

WHY HAVE P.U.D.R. ?

What is the relevance of People's Union for Democratic Rights ? This obviously begs the question as to what are Democratic Rights? Democratic Rights are rights which are enjoyed by the citizens in a democracy, which has been defined by Abraham Lincoln as : "of the people, for the people, by the people." In some countries, these rights are unwritten, - in some others written, as in India. After two-and-a-half years of deliberations, on 26th of November, 1949 Constitution of India was enacted and adopted. The Preamble to the Constitution read with Fundamental Rights Chapter defined the democratic rights, which are inter alia : equality before law, prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth, equality of opportunity in matters of public employment, rights regarding freedom of speech and expression, freedom of assembling peacefully and without arms, freedom to form associations or Unions, freedom to move freely throughout the territory of India, freedom to reside and settle in any part of the territory of India and freedom to practise any profession or to carry on any occupation, trade or business. Untouchability and titles also are abolished by a stroke of pen. There is also protection given even to a person, charged of a criminal offence so that he is not prosecuted and punished for the same offence twice and is not compelled to be a witness against himself. Article 21, which according to Mr. Justice Bhagwati is most

fundamental of all Fundamental Rights, says : "No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty, except, according to procedure established by law." There are prohibitions of traffic in human flesh and forced labour and of employment of children in factories, etc. Article 25, 26, 27 and 28 give right to freedom of religion. Articles 29 and 30 protect interests of minorities. Article 32 says that if any of the above rights is violated, a citizen has a right to move the Supreme Court of India for the enforcement of such right.

In addition, in Chapter IV, the States have been directed to follow certain noble principles. States are asked to secure a social order for the promotion of welfare of the people, to give equal justice and free legal aid, to organize village Panchayats, to provide for just and human conditions of work and maternity leave, to give living wage to the workers, to arrange for free and compulsory education for children, to arrange for participation of workers in management of industries, to promote educational and economic interests of the weaker sections, to improve public health and to separate judiciary from the Executive.

If it rested there, we would have a country over-flowing with milk and honey and the citizens rolling in material wealth and spiritual splendour with Acharya Rajneeshes and other Bhagwans, no less,

achieve the above, 66% of the population, that means over 45 crores of people, would not have trudged along below poverty line and Smt. Gandhi, the present Prime Minister, could not have spent in November 1979 in Election campaign alone more than Rs. 1 crore and Shriman Antulay could not have received for his ill conceived trusts over Rs. 25 crores in one month.

Therefore, there is a snag somewhere and that snag, if I may say so, has been placed in the Constitution deliberately by the founding fathers of the Constitution, who mouthed populist slogans, but, undoubtedly, represented minority, elite and bourgeois interest. Nehrus, Patels, Munshis and Ambedkars did not like to share power with the populace and it is evident from Schedule 7, List III, Entry 3 of the Constitution, where Concurrent power is given both to the Union and the States to pass Legislations for Preventive Detention for reasons connected with the Security of a State, the Maintenance of Public & Order, or the Maintenance of Supplies and Services essential to the community; persons subjected to such detention." Article 22 allows non-disclosure of facts to a detenu which the "Authority considers to be against the public interest of disclose." In addition, extraordinary powers are given to the Governors under Article 371 to lord over the citizens,

like Mohammad-bin-Tughlaq, when such citizens belong to Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, Hill Areas and Sikkim.

Inspite of noble sentiments expressed in the Constitution and inspite of various other excellent laws, which can contain unrest, black-marketing, law and order situation any day, - the history of Independent India is replete with Preventive Detention Acts, in the Centre as well as the States. Indian National Congress to its credit has Preventive Detention Act of 1950 (introduced by Sardar Patel), The Defence of India Rules 1962, Maintenance of Internal Security Act, 1971, West Bengal Prevention of Foreign Activities Act, 1970, Andhra Pradesh Suppression of Disturbances Act, 1948, Armed Forces (Special Power) Regulations of 1958, the Nagaland Security Regulation of 1962, the Assam Maintenance of Public Order Act, 1953, The Travancore-Cochin Public Safety Measures Act, 1950, whereby even a sheet of music can be declared to be dangerous and prejudicial and innumerable other similar Acts. The Janata Government to its credit has : introduction of the Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Act, 1977, whereby Preventive Detention was going to be a part of the ordinary law of the land (later withdrawn under public pressure), suggestion by the then Prime Minister to the Chief Ministers on the 11th November, 1978 to the effect that the Preventive Detention Acts were essential to maintain the law and order in the States, introduction of

