खासकर भारत में अपनी पकड़ बनाता जा रहा है, वह देश की व्यापार एवं अखंडता के लिए सीधा खतरा है। इस पहल में सभी की जुड़ना चाहिए। भाजपा की पूर्व सांसद व राष्ट्रीय सचिव डॉ. सुधा यादव ने व्यापारियों की इस मुहिम को देशप्रेम से जोड़ते हुए स्वागत किया। समर्थन के मुद्दे पर उन्होंने कहा कि यह अंतरराष्ट्रीय व्यापार नीति से जुड़ा मसला है। इसलिए पहले हाईकमान को इससे अवगत कराएंगे। चीन की हरकतों को देखते हुए हमारा प्रयास रहेगा कि रेवाड़ी से चली यह मुहिम राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर पहुंचे ताकि चीन को अपनी औकात का अहसास हो जाए।

(दैनिक पूर्वोदय - 01.05.13)

विदेशी जेलों में बंद 6500 से अधिक भारतीय

पाकिस्तान के जेल में भारतीय नागरिक सरबजीत सिंह की नृशंस हत्या के बाद विदेशी जेलों में बंद पड़े भारतीय कैदियों की सुरक्षा को लेकर चिंतित होना लाजमी है। मौजूद आंकड़ों के मुताबिक दुनियाभर के 80 जेलों में करीब 6500 से अधिक भारतीय कैदी अनिश्चिताओं का जीवन जीने को मजबूर हैं। खाड़ी देशों में ही भारतीय कैदियों की संख्या सबसे ज्यादा है। मौजूद आंकड़ों की मानें तो कुवैत में 1961, सऊदी अरब 1161 और यूएई में 1012 कैदी बंद हैं। पड़ोसी देश पाकिस्तान, चीन और श्रीलंका में कैद भारतीयों की संख्या क्रमशः 253, 157 और 63 है। जबकि नेपाल की जेल में भी करीब 377 भारतीय कैदी कैद हैं। इटली की जेल में 121, इंग्लैंड में 426

भारतीय कैदी हैं। वहीं अमरिकी जेलों में कुल 155 भारतीय बंद हैं।

कोच्चि स्थित गैर सरकारी संगठन ह्यूमन राइट्स डिफेंस फोरम द्वारा दाखिल आरटीआई से मिली जानकारी के मुताबिक 6569 भारतीय विदेशी जेलों में बंद हैं। विदेश मंत्रालय ने 30 देशों में भारतीय कैदियों की रिपोर्ट को शून्य बताया है। आरटीआई से मांगी गई जानकारी में कहा गया है कि ये आंकड़ा बदलता रहता है। साथ ही कैदियों की जानकारी और उन पर लगाए गए आरोपों की भी कोई सटीक जानकारी नहीं है। साल 2007 की एक रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक 2005 में भारतीय कैदियों की संख्या का ग्राफ 6730 से गिरकर 6000 तक पहुंच गया। लेकिन पिछले महीने आरटीआई के तहत मंत्रालय द्वारा दी गई जानकारी में

बताया गया है कि कैदियों की संख्या फिर से बढ़ गई है। संयुक्त राष्ट्र में भारत के पूर्व राजदूत टीपी श्रीनिवासन ने कहा कि यूरोपीय देशों की जेलों में ज्यादातर अपराधी साधारण अपराध, मादक पदार्थों की तस्करी और घरेलू हिंसा जैसे मामलों में गिरफ्तार किये गए हैं। लेकिन खाड़ी देशों में कैदियों की एक बड़ी संख्या को अवैध रूप से रहने और प्रवास के लिए गिरफ्तार किया गया है। मलेशिया में 187 भारतीय कैदियों को और सिंगापुर में 156 भारतीयों को अप्रवास उल्लंघन और नशीले पदार्थों की तस्करी जैसे आपराधिक मामलों के लिए गिरफ्तार किया है। पाकिस्तान, बांग्लादेश और श्रीलंका में ज्यादातर गिरफ्तारी अप्रवासी कानूनों का उल्लंघन करने के लिए हुई है।

(प्रेरणा भारती - 08.05.13)

