

CASS PUBLICATIONS

Sl. No.	SEMINAR PROCEEDINGS	Date of Seminar
1.	"Defence and Industry"	17 May 93
2.	"Use of Force in Internal Peace Keeping"	04 Dec. 93
3.	"The Emergence of China : Political, Economic & Military Implications for India"	22-23 Nov.94
4.	"The First SLK Memorial Lecture" by Shri P.Chidambaram, Union Minister for Commerce.	05 Jun.95
5.	"Human Rights : Law and Order in India"	30 Sep. 95
6.	"The Emerging Security Environment in South East Asia with Special Reference to Myanmar: Political, Economic and Military Implication for India"	02-03 Dec.95
7.	"India 2020 : An Agenda for the Nation" by Maj Gen (Retd) KS Pendse.	Feb. 96
8.	"India : The Nuclear Challenge" by Lt Gen (Retd) EA Vas, Maj Gen (Retd) KS Pendse, Dr. Col (Retd) AA Athale.	Mar. 96
9.	"Challenges to India's National Security And India's Defence Preparedness"	20-21 Apr. 96
10.	"Challenges of Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Implications for India"	28 Aug. 96
11.	"Second SLK Memorial Lecture" by Dr. P.C. Alexander, Governor of Maharashtra "Citizens Rights and Indian Democracy"	20 Jul. 96
12.	"Preparing to Meet Challenges to National Security In the 21st Century - The Organisational Dimension."	30 Jan. 97
13.	"Regional Security Environment To The North-West of India With Special Reference To Afghanistan."	21-22 Mar. 97
14.	"Third SLK Memorial Lecture", by Justice AM Ahmadi, Former Chief Justice of India "Changing Scenario of The Constitutional Values"	02 Aug. 97
15.	"Information Warfare"	24 Sep. 97
16.	"Laws of War"	09 Jan. 98
17.	"Indian Ocean - The Challenges Ahead"	06-07 Mar. 98
18.	"Fourth SLK Memorial Lecture", by Dr. Abid Hussain, Vice Chairman, Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Contemporary Studies. "The Changing Pattern of India's Relations with America"	03 Jul. 98
19.	"Pokhran II and its Implications"	01 Sep. 98
20.	"Nuclear And The World"	08 Sep. 98
21.	"The Challenge of Terrorism"	29 Oct. 98
22.	"Foreign Policy Imperatives For Nuclear India"	26-27 Feb. 99
23.	"Fifth SLK Memorial Lecture", by Dr. R.A. Mashelkar Director General, Council of Scientific & Industrial Research, "On Building a Globally Competitive Indian Industry : The Role of Research & Technology"	22 Jul. 99
24.	"Challenges of J&K"	04 Feb. 00
25.	"Indo-Pak Relations : Challenges Ahead"	30-31 Mar. 00
26.	"SLK Memorial Lecture - 2000" by Shri K. Subrahmanyam, Converner, NSAB on "Self Reliant Defence and Indian Industry"	18 Jul. 00
27.	"Insurgency In India - Causes & Perspectives"	28 Dec. 00
28.	"Governance In India : Challenges Ahead"	25 Jan. 01
29.	"India and China by 2020 : Political, Economic Sociological and Military Perspectives"	14-15 Mar. 01
30.	"Global Terrorism And India's Response"	19-20 Mar. 02
31.	"SLK Memorial Lecture - 2002" by Dr. C. Rangarajan, Governor, Andhra Pradesh on "Globalization And Its Impact"	24 Apr. 02
32.	"Shri N.K. Firodia Memorial Seminar : 2002" on "Governance In India"	03 Oct. 02
33.	"Globalisation And India" 19 Mar. 03	
34.	"N.K. Firodia Memorial Seminar : 2004" on "Elections And Democracy in India"	17 Feb. 04
35.	"Comprehensive Security: Need of the Hour"	25-26 Feb. 04
36.	"Ombudsman, Lokayuktas, Lokpals : Concept and Working, with Special Reference to State of Maharashtra"	25 Mar. 04
37.	"Comprehensive Security II : Economic And Internal Security"	03 Mar. 05
38.	"India And Its Neighbours : A Regional Security Perspective"	04 Jan. 06
39.	"Yashwantrao Chavan Memorial Seminar : 2006" on "Probity And Propriety in Public Life"	03 Feb. 06
40.	"Yashwantrao Chavan Memorial Seminar : 2007 "Social Unrest in India : Challenges Ahead"	13 Mar. 07
41.	"Emerging World Order And Sino Indian Relations"	21 Mar. 07
42.	"Air Marshal YV Malse Memorial Seminar : 2007" on "Aerospace Power in a Changing National Security Environment"	28 Jul. 07
43.	"Brigadier NB Grant Memorial Lecture : 2007" on "Future Environment, Perceived Threat Preceptions And Imperatives in Response"	02 Dec. 07
44.	"Yashwantrao Chavan Memorial Seminar. 2008" on "Environmental Challenges Ahead"	29 Dec. 07
45.	"Professor S.V. Kogekar Memorial Lecture" on "Indian Democracy : Its Strengths And Weaknesses"	25 May 08

