

The Virus knows more Indians than the Indian state

Naren Bedide

***Abstract:** The world has been struggling against the deadly Covid19 viral disease for nearly two years now. Millions of lives have been lost and millions still are struggling to survive as the virus has also destroyed entire national and local economies the world over. India witnessed one of the worst impacts of Covid19 during what is being referred to as the second wave of the viral attack. It laid bare the state of medical infrastructure as well as the poor intent and administrative skills of the political leadership. In this interview, Naren Bedide discusses the response to the viral attack by various global leaders as well as that of the Indian political leadership and what these responses reveal about their respective societies and social values. He suggests that the colossal failure of the Indian political class in dealing with the havoc caused by Coronavirus is yet again a lesson about the failed idea called India and its caste character. He goes on to discuss the role of global pharma companies and the Indian bourgeoisie in their response to something as essential and contingent a commodity as vaccine and its production in the wake of Covid19.*

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Anu: Jai Bhim, Kuffir. Vaccines are a good reflection of the health of a society. People's health is safeguarded when they are vaccinated against certain diseases. So, it is primarily the government's responsibility that people are protected from diseases for which vaccines have been produced and are available. It was known that a vaccine for Coronavirus would take at least a year to be produced. India was ahead in vaccine production and was distributing it to the world but then it experienced a serious crisis of vaccine shortage for its own citizens. How do we understand this and in general, what does vaccine production in India mean to you?

Naren (aka Kuffir): First of all, yes it does indicate the health of a country or a region, that is, whether it has the capability to produce vaccines and all kinds of vital critical care medicines. India has all those capacities. It has been a large-scale vaccine producer for many such solutions for the rest of the world for the last at least thirty years. Vaccines for hepatitis and polio and all other kinds of vaccines are produced here and are exported to Africa, Latin America and also some parts of the western world. Which means that there is a certain intellectual structure in place that is needed, so we can't really dismiss India. This pandemic has thrown up many insights and I hope people are taking note, especially the Bahujans. The so-called black and white difference between the west and the east has been totally erased by China and, in some ways, by India. But India did it much before this Modi government. The Modi government has in many ways scuttled this whole process. When they talked of *aatmnirbhar* they didn't know what the *aatma* of India is, actually. They don't know what *nirbhar* is either. Despite everything, companies in Gujarat have been getting a lot of support, in one way or the other from the Modi government. And I don't mean it just in this context of vaccines. Zydus Cadila, the Gujarat based pharma producer, first said that it will produce a vaccine but they have not produced any vaccine. There is one company in Delhi also, which promised the same but hasn't delivered. These companies depend on foreign capabilities. But in India, especially South India, there are other companies which have been producing critical care medicines. They have reduced world prices of medicines. These companies are run by a new generation of entrepreneurs, a new generation of a social class, which didn't emerge from the older aristocratic section. So, it is a notable progressive development which we have to acknowledge.

There are many countries in Asia, including Japan and Korea, which have not produced their own vaccines, as yet (some are on their way). India has produced a vaccine of its own. And had there been good government support India would have produced 3-4 more vaccines by now, because the state support is very much needed. There are some critical issues which we forget to discuss when we talk about production of any kind of advanced or even any low-technology based products such as food itself. They are all socially produced—all sections produce them, they labor for them, especially the Bahujan sections. But when it comes to modern industry, the Bahujan have

been mostly excluded from realizing their full potential despite the growth in their education levels etc.

So, India does have the capabilities, I will discuss more on those issues later. What went wrong is that India doesn't have intellectual leadership, on the social, political plane especially, which is required. What we have is not social leadership, it is caste leadership, primarily, which can't look beyond its caste roots. So, India got a golden opportunity to prove its capabilities but it botched up so badly, when its overall economic record was improving. Even in the Northern states, child mortality and maternal mortality rates have been relatively coming down. In states like Punjab, Haryana, they have some of the best HDI indices, on some parameters. In Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Rajasthan also, there have been marked improvements. There have been improvements in agricultural productivity too. But all these northern regions have been failed by their own social leadership and secondly, by their so called elected 'national leadership'. It is very evident that these regions that have been affected the most and their leaders have shrugged away their responsibilities, socially, politically. Instead, they have chosen to be sectarian, at this moment, which is a global crisis moment. This should have made people pause and think. But the political leadership in the north (India) and in some places in the south also, has been so myopic that they have betrayed the Bahujans, of course, but also their own classes in some ways.

So, there is a capability (and you do what you can with that fact) and it has been aborted, it has been botched, it has been scuttled, sociologically; that is also a truth. We will have to look at that, too.

Anu: When you say India has the capability for vaccine production, can you break that down and tell us how that happens? Is it part of the government infrastructure or is it a private enterprise? Where does the research component figure? Is the research component contiguous with the state and the private enterprise? Do all of these have to come together to produce a vaccine?

Naren: India does have the capabilities. Is it capable of producing vaccines? Yes, it is. In the current context, has it produced enough vaccines in time for everyone? No. And there is a cutting edge of medical science available now, here. It is the poorest and most vulnerable of the world that need it (the vaccine) the most. It is the conditions of their lives which make them the most vulnerable therefore the poorest require definitive, state driven preventive measures against certain diseases. For the rich, it might be a different issue. Socially, if you forget the public-private borders then India has the capability. Vaccines produced in America are all produced by foreign companies and the vaccines produced in China are locally generated. We don't know the specific details about the companies that have produced vaccines in China but they have produced two vaccines and they have state support also. They are private companies, so we will have to understand how private or how public these efforts are, overall.

What is public and what is private is a grey area now. For me, as a part of a large number of OBC, Dalit castes and tribals and who have always been excluded from all public sector efforts, since none of those products actually reached us—neither telephones, nor scooters and they produced even condoms—nor did we find employment there, objectively speaking. I have been to a state public university; luckily, I'd say, because the competition was much more, more intense back then. So, that is the extent to which the public sector has helped me—my college degree was subsidized by the state. As an OBC individual I can say that none of my relatives are employed in the public sector companies. The public sector factories and their offices are not part of my family history or places of livelihood. Their top level managerial and general managerial positions have been manned by upper castes—Brahmins especially and other Savarnas, so I don't consider the public sector 'public', as such. Both the private sector and public sector companies in India are both very private.