प्रार्थना की शक्ति का महत्व

मनुष्य का जीवन उसकी शारीरिक एवं प्राणिक सत्ता में नहीं, अपितु उसकी मानसिक एवं आध्यात्मिक सत्ता में भी आकांक्षाओं तथा आवश्यकताओं की पूर्ति के लिए और कामनाओं का है।

जब उसे ज्ञान होता है कि एक महत्तर शक्ति संसार को संचालित कर रही है, तब वह अपनी आवश्यकताओं की पूर्ति के लिए, अपनी विषम यात्रा में सहायता के लिए, अपने संघर्ष में रक्षा के लिए आय प्राप्त करने के लिए प्रार्थना द्वारा उसकी शरण लेता है।

प्रार्थना द्वारा भगवान की ओर साधारण धार्मिक पहुंच, अपने को ईश्वर की ओर मोड़ देने के लिए यह हमारी प्रार्थनारूपी विधि हमारी धार्मिक सत्ता का मौलिक प्रयत्न है, और एक सार्वभौम सत्य पर स्थित है – भले ही इसमें कितनी भी अपूर्णताएं हों और सचमुच अपूर्णताएं हैं भी।

प्रार्थना के प्रभाव को प्रायः संदेह की दृष्टि से देखा जाता है और स्वयं प्रार्थना निरर्थक तथा निष्फल समझी जाती है। वैश्व संकल्प सदैव अपने लक्ष्य को ही कार्यान्वित

करता है। वह सर्वज्ञ होने के कारण अपने वृहत्तर ज्ञान से कर्तव्य यांत्रिक नियम से नहीं, बल्कि कुछ शक्तियों एवं बलों के द्वारा कार्यान्वित होती है।

यह मानव संकल्प, अभीप्सा और श्रद्धा का एक विशेष रूप मात्र है। प्रारंभ में प्रार्थना निम्न स्तर भी हमारे संबंध को तैयार करने में सहायता पहुंचाती है। मुख्य वस्तु इस प्रकार का साक्षात् संबंध, मनुष्य का ईश्वर से संपर्क, सचेतक आदन-प्रदान न कि पार्थिव वस्तु की प्राप्ति।

अपनी मानसिक रचना के निर्माण के बाद यदि व्यक्ति अपने को 'ईश कृपा' पर समर्पित कर देता है, और इसमें भरोसा रखता है, तो उसको अवश्य ही सफलता मिलेगी। यदि कोई ईश्वर की कृपा का मात्र आह्वान करता है, तो अपने को उसके हाथों में सौंप देता है, तो वह विशेष अपेक्षा नहीं करता।

प्रार्थना को सूत्रबद्ध करके किसी वस्तु के लिए निवेदन करना होगा। व्यक्ति को यह सवाल नहीं करना चाहिए। यदि सचाई के साथ सच्ची आंतरिक भावना के साथ

याचना की जाए तो संभव है – वह स्वीकृत हो जाए।

धार्मिक विचार

– मनुष्य परिस्थितियों का दास नहीं, अपितु वह उनका निर्माता, नियंत्रणकर्ता और स्वामी होता है।

– आदमी कभी भी काम की आवश्यकता से नहीं, बल्कि उसे भार समझ कर अनियमित रूप से करने पर थकता है।

– ईश्वर भी केवल उन्हीं की सहायता करते हैं, जो अपनी सहायता आप करने को तत्पर रहते हैं।

– अपने आपको मनुष्य बनाने का प्रयत्न करो, यदि आप इसमें सफल हो गए, तो आपको हर काम में सफलता मिलेगी।

– किसी का सुधार उपहास से नहीं, उसे नए सिरे से सोचने और बदलने का अवसर देने से ही होता है।

– जो जैसा सोचता और करता है, वह वैसा ही बन जाता है। इसलिए हमेशा अच्छा सोचो, निश्चित ही आप अच्छा बनोगे।

(पूर्वोदय 05/05/13)

