

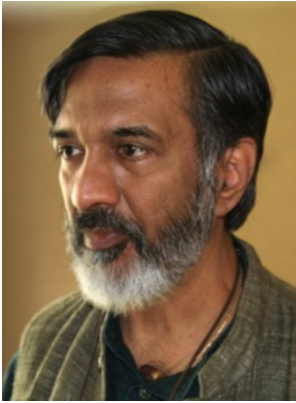
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6/26 India at an Inflexion Point

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The Election and the Indian Psyche

Ashok Malhotra & Raghu Ananthanarayanan



Raghu
Ananthanarayanan



Ashok Malhotra

India is at an inflexion point. An old civilization is coming to terms with modernity. At Sumedhas Academy for Human Context (www.sumedhas.org) we have been examining the nature and processes of the Indian Psyche with deep interest. As India takes steps towards development, it draws energy from its psyche and impacts it in many significant ways. We have used the frame work developed by Ashok Malhotra (one of the founders of Sumedhas) which is based on the Gravesian insights.

We have deployed a questionnaire called The Existential Universe Mapper (EUM) to study and work with people. The managerial population has been a large part of our sample, however, people from various walks of life and from different backgrounds is also represented in the study. The “Research and

Contemplation Dialogue” conducted by Sumedhas last year centered on the questions “What is India? What is Indian?” We based the dialogue on an in depth analysis of the patterns that have emerged out of the large data base we have accumulated through deploying the EUM questionnaire (www.taopowertools.com). The participants in the dialogue came from diverse backgrounds: people working on grassroots developmental issues, governance reform, psychologists, teachers as well as managers and consultants. They shared their observations and hypothesis and critiqued the EUM analysis.

Ashok Malhotra and I sat down to have a conversation about the phenomenon that is emerging through the election process. The insight we gathered from the dialogue provided an interesting canvas for our conversation. We asked ourselves the following questions: What is the nature of the Indian psyche as we view it through the Gravesian / EUM / SDI frame? How has the psyche of the Standard Normal Indian been shaped by the civilizational forces peculiar to India? What is the Social Character of our nation? How will the dynamics of the present discourse impact the nation?

We are presenting the gist of the Dialogue and our continuing discussions in two parts: Part 1 paints the main issues of the current election and Part 2 uses the EUM/SDI frame work to understand the phenomenon.

This election campaign has seen the emergence of personalities being projected as Prime Ministerial candidates more aggressively than earlier. There were three people who were seen as the main contenders. Rahul Gandhi, a member of the Nehru family and the leader of the Congress Party, Narendra Modi a self made man and leader of the Bharathiya Janatha Party (BJP) and Arvind Kejriwal the public face of the Aam Admi Party (AAP) an activist inspired by strong ideals. We will discuss their discourse and what it means to the country at this point in time by looking at them as symbols, icons of a particular type of psyche.

PART 1: A Quick Overview of the Context of the Indian Election

One of the significant struggles for the present day Indian is the conflict between sectoral leanings and larger Indian identity. Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru who was the first Prime Minister of India set the tone for initial decades of Nation building. His idea of India was at variance with that of Mahatma Gandhi who favored a more village centric India proud of her heritage but willing to look at herself truthfully and change. Nehru on the other hand was a Fabian liberal with a vision of an India that was scientific and technological and one that severed its links with the tradition. Nehru’s clarion call to rise above class, caste, creed, language, province, religion etc. and embrace an idealistic fervour for nation building has lost much of its sheen. In effect what it has fostered is a) a rootless and faceless Indian who is deeply ambivalent about his own system of belonging. And b) identity based divisive politics. Arvind Kejriwal has stayed clear of the later but has not been able to engage with

the former. He has tried to advance a new version of Gandhian ideals accessible to the urban middle class Indian. In a sense he also represents the Nehruvian ideal of someone who has transcended the sectoral identities and embraced the nationalistic fervour. This is easy to admire but not very easy to identify with by people whose basic sense of identity comes from their sectoral roots.

Narendra Modi, on the other hand, has tried to challenge the basic Nehruvian premise that sectoral identities are a threat to nationalism. He can easily proclaim that he is a Gujarati Hindu and this in fact strengthens his nationalistic fervour rather than diluting it. His stance that Gujarat is his family which is sending him to serve Bharat Mata is likely to find much greater emotive resonance than projecting himself as someone who is above sectoral identity. Needless to say the issue of his Hindu identity is a lot more complex particularly because of the strong associations of Hinduatva (the ideology of Hindu-ness as opposed to Hinduism projected by the BJP) with intolerant, regressive and oppressive forces. Perhaps in his mind there is no conflict between Hinduatva and nationalism. This can be potentially dangerous because it can easily breed insensitivity to pulls and pressures of a diverse society. How things will pan out, only time will tell, but it seems that what the nation has entrusted Modi to do is in fact only that which we have to learn ourselves viz. to learn how to co-hold our sectoral identities with a macro identity -be it a national level or at a human level or at an ecological level.

