



By Santosh Jha

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## **Prologue**

ENERGIES ARE CATASTROPHIC, if they are not streamlined and channelized properly. More so, if extreme reactivity shapes them, and when they lend gratuitously to charged up emotionalism. This is a common knowledge of humanity; probably no need to overemphasize it, as long history of humanity has already witnessed and realized this. It is also nothing new to state with renewed vigor that the most potentially calamitous energy happens to be ideas, which humans have innate tendency to engender in plenty and then foolishly become victim of it. Even best of ideas become a source of major calamity if they are not understood and accepted in non-reactive and holistic perspectives. Tragic realism is, energies are usually reactive,

not receptively assimilative; probably that is why, they prove ineffective to human society. There is no blame game here; just an acceptance of the realism of the mechanism, as it is.

In contemporary India, since long, a virtual stampede of ideas has been set to unleash tumultuous causalities, as the multiplicities of obsessively espoused ideas are roaming without proper channelizing mechanism and streamlining structures. There is a stampede of stupidities pervading Indian societal milieu and the potential outcomes are nothing short of calamitous, even if euphemized by another set of energies of high-sounding and media-sugared ideas. Moreover, the term stupidities, as used here is more in lovingly simple sense, not meant for any reactive utility.

There still is nothing new, which one can be specifically worried of, as this scenario is global and the happenings are only innovatively repetitive, if viewed from historical perspective. It is not that this stampede of stupidities could be patented to India and its contemporary mode and mood. All over the globe, the energies of ideas of youth, neo-youth, activism, the populist nomenclature of common man and the generally embedded force of rejection of status quoist realisms are active players of the stampede. And, there are embedded reasons for it.

This phenomenon too is cyclic in history of time and space on this earth. Energies of ideas for change, guided by the gradient and gravitation of rejection of status quo are basic cyclicity of cosmic evolution and human societies are just a small part of the macrocosmic arrangement, though, in reactive consciousness, we all fail to understand and accept it.

So, why is there a need to talk about it and be overly cautious? Why should we need to call it a stampede and a stupidity and discuss it? Is there a need to talk about it all, if what is going on is just fixed and endemic mechanism of all societies in course of evolution in time and space?

Yes, there is a big need to do it. The express requirement is to deal with the intrinsic issue of evolutionary energies of societies and its mechanisms with an objective,

holistic and non-emotional perspective. This integrative and assimilative perspective shall ensure that all players and participants of change, who in their emotional positioning of consciousness and microscopic viewpoint, fail to see the objectivity of the entire mechanism of societal changes, could understand the processes and mechanisms of change in its widest possible spectrum. This shall definitely weed out loads of aggression, ill will, chaos and conflicts out of the contemporary global societies, which are on the threshold of or amidst major socio-political and cultural changes. This shall surely be helpful in supplying the much needed sanity and serenity in the contemporary stampede of stupidities, which pervades India and many other nations.

At the very outset, I wish to make it very clear that the purpose of writing this long essay is surely not to ridicule or belittle any idea, activism or initiatives, which contemporary India as well as different other societies are witnessing. It needs to be reemphasized that all energies are not only endemic in societies but also very beautiful and powerful means of societal changes, which themselves are essential and intrinsic in evolution of humanity and their societies.

What I wish to bring about in this essay is; how and why energies of changes need to be viewed in holism and totality and why problems and solutions too need to be viewed in holistic and assimilative perspectives. The initiative is to speak of how it is very crucial to understand the dynamics of the mechanisms of the overall causality (cause-effect cycle), which ultimately energizes all changes in all societies and how all energies need to be properly channelized and objectively streamlined to instill the essential elements of sanity and serenity in changes. This is important, to weed out the chaos and conflicts, which usually most societal changes are prone to, especially in contemporary times of media-overdrive, reactionary consciousnesses and communication-obesity.