So, we should forget for a moment that the Indian socialist experiment actually worked for everyone. How did the public sector in India become such a private affair? In 1947, the general economic discourse around the world favored the public sector. After the Russian Revolution and their great success in building a strong industrial base in the public sector, all of Western Europe also veered towards building a similar large state sector, and even America came up with the New Deal—that was the backdrop which provided ample ideological justification for Nehru's aristocratic class to sell their gigantic private dream as a noble public endeavor.

Lenin had theorized that the 'commanding heights of the economy' should be entrusted to the public sector. This meant key sectors of the economy like power generation and other utilities, mining, heavy industry, areas of strategic interests should remain in the public sector. Babasaheb also expressed similar views. But what did ultimately happen?

What did happen was that the state entrusted the 'commanding heights of the economy' to the Brahmin, upper castes entirely. To people who had never engaged in any production in history, you could say!

There was one kind of critique from the right wing, which meant sections of Brahmins and other upper castes again, about what kind of 'strategic interests', or 'commanding heights', was the state seeking to protect or control by building hotels, producing condoms or manufacturing photographic film etc etc? Followed by the question, *what business is it of the government to do business?*

A better question from those who share true equalitarian or socialist ideas would have been: in such a pathetically capital starved country, so dependent on foreign aid even in foodgrains, wouldn't it have been better to invest it in an area that affected the livelihoods of nearly 80-90% of the population (back then), directly and indirectly: agriculture? Babasaheb offered that kind of sage advice too.

If we study a little closely, the motivations behind Nehru's mixed-economy-with-a-socialist-emphasis model would become plain. On one hand, it was to ensure complete economic and social security for the Brahmins, upper castes who were somewhat displaced or disempowered, economically, by providing them with large scale employment opportunities; on the other hand, also protect traditional captains of industry and commerce, also from the same upper caste sections, from international corporations and traders and against any upstarts from the lower castes through a rigid license-permit regime.

Economists have said for long that economic systems are politically constructed. Ha-Joon Chang, professor of development economics at Cambridge, is one such theorist. He had recently observed that the idea of 'free markets' is a political construction, and of course it means that hegemonic classes have a great role to play in shaping these ideas, in any given economy. India's tryst with a 'socialist' destiny was also similarly shaped by the Brahmin political, social leadership.

It did build some capabilities but it was so slow, and the West and other countries were so reluctant in sharing technology. And because of the caste nature of its employees and management, it had to fail; because they were supposed to provide employment for the upper castes, primarily. To build a certain industrial bourgeoisie out of a people—Brahmins, upper castes—who had historically lived on jagirs, fiefs and tithes of various kinds from state/s which had sprung up in India over the last thousand years.

Now, Covid presented an unprecedented global crisis. It was a unique moment which required all productive forces to come together, globally and nationally. We required that kind of political action and leadership. It was a time to generate social production in the truest sense, bringing together public and private capabilities to produce medicines, treatments and vaccines for the widest distribution, making them accessible across classes irrespective of costs. In the west, it has been a public-private partnership, you have to understand this. Even though it wasn't ideal, they still came together—government and industry—to reach people across man-made divides. Even Donald Trump, who is such a free-marketeer, and a great promoter of American enterprises and their need for protection from outsiders, and against interference from government, had launched a program called Operation Warp Speed¹, which was a huge attempt at government-industry co-operation. It does have a sci-fi kind of a title but it was a sincere kind of a program launched by him in January 2020 for which the US deployed some 18 billion dollars. It was budgeted as 18 billion but it could be much more. They proposed to finance 8 companies—Pfizer, Moderna, AstraZeneca, Sanofi, Johnson & Johnson, Novavax, GlaxoSmithKline, IAVI. All of these are overseas companies; they are not of American origin. None of them are owned by the UK government or the French government or German government. There is a realization that this is a creative business in some ways.

¹ See <https://www.wsj.com/articles/why-operation-warp-speed-worked-11612222129>

Babasaheb also said that private initiatives should not be curbed. So, there was a need for private participation in this and the urgency of the crisis also mandated that. Not just in the capitalist paradise of America or the UK or other countries; most of western Europe is social democratic—all of them gave space for private enterprise to step in. As a scientist, you know the reason is that most commodities are produced socially. Despite patents and copyrights and all other stuff, there is a certain level of sharing and the sharing carries a price and only private companies are quick enough on certain occasions to grab any knowledge which can be applied profitably. And in today's context of vaccine production, the only public enterprises which helped, in the west, was Oxford University sharing knowledge with AstraZeneca, and a few other instances perhaps. But I don't think any public university participated in most of this process. It was remarkably progressive of those governments to look at their people from such a responsible stance.

But it was a public-private endeavour, in a wide sense. And this is where India failed, miserably, and the US succeeded. The US and other governments paid and funded this in the west, making a pact with the private sector that if a company produces these vaccines, they (US Govt) will get a certain number of doses; it was a kind of an advance payment and if they didn't produce any of these vaccines it will still be okay. It was a risk that the American government was taking and many other governments in the west did the same. So, ultimately America provided free vaccines to its people and with a similar sense of responsibility, India could have produced 3 or 4 vaccines on its own. The glaring difference we often see between the west and the east, between India and the west, is so much a product of the ruling class and their manipulations here and there. We have the capability but we didn't produce.

The initial pure research, whether in America or elsewhere, was started in publicly funded organizations or universities, as a matter of their regular agenda, but ultimately when it comes to producing the actual vaccine or isolating the variant, it is the private companies which have to do it, because they can do it more efficiently, it would appear. So, it we again turn to the questions: what kind of a society do we live in, what kind of societies do they live in? Wherein, some figure like Trump who is so ugly to the rest of the world was so very kind and so very humane towards his own people. Whereas, despite having the glorious heritage of so many civilizations and religions, what India has done is utterly despicable and at this moment I am very ashamed that the Bahujan discourses are also not looking at such primary issues. Of course, at moments of crisis everyone turns to religion but religion is not the only solution or the only problem. Thus, we have failed in our thinking also. That is there.

Pushpendra: Kuffir, my next question relates to what you just said: research is socially produced.

Naren: Research is socially produced but the primary research can only be produced by some sharing of public resources.

Pushendra: So, the question is related to that. In India, we see these large hoardings referring to vaccines being free and the prime minister is providing it for free to Indians. How do you look at this given that R&D involved in vaccine research and production also involves tax payers' money, whether in India or the UK or elsewhere? Or to rephrase the question, how are governments and private companies, together trying to hide the public funding aspect of vaccine development.