Another area in which Kejriwal is likely to evoke considerable admiration but very little identification is his image of deep commitment, courage of conviction and willingness to pay any price for it. In this he tries to invoke the idea of Gandhiji. In many ways he reminds one of the story of Aztec priests (The Intimate Enemy; Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism; Ashish Nandy; Oxford University press) who chose to be beheaded rather than being coaxed into embracing Christianity. Nandy's speculation is that in a similar situation the Hindu Brahmins would have embraced Christianity, justified it as Aapad Dharma (rightful conduct in a crisis) but their embracing of Christianity would only have been superficial. Deep down they would have remained Hindus and in due course their brand of Christianity would have started looking like another Hindu sect.

Nandy goes on to argue that while it is easy to admire the masculine courage, heroism and valor of the Aztec priests and condemn the cowardice of the Hindu Brahmins, it is important to recognize that this feminine cleverness and adaptability has been at the core of the survival of Indian civilization. We are of the opinion that this Aapad *dharma* seems to have become the way of life for many Indians. Thus it would seem that in the Indian psyche, heroism and valor are strongly associated with sacrifice and martyrdom. This has taken a toll on the deployment of dynamic masculinity among Indians because it is invariably seen as a threat to survival and belonging. Both Kejriwal and Modi have tried to invoke the dynamic masculinity in the Indian psyche but Modi has been a lot more careful to stay clear of the fear that it may also evoke. Thus

he rarely talks the language of sacrifice, revolt and upheaval but that of conquest. His message has not been to die for the country but learning to live for it. Needless to say for a society struggling to deploy dynamic masculinity in a responsible manner and unhooking it from anxiety of survival, such a message will strike an immediate chord

Another significant stress for the present day Indian stems from the need to have faith and mistrust of powers that be. Faith has been a significant anchor of the Indian identity. The basic stance is- 'If I am following my Dharma then I will be automatically taken care of'. Even a calamity is justified as something which is ultimately for one's own good, though one may not be able to see it immediately. This faith has withstood centuries of oppression and exploitation. However in the last few centuries (particularly in the post independence era) the situation has reached a tipping point. The insensitivity, callousness and oppression by the powerful have been of such magnitude that it is no longer possible for the average Indian to sustain the faith in inherent fairness and justice of the world. Generally, this tension has been dealt with through a belief that while the world as such is fair and just, it has been corrupted by a handful of people who are in positions of power. Rahul Gandhi has become the face of the Congress party that has overseen the most blatantly corrupt government. Thus anti-incumbency has become a taken for granted feature of Indian democracy.

Kejriwal tried to leverage this through portraying the Aam Aadmi (common man) as a sincere, honest victim who is being exploited by a handful of people; If these few villains can be taken care of all will be well. While Modi also exploited anti-incumbency to the hilt, he stayed clear of victimhood. Even when he was attacked on issues such as post Godhra riots or linkages with big business houses he did not act the victim. While his supporters talked about his being unfairly targeted, he himself chose not to react or justify himself. His stance was simple: 'If I am guilty then punish me'. Simultaneously he kept emphasizing on performance and accountability. In a very subtle manner he delinked the issue of faith from trust/mistrust of the rulers. Unlike Kejriwal he did not over emphasize vigilance. He punctured the Congress's attempt to project the Rahul Gandhi and the Nehru family as the only one who could be trusted.

The tension between tradition and heritage on one hand and progress and modernity on the other, is yet another source of difficulty for the present day Indian. Modi has made his intent in this matter reasonably clear. He will respect the heritage but not be bound by it. He can touch his mentor Advani's feet but will simultaneously limit his influence. This stance will sit well with the average Indian who is struggling with the same difficulty. However this stance also denies the inherent complexity of the issue. While it may be reasonably feasible to make this stance work in the context of a prosperous Gujarati business family-extending it to a diverse and complex society is not that straight forward. So far he seems to have colluded with the popular fantasy that the two can blend harmoniously with each other rather than show any

alternate path. The real test both for him as also for us as a society will begin once the inherent conflicts and contradictions begin to emerge. So far we have not even started asking the question of how the quintessence of our heritage and tradition relates to the imperatives of living in the present day world.

Finally, there is the issue of personal ambition. While Modi has used the usual rhetoric of selfless service, there is little doubt that he is an extremely ambitious man. His demeanor and track record support this. It seems that he is cognizant of his own ambition though he recognizes the dangers of flaunting it front of others and hence the necessity of covering it up with acceptable rhetoric. In this respect he seems to be following the foot-steps of leaders like Mayawati, Mamta Bannerjee and Lalu Yadav. The fear of personal ambition both in one self and in others is an issue which is extremely destabilizing for the Indian identity. It is extremely interesting that both the PMs from BJP (Atal Behari Vajpayee and Narendra Modi) are non-family individuals. Perhaps it is a safety mechanism that we need to ensure that personal ambitions remain bounded. It would perhaps be unreasonable to expect that we can learn to co-hold personal ambition with pursuit of collective good very easily but not doing so will only add to our difficulties.

