CHAPTER-7

HIS VISION OF INDIAN POLITY
R.K. Hegde's life and thought gives unity. There is no doubt that like all historical persons who have made their impact on the world they lived in Ramakrishna Hegde too was inspired by a vision. A vision is a comprehensive picture of what a person desires as the appropriate goals of life and it embodies a set of principles and values. At the most comprehensive level, his vision may be described as a humanist vision, rooted in man both as a natural being and a rational moral being.

In its political aspect this vision meant a profound commitment to values of secularism and democracy. It is because of this liberal commitment that Ramakrishna Hegde is hostile to communism and communalism, communism violates democracy, communalism violates secularism. But this apparently western-oriented vision going back to the European enlightenment was heavily overhauled by indigenous tradition R.K. Hegde was drawn heavily by the rich Gandhian tradition of morally governed politics. His relationship to Gandhism is clear on certain issues such as the need for principles in politics or the need for decentralised political and economic power. His ideas on corruption, government, electoral reforms and judiciary are explained in the following pages.
It is a matter of great national shame that India has become a member of the club of most corrupt countries in the world. In terms of integrity in public life, India's position is as low as Venezuela and Cameroon. According to Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index 1999. While Denmark scores 10 out of 10 for honesty, India's score is 2.9 out of 10. What a reputation to earn for the land of Harish chandra and Mahatma Gandhi, questions Ramakrishna Hegde.

Hegde believes, political corruption is the mother of all corruptions. "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely", because the temptation to misuse power is irresistible. Unless there is fear of speedy enquiry and deterrent punishment of the guilty corruption cannot be eliminated from public life popular belief that the root cause of political corruption is the present electoral system which is substantially true. Greed for money also breeds corruption as is seen in countries with authoritarian systems where no elections are held.

Hegde recommends Tarun Tejpal for a Padma Shree Award for the national service he has done by exposing corrupt practices in politics,

administration and even in defence services through his Tehelka video tapes. Everybody knew that corruption had seeped into body politic and spread to every field of public activity. But for the first time, Tehelka expose showed to the people clearly and vividly how bribes are offered and received for undue favour.

Hegde suggest drastic and radical steps to cleanse the public life by the government, political parties and people at large otherwise corruption will continue to corrode the vitals of the country. A corrupt country is a weak country even if it is seemingly economically strong. We should free our nation from the strangle hold of octopus of corruption?

HEGDE ON CLEAN GOVERNMENT

Hegde notes that whenever thinking men gather to discuss our country's future, there is a fair degree of unanimity that India's "Tryst with destiny" of which late Pandit Jawaharalal Nehru spoke with so much emotion on the mid-night of August 14, 1947 has failed. One of the reasons for this overwhelming sense of dejection and despair has been the extent of corruption which now pervades all sectors and sections of society. Corrupt 'Ayarams' and 'Gayarams' have transformed legislative

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bodies into cattle bazaars by offering themselves to the highest bidder. The politics of corruption is matched only by the economics of black money which is currently ravaging the country. A third party of monopolists, hoarders and smugglers seem to be calling the shots in the country, with the people and their government looking askance from the sidelines. We bribe to have our children born in a hospital, or to obtain a certificate of our father's death. Every project, no matter how directly related to the struggle against desire or death is a fair game. Muster rolls in rural employment guarantee programme meant exclusively for the poorest of the poor contains innumerable fictitious names.

Hegde thinks, it is not that we do not have men of sterling integrity and unimpeachable reputation at the top. However a few individuals however gifted and committed, cannot really influence matters when it comes to waging an effective war against corruption. What is necessary is to try to introduce institutional and statutory changes so that the system as a whole, functions better. This would involve taking the following steps:

1. Make systematic efforts to root out political corruption.
2. Decentralise authority and simplify rules and procedures so that the incidence of corruption is reduced; and
3. Ensure the existence of an independent Judiciary.\textsuperscript{3}

Efficiency and integrity of administration which is a sine qua non of good Government is inseparable from the integrity at political levels. If people at the higher level indulge in corruption, nepotism and favouritism, it is bound to be reflected in a much bigger way at lower levels. It is the corruption at the political level to which a good part of administrative corruption is directly or indirectly accountable. Political interference and intervention to secure permits and licenses or to influence any type of decision for any one who is willing to pay the price is fairly well-known.