The very affectionate and compassionate idea of this endeavor is to present a case of sanity amidst the milieu of contemporary societal changes, without making anyone a

villain and others a hero. All ideas can be wonderfully fruitful and all participants of energies can be catalytic in shaping brilliant changes, if the entire idea of change and its mechanism is understood and accepted in holism and in a non-reactive and receptive causality.

I am taking up the contemporary Indian chaos of 2013-14 as a case study of societal changes in this book and it needs to be emphasized that though, the scenario and ground realities in USA or Egypt can be different from India, the operating mechanisms of societal changes remain the same. I am talking about broad issues and ideas of system's operational mechanisms and as all societies have very similar structures and functions, there has to be big commonalities in energies of societal changes that are troubling most societies in contemporary times.

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## **The Core Issue, The Central Stupidity**

What is a stampede? A large group of people, when marching towards one singular direction, queued up in an orderly manner and with firm resolve towards the idea they profess to establish, is a beautiful and powerful procession. The same people, when they start frantically moving and running in all directions, breaking up the pattern of a queue or orderly line-up, with individualistic resolves to lead things to logical end in their own subjective ways, it results in a stampede, which engenders catastrophe.

India has been very fortunate to have witnessed the magnanimity and fruition of the beauty of a powerful and orderly procession under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. This was so effective and universal in its utility that almost all major changes in all societies across the globe imported it and used it in different times, post Indian independence. It was to Mahatma's credit that he always preferred no energy to a

reactive and disorderly aggressive energy. He never patronized the energies of a stampede. This sanity and detachment is missing in Indian participants of contemporary change as most of them hastily succumb to the populist lure of patronizing the energies of the stampede of stupidities for instant or short-term gains.

Societies of nations are huge group of people and they are marvelous agents and participants of change but always a potential of populist presuppositions. Globally, the new idea of liberalism and globalization has resulted in weakening of societies and nations. This has in turn created a stronger and more reactively vocal individual. Probably first time in global history, the common person, the average citizen and a simple voter has become relatively better empowered and emphatic, vis-à-vis the society and governance, he or she lives in.

People of my generation still remember how in India, we as citizens felt alienated and demoralized. Only two decades back, for a simple gas connection to as trifle as few kilograms of low quality sugar, we all had to stand in queues for hours and virtually beg for what were our basic rights. In banks, we were treated like beggars, even when we were drawing our own money. For every little thing, we were dependent on the mercy of state's services, which were doled out to average citizen as if we were burden on the nation. Now that liberalization and globalization has done away with this state monopoly and now we feel honored and even overly pampered by markets and private producers of quality goods and services, we feel empowered not only as a consumer, but also as citizens. A larger sense of wellness in life and living has taken away the demoralized posture. This has been the scenario for most people in many developing and struggling nations, especially in Afro-Asian societies. In most societies, across the globe, for a larger population, especially the youth, it is a party time!

The new urban and educated Indian citizen now feels empowered and emboldened. He or she has become used to quality services and products. The average citizen knows and accepts that when he or she pays for something, first thing which is

delivered to him or her is respectability and then the desired product. This honored and pampered customer is now equally demanding citizen as he or she pays the taxes and loads of it. The governments run the show on their moneys, as few governments have been successful producers to generate enough moneys.

A vociferous citizen and its desire to script changes in societal milieus is the new contemporary reality globally and it has acquired decisive energies from the massive improvement in communication technology and personal media; emboldened by the new culture of openness and liberalization. As an empowered consumer, an average person wants states and its institutions to behave and act in a more respectable way to them and should be approachable to them easily. On the contrary, state institutions and governance behave and act in the old mould and often, they rub the people the wrong way. It is only natural that the new generations of people are in no mood to take this for granted. A change is no doubt a big necessity and this has been procrastinated for long.

The new milieu has troubled all societies and nations across the globe as they have failed to match up with the pace of people's aspirations and desires of good life. The huge improvements in technologies and sciences have massively lifted up the benchmarks of 'good life' across the globe, be it a developing society or a developed one. In that sense, core trouble of USA and Egypt or India is the same. Also similar is the fact that both developed as well as developing nations are facing financial crisis, which has resulted owing to overdrive of governments to appease and fulfill growing desires of average people in contemporary societies, along with other reasons of mismanagement of governance.