गिरा हुआ वटवृक्ष स्वतः हुआ खड़ा

शिलचर मेडिकल कॉलेज अस्पताल के निकट भैरव मंदिर के पीछे गिरा हुआ वटवृक्ष अचानक स्वतः ही खड़ा हो गया। 25 मार्च को अपरान्ह 3.30 बजे से ४ के बीच घटी इस घटना को स्थानीय लोग किसी चमत्कार से कम नहीं मान रहे हैं। इसी कारण वहां प्रतिदिन श्रद्धालुओं की भीड़ पूजा-अर्चना के लिए जमा हो रही है। पता चला है कि 13 जून सन् 2012 को यह विशाल वटवृक्ष जड़ समेत उखड़ कर गिर पड़ा था। इतने महीनों बाद यह वृक्ष पुनः अपने स्थान पर उठ खड़ा हो गया और लोगों ने इसे चमत्कार मान लिया। इस संबंध में स्थानीय वरिष्ठ नागरिक पीयूष नाग ने बताया कि हर महीने

की अमावस्या की रात इस वृक्ष के नीचे पूजा होती थी। पिछले साल तूफान में यह वटवृक्ष गिर गया था। वटवृक्ष की विशाल डालियों से लोगों को समस्या होने पर स्थानीय समिति ने वृक्ष की शाखाओं को विक्री कर दिया। कुछ डाली काटकर एक व्यक्ति ले भी गया। पूरे नौ महीने बाद जब वृक्ष अपने आप खड़ा हो रहा था तभी यह दृश्य सतलाल नुनिया नामक युवक ने देख लिया और डर के मारे भाग गया। उसने लोगों को चिल्लाकर इस घटना के बारे में बताया तो सभी आश्चर्यचकित हो गये। इतना विशाल वृक्ष अचानक खड़ा हो गया और तो और उसके साथ ही टेढ़ा हुआ

त्रिशूल भी सीधा खड़ा हो गया। पीयूष नाग ने कहा कि 50 साल में ऐसा अद्भुत दृश्य कभी नहीं देखा। इस घटना को लोग भोलेनाथ की कृपा मान रहे हैं। यह वृत्तांत सुनाते समय पीयूष नाग के साथ स्थानीय निवासी कन्हाईलाल नुनिया, राजकुमार नुनिया, जगदीश नुनिया उनका साथ दे रहे थे। अभी वृक्ष के पास श्रद्धालुओं की भीड़ लगी हुई है और प्रतिदिन वहाँ पूजा-पाठ, भजन-कीर्तन चल रहा है। वटवृक्ष को माला पहना और लाल कपड़े से ढक दिया गया है। इसके साथ ही लोगों का वहाँ माथा टेकना और मंत्रों मांगना भी आरम्भ हो गया है।

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शिक्षा का व्यक्ति के जीवन में बहुत महत्वपूर्ण स्थान है। पर इसका अर्थ केवल पुस्तकीय ज्ञान तथा उससे मिलने वाली भारी-भरकम डिग्रियां ही नहीं है। यद्यपि इनसे ही आजकल व्यक्ति की योग्यता को नापा जाता है। इनसे ही उसे नौकरी मिलती है। इसलिए इनका महत्व भी है। पर शिक्षा का अर्थ केवल डिग्री नहीं है, यह भी सत्य है।

शिक्षा के साथ ही दूसरा महत्वपूर्ण पहलू दीक्षा का जुड़ा है। प्राचीन समय में छात्र अपने गुरु के सान्निध्य में आश्रमों में ही रहकर शिक्षा पाते थे। उनकी वह शिक्षा पुस्तकीय तो होती ही थी। पर इसके साथ उन्हें खेती पशुपालन, शस्त्र-संचालन तथा राजनीति की व्यवहारिक शिक्षा भी दी जाती थी।

वे युवक ही आगे चलकर अपनी रुचि, प्रवृत्ति तथा पारिवारिक परिवेश के अनुरूप राजा, राजकर्मी, सैनिक, व्यापारी, वैद्य, वैज्ञानिक, कलाकार, अध्यापक, किसान या संन्यासी बनते थे। अपने गुरु, गुरुपत्नी तथा अन्य आश्रमवासियों के साथ रहकर वे घर-परिवार के संचालन के सूत्र सीखते थे। इस प्रकार आश्रम और गुरुकुल से शिक्षित ये छात्र अपनी योग्यता और क्षमता के अनुसार देश, धर्म, समाज और अपने परिवार की सेवा करते थे।