Naren: I discussed how much the American government spread its arms to embrace the producers of vaccines to mark it in contrast with what the Indian government did. You are talking about public funding and taxpayers' money. Taxpayers' money is the Bahujans' surplus labor, everything goes through a stream of processes which ends up becoming capital and finance capital later and so on. Here it was mostly private capital (even though originally it is extracted from surplus labor) and private initiatives of a few individuals which resulted in bringing together public knowledge, which is global public knowledge to the cause of Indians. I mentioned earlier about the American government spending 18-20 billion dollars in advance on vaccines; the Indian government did not deploy a single paisa on either the Bharat Biotech or Serum Institute of India, which means it (the government) didn't develop any vaccines.

Until the Supreme Court asked the Modi government on May 2, 2021, no one in the ruling regime cared to disclose the full truth about vaccine production in India. Though the Prime Minister exploited every opportunity to make it seem like he and his government were shouldering the whole research and development program, the bare truth was quite shocking². As they submitted to the Supreme Court, 'no governmental aid, assistance or grant' was 'made for research or development of either Covaxin or Covishield'³.

Bharat Biotech didn't get any money and it was only a few months ago there was news of a grant of 300 crores to Bharat Biotech and double of that grant to Serum Institute of India and some grant to one public research institute in Maharashtra and another in Uttar Pradesh. But all this news has not been verified. So, what about the role of public institutions like ICMR (Indian Council of Medical Research)? They 'Gave some aid for clinical trials of Covaxin and Covishield' as this news report says⁴.

But what I want to point out through this exercise is that the Indian government, which is the custodian of Indian public resources, especially the funds, has failed shamelessly. Whereas, other governments with much less resources and much less capabilities have extended themselves much more, especially in the west. The Indian government did not support any of these private efforts.

² See <https://www.livemint.com/politics/policy/no-aid-given-for-vax-devp-centre-to-sc-11620672443048.html>

³ See <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/no-funds-granted-for-vaccine-research-development-govt-101620675320843.html>

⁴ See <https://health.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/policy/gave-some-aid-for-clinical-trials-of-covaxin-and-covishield-not-rd-centre-to-sc/82539357>

That is why I was stressing that India could have produced 3-4 vaccines. In Hyderabad alone there are several such companies. Sputnik is being produced by Reddy's laboratory and the Indian government has no hand in it. They just said go ahead and produce it, take the license (from Russia) and we'll give you approval. What does that mean? It has already been approved in Russia and other countries. The Indian government put a no on Pfizer vaccine, due to some factors, even though the west keeps saying that it is efficacious. We will have to sift through all the western and Indian propaganda. Modi doesn't deserve any kind of attention on this, because he is a criminal. On this count, he has risked the lives of a billion and more people and has just looked away. He will be so much caricatured, he has already been caricatured, but he is a figure of pathetic shamelessness and ignorance for all world historians to pay attention to.

The Indian government, because of its ruling class being composed of all these upper castes, has failed the Indian people. There is no limit to that, their consistent failure. Actually, we should be ashamed that public funding has not gone into these vaccines, directly. When it was going through third trials and people were making fun of Bharat Biotech's managing director's English capabilities (and I contrast him with Adar Poonawalla, who is a 3rd or 4th generation Parsi entrepreneur and he has mostly been only producing, not developing, because he has built big capacities); whereas, Bharat Biotech has been doing it on a shoestring budget for the last 20 years. We will put aside the question of capitalism here but it is remarkable that someone from one of the dominant castes came forward and has put together this vaccine.

There was another company Shantha Biotechnics, which was a pioneer in producing vaccines in India, which is also Hyderabad based. This company was bought over by a French company—Sanofi group. They were also producing the vaccine and they also took money from the US government and the erstwhile chief promoter of the Shantha Biotechnics said that we will also do the research here (India) but they said that 'no, no, we will do it in France (because the American govt will not agree to do in India)', even though they had produced all the path breaking vaccines in that particular company. They (Sanofi) said that we will not get the funding if it is developed in India so 'we will do it in France'. Because it is big finance capital which bought over the company (other promoters went in for this lucrative offer) and their share values went up by several hundred times. It happened in the 2000s. Shantha Biotechnics was started in 1991 and it brought out many vaccines when they (the west) said Indians can't produce vaccines. The company went ahead with its grand intentions, saying, 'why can't we produce vaccine'? So, the founder had gone to the US for some kind of technology tie-up with a big US company and they said, 'you are 20-30 years behind us and it will take at least 30 years for you to develop a vaccine'. So, he came back and put together his own plans. I would come to it later, but Marx would recognize this quality of the Indian bourgeoisie as progressive, perhaps, at an initial stage in their formation.

Returning to the question, in this process of vaccine development, the public funding comes from the fact that many of them have had experience of working in some public pharma company or the

other in their early careers, which has closed down now; for instance, Dr Anji Reddy (of Dr. Reddy's Laboratories) who had worked with IDPL earlier. So, there is always some seed of public support in earlier stages of their career. But to say that the Indian state has provided support for these vaccines... it could have provided it in time and would have held its head high with pride saying that it is our effort. Right now, this is a private effort, despite everything. We have not developed that kind of social morality. It is impossible to call India some kind of nation or a society.

Pushendra: When I mention the public funding aspect, I don't just mean to refer to India, because, for example, the research for Covishield, was done at University of Oxford, the money that came was from the governments there.

Naren: It came from the US, mostly. The Moderna vaccine was produced on its own (by the company). There was sharing of some research by Oxford, don't know the extent, so if you are going to talk about Covishield, then the consumers/patients/taxpayers/citizens, paid enough for that. In India, it has been paid for by patients and the government now, to some extent. It is not subsidized by the US government or the UK government, as far as I know. The knowledge is public and the government always has some role but to dismiss the other aspects of it, that doesn't present the whole picture. Though I'd like all these companies to close down and I'd like all of India's land to be taken over—all private property to be taken over. But I am looking at it in this current framework, the framework Babasaheb proposed, he himself was a part of it wherein he mentioned that there will be public-private participation in the proposed mixed economy. Even in this so-called liberal-democratic set up which is completely dominated by the caste mode of production, I would still like to give the credit where it is due. So, we cannot say the Indian or UK governments etc. supported these efforts.

Anu: What exactly was the international pharma industry doing by buying Shantha Biotechnics?