What is then the stupidity in all this new worldview? This stupidity is very subtle and as it is on the side of the teeming majority of common people, it is not being recognized and accepted. This needs to be understood. Since long, despite differences among political philosophies about individual liberty and sovereign rights, the nation-state always prevailed over individual liberty. This started to change at the end of the

last century, when cold war politics ended and the rigid and oversensitive idea of nation-state, sovereignty and nationalism started to wane. The major wind of change was globalization and opening of economies.

The definitive change however has been brought by massive surge in cutting-edge technologies, especially in communications. All these ensured that nations and governments running them, became growingly less powerful, as one singular identity and desire has begun to take center-stage – individual self-gratification. The individual has now been emboldened by markets. The markets have given a common person a new identity of a consumer, who is now the most pampered entity in contemporary societies. This common person has growingly started to demand services and facilities from governments as it has become used to getting high quality services from private companies.

The impact of consumerism on common man's attitude and worldview has not been rightly assessed and accepted by state and societies. They still believe in old philosophies of their natural superiority. The liberal and open market economy has given the common person a disastrously deep-rooted habit of demanding and having options. The common person, especially the young, now thinks of himself or herself as consumer of political productions and services. The markets have pampered him or her with so many choices and options that it surely suffocates him or her to find that the political and administrative system is so hugely non-performing and poor service provider with almost no or so little options.

In the modern age of choices, nothing seems like permanent and durable for long term. The common person now has the scary mindset of being impatient and deeply reactive. Psychologists admit that this impatient and reactive common person, pampered with choices and options, has already started to view and accept even relationships as products. The societies all over the globe are facing troubles, as people do not want to live a life in a no option milieu. When people are not willing to drag even in a relationship, as choices and options are available in good measure, how



can they be expected to carry the burden of an option-less social or political system, which they perceive as non-performing and a big drag! This attitudinal change in average person's mindset and worldview has come up fast and societies and nations have not kept pace with it.

The governments all over the globe are struggling as they have since long prospered on the age-old premise that 'citizens should not think of what nation gives to them but what they give to nation'. The masses are now empowered and pampered consumer, they want governments to become smart, performing and facilitative. There is nothing wrong and troubling in this aspiration of people. The trouble is; nations cannot be private companies.

Nations and governments are not some detached entity like a company, which some people run and which produces and markets a commodity. Nations are cooperative ideas, where people are part of the entity and responsible for its good working and delivery of services. Being a citizen is definitely not like being a customer, though a citizen has every right to good delivery of services by a political system.

The problem, which defines contemporary chaos and conflicts in global societies is; the common man and woman want everything from society and nation but they have little idea as what as a citizen, they need to extend to the society and nation, they live in. The cherished idea of democracy, which worked on the golden principle of people's participation in governance, has now become identified with a scary populism. Be it governments, political parties, activists, corporate and media; everyone is on an overdrive of populism, pampering the common man and woman.

This pampered common person, emboldened by its newfound empowerment as consumer and game-changer in societies, wants good life and it is very much justified. What creates trouble is this common person often fails to accept its responsibility and culpability. It is sufficient for a customer to pay the money and demand everything else from the producing company. However, as a citizen, he or she is not only a customer but also an equal producer of the services. As a citizen, one cannot say that

as he or she has paid taxes, he or she has no responsibilities and duties and he or she should in turn get every facility. Governments are not producing companies and citizens are not consumers.

There cannot be denial to the fact that democratic societies needed an aware and highly informed and disciplined citizenry for its success but the sad realism is that dysfunctional populism and irresponsible common men and women have brought all democratic societies into a veritable chaos. There is a complete imbalance of rights and duties of common men and women towards societies and nations.