CENTRE FOR ADVANCED STRATEGIC STUDIES



PROFESSOR S.V. KOGEKAR MEMORIAL LECTURE

BY

DR. DILEEP PADGAONKAR

INDIAN DEMOCRACY :

ITS STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

25th May, 2008

**CENTRE FOR ADVANCED
STRATEGIC STUDIES**

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**INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST PROFESSOR S.V.
KOGEKAR MEMORIAL LECTURE**

SMT. SUJATA GODBOLE

Dr. Dileep Padgaonkar, Dr Dubhashi, Air Marshal Kulkarni, Members of the Centre for Advanced Strategic Studies, and ladies and gentlemen, I would like to welcome you all on the occasion of this first Prof. S. V. Kogekar Memorial lecture today. It is with a mixed feeling that I stand before you to say these few words on behalf of the Kogekar family. It is an emotional occasion for us today. When we were thinking about a fitting way to pay tribute to the memory of Prof. Kogekar, my father, the thought of a memorial lecture seemed like the most appropriate way to do so.

Prof. Kogekar is best remembered as an educator in the larger sense of the term. The field of education has changed greatly over the years. Today education has become a commercial activity. When my father came back from England after getting the B. Sc. degree from The London School of Economics in 1937, he could have easily got a very well paying job anywhere. Instead he joined the Deccan Education Society, founded by Tilak, Agarkar, Namjoshi, Apte and others which was totally dedicated to the spread of education, especially the liberal education, as a life member. Incidentally, he was a student of the Deccan Education Society since his school days and was invited by the then Principal, Wrangler Mahajani to join the Society. It really needed commitment to one's convictions to work as a life member since monthly pay was just Rs 140! It was not a job, as commonly understood. One dedicated one's life to the Deccan Education Society and the cause of education.

Prof. Kogekar was a man of principles. He valued individual freedom greatly and fought for it whenever the occasion demanded. While he was with the University of Pune for a brief period in the 1950s, the University issued instructions to say that its teaching staff could not participate in any social or political activity, give speeches, write articles etc. Prof Kogekar protested vehemently, wrote articles against the policy and finally resigned from the University. He believed that as an individual he owed it to the society in which he lived to raise his voice against the injustices, or wrong policies. A teacher cannot be isolated from the society and it is his duty to educate the public at large. He wrote to the University that "the study of Politics, like that of other social sciences, is not a cloistered pursuit; it thrives on a living contact with reality." At that time it was quite a big issue, and even today, as we look around, we realise that the same issue has come up again as new restrictions are sought to be imposed by the government on teachers in 2008!

He was an intellectual in the best of traditions. A true liberal at heart, he always enjoyed a good discussion on various issues. His memory was phenomenal till his last day. He was our virtual reference library. His grasp of issues and the minute points of the Indian constitution was simply amazing. When he was in his nineties, his eyesight had become weak, and he had to read with a big magnifying glass, but that did not deter him from reading and he pursued his interests vigorously till the end. In fact he wrote the last book review, a few weeks before his passing away, in long hand and it was published after his death in the magazine *Freedom First*.