Naren: As I said, there are certain things which affect the poorest and the most vulnerable sections world over. Diseases like polio, malaria, and hepatitis—which come from certain general lack of social and physical infrastructure that ensure clean air and water to all, especially water. Such people and countries require these vaccines more and Shantha Biotechnics had produced those vaccines since 1991. It is a biotech company, as different from a pharma company, which itself is an advanced field in the pharma domain. So, for a country like India to have that kind of knowledge and we did produce those kinds of people who have that knowledge, we still produce those kinds of people, who have the capabilities to produce vaccine etc., is commendable. Other companies were not so interested in producing vaccines and even if they did the cost would be much higher. If it is a western company it has to source its manufacturing somewhere outside Europe or USA.

Anu: So, they bought Shantha Biotechnics and did not put resources into it to increase production or increase its range of products. Does it mean they bought it, in a sense, to shut it down?

Naren: You can neutralize people in many ways. But they didn't want to neutralize this. The point is they (Shantha Biotechnics) had shown their capability to develop vaccines, something Bharat Biotech has now and Adar Poonawala doesn't have and lots of Gujarati companies don't have. There are companies here which have developed medicines circumventing the strict patent regimes of America and Europe. You may call it stealing but it is world knowledge. They say this is the molecule and this is the product but we will produce it some other way (so the product patents can't apply). That is how most of these critical care medicines are also available here. It is because some people, especially here in Hyderabad, introduced this circumvention and 'stealing', I don't consider it bad because patents and copyrights are the most perverted form of right to property and this is science, it evolves out of knowledge built across time and geographies. Nothing should be pinned down to an individual or an organization or nation's credit entirely, especially when it involves people's lives. Americans tried a lot but they couldn't stop it. But that time is over. Now much original work is being done here.

Their own people don't like the system there. Americans cross over to Canada and buy medicines in huge hoards because it is much more reasonably priced there. These patents and copyrights are the most perverted form of right to property. Bharat Biotech has produced the least cost vaccine despite all kinds of negative press and coverage and sneering at it. There are many things which are wrong but in this case we will have to look at things as they are. Should Krishna Ella, a private company, exist? No, private ownership shouldn't exist or control social production, but you have America in the world which valorizes private enterprise, while using all kinds of protective measures and is busy showing others down and there is Cuba, which depends or depended entirely on state ownership of social production, almost always bankrupt, despite its many noble policies; there is only one kind of paradigm which exists in the world today. A skewed, mixed paradigm.

Anu: Clearly, the political failure can be put on the individual but the vaccine as such and the response to pandemic also reflects the realities of the infrastructure. So, how did such a large country with such a huge population end up talking about two companies? What is happening to this large research network and scientific establishment? What has been their contribution, their innovations and their entrepreneurship?

Naren: They have no entrepreneurship, only ownership of all means of production by ruling castes who are naturally very interested in maintaining the status quo, in stagnation. Oxford produced some knowledge which they shared with private companies for producing vaccines; what is JNU (Jawaharlal Nehru University) doing, what is DU (University of Delhi), what is Jamia (Jamia Millia Islamia) doing? They produce new generation of owners, caste overlords of the political economy.

Anu: Not just the universities, the scientific infrastructure of India is one of the largest..

Naren: I look at whatever is happening and there is this thread in my article⁵, which mentions that there is a region-wise divide, state-wise divide, there are huge divides on many parameters; Babasaheb hoped that maybe by mixing together different classes, castes we will share values, through endosmosis, to understand each other but what is happening is reverse osmosis wherein we are sharing all negative values across all regions. Whatever good things could have come out they have been turned into negative things. Together we could have done so much but what has happened is that together we are bad for each other.

I would like to discuss the whole Indian approach to science and modernity, which is the larger question here. The question of modernity. When we talk about the French revolution and when we talk about the enlightenment, these were mostly about individuals and their freedoms, it was centered on that. There was a class of people who had come up and who had newly gained some skills and resources and they are referred to as the bourgeoisie. They said that we will not listen to the aristocracy and we don't even accept the doctrine that the monarch is God or divine or is the representative of God on earth. These people were not just scurrying across the world and setting up factories in Surat, Machilipatnam, Madras or wherever, colonizing the world and discovering America and Australia, they were also, in some ways, bringing in new values, like bringing the individual to the center of things.

In India, modernity has always been seen or interpreted by the ruling classes as an intervention by the western world. While deriding modernity as westernization—note their double standards—the ruling class or castes were the first to partake of its fruits, its institutions, products, conveniences while rejecting its values. In the current situation we can see clearly how they view modernity literally as an instrument—it is thermometers, it is ventilators, it is oxygen cylinders, it is cell phones. It doesn't matter to them where they are produced. They will not look into ideas, thoughts and processes which gave birth to those instruments. Thankfully, they got these *in gratis* in some ways but they made the Bahujan produce them, directly or indirectly, by extracting more of their labor. But they still steadfastly refuse to accept the values, the ethos of modernity.

Thus, the individual hasn't emerged in India. Babasaheb also pointed out that they are still part of caste groups. Caste mode of production centers the needs of the ruling castes as the focus of all production, because they control almost 90% of the wealth and property in India as I have pointed out elsewhere⁶, most of it accruing from, and accumulating over, traditional inherited property.

It's irrational to compare them with the industrial bourgeoisie in the west, who emerged as a social class that challenged the hegemony of the top two estates, the nobility or the feudal lords and the

⁵ <https://www.goethe.de/en/kul/ges/eu2/tlk/22008456.html>

⁶ See https://roundtableindia.co.in/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=9156:bahujans-and-progressive-brahmins-adversaries-not-allies&catid=119&Itemid=132

church or the clergy. They brought about a decisive shift in societal mindset freeing the individual from rigid social structures and feudal production relations. As Marx and Engels say in the Manifesto of the Communist Party that, ‘the bourgeoisie, historically, has played a most revolutionary part.’ How was it revolutionary? They catalyzed the unleashing of productive forces like never before, taking full advantage of new advances in science and social thought. As the Manifesto says, ‘the bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionising the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society. Conservation of the old modes of production in unaltered form, was, on the contrary, the first condition of existence for all earlier industrial classes.’ What kind of impact do they have on society’s values, its ethos? ‘All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind.’

Can we think of the industrial ‘bourgeoisie’ class in India in the same terms? Did they expand production, strengthen the productive forces, triggering social development at large? This should make us laugh, because what we’ve seen during the Covid period was shortages in all basic necessities for reasonable healthcare, from oxygen cylinders to critical care medicines. All the missing social infrastructure: from hospital beds to the pathetic situation of public transport which resulted in the huge exodus of millions of migrants on foot. Did the ‘Indian bourgeoisie’ have a positive impact on Indian society’s social values, its ethos? Did they change ‘all fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions’? This should make us laugh even more because it is this very class which had given birth to the ‘train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions’ in India, giving birth to caste and all its hateful biases, prejudices and practices. And this is also the class which lorded over the ‘fixed, fast-frozen relations’ in this society, meaning the caste system, and still seek to sustain its hierarchies and inequalities, strengthen them, in fact. How can they be considered the Indian ‘bourgeoisie’? In fact, they play the same role as the entrenched ruling classes who were displaced by the bourgeoisie in France and Europe.