The stupidity lies in the fact that major trouble rests with an irresponsible and undisciplined common men and women, still, governments, political parties, corporate, activists and even media are in an overdrive to pamper the common men and women, never ever daring to tell them what is expected of them for the good life they fight for.

The contemporary stampede of stupidities is the result of everyone; the governments, political parties, corporate, activists and even media, doing different things in different ways, professing to doing all these for good life of the common man, even when it is apparent that what they profess is only populist propaganda.

Taking the case of India, I shall endeavor to elaborate how and why it is just only populism and this overdose of populism is the core energy behind this stampede of stupidities.

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## **Mechanism Of Populism**

Let us understand populism and the harm it does to general wellness of a nation and society, with a day-to-day life example. The food we eat is felt until it stays up to the throat, even while the enjoyment stays only till it remains in the mouth. After that the body mechanism, which continues to work upon the food, is not felt. The mind has 100 billion neurons and billions of other supportive neurons are working incessantly. We can feel and understand only a fraction of its operative mechanism. Rest is mysticism for most.

This is our design. However, the real Hero is a person, who does not divert his or her attention and focus from the food, even when it is past the 'felt-zone' of throat. We all need to be aware of and receptive towards the journey of this vital food down the tracts till its last processing. If not, we are bound to compromise with our wellness.

Doctors have been warning us. They say, "Own the onus of the food your mouth shoves to the body, as you are not just your tongue, but the entire body". The idea is to convey the fact that usually, in our restrictive consciousness, we eat in loads what our mouth, especially tongue likes. It is true that the taste buds are restricted to tongue only and as the food goes down beyond it, we do not wish to remember and care about.

However, we are not only our mouth. Our body is an intricate and huge mechanism. There are long food canal, liver, pancreas, kidneys, heart et al and together there are millions of functions that go on within our body, which we do not consciously register. However, they are crucial for our survival and general well-being. The mouth is our conscious mind but rest of the millions of complex functions are handled by our unconscious mind.

A truly rational and receptive person, cannot restrict its responsibility and attention to just the miniscule conscious part. The subconscious is also our onus as it is the larger domain, which essentially handles our basic health and survival. The rational person shall always know and respect the 'details' of the entirety of the 'body-mechanism'

and shall own the responsibility of the wellness and success of all parts, not only one part.

The conscious-mind in we all, which is restrictively concerned and knowledgeable about only a 'part' of the entire complex mechanism, is essentially the 'Populist Self' in us. However, a truly empowered person shall definitively be aware and responsible towards the 'whole'. The holistic, assimilative and integrative perspective towards the 'mechanism, in its entirety is the hallmark of a true person. It is where, many of us fail.

We cannot blame ourselves. It is our mechanism too! The conscious part, the mouth, gives us tangibles as instant utility and fruition. The mind consciousness is bound to register the immediate advantage of 'taste-satisfaction' and extend instant thumbs-up. We eat a huge and rich creamy cake and feel so happy. The tongue gives us a huge thumbs-up as it registers big bonus on satisfaction-scale. However, the burst of calamitous sugar, which goes inside the food tract and gets big disapproval and thumbs down from liver and pancreas, is not registered on the satisfaction-scale. These organs are rather neutral. The mouth is a vocal and populist showman. The liver however is the silent worker.

The 'Populist Consciousness' within all of us, has this tendency of giving in to populism. However, the real person shall always have the poise and perspective to see the picture in entirety as the rational person understands and accepts the 'mechanism' not in 'parts', but in holism and assimilation. The rational and empowered person shall never be swayed away or blown out by populism, as it has the holistic perspective to understand that 'success' is not in pampering the mouth with all its 'wants', it is rather in ensuring the larger health and wellness 'needs' of the whole body. The rationalist understands, "Success is not in having all that we want for instant joys, it is rather in the prudence of having what we actually need for persevered satisfaction".