PART 2: A Brief Overview of the Indian Psyche as Seen through the EUM/SDI Framework

We have been working with the Existential Universe Mapper (EUM) designed by Ashok. (www.taopowertools.com). The EUM is based on many years of work he has done studying the insights of Clare Graves in the Indian context. Ashok believes that the existential levels are like the keys of a piano. They are all potentially available to every human being to deploy. However, ones conditioning and growth trajectory predisposes a person to have certain propensities. Some of the memes become more developed than others; some unfold functionally through harmonious and meaningful evocation, and others distorted by constant provocation or suppression. Thus a person has a 'signature pattern' like the chords one can play on the piano, rather than a just a single note. Over the years a distinct pattern of a 'Standard Normal Indian' (SNI) has emerged (<http://integralladershipreview.com/archive-ilor/archives-2010/2010-03/2010-03-article-ananthanarayanan.php>; Organization Identity Profiles – Old and New Economy Indian Organization Profiles Through the Graves – SD Lens Raghu Ananthanarayanan and K.S. Narendran)

The behavioral responses of the SNI are as follows: a high propensity to act from Purple-Clan; a depressed potential to act from Red-Arena; a high Potential to act from Blue-Clockwork; Moderate Orange- Network; medium to High Green-Ecological and a fairly high Yellow-Holonic. When we ask the person to reflect on 'who I wish to be', the Orange-Network takes a significant jump, the Green-Ecological gets depressed.

What does this mean? Through the many dialogues and 'coaching' sessions

that we have had with a variety of people across the board this is what we hear:

- It is important for me to have a small group of people with my background for me to feel a sense of belonging; I recreate my clan around these people wherever I go; I am a 'good son' (a strong Purple meme).
- I find it very difficult to assert myself, to confront others or to make demands for myself; I withdraw into my-self when challenged (the depressed Red meme).
- I am role bound; I wait for others to give me legitimacy and for bestowal; I conform to belong; I am dependable and responsible; I willingly sacrifice myself when it is demanded of me; I am a 'good soldier' (an anchorage in the Blue meme).
- I have a great respect for knowledge, I am a good team player and will willingly contribute but within the defined boundaries of my role; I keep my aspirations in check (the carefully modulated Orange meme).
- I adjust to the context, offer space to others and play the role of a good infrastructure provider; I am willing to sacrifice myself in order to accommodate others (the strong commitment to the Green meme).
- I have an implicit faith in an Intelligence that guides my path; I am grounded in a perennial philosophy (an implicit acceptance of the Yellow meme).

These memes patterns with the core Purple-red-Blue constitutes the key anchors of the SNI's psyche that finds it very difficult to say "I am" without self-doubt. It seeks to ground ones actions in a dedication to playing roles defined by the system. The pathos and angst that are generated by this self-effacing way of being is held within a deep and personal 'bhakti' (a faith and a surrender to Intelligence). The SNI is also stating a deep wish to become more of an achiever and acknowledge aspirations; however he/she is unwilling to change the basic anchors of the Purple, Red and Blue memes. So where will the energy and assertion necessary to actualize the wish come from? At the same time, the SNI says 'I have been too trusting of the world and self effacing, I do not wish to do this anymore; give me goals to work for and I will collaborate, but I will negotiate too!' We feel that this wish is an expression of deep angst; the SNI is looking for leadership that will create space for wealth creation and progress without disturbing the core of the identity!

How is the context evoking/ provoking the angst? How has it shaped the identity so far? To answer these questions, we look at the way the Social Character of India i.e., the 'life conditions' that have shaped the SNI.

The Indian Social Character as it has evolved

The identity of this SNI has grown in a historical context characterized more by peace than by war, a geographical context of fertile river valleys. Agrarian societies grew around the great Rivers of India very early in its civilizational evolution. As far back as 2500 BCE, the Harappan Civilization that grew on the

banks of the Indus river system are believed to have developed a ordered cities, farming practices and the use of the bullock. Many of these ways are in evidence today in the Indian village! (John Keay; India, A history from the earliest civilizations to the boom of the 21st century). The Social structure and Cultural practices deeply reinforce the Clan and Clockwork as the anchor around which changes are responded to. Familial belonging is the basis of one's role in society, the interface behaviors are clearly defined and within this there is a freedom of choice. For example, the individual can choose and form of godhead as his/her 'personal god' (*Ishta-devata*), this choice encompasses ones values and ones inner seeking; every family has a 'family deity' (*Kula-devata*) which symbolizes the values and wealth creating processes that the family lives by, and every family celebrates and venerates the 'National Deity' (*Nagara-devata*). The individual's life is defined by these three anchors, one's personal striving for liberation, ones commitment to enlivening the world and ones commitment to upholding the norms and laws of the land.