Hegde looks at the various remedies such as electoral reforms, regulation of sources from which political parties receive funds, and controls and licenses, the institution of Ombudsman, institutions such as Lokpal and Lokayuktha But as long as the political process is dominated by the spirit of ruthless and unscrupulous struggle for power between political parties which have no common commitment to basic moral values or national objectives, the institutional and statutory reforms will be of no avail. Hence, the starting point for a change in the national scene towards a clean government is the acceptance by all political parties of

\textsuperscript{3} Ramakrishna Hegde, thoughts and vision, Publishers, Hegde 75, Felicitation Committee, Bangalore August 2001, p. 113.
certain basic values which they regard as valid for all parties and vital for the survival of the democratic system and the progress of the nation.

Hegde suggests that the question of bringing in electoral reforms to combat political corruption needs to be considered seriously. Politicians and political parties raise money mostly, even if not only, for elections. He felt that the system of state funding of elections should be attempted for the LokSabha and state legislative elections. There are numerous hurdles involved such as the vast sums of money required, the difficulty of deciding who qualifies for the state funds and who does not, the difficulty of preventing private spending designed to disqualify someone else, the inevitability of the demand that all elections including the panchayat, municipal and district one's should be funded. However, the political parties in the country which claim to be concerned about the nexus between the money and politics should be willing to give state funding of elections a trial—even on a modest basis to begin with, say for a few bye elections. The United States has experimented with a scheme that provides at least partial financing of Presidential elections. This has also been experimented in certain other European countries such as West Germany. The evaluations are by no means negative on balance.

Hegde says there are other measures which seek to reduce
political corruption even which at first glance appear rather far-fetched. The compulsory public auditing of accounts of all political parties is one such measure. The cost of elections and its legacy of corruption have necessitated the introduction of cost saving procedures such as cutting down the period of poll through the introduction of electronic voting machines. These measures would probably help considerably to curb political corruption, However, what is important is some kind of acceptance of certain basic values by all political parties without which no other step to reduce-corruption at the political level is likely to yield significant dividends.  

The importance of judiciary as an indispensable arm of the Government to provide a clean government needs no reiteration. Unfortunately, over the last ten years, the executive has adopted a confrontational attitude with the judiciary. This was in direct contrast to the position taken by Pandit Jawaharalal Nehru who clearly saw the need for a honest and independent judiciary to act as arbiter between the state and the citizen. One of the greatest social achievements of Independent India has been the enforcement of constitutional rights by courts. Hegde

4. Ramakrishna Hegde, Thoughts and vision, Publishers Hegde 75, Felicitation Committee, Bangalore, August, 2001 p.117.
believes only with these kind of checks and balances, can the concept of clean government make any head way, failing which the unbridled powers should spawn corruption of gigantic proportion. Ensuring that we have a 'clean Government' for a 'clean Government' is the biggest insurance for stabilising and strengthening Indian democracy.\(^5\)

**HEGDE ON COALITION AT THE CENTRE**

Hegde observes that, India is already passing through a phase of coalition politics. Even though political polarisation is gradually taking place at the state level there is yet no sign of the emergence of a natural alternative. Unless that miracle happens a coalition Government at the centre comprising like minded parties appears inevitable in the present political situation. It is also desirable. If the opposition parties are unable to offer the people a credible alternative they should at least prepare the mind of the people to accept a credible coalition at the centre. In the context of the distortions of India's federal structure in recent years, a coalition to what it was intended to be by the founding fathers. It would help to strengthen the roots of co-operative federalism.\(^6\)

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5. Ramakrishna Hegde, Thoughts and vision, publishers Hegde 75. Felicitation Committee, Bangalore, August 2001, p.119.
'coalition' has acquired a bad name in the country because of various historical reasons. The speedy collapse of the SVD (Samyukta Vidhoyak Dal) ministries in North India in 1967 and 1968 and the collapse of what was a promising experiment in national politics, the Janata Party Government in July 1979, a little over two years after it was formed, have created a strong prejudice against the very concept of coalition.