Prof. Kogekar was a very effective orator, both in English and Marathi. The students in Fergusson college recall many instances of his stirring speeches on many occasions, sometimes even without the mike! I can say this as I have been a witness to many such occasions when I myself was a student in Fergusson College. He was known for speaking his mind fearlessly and

without mincing any words. In this connection, I might mention the Kale Memorial Lecture 1976 which he had delivered during the Emergency on the proposed revision of the Constitution. He had reminded the rulers that "the supremacy of Parliament in a federal and democratic polity is limited not only by the powers allotted to the states but also by the accepted norms of democracy as enshrined in the Constitution." He had made an earnest appeal therein to the powers that be not to delay the return to normalcy in view of the admitted importance of the debate on the proposed constitutional amendments. It was a very forthright speech in his usual no-nonsense style. The speech was widely reported in the press. We had learnt that there was some move to arrest him for this and discreet inquiries were made in Fergusson College though he had retired from there. In fact, my younger sister was going to be married shortly thereafter, and I might tell you that I used to get nightmares that we had taken her and her husband immediately after the wedding to meet him in prison! Later on when I mentioned this to him, he merely had a good laugh. Such were his convictions.

It is on this background that we thought it would be most appropriate to have a Memorial lecture by an eminent person each year on an appropriate subject. It felt like a natural thing to do, I somehow feel that he would have liked it too. So we decided to institute a memorial lecture and approached the Centre for Advanced Strategic Studies for this purpose and we are very grateful to them for having agreed to undertake this responsibility. The lecture would be in English so that it could have a wider audience even outside the State. We intend to have the memorial lecture printed and distributed to various institutes of higher learning, opinion-makers, media and other appropriate organisations to create public awareness on the relevant issues. This year we are very fortunate that the main speaker Dr Dileep Padgaonkar and the chairman Dr P.R. Dubhashi are both my father's eminent students and he was very proud of their achievements in their chosen fields.

The subject of today's lecture namely "The Indian democracy- its strengths and weaknesses" is a subject that was very dear to his heart. He was very proud of the fact that India is a democracy. In fact, he had spoken on the problems facing the Indian democracy way back on 28 June 1985 in the centenary lecture series of the Pune Town Hall Committee.

With these few words I thank Dr Padgaonkar and Dr Dubhashi for having accepted the invitation, the Centre for Advanced Strategic Studies and its office bearers for having agreed to host the lecture each year on our behalf, and you all for having come for the programme. Thank you.

PROFESSOR S.V. KOGEKAR MEMORIAL LECTURE
DR. DILEEP PADGAONKAR
“INDIAN DEMOCRACY : ITS STRENGTHS AND
WEAKNESSES”

I have more than one reason to be grateful to the Centre for Advanced Strategic Studies, and especially to its President, Dr. Madhav Godbole, for inviting me to deliver the first Prof. S.V. Kogekar Memorial Lecture. Given Prof. Kogekar's many accomplishments, the invitation would of course be a badge of honour to any one called upon to speak on this occasion. I sport it with pride.

But for me this is a moment of rejoicing too. Prof. Kogekar was the Principal of Fergusson College during the four years I studied in the institution. He was also my professor of Political Science. I am therefore delighted that I have been given this opportunity to pay a tribute to my guru who, as I shall shortly tell you, set me on the straight and narrow path of scholarly engagement with the world at large.

Prof. Kogekar's peers, colleagues, friends and students seldom failed to acknowledge his qualities of head and heart. They admired his scholarship, so lightly borne, his spotless character, his marvelous gifts as a teacher, his acumen as an administrator of educational institutions and his life-long dedication to serve the public weal. Above all, they were in utter awe of his indifference, at once subdued and sovereign, to the vain seductions of fame and fortune.