It will be clear that the social character that emerges out of this world-view has devalued the world of desires and aggression, except when it serves 'Dharma'. The nature of the world that has been reiterated by Indian Philosophy is largely Ecological-Holonic (Green-Yellow). "*Metta*" i.e., maintaining an interface of friendliness and compassion towards all living beings, and its variant "Ahimsa" or non-violence is a defining feature of the culture. "*Karma*" i.e., taking full responsibility for ones evolution and inner growth is the principle that defines action choices, and "*Dharma*" i.e., the principles social action that enlivens oneself, ones context and the environment defines community life. The 'ascetic house-holder' is therefore the hero not the pure ascetic and certainly not a pure warrior.

Governance and wealth creating organizations were based on the Orange-Network and Green- Ecological memes. 'Village republics' were the basic unit of governance. People from a variety of professions populated a village, though farming was the basic occupation. The village was governed by a '*Panchayat*', a body of elders from every community that lived in the village. Consensus building was the decision-making mode. Every aspect of the technological and economic life of the village was given voice. Gautama Buddha was not only a great spiritual leader but also a social reformer. He enunciated many of the principles of governance by the '*Gram Sabha*' (the village polity) and established the autonomous village as the key element of the nation. Asoka one of the greatest Kings of Ancient India institutionalized these principles across the length and breadth of the country. (John Keay; India, A history from the earliest civilizations to the boom of the 21st century). These Gram Sabhas were energized by the SNI we have described and circumscribed by the idea of dharma.

Wealth production was organized through guilds. Each guild had its own criteria for membership, and its own ways of developing its members. Though the extended family was at the heart of these guilds, they enshrined many practices that ensured equity and autonomy. Membership to the guild cut

across the allegiance to kingdoms, and when the members of these professional guilds experienced constraints to their autonomy or oppression of their members they moved out. The members of the *Vishwakarma* community were the technologists of India. They built its magnificent temples and its cities, crafted the war implements and made its fabulous jewelry! The management of the *Gram Sabhas* and these guilds have been studied and recorded by the British orientalists and government officials. The works of Dharampal and Claude Alvarez (<http://ppstbulletins.blogspot.in>) have described the modes of education, governance, taxation and commerce that characterized the India of the 17th century by delving into these voluminous records. These studies echo many of the principles outlined at the time of Asoka and in an earlier book namely "*Artha-Shastra*" (The Science of Wealth Management) attributed to Chanakya. Modes of revenue management as well as money lending practices and rules of international commerce are defined in these texts (<http://integrallleadershipreview.com/410-'koodam'-breaking-hierarchy-building-democracy> – Dr.V.Suresh & Pradip Prabhu).

The 'History of Kings and Conquests' seems to have been played out on the platform provided by the institutions of family, clan, village republics and guilds. Organized religion was never a strong element of the social and cultural fabric, though the veneration of truly realized people has been a strong stream in the Indian civilization. The rigid and decayed forms of these social modes are what we see today as castes. The early History of India has its share of warring kings. However, the pattern seems to be one where battles for supremacy are fought within clear rules and 'dharma' of war. Thus the losing king accepts defeat and agrees to serve the victor. He is given back his kingdom! The rest of the social structures is not altered. Wealth was shared in two forms, firstly the 'lower share' which was distributed at the village between the farmers, the artisans, the teachers and the local officials; and secondly the 'upper share' which was given to the rulers. The village republics and the guilds therefore retained autonomy. This pattern was the defining 'Life Condition' till about the 11th century. (<http://ppstbulletins.blogspot.in>)

The Muslim invasions into India that began at this time disrupted this pattern. The wars were not fought for mere suzerainty and the right to a portion of the 'upper share'. Wars were fought for plunder and loot. Fabulous wealth was extracted from the land. Some of the plundering kings stayed behind to rule the lands they captured. But the fabric of the 'lower share' seems to have been retained. Some studies say that up till the 17th century, India contributed to more than 25% of the wealth generated in the world. The 'Life Conditions' however became stressed, the dharma of the rulers that included the conduct of large reviews of the societal conditions, its well being and ill being ended with the loss of power of the Indian Kings. The periodic redesign of social structure and community dharma also ended. (John Keay; India, A history from the earliest civilizations to the boom of the 21st century).

The violence of raw Red-Arena simply overpowered the Dharmic-Red of the Indian SNI. The Orange-Network and Green-Ecological social practice was

under stress and shrank back into its Blue-Purple. These structures became rigid and defensive and its membership became conservative, questioning was discouraged. Many commercial guilds like the *Chettiars* and the *Marwaris* managed these life conditions and were vibrant till well into the 19th and even the 20th century. Some schools of science, mathematics and technology survived. The 'open-source' *Dharmic* religions retreated under the attack from a more centrally organized and proselytizing Islam, but they survived. Communities retreated behind their own forms of Blue-Purple-red. 'Tolerance' is the result the SNI having withdrawn and retreated into the most basic structures of living. The social structure became a mosaic of fragmented communities living together in a strained harmony. Thus many quaint communities and groups are alive today and practice their own traditions. The SNI rigidified the principles of "Ahimsa, Karma and Dharma" on the one hand and became flexible and accommodating on the other hand.

