***Energency IT IS!***

***Sury Pullat***

Making fools of most people for sometime is what is being pursued

Don’t get befooled. Emergency it is still! Technically, it may have been withdrawn; but in all spheres and aspects of life, it has been recurrent for Indians since mid ‘70s. The ’84 assassination of Prime Minister, the revenge killings that followed, Rupee devaluation, frequent price increase of essential commodities, fake encounters, falling standards of education and efforts in undermining it, forged degrees, the unemployability of the educated, unaffordability of health care have all been making life miserable and unbearable consistently. Overseas jobs the only blessing in disguise! For, it has been total and abject failure of democracy in its true sense; except that resilience of a young post-war nation and the commitment of its billion citizens have not been extinguished; its embers are burning well, but not bright enough to correct the malevolent for better and faster changes.

But what of the youth? The much touted demographic index is being wasted, except for its space in political speeches and economic analyses to drive up optimism. They -new generations of Y & Z are busy enjoying the fruits of labour of their grandpas and pas of Gen X. Perhaps we need a bit of good ole emergency to discipline them, make them behave, insist on them exercising adult franchise given to them at 18 etc etc. Yes, the old emergency had made their parents more work-time conscious.

In the current scenario, the average citizen’s life from Kandla to Kohima, and Kanyakumari to Kashmir, is none the better. What with breaking news and headlines full of scams, rapes, forced deplaning and real estate acquisitions, misappropriation of national treasures; murder of lasses, artists, rationalists, executive engineers, administrators, authors, journalists, reporters, their close kin and bloggers; land grabbing, courts turning courtesans to favour the rich, famous, mighty and powers that be with alacrity, when millions of cases are in pendency as if their pregnancy can be kept alive ad infinitum. Whatboutism of scurrilousness aside, majoritarian tactics and threats are added insults to injury, with none to preserve or protect dignity of life, gender, profession or for that matter civil existence with fundamental rights and dignity.

Never before have the citizens been so trampled upon, that their patience has run out. A simple rate increase in services due to inflation, becoming such a contentious issue in the capital itself, where contracts had all been doled out with kickbacks, nepotism, malfeasance and what not! And when the netas and their minions, *chamchas* and sidekicks are able to getaway with scams, scars, syphons and scandals every day with impunity, isn’t it undeclared emergency that is prevailing? They with flashing lights atop cars are upsetting all normal routine schedules and plans. Hockey, Cricket, Asian Games, Boxing have all been impregnated with corruption. What, if at all, is the recourse?

Let it not be said that all the negatives only are highlighted. Positivities of optimism about a single party majority government –albeit in coalition- are very much in the air. But the opposition that had been long used to power, misrule and its benefits, are only crying foul. They should concentrate on contributing through constructive criticism, suggesting alternatives that cannot be ignored, for which they can take credit. In other words, play the role of a shadow cabinet and not just critiques.

With the callous youth disinclined to participate and usher in change for their own good, Media seems to be the only savior. Here again, political nexus rules the roost. Hence a broad-based trend setting proactive movement is called for. Can the middle class –beneficiaries of development – toiling to enrich their masters take note? About 60% of Indians are left out of the main stream and so can’t be blamed for their methods of protests, violent though it may turn against police excesses!

Can the legal eagles ensure that courts work on weekends and judges slog overtime - cutting their paid holidays- till the backlog is cleared by hearing cases in batches or bundles within say two years. If not, they will be seen as perpetrators of the system they are beneficiaries of, being parasites on citizen services. With the head-start we have in IT, can’t we develop On Line dispute resolution in/for courts and algorithms for resolving common problems of litigants? Better late than never!

Delivery of legal system must fall under RTS Act. When a case/suit is filed, the citizen must be promised of the cost and time-frame so that he can get on with his life more productively, leaving the nuances to professionals and specialists of the system. Let adjournments –neither a fundamental right nor coming under directive principles- be a thing of the past. Isn’t ‘that justice must seem to be done’ about a century old adage? Let us have quick, if not instant justice, with one each opportunity for litigants to argue and one each to defend, unless we want to let them take law into their own hands as routine recourse. Seen disobedience at traffic signals? None has the slightest inclination to comply; and politicians? Discretion –its misuse- is their valour, giving themselves raises, freebies and allowances, when ex-servicemen’s pension is hanging fire! The underlying altruism that all can be misled for short time, most for some time and some for the whole time seems wisely practiced.

Nothing short of a revolution on all fronts will help us change the scenario in a life time or two. Like Gandhiji had imbibed, JP suggested and George Fernandes did, it is time to think of disobedience and non-coperation in all walks of life –in non-violent mode of course!

Non payment of taxes may be the best to start with, as all those who haven’t paid, amassed wealth, hoarded essential commodities and stashed away foreign exchange, seem to get away, despite the call for bringing back black money. It is our sweat, money, assets and heritage. Let us get them all crooks to books. The time frame and window of opportunity –before things get out of hand- is small. So don’t brood, dither, sit back, vacillate, criticize, think, analyse, talk and blog. They are of no use. Wisdom, intellect and intelligence are to be put to good use for desirable results and social benefits.

All pillars of our democracy, public institutions, PSUs etc are infected with the contagion. In the final analysis, what is to be prioritized soonest is to kick criminals out of elected, appointed and nominated positions. Fast track their cases with time bound judgments instituting right to recall, reject and ban the nefarious as well. Electoral funding being the key issue; a new modus need be created, though, as we can’t trust and afford to finance elections of current leaders.

As such we need to attract fresh young blood –men and women- into the political arena. Politics is a part of life at home, workplace and in the society at large. Committed citizens have to take the lead to clean up under the dictum Lead, Follow or Move.

*Jai Hind*