Many in India had hoped that a two-party system would emerge in the country. They had in mind the British model though it was under strain. By now it is clear that the hope was built more on illusion than on realism. Hegde is of the view that, in a country of our continental dimension and social diversities a stable multi-party system is perhaps unavoidable for quite some time.7

Hegde refers to a very able study in 1967 prepared by the research and policy planning division of the union Home Ministry titled: "Comparative Study of Coalitions". It was prepared in the context of Congress debacle in the fourth general elections in 1967. The study was optimistic that "As parties increasingly aim at compatibility in entering into alliance, the ugly in coalitional stresses and conflicts, mainly due

to ideological and programmatic incompatibility of the partners witnessed
after 1967, may prove to be a passing phase". It emphasized that while
coalitions were inevitable, they had to be based on programmes. "If the
broadlines of political evolution as emerging from the results of the
fourth general elections any guide, coalitions cannot always be avoided,
and may become inevitable in certain circumstances, if the alternative to
its instability or inefficient Government. However, Indian experience has
shown that where coalition was unprincipled, formed purely for the sake
of power, it had not endured; on the otherhand, where it has been made
up of parties with a programme broadly compatible with their ideologies,
it has led to a stable Government, as in the case of Orissa, and to some
extent Kerala (if we overlook the Muslim League and the controversial
attitudes of individual ministers)".

Hegde recognises another aspect which the study did not emphasise.
The members of the coalition must accept the coalition not as a temporary
convenience to be exploited cynically. But as an enduring understanding
atleast for the duration of the term of parliament. There must be a will to
work in the coalition earnestly. A coalition is doomed if any of its
constituents seeks to impose its own identity or will on the coalition.
If coalitions are viewed in their proper perspective not only will the fears of instability be proved to be unreal, but even the apprehensions regarding the introduction of proportional representation will be allayed. The present electoral system based on the winner taking all in the "first past the post" system produces an artificial instability something not even that, in which the popular vote is not accurately reflected in the seats secured by the various political parties. Once co-alitions are accepted as a norm, people will not look askance at an electoral system which, accurately reflecting the popular vote, strengthens the multi-party system. The experience of West Germany belies the criticism that coalitions are unstable. If Italy provides the contrast, the reason lies not in the nature of coalitions, but very obviously in the nature of political parties infers, Ramakrishna Hegde. According to Hegde what people often forget is that in very many of the countries which are governed by single party, that party itself is essentially a co-alition of various interests and forces. Even in our own country, for over two decades since independence the Indian National Congress was essentially a coalition. The two powerful personalities in the first cabinet, Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

and the Deputy Prime Minister, Sardar Vallabhai Patel, belonged to the same party but their differences in outlook approach and style were fundamental. A political party which can accommodate personalities as different as Shri S.K. Patil and Shri V.K. Krishna Menon, till as late as 1967, as a coalition of diverse elements even if it functions under a single flag. As a British scholar, Prof. Richard Rose, pointed out in his book, "The problem of Party Government". "in a sense, Britain is always governed by coalition; for the Conservative and Labour Parties" like any party with millions of voters inevitably combine politicians with contrasting points of view. One of the chief problems of party leadership is to reconcile outlooks of differing factions and tendencies within a party so that supporters can concentrate upon what unites rather than what divides them". In this opinion, the distinction between the British and the European continental practice is that between government by "a coalition maintained within one party as against coalition between parties"

Hegde is of the view that instability can be prevented by a simple reform which is desirable on its own merits. It is the "constructive vote of confidence" as in West Germany where by existing ministry cannot be toppled by a mere motion of no confidence unless the motion itself nominates the leader of the Government to be formed
thereafter. The positive advantages of a coalition are not inconsiderable. It will do away with the excesses of "Prime Ministerial Government" and restore the importance of the cabinet. A coalition Government can lead to a more effective harmonisation of diverse interests and prevent acute conflicts whether between the various elements within state or between the union and the state. The communal situation in Punjab when the Akalies and the Jansangh formed a coalition in the sixties and when the Akali Party was a member of Janata Party Government was far better than it was otherwise. This is not to deny some inherent weaknesses of coalitions. These stem more from the weaknesses of political parties themselves than from the fact of power sharing in a coalition. If the members of coalition resort to unprincipled horse trading or partisan interference in administration or resort to demagogy the coalition would certainly become an arena of conflict. It is clear that in such a situation, there simply was no political basis for a coalition in the first place.