When the Muslim rule gave over to the British Rule, the "white man's burden of Christianizing and Civilizing the savage" was added to the process of large-scale plunder! The patterns of Governance overturned most of the traditional ways, taxation, education and rules of commerce. Life Conditions went from stressful to difficult and oppressive. The Indian society in the late 19th century and early 20th century was fragmented and depleted; the Indian psyche was severely undermined. It was a wounded civilization. The Intimate Enemy; Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism; Ashish Nandy; Oxford University Press)

Significant Leaders who Shaped the "Struggle for Independence"

The Independence movement of India led by Mahatma Gandhi was unique. It heralded the idea of 'non-violence' and '*Sathyaagraha*'. Many charismatic and insightful thinkers have awakened and shaped the action of the fragmented defensive and emaciated SNI.

Vivekananda is more internationally known figure among the many spiritual leaders of pre-Independent India. He was appalled by the lack self-confidence in the SNI. The Red meme had gone completely into the shadow; internal dissention, discrimination and deprivation had taken hold of the culture. Vivekananda appealed to the Green-Ecological and Yellow-Holonc threads of the tradition and defined assertive action that served the spiritual core of the Indian identity. The call of these spiritual reformers was to the ascetic householder, but it was also a call to serve "Mother India" a new national deity: "Do not act for personal gratification, do not aggress upon the other, do not give in to apathy, serve the nation, serve the tradition and find divinity in every human being". All of these reformers entered the field of education, the redefined the traditional practices and attempted to bring the many Hindu communities to recognize their commonality, converge their action and end their self destructive internal violence. The SNI who had given up on his pride, and had internalized self-condemnation was asked to direct his angst to self

transformation.

Mahatma Gandhi's message was more directly political. One of the leaders he had admired was Balgangadhar Tilak. Tilak had reinterpreted the *Bhagavad Gita* to awaken patriotic action; he had attempted to create a cultural unification of the Hindu through a redefinition of religious festivals. Gandhiji shifted the emphasis. He redirected the SNI's abhorrence of red-aggression into the idea of non-violent struggle; he asserted that 'freedom is your birth right' and used the philosophical ideas of the Indian culture to reiterate the idea of internal freedom. He wrote a very influential small book called '*Hind Swaraj*' where he linked internal transformation and righteous struggle for independence. Gandhiji articulated a condemnation of the western ways, and sounded a call for an inclusive idea of India. The underprivileged were dignified as '*Harijan*' (children of God) and people of all religions and back grounds were included in his vision of India. He led a life of ascetic self-denial and shared his intense '*saadhana*' with total honesty with the whole nation. He glorified the village and envisaged a nation centered on the autonomous village. He appealed both to the pride of the SNI as well as his moral imperative; he converted the passive aggressive Red into a weapon of righteous non-cooperation. His message respected the Blue-Purple-red of the SNI and redefined the context and form of his/her action into a new form of Orange-Green. Wealth creation was through trusteeship; the 'other' was disarmed through 'ahimsa'. Millions were inspired give up both self-defeating futility and the hate of the 'other', to sacrifice their lives to the ideal of *Sathyaagraha*: Truth-force.

Bhimrao Ambedkar on the other hand focused his energies on voicing the rage he felt at the negatives of the Purple-Clan and inwardly directed Red-Arena. He had experienced the shadow of the Indian Social Character first hand. To Ambedkar the village had become a cesspool of discrimination, denial and passive violence. His ideas of emancipation were influenced by his study of western democracies, particularly America. He had an astute understanding of economics. He argued for a radical redefinition of the Purple and Blue memes. He was a great admirer of the Buddha and the Buddhist ways. The oppressed classes found a great champion for their cause. The SNI was awakened to his rights, but led in a way that used peaceful protest: Purple angst channelized through a Blue that was based on laws and rights. Ambedkar was one of the prime architects of the Indian constitution and it gave legitimacy to his criticism of the decadent shadows of the Indian Social Character. His vision of India was decidedly Orange-Green.

These thinkers-reformers-leaders believed that social and psychological transformation was a prerequisite to acquiring political power. However, there were many leaders who believed that political freedom came first. Nehru (and Jinnah who was the Father of Pakistan) was the most visible voice of this idea. He also voiced the world-view and aspirations of the colonized Indian. Nehru shared Ambedkar's aversion to the negatives of the clannish forces that had taken over the village. He did not share the spiritual anchorage of

Gandhiji. His was a mind typical of the 'Oxbridge' educated Indian. Both his criticism and appreciation of India did not come from his direct experience of the average Indian, his idea of India was mediated by western patterns of thought. He was a votary of science and technology. Orange dominated his understanding and his choices. He was a charismatic figure, the SNI who sought bestowal and legitimization by the 'powers that be' was enamored of his acceptance by the British. He was a 'Brown Sahib' the epitome of the kind of Indian Lord Macaulay wished to create! (Makers of Modern India; Edited by Ramachandra Guha).