Preventive Detention Acts and Ordinances in Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat and Maharashtra and a notorious labour legislation, which if not withdrawn under public pressure, would have taken away valuable rights enjoyed by labour. Chaudhary Charan Singh not only has the dubious distinction of trying to bring in Preventive Detention by the back door through the Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Act of 1977 as the then Home Minister of Janata Government, but also distinction of introducing on October 15, 1979, as the Caretaker Prime Minister, the Preventive Detention Ordinance, which was an improved version of the earlier MISA.

On Smt. Gandhi's return to power, the above Ordinance was promptly made into an Act and she gleefully told the Opposition that if they did find merit in the Preventive Detention Legislations, who was she to stand in the way? In addition, now, she has brought in the National Security Ordinance, 1980, which has been made into National Security Act, 1980, on 27th December, 1980 and also Essential Services Maintenance Ordinance 1981 on the 26th July, 1981, which has also been made into an Act recently.

What are the characters of these two? Like the earlier MISA, National Security Act gives unbridled power to the Executive to rope in any citizen and put him behind the bars, even without

disclosing the facts of detention if the Executive "considers to be against the public interest to disclose" (Section 8(2)). Under Section 11(4), no legal practitioner will be allowed to appear before the Advisory Board on behalf of such detenu. Under the Section 9(2), the Advisory Board will be composed of three persons of whom two are only qualified to be appointed as Judges. Only Chairman has to be a past or present judge of a High Court. Under Section 11(3) if there is a difference of opinion among the the Advisory Board, the opinion of the majority of members of/such members shall be deemed to be the opinion of the Board. Therefore, two raw Junior members of the Bar, who belong to the Ruling Party, can over-ride the experienced opinion of the ex or present judge Chairman of the Advisory Board. Therefore, it further means that all the political opponents of the Ruling Party can be kept, under National Security Act, behind the bars but, of course, with a facade of judicial process. Such a detenu can be kept in detention for 12 months from the date of detention, but according to Section 14, Sub-Section (2), "the revocation or expiry of a detention order shall not bar the making of fresh detention order under Section 3 against the same person in any case where fresh facts have arisen..."

Now a discerning citizen will understand that a person can be kept in detention indefinitely even without disclosing the facts of detention which is allowed under Section 8(2) and sanctified by Article 22(6) of the Constitution.

Suppose a citizen has been put behind the bars for obvious malafide reasons like personal animosity or the like. Can he get any relief against the offending order? The answer is a resounding No, - because Section 16 of the Act gives immunity to such officers and it says : No suit or other legal proceeding shall lie against the Central Government or a State Government, and no suit, prosecution or other legal proceeding shall lie against any person, for anything in good faith done or intended to be done in pursuance of this Act". Who will decide that such Acts were not done in good faith, when even the grounds of detention are not to be supplied to the detenu?

This is National Security Act and this is now the law of the land. Now what is the Essential Services Maintenance Act, 1948? "Essential Service" according to this Act, means, any postal, telegraph or telephonic service, any railway or transport service, by land or water, any service connected with the operation or maintenance of aerodromes or aircraft, any service in or in connection with the working of any major Port, any service connected with the clearance of goods through customs, etc., any service in any Section of any industrial undertaking to scheduled industry, any service in or in connection with the working of any system of public conservancy or sanitation, hospitals or dispensaries, any service

in connection with banking, oil field, refinery, mint, security press, etc. In addition, it means any other service connected with matters with respect to which Parliament has power to make laws. It further says that in connection with the above, "any service connected therewith", will also be included in the definition of "essential services".