Among the first books Prof encouraged his students to read, and to read again and again, was *The Grammar of Politics*. This was no surprise. Its author, Harold Laski, was his teacher at the London School of Economics. You can well imagine what the connection meant to our impressionable minds. It gave us a sense

of belonging to a most distinguished intellectual fraternity.

We also considered ourselves to be part of a fine legacy nearer home. In our juvenile eyes, Prof. Kogekar embodied the vision, the character and the talents of one of his distinguished predecessors - Gopal Krishna Gokhale. Forsaking personal ambition, both men, armed with a methodical mind, sought to understand the ideas and passions that shaped, or ought to shape, India and her people. Both championed similar causes: freedom and justice, economic growth and egalitarianism bereft of dogma, transparency and accountability of rulers and, not least, relentless skepticism of the self-serving wisdom of the powerful, the wealthy and the privileged.

Both of them also cultivated a fierce belief in the virtue of tolerance. They would not jettison any idea or opinion without subjecting it to critical scrutiny. Its provenance did not matter one whit to them. All ideas and opinions were welcome provided they did not entail the use of violence or result in giving a fresh lease of life to prejudice, bigotry or double-think.

I had a taste of this myself. As the secretary of the debating union of the college I was called upon to invite personalities of stature to address the students. The first was N.V. Gadgil who had just resigned as the governor of Punjab following differences with Prime Minister Nehru. The second was Nath Pai, a masterly orator. Prof. Kogekar was pleased as Punch with these two choices. But the third one N. G. Goray - turned out to be a fiasco.

A week before the lecture I read in the papers that Goray had endorsed the American bombing of Vietnam. My leftwing radicalism prompted me to cancel the lecture as a mark of protest. Two days later I was summoned by Prof. Kogekar. Without a word he showed me a postcard from Nanasaheb. The Socialist leader had written to say how much my gesture had offended him. A visibly upset Prof. Kogekar asked me to offer him an unconditional apology or face suspension for a term. Fergusson

College, he warned me, would allow no deviation from its liberal traditions. I quickly fell in line.

These memories of my student days account for my happiness today as I speak to you. There is another reason too. The fact that I have been asked to lecture on the strengths and vulnerabilities of Indian democracy is also a most propitious coincidence. Nothing enthused Prof. Kogekar more than the subject of democracy. This would be obvious from his very first book on the 1952 general elections which he co-authored with Prof. Richard L. Park. It set the bench-mark for future studies on the subject.

In later years, this enthusiasm became more and more pronounced in his numerous academic articles, notably in the **Economic and Political Weekly** and **Freedom First**, in his interventions at the meetings of the All India Political Science Association and the International Political Science Association, in his public lectures, including a memorable one delivered during the Emergency, and in his teachings in the classroom.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The framers of our constitution took a revolutionary step when they opted for a parliamentary democracy based on universal adult suffrage. This required uncommon courage for a bulk of Indians were poor, illiterate and divided along lines of language, caste, ethnicity and religion. As we know, many older democracies granted adult suffrage in full measure to their citizens, and especially to women, long after they had established their representative institutions. But these men and women of vision placed the individual citizen at the centre of the constitutional scheme of things. Only thus, they reckoned, would the new ruling dispensation be able to face the humongous tasks awaiting them.

The foremost task surely was to maintain and consolidate the unity and territorial integrity of India. The country had just been

partitioned leaving behind a trail of death and destruction, of bitterness and acrimony caused by the uprooting of millions of people from their homes. It is in this atmosphere, when the demons of communalism performed their macabre dance, that the spirit of secularism had to be upheld.

Urgent measures were also required to speed up economic development and arrest and then reduce gross social and economic disparities between groups of citizens and between the states of the union. No one addressed this issue with greater eloquence than Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. In a speech made a day before the Constituent Assembly formally wound up its work he argued that we could not have equality in politics - the principle of one man one vote and one vote one value - and continue to deny the principle of one vote one value in the social and economic domains. Then came this warning: “ If we continue to deny it for long, we will do so only by putting our political democracy in peril. We must remove this contradiction at the earliest possible moment or else those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of political democracy which this Assembly has so laboriously built up.” Rarely have words proved to be so prescient.