The Inflexion Point India is Poised at Today

The Congress Party that won the Independence for India stepped into the role Governance. It was the unassailable choice for the initial years that were characterized by a great euphoria. The Slow decline of the Congress party has seen the growth of 'Democratic Dynasties': a family succession defines its leadership and the ruling elite of the party; the parties contest the elections and these families rule through the parliament! The Nehru Family rules over the Congress party and many regional parties similar in nature and structure to the Congress have all deteriorated into clones of the Congress, each with its own 'Democratic Dynasty'! Tavleen Singh a respected journalist has captured this decline in a very insightful article:

(<http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/fifth-column-a-dangerous-disconnect/>). She traces the slow but sure way in which the Governing elite of the new nation has changed colour, to become indistinguishable from the British Colonial masters! She gives evidence to the dangers of incomplete revolutions that Frantz Fanon pointed out in his classic "The wretched of the Earth". The SNI who has awakened to his potential through witnessing the success of many Indians in various fields across the globe has to now turn his attention to building the nation.

This then brings us to the first of our three icons: Rahul Gandhi. He is the 4th generation of the Nehru family and heads the party. He continues to spout an 'Orange' discourse of development that his great grandfather did, but the fact that he is in a position of power due to the accident of birth and not due to any proven ability is an ugly reminder of the Purple v-meme in operation. In the last eight years of Congress rule, the levels of corruption and venality have reached abysmal depths.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2G_spectrum_scam). The Red hidden agenda is not so hidden anymore! It is blatant. If the congress party and its allies were to return to power, India's descent into becoming a 'banana republic' will be unchecked. Democracy will be a farce that plays out deep collusion and facade building. The Congress party has often used the tensions among the many communities that comprise the nation cynically. They highlight the anxiety and stoke fears to offer themselves as Knights in shining armor! Over the years of their rule, many of the pillars of democracy like the judiciary and the executive have been subverted. They maintain a Blue façade, but are on the verge of collapsing. The strength of the inwardly anchored Blue

professional the most exemplary of the SNI we have been looking at has kept the dignity and the functionality of these institutions intact. The average Indian feels betrayed by this icon. The Brown Sahibs have proved to be as predatory as the colonial masters they imitate. This is the Nehruvian voice whose shadow has been dancing merrily on the backs of the long-suffering Indian.

We now look at the second Icon: Narendra Modi who leads the Bharatiya Janatha Party (BJP) and its allies. The BJP is the dominant face of a group of parties that represent the discourse of Hindu Pride and nationalism. This is the voice of Vivekananda and the Voice of Nehru mixing in peculiar ways. A reactive and strident Red note queers the pitch every now and again. The articulate face of form of this discourse is the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak (RSS). While the RSS has remained a social reform group, its political face is the BJP. The RSS is a right wing Hindu organization. It champions an idea of Hindutva: Hindu-ness as opposed to Hinduism. Its thesis is that Hindu culture underlies all Indian thought and practice. This culture is a continuity of the hoary past studded with a galaxy of *Rishis* the great spiritual seers who were the authors of the Vedas and the Upanishads. At one end of the spectrum of this derogatorily called 'saffron brigade' are militant organizations like the Bajrang dal (the group that spearheaded the demolition of the Badri Masjid).

The Bajrang dal and the Shiv Sena are the Hindu answer to the psyche of Pakistan. Red Purple in its core, it is the self appointed defender of the Hindu faith. At the other end is the more developmentally focused party the BJP. The BJP has been in power in a few states and has shown a commitment to governance and development that is touted as the future model for India. Narendra Modi is the face of this discourse. Centered in a Blue drawn from Hindu ideals, aspiring to wealth creation and technological progress it focuses on an Orange discourse of progress and development. Its key words include patriotism and nationalism and growth. (<http://harvardpolitics.com/world/india-need-narendra-modi/>).

There are leaders like Mayawati who represent the voice of Ambedkar. They lead parties that have a strong regional presence, and have been heading some of the state governments in the last few decades. The traditionally privileged Indian feels anxious that they will demand a part of the pie we so proudly call "India shining". They are the examples of the success of the affirmative aspects of the Indian constitution and the rights and safeguards Ambedkar wrote into the constitution. However, they are not a major player in the National stage. Narendra Modi is from a backward caste, but has championed the idea of a unified Hindu! He represents the hope that a resurgent Hindu identity offers. The vision of India that his discourse offers is one that is enamored of Shanghai, he wants to see India in the glory that he believes it once had as Bharath, but, it looks suspiciously like Singapore! His idea of India is riddled with GDPitis, and may be fueled by an envy of the colonizer that many Indians suffer from. This is a strange mix of righteous Blue and aspirational Orange. Strongly anchored in Purple and Blue ideals the

passive aggressive Red of the SNI has been sublimated into patriotism and nation building. Narendra Modi is Spartan and almost ascetic in his habits; he is seen as one above personal corruption and as a person dedicated to 'Mother India' by his admirers. However, his opponents paint a picture of him that is revisionist and oppressive. (<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/general-elections-2014/more-stories/Modi-victory-will-see-ideology-of-hate-penetrate-into-govt-machinery-Nandita-Das/articleshow/34481928.cms>).