A veteran administrator, Shri L.P. Singh has opined that "A co-alition Government, if it is to be formed would not be a calamity; it might in fact serve the country's wider interests better at this juncture." Shri

9. Ramakrishna Hegde, "co-alition at the centre" Rajaji Memorial Lecture, Madras, February, 1988, Published by Government of Karnataka, February 1948m p.11.
L.P. Singh puts his finger on the heart of the matter. The necessity to form a coalition does not altogether exclude an element of free choice. But here Hegde makes a distinction between coalition politics and coalition rule. In regard to the former all political parties and groups in the opposition irrespective of ideological differences should work together to expose the lapse of the ruling party. However, broad agreement on basic issues is necessary among the parties to make a coalition Government credible and effective. To be successful a coalition must be formed in a spirit of willing co-operation and with a determination to make a success of them. The duty to make them succeed is as clear as the duty to forge coalition on the basis of agreed programmes. The alternative to the single party is a coalition of the like-minded parties, thus concludes Ramakrishna Hegde.

HEGDE ON ELECTORAL REFORMS

Elections in a democracy can be defined as a process 'politischer willensbildung' i.e. as means through which the political opinion (will) of the public is shaped. They help people to crystalise their interest, to give expression to them. In the elections it is decided who shall govern and who shall have the control over the Government. These are at the same time, also substantive processes of political mobilisation and

participation. It is through these peripheral groups transcend their regional and caste identities, and acquire over time a certain communality of economic interests and political identifications which help establish a political framework of conflict and negotiation among divergent interests within the society.

The Janata Party Government came to power in Karnataka on January 10, 1983 under the Leadership of Ramakrishna Hegde. Chief Minister was determined to implement its election pledge to strengthen democratic values enshrined in the constitution and to enable the peoples representatives to participate effectively at all levels of the state's administration. Within days of assumption of its power the government announced elections to municipal corporations, municipalities, taluka boards, village panchayats, market committees and cooperative institutions, the elections for some of which were not held for over a decade. The Government was equally determined to give the people a clean and responsive administration. Electoral reforms ensure, both, democracy and purity in administration.

The Governor's Address to the very first meeting of the state Legislature on January 24, 1983 contained this passage; "My Government is contemplating the introduction of a Bill prohibiting defections. The
Government would also like Karnataka to be a state of experiment for electoral reforms, which the election commission might have in mind. In reiterating the Government's objective to provide clean administration which would be free from corruption and favouritism at all levels, I would like to mention that already a decision has been taken to set up the institution of Lok-Ayukta whose ambit would cover all levels of decision making authorities, including the Chief Minister.  

In order to reinforce the autonomy, neutrality and impartiality of the election commission and the election machinery from the top to the bottom Ramakrishna Hegde proposes the following:

**A. Composition, Responsibility and Authority of the Election Commission**

1. The election commission should consist of three members to be appointed by a committee consisting the Prime Minister and the leader or the joint representative of opposition parties and the Chief Justice of India, or from among persons who are judges of the supreme court or persons who are eligible to be so appointed.

   The state election officer should be similarly selected and appointed from among persons who are sitting judges of the high court.

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11. Ramakrishna Hegde, *Electoral Reforms- Lack of Political will*, Published by Karnataka State Janata Party, Bangalore, 1985, p.9
court or persons who are eligible to be so appointed. He should be designated as the deputy election commissioner for the state. The district judges should be the ex-officio district election officer. The electoral registration officer and the subordinate judges should be ex-officio ARO's.

2. The terms and conditions of appointment of the members of the election commission and state election officers should be statutorily laid down.

3. The election machinery should be completely delinked and separated from the executive. The election commission should have its own permanent staff up to district level and should have the power to requisition additional staff from the executive for the conduct of elections on temporary deputation basis.

4. The sole responsibility for fixing the date of the general election or a bye-election should be that of the chief election commissioner. In any case, a bye-election must be had within six months of the date when the vacancy arises. Polling must be completed on one day, except in snow-bound areas.