The forbidding nature of the tasks awaiting the newly-independent country gave rise to persistent fears about the very viability of India as a single nation. Indeed, the fears were all the more intense given the determination of free India's rulers to address the tasks within the framework of democracy. As early as 1948, General Claude Auchinleck, Commander-in-Chief of the ex-Indian army noted: “The Sikhs may try to set up a separate regime. I think they probably will and that will be only a start of a general decentralization and break-up of the idea that India is a country, whereas it is a sub-continent as varied as Europe. The Punjabi is as different from a Madrassi as a Scot is from an Italian. The British tried to consolidate it but achieved nothing

permanent. No one can make a nation out of a continent of many nations.”

Ramchandra Guha cites this quotation in his recent book *India after Gandhi*. He also cites an unsigned report in the February 15 issue of *The Atlantic Monthly* to the effect that General (later Field Marshal) Ayub Khan's experiment of a 'guided democracy' in Pakistan “ will be watched in Asia and Africa with keen interest rather than the newly independent countries, including India, which are trying to copy the British parliamentary system.”

In early 1960, Selig S. Harrison, the American scholar-journalist, made bold to predict that “the odds are almost wholly against the survival of freedom in India.... The issue is, in fact, whether any Indian state can survive at all.”

Seven years later, Neville Maxwell, correspondent of *The Times* of London wrote a series of articles under the heading 'India's Disintegrating Democracy.' In one of them he declared that “the great experiment of developing India within the democratic framework has failed.” Maxwell predicted that the fourth general elections, which were soon to take place, “would surely be the last to be held in India.”

Over the decades there was evidence time and again that these Cassandras may have had a point. Secessionist movements reared their heads in Jammu & Kashmir, in the North-east and in Punjab. They threatened to extend to Tamil Nadu over the issue of the official language. Violent left-wing groups ran amuck in the countryside in many parts of India. All this gave currency to the impression that the Cassandras may indeed have been prescient.

Other than these foreign observers, many Indian leftists too were initially of the view that parliamentary democracy was a sham. It meant nothing or little to the oppressed and the marginalized. Without a violent worker-peasant revolution, they

claimed, class oppression would continue. Democracy would be a chimera. No genuine development would take place. Class domination had to end if the people of India had to prosper.

Here, too, the left-wing Cassandras appeared to be not wholly off the mark. The niggardly growth of economic development during the license-permit raj, food shortages, the constant dearth of foreign exchange did indeed translate into all manner of deprivation for large swathes of the population. No end was in sight to social oppression either.

Overall, however, the achievements of India during the first decades after independence ensured that the country, functioning under the democratic constitution, never quite reached the brink of an implosion. Consider the integration of the princely states, the solution to the highly emotive issue of the official language, the reorganization of the linguistic states, the energies deployed to draw the huge tribal population into the national mainstream, the firm handling of the separatist movements even while respecting some of the sentiments underlying them, the abolition of privy purses, the nationalization of banks. Indian unity emerged strengthened through this period of turmoil, the very notion of Indianness became more cohesive.

Consider next the steps taken to reduce social and economic disparities through legislative and administrative means. These included a variety of welfare schemes targeting the poor, the oppressed, the marginalized sections of the population. Affirmative action in favour of the Dalits, tribals, the Other Backward Classes and the minorities consolidated social stability.

Of course these steps met with considerable resistance from certain quarters. But on this score, too, the system was able to overcome resistance by seeking to forge the largest possible consensus in a highly fractious polity.

Moreover, far from harming the cause of national unity the

blossoming of regional cultures has served to solidify our bonds. The passionate interest in sports, notably cricket, in Bollywood films and in television soaps has gone a long way to consolidate the sentiment of belonging to one nation. To this must be added the increasingly powerful role of the news media at the national and regional levels. Unlike in most countries, the circulation of newspapers and magazines continues to rise every year. So does the appeal of radio and television. Soon the Internet will contribute its mite to the dissemination of information.