इन गुरुकुलों में शिक्षा पूरी होने के बाद एक विशेष समारोह होता था, जिसे 'दीक्षा समारोह' कहा जाता था। आजकल भी कई बड़े और प्रतिष्ठित संस्थानों में डिग्री वितरण का कार्य बड़े समारोह के साथ होता है। इसमें डिग्री पाने वाले छात्र-छात्राएं तथा डिग्री बांटने वाले अतिथि एक विशेष प्रकार का चोगा और टोपी पहनते हैं। यद्यपि यह अंग्रेजों द्वारा निर्मित मूर्खतापूर्ण परम्परा है, जिसे हम 'इंडियन्स' बड़े गर्व के साथ ढो रहे हैं।

इन समारोहों में विशेष स्थान पाने वाले छात्रों को अतिथियों द्वारा डिग्री दी जाती है। बाकी को विद्यालय के कार्यालय से ही उसे प्राप्त करना पड़ता है। छात्र बड़े गर्व से उस डिग्री और चोगे के साथ फोटो खिंचवाते हैं। विद्यालय के प्राचार्य और अतिथि कुछ औपचारिक भाषण देते हैं। इस प्रकार वह 'दीक्षा समारोह' सम्पन्न हो जाता है।

पर दीक्षा का अर्थ केवल इतना मात्र नहीं है। कुछ विद्वान इसका अर्थ दिशा+शिक्षा से लगाते हैं। यों तो छात्र जीवन में कदम-कदम पर शिक्षा के साथ दीक्षा का पाठ भी पढ़ाया जाता है। पर पाठ्यक्रम समाप्त होने पर एक बार छात्र को फिर से याद दिलाया जाता है कि उसे अपनी शिक्षा का उपयोग किस दिशा में करना है। क्योंकि दिशाविहीन शिक्षा उस दुधारी तलवार की तरह है, जो दूसरों के साथ-साथ अपनों को भी मार सकती है।

शिक्षा का उपयोग यदि दिशा में हो, तो वह सम्मान दिला सकती है। अन्यथा उससे अपमान और दंड मिलता है।

दो छात्रों ने एक साथ, एक ही शिक्षक से बंदूक चलाना सीखा। एक छात्र सेना में, जबकि दूसरा कुसंग में पड़कर बदमाशों के गिरोह में शामिल हो गया। आगे चलकर देश की सीमा पर लड़ते हुए उस वीर सैनिक ने सैकड़ों शत्रुओं को मारकर अपने देश की रक्षा की। इसके लिए उसे 'वीर चक्र' मिला। दूसरी और उसके सहपाठी को लूटपाट और हत्या के आरोप में फांसी की सजा दी गयी।

यह घटना बताती है कि शिक्षा तो दोनों की एक ही समान थी। पर बाद में दोनों की दिशा अलग-अलग हो गयी। अपनी शिक्षा का देश की रक्षा में उपयोग करने वाले को पुरस्कार मिला, जबकि उसका दुरुपयोग करने वाले को प्राणदंड। इसलिए केवल शिक्षा ही पर्याप्त नहीं है, उसके साथ दीक्षा

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यदि दिशा सही हो, तो कई बार साधारण और उपेक्षित समझी जाने वाली चीजों से भी चमत्कार हो सकता है। ऐसी एक घटना हमें मेवाड़ के इतिहास में मिलती है।

चित्तौड़ में महाराणा प्रताप के समय में ही प्रताप नामक एक क्षत्रिय बालक था। उसकी रुचि शस्त्र-विद्या के बदले संगीत में थी। वह घूम-घूमकर अपने गीत-संगीत से युवकों को सेना में भर्ती होने के लिए प्रेरित करता था। उसके साथियों ने कई बार उसे भी सेना में भर्ती होने को कहा। पर वह सदा संगीत में ही डूबा रहता था। जब एक बार लोगों ने उसे कायर तक कह दिया, तो उसने कहा कि कला से भी देश की सेवा हो सकती है और समय आने पर मैं इसे सिद्ध कर दिखाऊंगा।