A moot question can be asked as to what will remain outside the scope of this omnibus and "all pervading" definition of the "essential service"? Thereafter, it is said under Section 2(1)(b) : strike means the cessation of work by a body of persons employed in any essential service, etc. It includes refusal to work overtime and also any other conduct which is likely to result in or result in cessation or substantial retardation of work of any essential service.

It simply means, no strike is possible in any establishment in India. It also means that overtime can be forced ^{down}/"the gullet" of the employees and if he refuses to do such overtime, he can be punished under this Essential Services Maintenance Act. Under Section 3, the Central Government has been given the absolute power to prohibit strike in any essential service and after the issue of this order, no person employed in any essential service to which the Order relates shall go or remain on strike and any strike declared or commenced even before the issue of the Order shall be illegal. Under Section 4, any person who commences, such strike or instigates or incites any

other person to commence, etc. any such strikes, can be dismissed straightaway. Further under Section 5, a person who commences etc. a strike, which is prohibited by this Act, shall be liable to go to prison for six months and to pay Rs.1000 as fine. Under Section 6, a person, who encourages such strike can go to jail for a year and pay a fine extending to Rs.2,000/-. Under Section 7, a person who gives any money in support of such a strike is liable to be imprisoned for a year and pay a fine of Rs.2,000/- and under Section 8, any Police Officer may arrest without warrant any person who is reasonably suspected of having committed any offence under this Act. It is further said under Section 10 that if there is inconsistency of this Act with the Industrial Disputes Act or any other Law, this Act will over ride other laws.

With these two acts in force, the Fundamental Rights Chapter of the Constitution becomes irrelevant vis-a-vis the liberty and democratic rights of the citizens. That is where we come in. The purpose of the Union (PUDR) is to expose such inequities of the Government, expose the brutalities perpetrated by the Administration and the police against the poor and the indigent, hold public meetings, educate the citizens, including the Members of Parliament, so that the reign of terror which was unleashed in 1975 is not unleashed once again in the year 1981-82. Witness, in this connection, PUDR's investigating Reports on Aligarh Riots (1978), Andhra Disturbed Areas (1979). Regression in Singhbhum (1979).

Firing on Faridabad Workers (1979), Attacks on Kerala Writers (1980), Beggars in Delhi(1980), Assam Agitation (1980), Rape, State and Society (1980), Chhattisgarh Miners (1981), Indervalli Firings on Tribals (1981), Modi Nagar Killings (1981), Torture of BJP Workers (1981), Contract Labour and Asiad - 82(1981) and the Demolition of 499 Jhuggis in New Seemapuri (1981).

The question, which has to be answered by the citizens of this country is : "if two Acts of Parliament can take away all the Fundamental Rights allegedly given by the people to the people on 26th November '49, then did the founding fathers of the Constitution really mean what they said in the Pream-ble and Fundamental Rights Chapter of the Constitution?" The answer is No., and that is why it has been said earlier also that the minority, elite, bourgeoisie never wanted to share the power with the people. They only created an illusion to opiate the citizens and to a great extent succeeded in doing so with the active assistance of the un-suspecting Judiciary and gullible intelligentsia.

(Gobinda Mukhoty)
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PEOPLE'S UNION FOR DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS:
A POLITICAL APPRAISAL

Civil and Democratic Rights are an essential component of democracy, and organisations aimed at protecting, promoting and popularising democratic rights provide mass base to the content of democracy. In a country like India, with its widespread social base of poverty and ignorance sustained by the traditionally oppressive structures of authority, organisations like the PUDR have considerable significance. In such countries like India, constitutional rights derive their true meaning and content only when, and to the extent they are, supported by democratic consciousness at the mass level sustaining mass movements.

It is necessary to protect democratic rights when they are actually violated, as they so often are in this country, as would be borne out even from a cursory glance at the enormous literature now made available to the public through organisations like the PUDR, which only represents the tip of the ice-berg of the entrenched structure of social oppression in the country. But it is equally important to create the social base which would pre-empt such blatant violation by inculcating a mass consciousness in the social content of oppression and the nature of democratic rights guaranteed by the constitution, which, in retrospect, appears to be a case of absent minded generosity by the Founding Fathers, as the implications of the Emergency so sharply brought to focus.