The nation and society is also like a person. Populism is only one part of the existence of this body. Politics has over the years become concerned only to the tongue and

mouth. As people have become very reactive and restricted in their consciousnesses and as a consumer concerned only with instant-self-gratification, they too basically demand populism. It is only natural that politics as well as markets have become huge suppliers of tangy populism. But, this populism only suits the taste buds of mouth and unleashes calamitous side effects on the other parts of the body. A nation is whole body, not only mouth. Populism is catering only to the mouth, without caring for the wellness of the whole body. It is like enjoying tobacco and liquor. The mouth gives a huge thumbs up to all these but the liver and other organs suffer silently. Finally, the body is taken ill and dies.

No doubt; everyone has equal responsibility in a democracy. The political parties and politicians need to rise above the politics of populism as this harms the wellness of the nation. However, the larger onus always lies with people as the people are the sovereign in a democracy and political system does what they delegate it to do. The people are the masters and political system is there to serve them. The servant shall always do what the masters would say. However, if the masters themselves demand and wish populism, servants cannot be overly and exclusively blamed for populism.

Good and rational persons, societies and nations never fall for populism. Occasional populism is not bad as life is also about fun. However, the primary need is the survival and health of the body. If the body is unhealthy, the mouth loses its taste and joys. India as a nation has since long indulged in the fun and fantasy of mouth populism. It is only showing up very bitterly, as how nation's overall health has gone down drastically.

The stampede of stupidities are all about not registering this problem and still looking for solutions in populism itself. The problem can never be a solution, though it clearly hints at where solutions can be. The contemporary India is in such reactive and restrictive consciousness that it cannot see its wrongs and that is why, there is little hope for solutions.

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## The Contemporary Indian Scene

The slogan that 'customer is the king and the voter is wise' is probably the first line of stupidity, which has its larger than life manifestations in India's politics. It is more evident, whenever India goes to polls. The stupidities of all shades start blossoming like flowers in spring. It is important to list these stupidities.

The first major stupidity is the idea of 'common man'. The generalization of the label called common man is a major issue as this creates a picture of a reality, which is conveniently virtual, having little grains of realism. Moreover, this label has been used for the convenience and utility of political players, not the people. Election time is the golden period for average voters, the so-called common man. Everyone is out to pamper the voter and as this pampering goes on, the first stupidity is coined.

The perception is made out that the common man is a victim of political and administrative corruption and everywhere, this common man and voter is in deep agony and crisis. The template, which emerges is, there is a fixed idea and a variable idea. The fixed idea is that common man or voter is a good honest person and he knows what is good and what is not good for the country. Part of this fixed idea is that voter is a victim and everyone else are villains, responsible for his plight. The variable idea is, the opposition says, the ruling party is villain and responsible for plight of common man. The ruling party defends that it did most for common man and only it can do more and more better things for him.

This is cyclic as an opposition party may later or somewhere in states becomes the ruling entity and the current ruling outfit may land up in opposition but the accusations shall remain the same, as the slogans are inter-changeable. The activists say, both are fooling the common man as they are two faces of the same coin; meaning, they both are villains. The activists are out to make the common man

believe that they alone can make common man happy and well. Both ideas, fixed and variable are stupidities and hypocrisy at its best.

Let us first take the first stupidity of the fixed idea of the good, honest and 'know-all' common man, which everyone in the political community is projecting and promoting to suit their interest. There is a philosophical hypothesis on which the empire of hypocrisies of politics, economics as well as culture presides and thrives. The hypothesis is –

“A human being is born rational and is equipped with an innate general will. Therefore, it intrinsically knows what is good for him and what is bad. The wearer knows where the shoe pinches and if he does not know it, nobody else has the business to tell him where it hurts him.”

This hypothesis, especially the more populist shade of the hypothesis, on which democracy and societies work has no scientific and objective basis and that is why, both societies as well as people are troubled and socio-economic and political systems are flawed. The sad realism is; often, an average person seldom knows what is actually good and bad for him or her, in the long run. Also, few know and realize that what is good for him or her, may not be equally good for the society and nation. This missing realization is the sad premise of all populism.