The most recent voice that has emerged in the political space is that of the newest party, the Aam Admi Party (AAP- the Common Man Party). Arvind Kejriwal is the icon of this party. He has generated great hope in the young urbanized Indian. He is very much like many middle class Indians who have acquired a decent education, but have felt let down by the corruption and nepotism that they experience. A product of the Indian Institute of Technology, having worked in the bureaucracy for a few years (and being acknowledged as a very upright officer in the revenue service) and possessing a good NGO background, Arvind Kejriwal could be the envy of any aspiring young Indian with a conscience. His discourse reveals a good grasp of Gandhian ideas and ideals. He has broken ranks from the intelligent, self centered, job seeking Indian; he has dirtied his hands, and therefore acquired credibility as an activist. He has written his version of "*Swaraaj*" and brought in innovations like the "local manifesto" for each constituency that is based on the larger party Manifesto. This echoes the idea of local governance and expanding circles of interaction that Gandhiji had envisioned. The fact that someone like him can enter politics, infuse it with honesty of purpose, pragmatics of action, and articulate a modern perspective evokes great hope. His naïveté makes people nervous, but is inspiring too.

The rebelliousness and the clean image presented by the new AAP party encouraged a lot of educated, urban middle class Indians to volunteer and work for its success. Having surprised themselves and everyone else by winning the elections in New Delhi state, the AAP, just as suddenly resigned from the Government after a short and stormy 49 days in power. However, when they entered the fray for the Parliament, a spate of activists from many parts of India have thronged to the party and almost all the 500 plus seats see an AAP candidate standing for elections! With no funds and completely spontaneous voluntary efforts energizing its efforts AAP is a great phenomenon, but its competency and longevity are in serious doubt at the moment.

Will AAP drop the pot and break it? Arvind Kejriwal seems to have captured the imagination of many, and he is in many ways young India's idea of an indigenous attempt at shaping India. The AAP discourse is decidedly Orange-Green oriented, they sound as though AAP is above all clannish and parochial belonging, motivated strongly by values. The generation that was born just after Independence now feels it is moving!

(<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/lok-sabha-elections-2014/news/AAP->

releases-Varanasi-manifesto/articleshow/34487768.cms);
(<http://indianexpress.com/article/india/politics/aap-fails-to-gain-ground-candidates-bank-on-caste-equations-in-ferozepur/>);
(<http://kafila.org/2014/05/04/two-days-with-aap-in-banaras/>)

These then are the three icons: firstly: Rahul Gandhi, representing a decadent Congress, an Orange facade that hides Red underbelly, encourages Purple politics (while spouting Green jargon), and continues to subvert Blue institutions. Secondly: Narendra Modi, Blue-Orange, based on righteous nationalism and Red assertiveness that leverages Purple belonging. Thirdly: Arvind Kejriwal, Green discourse, rebellious Red, Orange stances that lack Blue competences and a discourse that disowns Purple.

We are presented with three icons to choose from and hand over the future of our country to. Sometimes these icons look like caricatures of who they wish to be, and sometimes they look like cartoon characters! It is very difficult to predict what the outcome may be, but it is clear that the future of India rests heavily on how this election turns out.

Postscript

As we read this paper, the elections are over. The BJP has won by a convincing margin. For the first time in decades a single party has the majority in the Lower House of the parliament. The Congress has been routed and the AAP has suffered a very bad defeat.

The liberals and the left have reacted with alarm and the right is overjoyed. The stock market has registered a very positive jump. There is anticipation of decisive action that will kick-start the economy. We feel hopeful that this is a turn in the right direction from our reading of the Indian Psyche. (Though our sympathies lie with the Arvind Kejriwal discourse:)

To understand the inflexion point India is poised at, we must understand India's twin, Pakistan. Jinnah came from the same mold that shaped Nehru. The SNI of Pakistan differs from the Indian in respect of the Red-Arena as well as the religiously ordered Blue. The Pakistani SNI did not heed voices that were of the genre of Vivekananda and Gandhiji. There were people like Abdul Ghafar Khan and ...whose voices were audible but were subdued by the demands of the Clergy and the Military. Within a decade of Independence, Pakistan was overtaken by a dictatorship that pandered to the Religious right. Political power even during the brief periods when democratic processes prevailed was dominated by the landed gentry supported by the Military. India on the other hand has proved to be a viable democracy and is now on the verge of becoming an economic power-house. This election result is therefore crucial to its future. It is feared that after having made huge strides in its growth India is faltering.

If the BJP Government headed by Modi strengthens the Blue institutions and

creates a corruption free and well-administered India, we will grow. If on the other hand he is unable to hold the reactive Red elements of the '*Sangh Parivar*' in check, there is a distinct possibility that the fragmentation in our society will not be healed. Confrontation and polarization will take over and feed the shadow elements of the Purple and Red memes. In either case, the environment will be a big loser!