To a considerable extent the functions of organisations like the PUDR supplement those of the democratic political parties. But there is a significant difference in their aims and objectives which determine their respective relevance. The primary goal of all political parties is the capture of political power, which involves political responses to democratic rights

organisations came into being in the various parts of the country, all of them demanding revocation of the Emergency, restoration of constitutional rights and the release of political prisoners. Soon after the Emergency was lifted, quite characteristically, all the political parties because involved in the ensuing elections and lost interest in the movement for civil liberties. Even the national body, coordinating the activities of the various civil liberties organisations became defunct, and some of its important leaders plunged into the more exciting arena of electoral politics. Finally, with the Janata emerging as the ruling party in the country, the erstwhile political base of the civil liberties movement was eroded, as the Janata Constituents, in power, had reasons to perceive such a movement as an avoidable irritant in the midst of the worse attractive task of running the governmental machinery.

In this immoral and arid political milieu, in the context of civil liberties, the movement was sustained by organisations like the PUCL and DR (Delhi Unit), CPDR (Bombay), APCLC (Andhra) and the AFDR (PUNJAB). Deprived of any national organisation, these groups, run by a small, dedicated group of democratically committed intellectuals, ran their make-shift outfits with such coordination among themselves as was possible under the circumstances. What sustained these organisations in this atmosphere of political apathy to the movement was the conviction of the few people who constituted them, that though born in the immoral politics of the Emergency, such organisations fulfilled a big gap in the democratic movement of the country that made the extra-ordinary situation like the Emergency so easy to impose. What provided the bond of coordination between these few far-flung groups thinly spread in various parts of the country, was the mutual trust, confidence, and the impeccable credentials of

each others' commitment to civil liberties and democratic rights that had been established in the shortlived period of such struggle during the Emergency. The PUCL and DR (Delhi Unit) actively functioned in the period of the Janata rule because of its members' conviction that such a rule had not in any way altered the entrenched social base of oppression in the country, despite the political change. Hence the PUCL & DR (Delhi Unit), organised a national convention on the release of political prisoners, to remind the Janta Party of its electoral promises. The convention prepared and submitted a list of political prisoners and the need for improving the conditions in the prisons to conform to the requirements of a democratic state - apparatus as apart from a colonial apparatus. In the same period of Janata rule, it investigated and published reports of repression of miners in Dalli - Rajahara, workers in Kanpur, agricultural labourers in Pantnagar, Muslims in Aligarh, tribals in Singhbhum, peasants in Telengana.

The a-moral aspect of the politics of the civil and Democratic Rights movement in the country again re-asserted itself in the changed political situation that brought Mrs. Gandhi back to political power in the elections of 1980. Soon afterwards, the Peoples' Union for civil liberties was revived in November, 1980, and some of the superstars of the defeated Janata Establishment again re-activated themselves to the politics of Civil Liberties. Soon a National - level PUCL came into being, demanding of the existing organisations, like the PUCL and DR (Delhi Unit), to merge their identity with the National PUCL. The demand was aptly described by an eminent Delhi journalist as one, where the prodigal father who had forgotten about its progeny returning back to claim the filial duties with a child which had meanwhile established its moral legitimacy. The PUCL and DR (Delhi), as also some other sister organisations elsewhere in the country, quite obviously could not accept with equanimity the demands for its liquidation, in a situation where the need for vigilance about democratic rights have, if anything, assumed greater urgency after the elections of 1980; and less so, till such time as the organisation it its democratic wisdom perceived that the struggle could be better fought with men of intellectual conviction with proven

proven commitment to the cause of democratic rights in its social context. In a general body meeting of the PUCL and DR (Delhi Unit), the organisation welcomed the National PUCL, encouraged its members to become members of the new organisation, solemnly offered mutual cooperation in the on-going struggle for democratic rights, but rejected to endorse its death-warrant issued by the newly-revived National PUCL.