Their approach towards modernity tells us a lot about what they are. Dipankar Gupta has talked about it and he calls it westoxification, which means you just want their (west) products but you don’t want their values—good or bad—you don’t want their values. We have our own values, as I had pointed out earlier. So, change in factors of production, as a Marxist would say, will ultimately result in certain changes in people’s understanding of the self and society and also in their subjectivities, but it hasn’t happened so far.

Anu: It goes back to the statement you made that the Brahmin elites are a completely consuming class. They just won’t produce. It goes into that ethos that a thermometer is a

product but the physics and science and the context of how the thermometer came into being is not needed.

Naren: Exactly. There is also a certain pain and suffering behind the research. As Engels said, the bourgeoisie explored nature first, in their evolution. This was how they started delving more and more into science. How the natural world is, how things work! What is Physics, Biology, Zoology? It was only after that they started to study society, because the bourgeoisie must explore that. That's what made them a progressive class, as against the aristocracy, the feudal overlords. Only a small section of upper caste business class has that very much needed bourgeoisie quality, like Bharat Biotech, for instance. Because our society too is still very much in the grip of the traditional ruling castes. I would go ahead with Chandra Bhan Prasad and say that a certain bourgeois character could be a good quality for the Bahujans to have for certain reasons; because it brings individuals to the fore, it talks of freedoms and all.

As the bourgeoisie are a very tiny part of the industrial or business class in India, mostly engaged in small scale industry—who are the rest? A larger part of them are what I'd like to call the *Brahmavasi*. A class of people who follow the Brahmin in every way and also believe that the instruments of modernity (forget the values) will (or should be used to) help them to control the Bahujans more efficiently. And at the same time, retain their pre-modern preeminent status in society. These are rentier capitalists of various kinds: mercantilist capitalists who depend on government consumption to build monopolies, extractive capitalists who can wrangle licenses and permits from the government smoothly because of old, old connections going back to the colonial era, large contractors of various persuasions etc.

You'll notice all of them require the greatest proximity to the government to survive. They all thrive, actually. You'll also notice, all those businesses display the least amount of research, innovation, or creativity. So how could they respond proactively to the Covid situation, or any other needs of society?

Their ugliest examples are Vedanta, Jindal and other companies. The easiest business for them is to extract ores from the land. If you have heard of the Reddy brothers in Karnataka, they were from Andhra and they crossed over and erased borders between Karnataka and Andhra mining iron ore in Bellary. Between 2004-2005, within 2-3 years, they made nearly 40,000 crores by just exporting 95% of that stolen iron ore to China. Vedanta plans to do the same in Odisha; in Andhra-Odisha border there are Jindal, Tata and other companies, who want to extract bauxite and do the same because there is no capital building (especially in manufacturing) in India for there is no real industrial growth in India. Then there are all kinds of mineral capitalists in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand. The entire Dandakaranya or the Adivasi country. With state support, which essentially means the support of their kin in government, who can stop them riding roughshod over the most vulnerable sections of Indian society?

Here we need to acknowledge Babasaheb's perspicacity in saying that mineral resources are our strategic assets and they should be owned mostly by the state. But the state owned it for a large period of time and then they privatized it because it was handled very inefficiently. What does it matter if the state owns those resources or its kin (private sector) controls it, in the Indian context? Ultimately, they all serve private ruling castes' interests.

At a lower level, all kinds of local politicians are involved in mining of various kinds. Across the country, illegal sand mining is rampant now, with the state actively looking the other way. Digging up river beds, lake beds and every other kind of land around water bodies for sand for construction which is mostly for housing for the rich and the NRIs. Nothing for the poor. There is no sand for the poor. For cement companies, limestone is being mined. And bauxite and barytes and all kinds of other ores which we haven't even heard of; gemstones, coal, granite, marble from coastal Andhra up to Rajasthan, are being mined. There is illegal mining done even by Jaganmohan Reddy and his family: barytes and other minerals. Now he wants to mine bauxite. He had a partnership with Gali Janardhana Reddy in Bellary, for mining iron ore; they may still have it.

This kind of extractive capitalism, monopolies, is an indication of feudal equations not changing. They employ very few people and have an almost bonded labor kind of system, production relations that are stranded in some earlier century. All of them are politicians and are elected members of the parliament or state assemblies, or their kin. Right now, that is the position. The *Brahmavasi* seek rank, interest, royalties and monopoly profits or rent, unlike regular bourgeoisie who chase profits. They are the new feudal lords; they just sit in their homes and get everything done. It is a very primitive kind of organization which they operate: there is the lord and there are the serfs.

Anu: It becomes very glaring when you see that much investment of the elites in their children becoming doctors has produced literally zero innovation from that class or zero moral responsibility to rise up to diseases and this pandemic.

Naren: The elite don't invest in their children; the whole of society does!

We built JNUs for whom? We built IITs for whom? They are still kicking out Dalit and OBC students out of there. And state universities where we have some local ground to fight, they want to erase those state universities.

One of the immediate benefits of high-class education is dowry, which serves as the beginning of a lifelong commitment to reactionary institutions, practices and politics. This country has come to such a regressive pass, building over the last 70 years, that one has come to think of even the bourgeoisie as a progressive class, though they are reviled across the world, and justifiably so. But the Indian ruling class is one of the most retrograde in history: we need to look at any tiny rupture in their ranks as also progressive, at this stage.

The lesson for the Bahujan is that this tiny bourgeoisie is not the primary enemy, the *Brahmavasi* is. That doesn't mean that the bourgeoisie can be our allies; that can never be so. But one has to make this distinction between the *Brahmavasi* and the bourgeoisie, that the former is tied to caste, capital, cronyism and monopolistic profits, while the bourgeoisie are tied to capital and profits which they seek through not connections with those holding state power but through mostly their enterprising character. Or innovation, as you would say.