Summarizing our Hypothesis

1. Traditionally, in the Indian ideal, Red has never been given its legitimate due. The attempt has been to make it subservient to Green, Blue and Purple-and to some extent Orange. In practice, Red in conjunction with righteous Blue became the primary lever through which the negative side of the Purple was sustained. In this process, Red suffered a loss of potency and started to acquire a manipulative hue.
2. Mughal invasion and colonial rule accentuated this process leading to self hate on one hand and rampant emergence of the manipulative Red. Thus submission in front of the powerful and shameless oppression of the powerless became the norm. Sadly, till date we have not been able break free of this.
3. Vivekanand showed a vision wherein Red could break free from this manipulative stronghold but it still remained subservient to Green.
4. Gandhiji tried to make a virtue out of the suppressed Red and showed how it could regain its potency and be used as an effective weapon if there is the moral strength of the Blue and ecological sensitivity of the Green.
5. Both Vivekanand and Gandhiji took the issue of self hate head on and thus managed to extricate Red from the erosion of potency and manipulative leanings. However their embracing of Red for only its Strength and disdain for its other side viz. Desire (here we are using the EUM terminology) meant that it got pushed into the subterranean level and reemerged in full force when the opportunity arose.
6. Ambedkar's vision was primarily Orange and Green based on a solid Blue foundation and a healthy respect for Red. However his total disregard for Purple meant that a large part of Red energy got focused on the negatives of the Purple rather than in pursuit of the Orange/Green vision. This also reinforced self hate at the collective level.
7. While Nehru also had a Orange/Green vision, but like a true romantic idealist he wished away Purple, remained tentative towards Red and disregarded Blue. Ambedkar ensured that Blue got its due at least to begin with. However Purple and Red were only waiting in the wings to devour the Blue institutions as and when the opportunity arose.

Thus the SNI today stands at a point wherein he/she does not know what to do with either Purple or Red. Both are held in ambivalence and the implicit tension between the two does not help either. Of the three icons, Rahul is seen as a beneficiary of the Purple-red dynamics and hence unlikely to make a difference to the status quo. Kejriwal is perhaps seen as a well meaning novice whose rigidity will not allow him sufficient space to maneuver his way. While his vision has a much greater element of Green as compared to Modi, he also shows a disregard for Purple and some aspects of Red. On the other hand, Modi seems to convey that he is at ease with both Purple and Red. The Orange part of his vision is clear but the Green appears suspect. Simultaneously how he will saddle the positive and regressive side of Purple remains uncertain. Also will the Red be unleashed in a repressive manner remains a big cause of fear and anxiety. These are the very issues which the Standard Normal Indian (SNI) is struggling with – Can I deploy my Red with a sense of responsibility? Can I embrace my heritage without self-hate and/or over-glorification? Is my Green for real or is it a mere facade? etc. In this sense Modi is much closer to the SNI than Kejriwal. Kejriwal is perhaps seen as a person who has already transcended these issues. The only commonality which he shares with SNI is in respect of victimhood and mistrust of system in general and power/authority in particular.

Thus we believe in electing Modi, SNI has taken a big gamble not just with him but with its own self. How this gamble will turn out only time will tell.

About the Authors

Ashok Malhotra is an alumnus of the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad. His professional career over 30 years spans stints in HR Management with organizations such as Indian Oxygen and Balmer Lawrie, teaching, research and consultancy at institutions such as Administrative Staff College of India. He was Chairman of Indian Society for Individual and Social Development, and Ma Foi Management Consultants and is presently on the Board of several prominent Indian business organizations. He is a co-Founder of Sumedhas Academy for Human Context.

Ashok has numerous papers and research publications to his credit, namely, (a) Child Man – The Selfless Narcissist – Book published by Routledge (Taylor and Francis Group) in May 2010, and (b) author of the Existential Universe Mapper Framework and Suite of Tools, the only set of organization diagnostic tools developed indigenously in India. The tools include organization mapping, diagnosis and 360 degree leadership orientation mappers. The tools have been deployed in over 100 independent organizations in India and have a database of over 3500 managers working in Indian and multinational organizations in India and abroad. He can be contacted at ashokmal9@gmail.com

Raghu Ananthanarayanan is a Trained Behavioural Scientist, Yoga Teacher and an Engineer; Founder of the consulting firm “FLAME TAO Knoware” – a team of functional experts all of whom are Behavioural Scientists focusing on Organisational Transformation, Alignment and Optimisation; Founder of Sumedhas Academy for Human Context – a not for profit organization focusing on developing behavioural scientists; and the Founder Trustee of the Barefoot Academy of Governance. His consulting experience spans three decades: organization turnarounds, leadership coaching, culture transformations. His clients include TCS, Infosys, Claris Life Sciences, Laxmi Machine Works, ITC, and EPCOS. He pioneered the use of Yoga and Theatre in process work. He has published many papers and books: *Learning through Yoga, The Totally Aligned Organization and Organizational Development and Alignment*.

His goal is to develop a unique approach to management at a personal level and at an organizational level based on the three streams of his expertise, namely, Lean Management, Yoga, and Behavioural Sciences. Raghu is the India Bureau Chief for ILR. He can be contacted at raghu@totallyalignedorganization.com

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