The new organisation was formed in March, 1981, and to avoid possible confusion re-named itself as Peoples' Union for Democratic Rights (PUDR), with a manifesto and constitution that were unanimously approved in the General Body.

In its new incarnation, the organisation emphasises its distinctiveness in two ways: firstly, its emphasis on the social content of democratic rights, as apart from merely their constitutional significance; this emphasis largely influences its choice of priority - areas for focussing public attention in the midst of the vast ocean of oppression that characterises the system in our country. This choice becomes unavoidable to make the most optimum utilisation of our meagre material and human resources which are only compensated by the sacrifice of dedicated people. For example, in a situation of general violation of democratic rights, even when the contractors are often victims of political corruption, the PUDR opts to highlight the plight of the labourers of Asiad'82 and the violation of their democratic right for fair wages. The second significant aspect of the PUDR is its concern for democratic norms within the organisation, without which our bonafides in the struggle for democratic rights in the country would be legitimately suspect, as we ourselves view many such dubious claims.

We offer enough opportunities for sweat and sacrifice to anyone sharing our aims on democratic rights to become members of our organisation, irrespective of their political views or affiliation. We cannot offer any loaves and fishes, for we have none to offer.

ASHWINI K. RAY.

Science and Democratic Values

PRAEIR MITRA

The position of science and technology in any contemporary society today is of great significance. Through the goods and articles of consumption that the modern science based technology has proliferated by techniques of mass production and through the modern mechanism of assimilation and dissemination of knowledge - e.g. , the formal learning system, the programmed training methods, the media, books, journals and now, the computerised storage - retrieval system - it has brought a great transformation in the material and the ideotive life of the society and the individual. The phenomenal growth of science as a field of persuit- as a profession, its gradual acceptance as the only credible source of knowledge on the external world, and finally its demonstrated prowesses in the material/productive and the destructive persuits have convinced many people of :

(a) That ~~there~~ exists a method of drawing iferences, implicit in the structure of science, which could be reconstructed by an examination of the history of science, and which could be called an exclusive scientific method.

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- (b) That this so called scientific method is the only **legitimate** method of enquiry, and should be widely applied to human, ethical, **political** situation etc., in order to promote a more scientific understanding of these situations.
- (c) That these are axiological implications of modern science, which are extremely important for a scientific understanding of a human existence.
- (d) That the 'Social function' of science in this great social transition has been entirely positive, and that in the present national and international conjuncture it remain so.

The first of these three presupposition are epistemological in nature, in as much as they attempt to reconstruct a systematic theory of knowledge of the external world, and the last of the presupposition cuts across the boundaries of social, ethical, political and economic judgement and provide the basis of, an attitude which is sometimes called 'scientism'. Appearing together, in documents, statements and writings, either implicitly as an articles of faith or explicitly, they sometimes

constitute the foundations of an neo-positivist ideology of science, which if anything else is extremely ill-founded on the contemporary experience. That they should become a major plank in the defense of larger human commitment, the defense of democratic rights, however well intentioned, still, therefore remain indefensible. It would be my purpose in this paper to argue on historical grounds that such defense and naturalistic reconstruction' of ethical values is not only based on erroneous judgement but the mechanism sometimes legitimises those very forces of oppression and bureaucratisation against which this entire attempt of democratisation is really directed.

(Synopsis of paper by Sarweshwar Dayal Saxena)

What is culture? It is the voice of the independent and liberated spirit. This is why those who perceive a threat from this voice will attempt to suppress it. And they have been doing it for ages. For, authority can be maintained only by stifling this voice. The creation of aesthetics suppresses this voice of the free spirit which is fundamental to our very existence and unites one person with another. Simultaneously it provides a medium through which people have the joy of feeling equal with each other and of gaining the strength to struggle. Culture teaches us how to harmonise the voice and movement of one person with that of others, thus making the people strong. That is why authority always fears it. The weaker it is the more it attempts to stifle the voice of the cultural individual. And the character of authority can be judged by the cultural coercion it exercises.