एक बार जब वह शाम को वापस लौट रहा था, तो मुगलों ने उसे पकड़ लिया। वे किले पर ही हमला करने जा रहे थे। मुगलों ने उससे कहा कि वह ऐसा गीत बजाये, जिसे अंदर के लोग मित्रदल समझकर द्वार खोल दें। पर प्रताप ने ऐसी धुन बजाई कि अंदर से तीरों की वर्षा होने लगी, जिससे बड़ी संख्या में शत्रु सैनिक मारे गये।

इससे नाराज होकर मुगल सेनापति ने पूछा कि तुम क्या बजा रहे हो? युवक ने सगर्व उत्तर दिया, 'मैं अपने साथियों को बता रहा हूँ कि द्वार पर शत्रु आया है। इतने बाण मारो कि कोई वापस न जा सके।' सेनापति ने क्रोधित होकर उसका सिर काट दिया।

अगले दिन किले के रक्षकों को प्रताप का शव मिला। वे समझ गये कि उसने कला के माध्यम से देश-रक्षा का अपना कर्तव्य निभाया है। प्रताप को सम्मान देने के लिए स्वयं महाराणा प्रताप ने उसके शव को अग्नि में समर्पित किया।

इन दिनों भारत में भ्रष्टाचार और

आतंकवाद महामारी की तरह फैल चुके हैं। कुछ लोग गरीबी को भ्रष्टाचार का कारण बताते हैं। पर अनुभव तो इसके बिल्कुल विपरीत ही हैं। अरबों-खरबों रुपये के भ्रष्टाचार और दलाली के आरोप जिन लोगों पर लग रहे हैं, वे सब अत्यधिक सम्पन्न और बड़ी-बड़ी डिग्रियां लिये हुए हैं। इसी प्रकार आतंकवाद के आरोप में जो मुस्लिम युवक पकड़े जा रहे हैं, उनमें से अधिकांश सुशिक्षित ही हैं।

यहां प्रश्न उठता है कि शिक्षित होते हुए भी वे गलत काम क्यों कर रहे हैं? कारण बहुत स्पष्ट है कि उन्होंने शिक्षा तो अच्छी प्राप्त की। पर उनकी दिशा गलत हो गयी। इस कारण उनकी वह योग्यता देश और समाज को लाभ पहुंचाने की बजाय हानि पहुंचा रही है।

जहां तक शिक्षा की बात है, तो उसके लिए किताब, कॉपी, चॉक, श्यामपट, प्रयोगशाला आदि की आवश्यकता होती है। पर दीक्षा के लिए तो शिक्षक का आचार-व्यवहार ही सर्वाधिक महत्वपूर्ण है।

यदि कोई शिक्षक समयपालन की मर्यादा पर घंटा भर भाषण दे या इस बारे में पुस्तक से कोई पाठ पढ़ाये। पर वह स्वयं समय का पालन न करे, तो उसका पढ़ाया हुआ पाठ व्यर्थ है। इसीलिए पुराने समय में शिक्षक को 'आचार्य' अर्थात् अपने आचरण से सिखाने वाला कहा जाता था। आचार्य का आचरण केवल विद्यालय समय में ही नहीं, तो दिन भर छात्रों के सामने रहना है। इसलिए वे हर समय उनसे कुछ न कुछ सीखते रहते हैं।

आजकल सब और पैसे की होड़ लगी है। शिक्षक भी चाहता है कि उनके घर में भौतिक सुविधा देने वाले सब उपकरण हों। इसलिए वह ट्यूशन से लेकर दलाली तक, ऐसा हर काम कर रहा है, जिससे कुछ पैसे मिल सकें। कई अध्यापक तो अपने छात्रों को ही इसका माध्यम बना लेते हैं। ऐसे में छात्र उनसे क्या सीखेंगे, यह समझना कठिन नहीं है। इसलिए शिक्षा के

साथ ही शिक्षक और आचार्य के बारे में भी विचार करना आवश्यक है।

निष्कर्ष रूप में यह कह सकते हैं कि शिक्षा का विषय एकांगी नहीं है। अध्यापकों द्वारा विद्यालय में छात्रों को चार-छह घंटे पढ़ा देना ही शिक्षा नहीं है। हमें शिक्षक और विद्यालय के वातावरण के बारे में भी गंभीरता से सोचना होगा। बच्चे की पहली पाठशाला अर्थात् उसके घर का वातावरण भी ठीक होना आवश्यक है। यदि सब ठीक से चले, तब ही शिक्षा की दिशा अर्थात् दीक्षा ठीक होगी।