Without the freedom of speech and expression we enjoy under our constitution, these means of communication would have floundered. I am aware of their drawbacks and I shall refer to them later. But I dare say that despite the drawbacks, the media sustain debate and dissent which are so necessary to sustain the vitality of our democracy.

Apart from the media, a number of other institutions and forces have lent substance to our democratic experiment. The tardy delivery of justice is a matter of grave concern to all of us. Yet it would be hard to deny that the judiciary, especially at the level of the Supreme Court, has rendered yeoman service to uphold the rights of citizens. If nothing else, its ruling on the 'basic structure' of the Constitution has meant that neither the executive nor even Parliament can ever endanger the democratic foundations of our Republic.

Much the same holds true, for instance, of the Election Commission. Given the size of the electorate, its vast geographical spread and its sheer diversity, its success in conducting free and fair elections at regular intervals is on all counts a most remarkable feat. Obviously we are aware of the malevolent factors at work in our electoral system. I shall mention them too a few minutes from now. But the mere fact that incumbent governments have been routinely voted out of power bears witness to the resilience of our democracy.

Take next the example of the National Human Rights Commission which has not hesitated to bring errant politicians and officials to book. The effective use of the Right to Information should also go some way to bring about greater transparency and accountability in our system of governance. Civil society groups can hasten this process.

The above is not to suggest that we are over the hump as a nation. Forces of separatism in our border states have not been decisively tamed. The poison of communalism still runs through the veins of our body politic. Terrorism, carried out in the name of Islam or of social justice, shows no signs of abating. Moreover, India has still to shine for millions of our citizens. They continue to eke out a miserable existence even as their expectations of a good life rise higher and higher thanks to the media exposure of conspicuous consumption. Adding to our woes is our volatile neighbourhood.

So what does the future portend? In this concluding part of my lecture I would like to focus on the shifts taking place underneath the surface of day-to-day events. These shifts are fashioning the future of our society and our polity in ways that will prove to be dramatic for they involve a relocation of power and authority and control in every sphere of activity. In the plainest of words, our democracy is getting more complex and less manageable.

One major shift is from older Indians to younger Indians. Our demographics show that we have one of the youngest populations in the world. We shall remain so for at least another forty years. This is going to be a huge advantage when you consider that in most countries of the West, in Japan and, up to a point, even in China the population is ageing.

Unburdened by the baggage of the past and armed with skills relevant to a knowledge-based economy, our young people constitute a rampart against many of the woes that assail us. But if

we do not provide these young people with adequate education and if we do not give them jobs they could foment unrest on an unprecedented scale.

Another shift is from the upper castes to those lower down in the social pecking order. Millions of Indians who were left out of the ambit of power, authority and worldly success are now clamouring for their place in the sun. They have begun to assert their rights in the political, social, economic and cultural arenas. In the process, our democracy will at once gain depth and become more broad-based. This, however, will happen only if such an assertiveness does not degenerate into protracted caste conflicts.

Yet another shift in the social arena, which is just about gaining momentum, is from a man-centred India to an India where women exercise power and authority commensurate with their numbers. This is bound to unleash productive forces which have hitherto been bottled up. A greater representation of women in elected bodies will again enrich our democracy as it is doing in countries like South Africa and even Rwanda. Sadly though gender equality seems to be an anathema to most political parties.

The rapid urbanization of India is also an indicator of the changing nature of our societal and political fabric. It presents terrible dangers of course. But it is there to stay and the system will have to devise stratagems to ensure that this transition takes place in a relatively seamless manner, power is also moving rapidly from the Centre to the states. The rise of regional parties and the efforts of the national ones to accommodate regional aspirations would bear this out. In inter-state conflicts, politicians, cutting across party lines, are obliged to show solidarity with the people of the state. Our federal system is bound to come under strain and stress if such conflicts are not pre-empted in good time.