I look at social media and the participation of Bahujans in these spaces. They are largely mediated by the Brahmin in those discourses and the Bahujans sometimes fall for this empty rhetoric and all that. Secondly, if you look at these people, it is a huge population and they are handling technology with whatever little resources they have. If they had access to an equal playing field everywhere right from childhood, things would have been radically different. They are not allowed to come out of their caste and not allowed to participate equally anywhere, none of their freedoms are valued or respected or even regarded as relevant. The fact of the matter is, when capitalism rules the world, here caste becomes the only concrete relation or the only glue that binds people together or wrenches them apart.

In India, the 'middle class' which is 20% of the population actually commands/consumes everything; and 90% of that population is Brahmin and other upper castes. How can we call it 'middle class'? They have not felt the corona terror that we faced every day. I was so scared of the idea of ever being in such a situation where I would have to go to a hospital. I have heard of horror stories from different people—fifty thousand per day to one lakh rupees per day for treatment. I can't afford that. 90% of the Bahujans can't afford it. And the facts are horrendous. 25% of India's GDP has been shaved off, which means almost 50% of India's Bahujans have been rendered unemployed, either totally or are much more at the mercy of the caste overlords. This is who they call precariat: when nothing is secure, nothing is regular in their lives. Here, 90% of the Bahujans are part of the precariat. What does the Bahujan have? He goes to Bangalore, Hyderabad city, Kerala—as a migrant worker—where he doesn't have a home and he is kicked out of those non-existent homes. And he goes back to his village where he has no regular home. The corona situation should make the Bahujan think about more fundamental questions: what is life (laughs).. Not even your closest relative will visit you when you are dead, funerals are held without any family members present and you are thrown on the river banks and buried or burned without any ceremony, without any respect.

Pushendra: Now they are saying the situation is under control but also the third wave is round the corner. You have been closely observing the developments, the state measures and how the states have reacted to the second wave. Considering all that, do you think the country is ready for another disaster like that? Are we prepared as a country?

Naren: We are not even prepared as families because our resources are exhausted, whatever savings few of us had are gone. 25% of India's economy is shaved off, which means that if you

used to get 1 rupee earlier, now you are getting 75 paise and that too goes to those who are lucky enough to be employed, who are working in the organized sector, either in the government, the PSUs or in the big private companies. Some sectors are booming, they say. We have so many resources but we are much more incapable than we were in March 2020, except that we are a resolute people and we keep our spirits up. We see that somewhere that half of the village is gone, somewhere 10% of the village is gone. We are not noticing that. These are the kinds of genocides that happen so slowly.

There are some statistics here: total number of hospital beds in India on an average is 139 for 1 lakh patients. In Bihar this number is 26 for 1 lakh patients, Uttar Pradesh has 125 and that has not improved. That's not going to improve either. It is 10 times less than what the number is for Telangana, which has 259 beds for 1 lakh patients. Which is much higher than the national average! Kerala, Karnataka and Maharashtra are also much better. There is a stark difference and you can draw a Radcliffe Line between these two kinds of states, representing two extremely divergent realities.

In the early stages, Telangana provided free rations to nearly 2.8 crore people and they spent over 2400 crore rupees on it⁷. They even gave pensions to those who were rendered temporarily unemployed, which included not just construction workers and others. They gave 2000 rupees per month to private school teachers. We don't hear anything like that from Uttar Pradesh. Kerala boasts of a 20,000 crore budget to deal with the situation. The difference, as I said, is stark. Some states have spent more in the past but in the future wherein their resources are already depleted and so many small businesses are closed down—nearly one third might have closed down—and we don't notice because businesses keep closing down and other businesses might come up in their place: grocery shops and such retail businesses. Where are the jobs, livelihoods? You can think of their families' incomes right now and how capable they are in dealing with the third wave. We have seen the political and moral irresponsibility of the national government.

Healthcare falls under the state government's responsibility so nearly 70-80% of spending on healthcare was done by the states, which stretches their capacities a lot and that results in falling tax revenues etc. The Modi government has been interested in other things. They have been so very stingy; we see the worst kind of baniya attitude. It reminds me of what Kanhaiya Lal does in *Mother India* (1957) when the village is engulfed in a flood. He wants to use even a handful of *chana* (chickpea) to extort more, even from kids. They said free vaccines, which were produced so late. They could have done it one year ago. As I said, the US government was ready with money in January 2020 itself. We could have at least said in December-November 2020 that we will give so much to Bharat Biotech and to SII and to other capable companies one of which even said that it will produce a one-dose vaccine. The American government took a risk, on behalf of its people.

⁷ See <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/hyderabad/rs-2400cr-for-workers-to-get-food-groceries/articleshow/74783009.cms>

Here, even 100 crores would have been enough, not a billion dollars or 18 billion. But the Modi gang has neither the political wisdom nor the moral capacity to even think of that.

To return to the question of the third wave: if the virus attacks with even half the ferocity as the earlier two attacks, I don't think any government or at individual level, any family is capable of fighting again, with the same vigour.

They say India's middle class has been reduced. So many must have been thrown into uncertainty with no employment or uncertain employment. So many teachers, MSc degree holders and research scholars have taken up NREGA jobs or they are selling vegetables or working as manual laborers; these are Bahujans primarily.

The fundamental question is not just about social production but who controls that social production? This will lead us to answers about employment. At a macro level, it is very obvious that India has to create more and more production capacities. We keep looking away from the brilliant example of China just across our border. What does it mean to be *aatmnirbhar*? Producing cow dung is not *aatmnirbhar*, the cow produces it on its own, it doesn't need any subsidies. Nor will it create any meaningful new employment.

The Brahmins, upper castes can afford to be very pleased with things as they are, with the existing infrastructure, but if the Bahujan starts to think in that fashion then it won't work. He should be raving to learn, question, produce and explore the world. He should question all paradigms. Because there is no revolutionary class in India there won't be any French revolution. We need to bring about that revolution, first in thinking.

Pushendra: Going back to what you said that it is a bad idea to put these disparate people and disparate states as one country. We saw how it was the individual states that had to manage on their own. Each time we look at a particular issue people go back to see whether it is a part of the state's list or concurrent list. And all of a sudden health was more focused as it is a state subject and became a part of so many editorials and political rhetoric. How do you look at that?