Therefore, cigarettes, liquors and tobacco products are sold with impunity as the responsibility of health and wellness is with so-called rational common man with so-called inborn general will. Similarly, democracy comes with a hypothesis that common man knows what is good for him and therefore, he shall act responsibly and intelligently while making his choices. Everyone knows, how many people, the common men and women pose themselves intelligently and responsibly towards intoxicants and democracy!

The fact remains that a nation's population has men and women in broadly eight different consciousnesses and each one is antagonistically disposed towards other. The millions of people, comprising the singular notion or label of 'common man' or

average voter are divided in mutually conflicting socio-economic and cultural identities too, apart from being in different shades of consciousnesses. Within this singular label of 'common man', there are groups of people who are also corrupt, oppressors and inimical to others, in the same label. Unlike the populist hypothesis, the common man label is not a homogenous identity and certainly not singularly intelligent and responsible.

It is political convenience and a populist hypocrisy to say and believe that all poor are one common label. It is not. Within one common label of 'poor', 'downtrodden' or 'rich', there are individuals as well as groups, who battle with each other. Precedents prove that intra-class conflicts and clashes are no less than inter-class conflicts. In all societies, across the globe, population of a country is a mix of intelligent and stupid and for sure, most of them have little idea and inclination to understand and accept how democracy and its important institutions work.

In India, majority of people, even in urban and well off population pockets, have little knowledge about the Constitution of India, the system of governance and their expected duties towards democratic institutions. Majority of people do not know what a federal mechanism is and how Indian federal system faces major challenges. Majority of people, even well educated youth and higher income group people do not understand the parliamentary form of democracy and separation and balance of power between executive, legislative and judicial wings of government. Vast majority of people are foolishly unaware of the mechanism, structures and functions of public administration in India. Sadly, the core idea and true spirit of governance is a rocket science for most people either in common man nomenclature or in elite label.

As a result, even when they vote for electing a member of parliament, the average voter believes that a good candidate is one who gets roads repaired and sewerages clean. The issues of national elections, state elections, local body elections all get muddled up. They cannot accept that an ideal member of parliament is one who has abilities, experiences and personality orientation to become a good lawmaker, who



has a vision for larger issues of nation's welfare. Thankfully, no one asked Jawahar Lal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, to get roads repaired and streets cleaned in his constituency, as he would then never have won an election!

Globally, it is now believed that elections in India are now free and fair. Still, every time nation goes to polls, large number of tainted and corrupt people get elected. Can the common man label not be blamed for it. Should only politics be blamed for it. In this case, people say, what people can do? There should be law, which could debar such people from contesting. When there shall not be anyone with dubious and wrong credentials, the people shall automatically elect right persons. This populism is always lapped up, as it suits the masses, making the onus shift away from them. However, if this is accepted, why tobacco and liquor are not banned? If people cannot be made responsible for not electing a wrong person, how can they be relied on that they shall use intoxicants rationally? This hypocrisy is the basis of most populisms. Globally, it is accepted that any government, which shall completely ban tobacco and liquor, shall fall the next day. Many governments in developed nations are even legalizing some popular intoxicants, believing, people have the rationality and will to discern what is good and what is bad for them. This hypocrisy suits all. Though, this golden trait can be there in many people, this cannot be accepted that average people or everyone in this label of common man is such discerning.

Globally, tobacco and liquor are not 'debarred' because then it is said, 'average adult are rational and they can effectively use their discretion'. Why then the voters not blamed for not using their discretion and rationality, when it comes to not electing a corrupt and criminally inclined politician? It is a sad reality but fact remains that tobacco and liquor are killers still, many find utility and satisfaction in them. Many find the same in drugs too. Similarly, tainted and criminally inclined legislators and parliamentarians are killers of democracy still, huge number of people find utility and satisfaction in them as they are either 'good' for particular ethnic group of people or their own voters.

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