This coercion has become enormous today because authority has mustered strength to propogate a parallel culture. This parallel culture conceals its nature to the extent that the hand that throttles is admired for its beauty and kindness and the sounds of pain and choking are mistaken for lyric and song. And it is a culture that makes you so indolent that you have no sense of that pain. The film, the radio, the television, the big newspapers and the big publisher are all part of this kind of cultural coercion. This parallel culture seeks to engage us in pseudo battles, teaches us the use of false weapons or tells us that there's no battle at all.

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It is in this context that the real creative activity, the voice of free and independent spirit is increasingly becoming difficult to hear. For, it is authority which has power over the mass media not culture. While using a loudspeaker for itself, it has imprisoned the cultural individual and frightened him. For, a small spark frightens those who sit in the palaces of straw. That's why authority attempts to suppress the small periodical, the street theatre- like in Basti, Gazipur, in Bihar, in U.P., in Andhra and in West Bengal.

Another form of cultural coercion is the formalism of the feudal and bourgeoisie culture which inhibits the real culture. These art forms limit even that art which is intended for the people. And that which reaches people is not considered as art and culture.

Thus the free and independent spirit of culture is drowned in the cacaphony of parallel culture, is inhibited by formalism, and is being crushed under the heels of authority.

How do we free ourselves from this cultural coercion ? There is no easy solution to this. One solution is that the artist must raise his voice fearlessly regardless of consequences. And organisations should be formed of like-minded people. These organisations must make common cause with those who are paying the price for raising their free and independent voice, so that they will know that they are not alone. Rest of the work is that of political organisations.

Poetry should break the constraints of rigid forms and must turn into song for the illiterate and a search for new aesthetics will have to be made to support this effort. Radio, film, T.V are closed to us. But the medium of theatre is open to us. Plays should be written to expose the forces which are crushing freedom. Support must be extended to local cultural and theatre groups.

Finally it is necessary to emphasize that rather than fight the storm from inside a closed box, it is always better to come out as a whirlwind and combat it so that society will be free from cultural coercion. For freedom from cultural coercion is freedom for life itself.

संस्कृति क्या है ? आत्मा की मुक्त, स्वाधीन आवाज। इसीलिए जो स्वाधीनता से डरते हैं, उससे खतरा महसूस करते हैं वे सबसे पहले इस आवाज को दबाने और कुचलने की कोशिश करते हैं। सदियों से करते आ रहे हैं। क्यों कि सत्ता इस आवाज को दबा कर ही बनाये रखी जा सकती है। हम इस मुक्त स्वाधीन आवाज को जो हमारे अस्तित्व की सबसे जरूरी शर्त है पहचान कर क्या करते हैं ? रचते हैं -- सौंदर्य को रचते हैं -- क्यों कि यह सौन्दर्य रचना हमें सबसे एक करती है। इसी के माध्यम से हम समान स्तर पर जा कर खड़े होने का सुख हासिल करते हैं और लड़ने, जूझने की ताकत भी यहीं से मिलती है।

संस्कृति हमें एक मंच देती है -- एक के सुर में सबके सुर, एक ही गति में सब की गति मिलाना सिखाती है। इसलिए सत्ता इससे हमेशा डरती है, जो सत्ता जितनी ही ज्यादा कमजोर और दूसरों को कुचल कर अपने बने रहने का उवाच देवती है वह उतनी ही ज्यादा सांस्कृतिक व्यक्ति की यह स्वाधीन आवाज छीनने, दबाने और घोंटने की कोशिश करती है। संस्कृति पर पड़ने वाले दबाव से ही सत्ता का चरित्र निरूपित होता है, होता रहा है।