Naren: India itself is a result of an upper-caste coalition across regions. I said it many times. It is devised by this Brahmins-upper castes' coalition to protect their own. Earlier, most of them were landlords, now they are landlord-contractors and a small percentage of them are industrial-capitalists. Contractors are gaining more power now especially with mining and all. They are a coalition which is very strong and they got together with this idea called the centre. With Modi coming to power, this centre has become more ambitious, thinking like *why can't we become Rajas* (the kings). People are not talking in terms of democratic discourses anymore. *This Raja was better or that Raja was better, whether Manmohan was better or Modi is better* - that's how they talk. Under the consistent pressure of ever-increasing centralization, most states have themselves

become undemocratic set ups, exhibiting increasing tendencies towards emasculating village and district level democracy, in order to mimic the centre in concentration of power in the state capitals, in chief ministers. The political leadership has further regressed in the last few decades, stepping backward into the feudal era.

If there is no democracy even at the state level, how can there be democracy at the central level? The local upper-castes control the state capitals and the states and they all come together at the centre. This steadily increased pace during the building up of this authoritarianism and autocracy at the centre. The Sangh (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) itself is such an autocratic organization which is also, very paradoxically, democratically spread across regions and that's the contrast with the Congress (Indian National Congress). The latter was mostly upper-caste landlords and a certain class of professionals and businessmen. But this current ruling class has a new component, a new almost clerical class (the ideological missionaries of various *senas*, *dals* of the Sangh) which uses the regional, social-political tyrants to glorify and perpetuate old cultures in the states, to say that these are 'traditional', hence glorious cultures and that the claim on *kshatriyahood* of these state level dominant castes is justified. Overall, the political and social conditions have been made conducive for more and more centralization.

Secondly, because of Corona, most of the states' resources have been depleted, their tax revenues have fallen down a lot because of the lockdown. All the income taxes and excise taxes go to the centre. So, the centre's pool was affected but not so much for it doesn't have any specific things to do, and it has many more avenues to mop up revenues—from increasing duties on such necessities as petrol, diesel, gas etc. and to imposing new cesses in the name of education, health etc.. The centre oversees each of the 200 functions of the government, though there are only around 100 formally under its purview.. It has total control over 99 functions, the states have only 58-60 functions, rest are part of the concurrent list, which means in the centre's control, implicitly. So, most of the resources go to the centre and therefore the states wilted further during the covid period and said 'okay Modi ji help us'. Two, because they are muzzled, and if you have to buy vaccines then it is better for someone who can buy it in large volumes and bring down the prices, so the states looked towards the centre again for vaccines. They wanted only free distribution of vaccines. There were other factors as well but these two factors were major.

The third factor, as I said, there is centralization of total Indian civil society too, which focuses on, and promotes vigorously the Hindu-Muslim binary or Pakistan-India binary that has produced the Sangh's power. Additionally, there is the INC-BJP binary, which is equally false. INC enabled BJP and the BJP will enable the Congress (INC) to come to power next time. What this has ultimately resulted in is that corona has provided so much more power to the centre. At the state level you can see so many people being picked up for Facebook and Instagram posts. All kinds of civil liberties and freedoms are being curbed. I know many young Dalits were articulate on Facebook and other places being attacked by the police and the state agencies. This is an ideal

situation for more and more authoritarianism to evolve. There seems no way to stop. It has left a permanent scar on the political fabric also. And regions don't seem to have much capacity to resist centralisation even when people there are angry: in Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka. I believe in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar also. So the civil society too remained ineffective in questioning the ruling government.

What are the options left for the people, the Bahujans in the states? They have no political options, because political options have to be chosen mandatorily through elections by involving these national parties, which only leads to further centralization, unchallenged. National parties such as the Congress, along with the BJP, destroyed Telugu Desam (Party) here, along with the BJP. Now the BJP is focused on co-opting or displacing TRS or YCP. They tried desperately to destroy the DMK and AIADMK in Tamil Nadu. We know and have seen the frontal assault on Mamata Banerjee. But I am saying that these are the people's options, these regional parties; if they do wrong the people there have to fight with Mamata etc. You don't come over from outside and bring in your alien ideologies, values and say that you are the only option. Options are being reduced. Most of the somewhat independent civil society groups are fund starved. They have attacked comprehensively every section which could dissent.

Pushpendra: As we have seen, yet again, states have to manage on their own when such crises strike. Do you think people are going to realize that after this almost criminal conduct and handling of the pandemic by the central government? Do you think people in the states will realize the significance of their own regional parties?

Naren: The Indian ideology is Brahmin-centric which means it embraces the whole of India in a grand essentialist framework. What remains after all the wrinkles of *jati*, faith, religion, language, region are ironed out? A vast majority of subjects who can never measure up to the normative Indian, the Brahmin.

The Indian is an abstraction within an abstraction within.. You could say all nationals of England or China or Brazil are abstractions too. The dictionary says, an abstraction 'is something that is drawn away from concrete realities'. How many times are the Chinese or the English or the Brazilians drawn away from their concrete reality? Not a fraction as many times as the Indian.

Your *jati*, your work/occupation/job, your language, your region, your district, your village, your *wada* is your concrete reality. When all that is abstracted out, emptied, what remains is less than a hollow shell. Less than a body. That can't be in favor of the Bahujan.

It's you who has to decide your future as only you know mostly what happens in your reality. But the Indian state, especially as represented by the central government, doesn't know or recognize you except as a cipher shorn of all your contexts—as structured by the local *jati* system, the local political economy, the local history, the local polity etc.

This was starkly evident during the Covid era. Why were the infection, recovery and death rates so different in different states? After 75 years, why are the differences between, say Kerala and Bihar, so extreme?

After 75 years, the centre still hasn't found even the language to communicate with each and every 'citizen'. But it had the temerity to gobble up even functions that are supposed to be performed—like health, agriculture, most of education etc. Not just a majority of functions of government, the central government is steadily moving towards claiming the position of God, seriously.

So, what the media, as a state ideological apparatus, and the social media do is provide a justification for this empire, dressing it up as a common, garden variety nation. Or they successfully divert your attention from looking critically at this monstrous failure called India.