Accelerating this process of decentralization is the shift from the state to the market. Corporate India calls the shots more than it

ever did in the past. Politicians and bureaucrats court the captains of industry far more assiduously than the latter court the former. The rapid expansion of the market, as also the burgeoning middle class, is also profoundly changing the nature of our polity. A major source of concern here is the growing nexus between corporate houses, politicians, bureaucrats, entertainment enterprises and the media.

There is another shift away from government and that is towards civil society organizations. More and more citizens groups have begun to challenge the decisions of our rulers aided and abetted at times by the media. As their significance grows, our elected representatives will be obliged to deliver on their promises ranging from the physical and social infrastructures to the protection of the environment and probity in public life.

This is admittedly a tall order. The 17th century French essayist Montesquieu once noted that politicians tend to cut the trunk of a tree at the base to pick its fruit. Most of our political parties are family fiefdoms. Wives and children of politicians consider it their birth-right to inherit the leadership of a party or a constituency. The exception is the Left though the presence of a husband and wife in the uppermost echelons of the CPM does raise eye-brows.

The fortunes politicians amass leave little room for doubt about the extent of corruption that has eaten into the vitals of the system. They have on average assets worth Rs. 31 million. The number of MPs elected in the 2004 elections who have been formally charged with breaking the law is equally revealing : 34.8 per cent of RJD MPs from Bihar; 27.8 per cent of BSP MPs; nearly 20 per cent of Samajwadi MPs; the same percentage for BJP MPs; 17 per cent for Congress MPs.

Furthermore, 45 per cent of Congress MPs and 23 per cent of BJP MPs reportedly owe money to public financial institutions. The picture in the states is equally dismal. Possibly the only

exception on this count are again the Communists.

Nepotism and corruption on this scale, the exploitation of caste, communal and regionalist sentiments for electoral ends and the failings of the bureaucracy add to the grim nature of challenges facing a resurgent India. So does the failure to accommodate the aspirations of the poor and the marginalized for a better life thanks to a populism gone berserk.

It may be instructive to quote from Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan's scarcely remembered address to the Constituent Assembly in the night of 14 August 1947 just before Jawaharlal Nehru delivered his memorable 'Tryst with Destiny' speech: "Unless we destroy corruption in high places, root out every trace of nepotism, love of power, profiteering and black-marketing which have spoiled the name of this great country, we will not be able to raise the standards of efficiency in administration as well as in the production and distribution of the necessary goods of life."

Well, as the French say: 'The more things change, the more they remain the same.' Alas, here in our own beloved country, they sometimes can and do take a turn for the worse.

Prof. Kogekar would doubtless have approved of much of what I have said today. But I suspect that he would also have smiled wryly to indicate his skepticism of my rather sweeping and grandiose remarks. What would I have done then? I suppose I would have fallen in line yet again as I did, my eyes lowered, forty-five years ago almost to the day in his unusually stern but, as always, august presence.

Thank you for your attention.

CONCLUDING REMARKS BY THE CHAIRMAN DR. P.R. DUBHASHI

It is in the fitness of things that the first Prof S.V. Kogekar memorial lecture has been delivered this day by one of his distinguished students, Shri Dileep Padgaonkar.

In his lecture he has made a sweeping survey of our democracy and our political system as it has evolved during the last 60 years and has drawn attention to its strengths and weaknesses. It is a matter of great gratification to all Indians that all the grim predictions of the western prophets of woe that the Indian nation will disintegrate and democracy would dissolve into anarchy. Like the political prophets of woe, the economic prophets of woe also had predicted a dark future. They formulated 'the Triage Doctrine', according to which the ship of the world would be forced to throw overboard the 1/3 rd surplus consignment which constituted the hungry teeming millions of India. It is a strange irony that the leaders of the richest nation are now attributing the food shortage to the higher consumption by the increasing prosperous middle class in the country. While the Indian minister for agriculture attributes the rising prices of food grains to increasing consumption by the poor beneficiaries of the national employment guarantee program. One cannot but say that the western political and economic prophets of woe made erroneous predications because they failed to grasp the strength of the cohesiveness and the resilience of the Indian people bestowed on them by the ancient traditions of a continuing civilization.

