***Winds of Change***

*Game Changer*

Now that we have well-developed nation-wide political activism by the populace and resurgent judicial activism by the courts, let us count the successes we have had last few years, and plan ahead, to achieve more. It is imperative that we step up efforts now –before next elections- and of course carry on steadfastly later too. For it need be scaled up from winds to gusts, blasts and storm force to blow away the entrenched-corrupt from nepotism, cronyism, pelf, politics and its periphery.

Politics is said to be murky; but in India it has been going from bad to worse and worst. It is often said philosophically “things will get worse, before they can better”. Nonetheless, we have reached the limits of our tolerance, endurance and patience. It is timely to chronicle the recent success and strive for more so that much more can be attracted into activism chasing deliverable results.

Successes abound in the use of RTI Act but its full power as yet remains unrealised. From 2005 it had brought out Adarsh Society scam in Mumbai, PDS scam in Assam, (Mis)Appropriation of Relief Funds, IIMs Admission Criteria etc. Though there is some stonewalling, Central Information Commission with Chief Information Commissioner and Information Commissioners are duty bound to receive queries and complaints, respond with information and is backed up by Appeal process.

The following highlights few that have created awareness, aroused interest and created activism:

Various disproportionate assets cases being dragged through courts;

July 22, 2008: Three BJP members produced two bags of cash over a trust motion moved by UPA

2010; Commonwealth Game scam; Shunglu Committee appointed

2011 2G Spectrum Scam co-conspirators arrested

2011 Feb: Supreme Court orders all trial courts to expedite handling of corruption cases; also, High Courts ordered to seek quarterly reports from lower trial courts on progress of corruption cases

2011 march CVC P J Thomas resigns on pressure from Supreme Court

2011 Lok Pal bill passed in Lok Sabha on 27 Dec 2011 with Parliament taking note of “sense “

2012 April Jharkand HC rejected petition of RS candidate for quashing EC decision to countermand poll, and imposed Rs 1 Lakh costs

2013 Railway Minister Bansal resigns after his nephew implicated in corrupt practices in appointments

2013 April CVC recommends action against 122 government officials including a Commissioner of Central Board of Excise and Customs, for their alleged involvement in corruption.

UP IAS officer Durga Sakthi Nagpal reinstated

July 10, 2013: SC mandates that when convicted of corruption, the elected are to be disqualified

Fodder Scam verdict jails former Bihar CM Laloo Prasad Yadav

01 Oct 13: Rasheed Masood becomes first MP (RS) to be disqualified for fraudulent MBBS seat scam

02Oct Ordinance allowing corrupt-convicted to continue in parliament/stand for election withdrawn

03 Oct Laloo Prasad ex Bihar CM convicted and sentenced to 5yrs for 9.5bRs decade old fodder scam

Haryana IAS office Sanjiv Chaturvedi gets support for reinstatement

31Oct’13 SC orders that bureaucrats be given fixed terms, and they should not take oral orders

A list of Public interest litigations being pursued is available at:

<https://www.google.co.in/#q=Public+Interest+Litigation+No+1+Mail+Today+PIL+Crusader+Prashant+Bhushan>

Convictions, jailing, barring from elections –voting, contesting, campaigning?- etc aside, what we the citizens need to pursue is to ensure that ill-gotten gains –stacked overseas and invested in India- are repatriated/repossessed and the criminals handed down fitting punishments to dissuade others too.

People have to be made aware of the success we have had fighting against the government, parties and politicians, so that efforts can be intensified, focused and more attracted to the fore.

These are going to be long battles to win the war at the end. Corruption and nepotism can be fought and eliminated as the democratic processes strengthens and gains ground. This is has been achieved over two generations in developed countries. For Indians, it is the second *andolan* of independence.

India has to reach such levels sooner than later. It can only be achieved by more participation of the better informed and the better to do. For, the *aam aadmi* is too busy trying to eke out a living on low wages and struggling without work most of the time -being exploited by those in power. Funds earmarked and spent on various social yojanas/schemes MPLAD, NREGA, JRY, NRLM (1258 per <http://india.gov.in/my-government/schemes>) are mostly siphoned off and only trickles reach down.

The class and caste system is very much alive and prevalent in most parts of India. It is embedded in our psyche and democracy as can be seen in the popularity enjoyed by the dynasties in politics, so much so that we are indebted to party politics to run the nation. This is not as per our constitution and Representation of People Act 1951 as per which our elections are held and mandates given to the elected to form government and run the country for the people.

Before, at and after independence the better citizens of India had got into politics. They were aristocrats of the old feudal system, educated and the committed type. Later it was the younger change seekers full of ideologies wanting to improve the system. Then we have had criminals and crooks buying their way and getting elected through money and muscle power. Such plutocrats have hijacked system every which way from courts to banks and government machineries. These need be cleaned up from the inside and outside by fighting the system through the electoral process within, and externally through civil society, activism and all rightful means at first; then wrongful ones too!

With no age limit, fitness tests and encouragement for youngsters with succession plans, we are moribund with outdated systems and ideologies with the aged, cronies and nepotism ruling us with no respect for courts and rule of law. The judges and legal system need be blamed and overhauled. Of late the courts and our constitutional pillars of democracy viz: CAG, CVE, CEC, CBI are showing new-born signs of vigour to clean up and protect our hard earned freedom and democracy.

The choices we have are to clean up the mess with existing provisions within a time frame of say 2years and usher in major changes within five years, failing which we will have no choice but to turn revolutionaries; that is if the already active revolutionaries have not gained control by then.

A new era awaits, only if we can cause and usher in changes. The call is to do and not talk, discuss, analyse, criticise, suggest etc. Lead, follow or move is the dictum.

So on this birthday of RTI 2005, let us make solemn promises to rewrite India’s destiny.