Facebook might give you a delusion that we are learning a lot about the outside world. In this current scenario, in each region there is a YouTube channel or a dozen promoting this or that quack who says trained doctors are rubbish. Here, on 'Indian'/national social media, there are nearly 10 or 20 people that say *vaccines are rubbish, doctors are prescribing wrong medicines. Allopathy is rubbish.*

There is a lack of knowledge, outside metros, and people don't have the capacity to even go and do something about it. They have to depend upon these informal knowledge systems which are totally mediated by the Brahmin and upper castes. Bahujans have had to struggle a lot to develop a certain modicum of scientific temperament and enlightenment, of individualism. They savarna, postmodern influencers are pushing them to go back and think like a herd. This truth has to percolate down to these university people. They keep on shouting India... India, which refers more to the RSS than anything else. Uttar Pradesh is bigger than Brazil and it has 2-3 thousand-years-old cities. They say Bihar produced the Buddha and so many others. Though it has become a cliché to talk of Bihar and Buddha together: a meaningless thought because there's no space for reform or even reflection in these spaces. This obsession with elections has become the worst curse for U.P. and Bihar because they are not doing things on their own. Everything is directed from or towards Delhi. It is a dependency relationship between Delhi and U.P., Bihar, even West Bengal falls in that bracket, because the disproportionate devolution of funds from the centre to these states has warped the lines between the centre and the state/s. Reflexivity of any kind is absent there. Their ideas of state and centre have been blurred so much, leaving them only with a directionless angst. That is why they all want to flood JNU and do revolution. Why don't they do revolution at home?

There are 98.7% non-vegetarians in Telangana. These savarna cow-*wallahs* are bringing in their ideology and already gaining ground through media for they are also a part of the civil society and the state governments and state political parties are shit scared of the BJP. The local political leadership is all corrupt so they can be picked up any time and put in jails, even the top leaders.

Even street level goons go and attack chief ministers. So there has to be a more mature model of cooperation and collaboration between states.

Pushendra: According to you will this pandemic serve as an eye opener for people?

Naren: I am waiting to see them talk more radically. They are talking in the same manner. 90% of social media is dominated by the upper castes. They say only 16% on social media are Bahujans. I would say it is even less. So, how can we feel Bahujans' collective or individual pain through social media? This is the only medium that is somewhat open to us but it gives us so many wrong impressions every day.

Pushendra: I want to come to what you said earlier about individuals in Europe forming an identity post enlightenment and they want to do that here as well but all they end up doing is emulating a Brahminical model and that is far more disturbing.

Naren: Yes, in India, this process has become perverted. It has become a false identity for some, born out of the momentary entitlement of getting into some prized government job or university etc., out of being able to exercise some 'choice' as consumers, the most unenlightened products of modernity. For the Brahmin, that is the least part of his identity: using these instruments; for us it becomes a big entitlement, right. It seems like a big entitlement, even though it shouldn't be so. It is a big minefield where we have to be much more careful. But more importantly, this is the moment for us to rethink and there is Kancha Ilaiah producing new theories around the imaginary 'Shudras'. What kind of irrelevant knowledge is that? We are less than Shudras.

This Covid moment has told us how disconnected the online Bahujans sometimes are from the situation we are in. This Modi-Nero was thinking for 5 months on whether to give us all vaccines or not. Even if he said it would cost Rs 1000 per individual, honestly and openly, and explained why, people would have understood. That would mean taking the people into confidence, at least. The people, even the poor would have appreciated that. Aware as they are that this is a huge crisis for all humanity. It happened during the China war, Pakistan war and the state asked for participation from people. But Modi has all the honesty of an inveterate trickster or con man. He couldn't, didn't do that. And moreover, he did have the money. What is he? He's the result of 75 years of growing centralization. A textbook example of how absolute power corrupts. To add more insult to this injury to the collective psyche of India, it's not like he's an extraordinary thinker or doer who was led astray by power. The Sangh chose him because he's just a super loyal *karyakarta*, someone who would not get any ideas of his own. He's simply an eager careerist typical of this age—narcissistic, self-absorbed, totally wedded to the idea of hierarchy based on birth, camouflaged as 'merit' which in turn is ideologised as 'hard work'. Where is the enlightenment in it? This is the model the Bahujans have been fighting against for ages.

But it would be a great mistake if we think of all this has happened only because of Modi. The plain truth is, this is structural. The India that has been built in the last seventy years, all its

institutions and systems can't empathize. They're myopic, blind, and uni-directional. They can see and respond to only the Brahmins, upper castes. This is what the Bahujan has failed to see.

Pushendra: You mentioned such international agencies and I wanted to ask you earlier that these bodies are supposed to direct uniform production and distribution of such essential public goods like vaccines, what has been their role in handling this whole catastrophe?

Naren: This was a time when world leaders, especially the leaders of the rich and powerful nations, to stand up and show their concern for the world. It was the biggest global calamity in many decades, but they still preferred to indulge in narrow partisan politics, not caring for the helpless, impoverished majority of the world.

Until now close to 600,000 Americans have died. And that is the wealthiest country in the world. Imagine the plight of less fortunate countries across all continents. Over 5 million people have died worldwide.

To illustrate the depth of this catastrophe, let's look at only America for a moment. We don't know the exact valid figures but they have produced more reasonable figures than many earlier times. Let us assume close to a million people have died. That's more American deaths than in World War 1 and 2, and the Korean, Vietnam wars put together! That's the extent of the devastation of human life in the wealthiest country in the world.

We don't know how horrible the situation in America is. Its capitalist mantras have failed so much. Without insurance it can't treat its own people. Their people died on the streets, lying on pavements. That is the face of the west. We should realize that they are not angels or God's own people. It happened in Italy, France, and Spain. We have seen those scenes from the streets and doctors crying on video.

From what we can see in India, we can picture to some extent what is happening in Latin America, Africa, and the rest of the world. This is a global catastrophe and all those rich countries and those global agencies based in America and Europe, they have totally failed. They are puppets of the US and the UK. Why do they not provide funds for vaccines? Institutions, companies are not going to produce vaccines for free. WHO and UN agencies haven't put together a single paisa, they have not helped!

Americans have not ratified the WHO agreement; though they are not a part of it but they control it. Americans control the UN. They throttle any kind of resolution that goes against them. Bahujans are so very gullible that they give everything western a certain value. Anything that is global, they think, has come through some egalitarian or moral roots. They have time and again proved that they are immoral organizations. And they have been in cahoots with big capital everywhere, especially in the west. They are interested in protecting western interests. Why can't America provide funds for vaccines for the whole world when it spends tons more to support wars on

‘terror’?? What can be more terrifying, globally, than this pandemic, and many such less visible global illnesses? It has huge amounts of Covishield vaccine, but they are not using it. Even now they are dumping millions of doses⁸. Similar is the case with the UK, Germany, and France. These countries should have stood up morally. Everyone has come out wrong.

We need a new world which isn’t visible on the horizon, we need it badly. But at least let’s start thinking of a new India where power is more evenly distributed across states, empowering all instead of building a totally dangerous centralized structure where power hungry Modis can reign all the time.

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⁸ See <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/america-has-wasted-least-15-million-covid-vaccine-doses-march-n1278211>