आज यह दबाव बेहद बढ़ गया है -- बढ़ता जा रहा है। क्यों कि सत्ता के पास समानांतर संस्कृति का छद्म खड़ा करने की ताकत आ गयी है। यह आवाज राजा हाथ बढ़ा कर घोंट देता था वह समानांतर कुछ रच नहीं सकता था, न नाटक, न साहित्य और यदि अपने चाटुकारों से रचवा भी सकता था तो वह लोक में फैलने की शक्ति नहीं रखते थे, उसके दरबार तक ही सीमित रह जाते थे, लेकिन आज रेडियो, फिल्म, दूरदर्शन सब उस पजे की खूबसूरती और सहृदयता का वर्णन देश के एक-एक घर तक पहुंचाने में समर्थ है जो इस आवाज का गला घोंटने के लिए बढ़ रहा हो, इतना ही नहीं वे ऐसा छद्म भी खड़ा करने में समर्थ हैं कि आप घुटते गले से जो आवाज निकल रही है उसे ही सही सुर मान लें। और इतना निकम्मा भी आपको बना दें कि आपको उसके दर्द का अहसास ही न हो। अतः संस्कृति पर एक दबाव फिल्म, रेडियो, टेलीविजन और सत्ता के तथा पैसे वालों के

अखबार और प्रकाशन डाल रहे हैं। ये या तो आपको नक्ली लड़ाई में शामिल कर रहे हैं या नक्ली हथियार चलाना सिखा रहे हैं या यह समझा रहे हैं कि कोई लड़ाई है ही नहीं, जीवन का मकसद आपके लिए मोहब्बत के खवाब देखना है जैसा फिल्मों में दिखाया जाता है। इस तरह सत्ता अपने इन साधनों से देश को निकम्पा बना रही है, सही सवाल की पहचान मिटा रही है और नक्ली सवालों की बाढ़ में डुबा रही है।

ऐसी स्थिति में आत्मा की मुक्त स्वाधीन आवाज रचनाकार के लिए सुनना कठिन होता जा रहा है, क्यों कि उसके पैसे से बड़े इन सार्वजनिक प्रसार माध्यमों के तंत्र पर उसका अधिकार नहीं सत्ता का अधिकार है। सत्ता इतनी समर्थ है कि उसने सांस्कृतिक व्यक्ति की आवाज को डिब्बिया में बन्द कर दिया है और खुद लाउडस्पीकर लिए घूम रही है। आप छोटी सभाएं कर सकते हैं; छोटे बुलेटिन निकाल सकते हैं, छोटी पत्रिकाएं छाप सकते हैं, छोटे नुक्कड़ नाटक कर सकते हैं, रेडियो टेलीविजन तंत्र आप खड़े नहीं कर सकते और फिल्में बना नहीं सकते। लेकिन इस तरह डिब्बिया में बन्द करके भी वह संतुष्ट नहीं है। डरी हुई है। छोटी चिनगारी से भी फूस के महल में बैठने वालों को डर लगता ही है। वह छोटी पत्रिकाओं, नुक्कड़ नाटकों आदि को भी बूटों के तले लाने की कोशिश कर रही है -- बस्ती, गाजीपुर में रंगकर्मियों के साथ पुलिस का व्यवहार इसका सबूत है। बिहार, उत्तर प्रदेश, आंध्र, बंगाल सभी जगह इस आवाज को घोटने के लिए क्या-क्या किया गया है और किया जा रहा है इसका पता यहां सबको है।

संस्कृति पर दूसरा दबाव सामंती संस्कारों में युगों से विकसित किये गये रूपवाद का है। कविता, नाटक, कला के जो ढाँचे पूंजीवादी सभ्यता में तय किये हैं वही आज भी हावी हैं। नया सौन्दर्य बोध उस पत्थर के नीचे दबा है। कविता आप जन के लिए लिखेंगे लेकिन रूप उसका उस सीमित वर्ग के लिए ही होगा जो सांचों ढला है। यही हाल नाटकों का है, लगभग सभी कला रूपों का है। जन के लिए लिखा जाने वाला नाटक, कहानी, उपन्यास, कविता सब जन तक नहीं पहुंचते उसके काम के नहीं हो पाते और जो कुछ पहुंच पाते हैं वे साहित्य और कला नहीं माने जाते।

अतः संस्कृति की मुक्त और स्वाधीन आवाज एक और सत्ता माध्यमों के शोर, प्रचार और चरित्रहीन सैलाब में डूब रही है तो दूसरी ओर रूपवाद के चौखटे से निकल नहीं पा रही है और तीसरी ओर सत्ता के बूटों के नीचे छटपटा रही है तथा बंदूक की नली के सामने है.