अंग्रेजों ने भारत में शिक्षा और दीक्षा के इस समन्वय को गहराई से समझा। १८५७ के स्वाधीनता संग्राम में मंदिर, मठ और धर्मशालाओं में चलने वाली छोटी-छोटी पाठशालाओं ने बहुत योगदान दिया था। अतः १८५७ से निबटकर उन्होंने इस समन्वय को तोड़ने का षड्यन्त्र रचा। इसमें लार्ड मैकाले ने सबसे महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाई।

मैकाले जिस अंग्रेजी शिक्षा को भारत में लाये, उससे नयी पीढ़ी के सोचने की दिशा ही बदल गयी। पहले देश, धर्म, समाज के बाद मैं और मेरा परिवार के बारे में विचार होता था। पर अब देश, धर्म और समाज की सेवा गौण हो गयी। चरित्र और अनुशासन की बात करना पिछड़ेपन का प्रतीक मान लिया गया। परिणाम यह है कि अंग्रेजों के चले जाने के बाद भी हम मानसिक रूप से गुलाम ही हैं।

यों तो भारत में ब्रिटिश शासन की जड़ जमाने में अनेक अंग्रेज अधिकारियों ने बड़ी महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाई। पर मैकाले के योगदान को सर्वाधिक मूल्यवान माना गया। अतः उसे मृत्यु के बाद उस चर्च में दफनाया गया, जहां केवल राजवंश के सदस्य ही दफनाये जाते हैं। इसके बाद भी हम आज तक उस षड्यन्त्र को समझ नहीं सके और मैकाले के भूत को अपने कंधे पर लादे घूम रहे हैं।

गौतम बुद्ध शिष्यों को दीक्षा देते समय

'अप्य दीपो भव' स्वयं दीपक बनो का उपदेश देते थे। अधंकार में दूर जलता हुआ छोटा सा दीपक भी यात्री को सही दिशा बता देता है। पर यदि अपने अभिभावक, शिक्षक और आचार्यों से प्राप्त ज्ञान तथा संस्कारों से व्यक्ति स्वयं ही दीपक बन जाए, तो वह जीवन भर अपने साथ-साथ दूसरों को भी ठीक राह दिखा सकता है।

इसलिए शिक्षा और दीक्षा में सही समन्वय स्थापित करना, वर्तमान शिक्षा जगत के लिए सबसे बड़ी चुनौती है।