The logical sequence of Padgaonkar's lecture should lead us to a searching analysis of the causes of the weaknesses of our political, economic and social system, and the reforms and the remedy needed to overcome these weaknesses. The subject is so vast that it would require a series of lectures which hopefully

would be delivered under the auspices of Prof. Kogekar lectures in the years to come. Here I can only attempt a brief synopsis.

The Indian democracy is known as the largest democracy in the world. While it has survived and proves that it is robust, it has progressively deteriorated in various ways which has been a source of anxiety to the thinking Indians who often suggest basic constitutional and political reforms. The constitutional reforms commission under the chairmanship of Justice Venkatchaliah provided such an opportunity but it was lost when he declared abinitio, that the commission would not be touching the basic features of the constitution. Recently the introduction of a private members bill in the Rajya Sabha provided an opportunity for an informed discussion on the subject. Some members suggested that the Parliamentary system was not suitable for India and needs to be replaced by the Presidential system. Others pointed out that Indian democracy was not representative in character and India's first past the post system needs to be replaced by some kind of a proportional representation system. One member suggested approvingly the recent Nepal model which is some sort of a combination of both the systems. Serious defects have emerged in our electoral and political party system. Elections are more governed by money and muscle power and caste and religious affiliations rather than on considerations of issues connected with the economic and social developments of the country based on common citizenship. Political parties select candidates on the basis of their winnability, rather than merit. Many of them have criminal background. On getting elected they have little to contribute to any informed discussion on the issues facing the nation or the state. The election commission has made valid efforts to contain these factors like evil influence of money or appeal to religion. But the suggestion often made of public funding of election expenditure has not yet taken any concrete shape. The Indian political system is in disarray. While the two

national political parties have declined, the regional parties have filled the gap. The multiplicity of political parties has made it impossible for a single political party to get a majority in the parliament or the state assemblies and the coalition governments have become the order of the day. There is no code of conduct for the working of the coalition governments. The Prime minister or the chief minister, as the case may be is constantly required to compromise and is unable to provide strong leadership, making a weak government and a stop and go approach. A more basic rot is provided by the fact to which Padgaonkar has drawn attention that political parties have become family fiefdoms. Consequently free thinking and expression in the political parties has taken a backseat. The working of the Parliament or the State Assemblies leaves much to be desired. The sessions are disorderly and the Speaker is unable to control the proceedings. Serious business is not done. Even discussion on Budget or issues like Inflation is perfunctory. The attendance is meager. The members do not have any code of conduct. Valuable time is wasted and sessions are hurriedly wound up. Recently the Speaker had to take action to expel some MPs, who took money to ask questions; and more recently had to refer the conduct of some members to the Privilege Committee.

Our democracy has not been able to deliver the goods to the common people even after 60 years. Even basic necessities like potable drinking water, minimum nutrition, roads, decent housing, sanitation, electricity, etc. are not available to our people. This is a failure of our economic policies. In 1991, we dumped the approach of planning and socialist pattern in favour of the market economy. The latter no doubt has provided some kind of dynamism in terms of economic growth but has accentuated economic inequalities. The growth of Naxalite movement is said to be the consequence of this. And Dr Ambedkar's fear that those who suffer from inequalities would

blow up the political system seems to be coming true. The realization has dawned that market fundamentalism is inconsistent with the democratic aspiration of the common people and politicians who join hands with big businesses will not be able to retain their position too long if people wake up.

Our hope that India will not be a congregation of caste and communities but will emerge a cohesive nation with common citizenship with the same rights and duties has not come true. Political parties have vied with each other to support all kinds of reservations which have proved highly divisive. The partitioning of the budget and plan for minorities has opened a Pandora's box. We have started recognizing ourselves not as Indians first and Indians last but as members of some caste and community. If this trend continues it will debilitate the Indian nation. One can only hope that the younger generation would come out of the clutches of the past and enter into the brave new world without the prejudices of the past.

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