संस्कृति के इस दबाव से कैसे मुक्त हों ? इस सवाल का जबाब आसान नहीं रह जाता और दिन पर दिन कठिन होता जायेगा. एक उत्तर घोर निजी है जो हर युग में दिया जाता रहा है कि कलाकार अपनी स्वाधीन आवाज की रक्षा के लिए उत्सर्ग हो जाये. निर्भय हो कर रचे. जो सही समझता है कहे, परिणाम की परवाह न करे. क्योंकि सच्ची आवाज उसके न रहने पर भी कहीं न कहीं किसी न किसी रूप में बरोसी की चिनगारी की तरह जीवित रहती है और आधिया आते ही राख से निकल कर फैल जाती है और अन्याय के जंगल में आग लगा देती है. यह आत्महत्या नहीं है सत्य की रक्षा के लिए कलाकार का अपना उत्सर्ग है. दूसरा तरीका समानधर्मियों के साथ इस लड़ाई को लड़ना है. यह जानते हुए भी कि समानधर्मियों की पहचान इतनी आसान नहीं है. इतना जरूर हो सकता है कि साथ मिल कर इसका विरोध, जो भी साथ हो जाये, करें. जहां जिस को भी इस स्वाधीन आवाज की कीमत चुकानी पड़ रही हो, जिस रूप में भी, उसके साथ हों, उसको एहसास कराये कि वह अकेला नहीं है. बाकी काम राजनीतिक संगठनों का है. वे यदि उस स्वाधीन आवाज की रक्षा के लिए अपना समानांतर मोर्चा तैयार कर सकते हैं तो करें और जूझें. और यदि मोर्चा सही लग रहा हो तो सांस्कृतिक व्यक्ति उसका साथ दें हाथ बटाएं उसके साथ लड़ें.

कविता साहित्य का संभ्रांत चौखटा तोड़ कर गानों के रूप में इस निक्षर देश के कंधों में बसने के लिए लिखी जाये. यदि उसमें सामर्थ्य होगी तो लोक से साहित्य में आ जायेगी और एक नये सौंदर्यबोध की खोज उसके सहारे करनी पड़ेगी. फिल्मों, रेडियो, टेलीविजन का रास्ता बंद है, नाटकों का ही खुला है. नाटक इस दबाव के खिलाफ भी और दबाने वाली ताकतों का चेहरा बेनकाब करने के लिए भी लिखे जायें और नाटक करने वालों का साथ स्थानीय स्तर

पर जुटाया जाये। मुश्किल है इतने बड़े देश में उस तमाम दमन का जिसका सामना सांस्कृतिक व्यक्ति अपनी स्वाधीनता के लिए कर रहा है सामने ला पाना। क्योंकि बड़े और बिके हुए अखबार यह नहीं कर रहे हैं, उन्हें सीमित साधनों से ही सही सामने लाया जाये और लोगों को उससे परिचित कराया जाये ।

अन्त में यह कहना जरूरी है कि डिब्बिया में बन्द हो कर फैलती आंधी का मुकाबला करने से बेहतर है डिब्बिया से निकल कर आंधी बन कर ही इस आंधी का मुकाबला किया जाये और उसे परस्त किया जाये । ताकि समाज सांस्कृतिक दबाव से मुक्त हो सके क्योंकि सांस्कृतिक दबाव जिंदगी की बुनियाद पर ही पड़ा दबाव होता है उससे मुक्त करना जीवन को मुक्त करना है। जब घर में आग लगी हो तो चिल्लाना जरूरी है चाहे फेंकड़े ही क्यों न फट जायें और आग बुझाने के लिए हर संगठित प्रयास में कूदना भी।

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