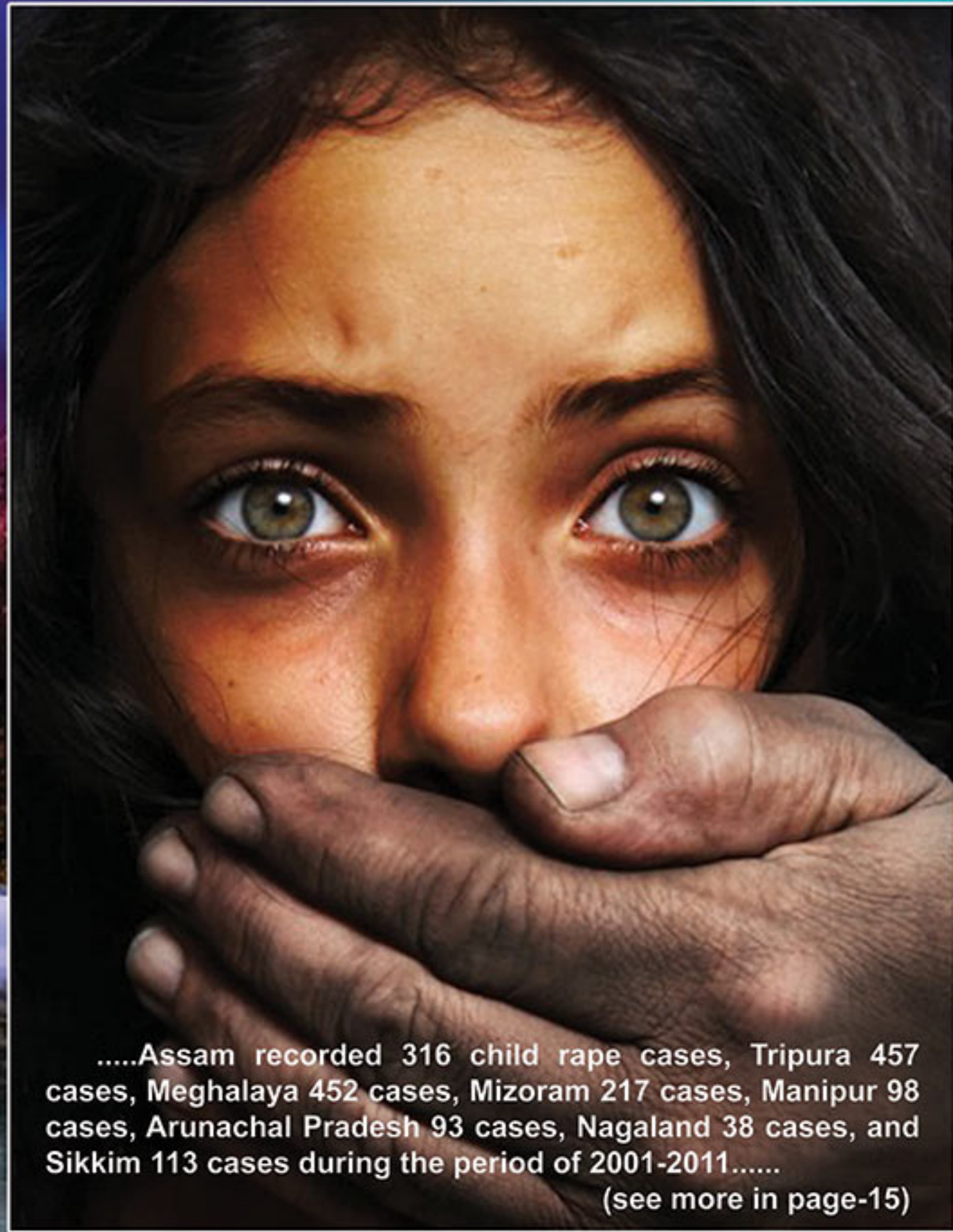
(Contd. from Page 22)

गिरा हुआ वटवृक्ष...

अब आगे यह चमत्कारिक वृक्ष क्या चमत्कार दिखाएगा। इसके लिए लोग उत्सुक हैं।

दूसरी और वैज्ञानिक मत के अनुसार वटवृक्ष गिरने के बावजूद भी उसके जड़ का सम्पर्क पृथ्वी से बना हुआ था, शनैः शनैः गिरा हुआ वृक्ष सिंचित हो रहा था तभी 24 मार्च की रात धुआंधार बारिश होने के चलते जड़ में ताजगी आ गयी और वह संतुलित होकर खड़ा हो गया। वृक्ष का अपने आप खड़ा हो जाना कोई नई बात नहीं है। किन्तु श्रद्धालु की श्रद्धा के आगे वैज्ञानिक मत की परवाह कौन करता है। वृक्ष खड़ा हो गया तो पूजा-पाठ करने के लिए श्रद्धा उमड़ पड़ी वहीं लाखों वृक्ष कट कर जंगल नष्ट हो रहे हैं तब श्रद्धालुओं की श्रद्धा उन वृक्ष की रक्षा के लिए नहीं उमड़ती। गाय के दो सिर निकल आये तो श्रद्धालुओं की श्रद्धा उमड़ पड़ती है किन्तु वहीं सैकड़ों गाय नित दिन कटती हैं तो श्रद्धालुओं की श्रद्धा उसकी रक्षा में नहीं उमड़ती। श्रद्धालु चमत्कार होने पर श्रद्धा करना जानते हैं दया, करुणा और वीरता से कोई मतलब नहीं।

(प्रेरणा भारती - 02.04.13)



.....Assam recorded 316 child rape cases, Tripura 457 cases, Meghalaya 452 cases, Mizoram 217 cases, Manipur 98 cases, Arunachal Pradesh 93 cases, Nagaland 38 cases, and Sikkim 113 cases during the period of 2001-2011.....

(see more in page-15)



Women
EMPOWERMENT