5. The election commission shall have the right to ask, and the executive shall have the duty to provide due logistic support in terms
of para-military and police force, vehicles. Before the induction of the force there shall be mandatory consultations between the election commissioner and the executive regarding the quantum and pattern of deployment, in order that the government does not use police force to overawe the electors and vitiate the electoral process.

6. The election commission shall exercise full disciplinary authority not only on its own officials but on those who are placed at its disposal during the election and shall have the power to punish them for any act which in any way, detracts from the impartiality of the electoral machinery.

7. The election commission shall have the power to monitor official media from the date of notification of the election to the date of the poll and the official media shall have the duty to consult the election commission on its programme in advance, if necessary, in order that no political party receives undue advantage.

8. The election commission should ban electronic publicity during the pre-poll period when public canvassing is prohibited.

A. **Electronic Voting Machine**

Hegde favours introduction of electronic voting machines and therefore suitable amendment of the Representation of the People
Act in this regard. The equipment is already available and the only hitch is the will of the government.

**B. Electoral System**

In order to remove imbalance between votes and seats as well as to improve legislative work, the German system based on direct election plus lists should be introduced.

**C. Delimitation**

Constituencies should be delimited again, keeping the number of constituencies within a state or territory unchanged as to eliminate politically motivated alignments of same constituencies. By and large that constituencies should follow administrative lines of division.

**D. State Funding of Elections**

State funding should be immediately introduced on the lines recommended by former Chief Election Commissioner envisaging the creation of an election fund of Rs. 100 Crores for five years.

**E. Care-taker Status of Government**

All Governments after the announcement of elections, should be deemed to be caretaker governments and should be barred from

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making policy announcements or launching large scale development
projects or even welfare, schemes, such practice was termed by the
Orissa High Court as "an evil practice". If not corrupt practice.

F. Access of Government Transport

Hegde suggests that government planes/helicopters/cars should
be available to leaders of all recognised parties on par with the Prime
Minister and the Chief Minister and on the same terms.

Hegde, in January 1985, submitted to the commission detailed
proposals, jointly with other political parties regarding the conduct of
elections from the preparation of rolls to the announcement of results
and take this opportunity to reiterate those suggestions and to request
the commission to give due and serious consideration to these as well.

FINANCING OF ELECTIONS

Hegde advises that the question of financing political parties must
be separated from that of election funding.

PARTY FUNDING

Party funding may be allowed through private and corporate
contribution subject to the following ceilings to be enacted by law;

Private contribution; ceiling of Rs. 5000 per annum with benefits
of tax deduction e.g under 80(G) of Income Tax Act.

Corporate contribution: Ceiling as a percentage of capital and
reserve subject to further ceiling of Rs. 50,000 per annum also with tax
deduction benefits. Such contributions should be subject to approval by
shareholders at the annual general meeting.

All accounts of the political parties should be subject to public
audit by agencies approved or appointed by the election commission.

**ELECTION FUNDING**

On the election funding Hegde suggests, a law should be enacted
covering both election to the parliament and state assemblies consisting
of the following elements.

**HEGDE'S VIEWS ON JUDICIARY TODAY**

The judiciary has always been recognized as one of the essential
organs of Government in any state. Traditionally the role of the Judiciary
has been to try and punish those violating laws of the land. In the modern
society with the development of the idea of constitutionalism, which
primarily is based on the principle of limited Government an independent
judiciary has become sine-qua-non of democracy. Any constitutional set
up established on the phenomenon of limited power of the state and
defined rights of the citizens by nature of things, requires an agency
which in addition to decide disputes among citizens and punish the
defiance of law, may also see that restrictions imposed by the Government by the constitution are adhered to and the rights granted to the people by the constitution are not infringed with.

Along with this, in a federal polity where the powers of the government are not only limited vis-a-vis the citizens but also are divided between two sets of Government the need for an independent judiciary. The supreme court is the guardian and interpreter of the constitution also.

According to Ramakrishna Hegde, the independence of judiciary is an integral, indispensable part of our entire constitutional edifice as a democracy governed by the rule of law. On the judiciary rests the heavy responsibility of enforcement of the most cherished part of our constitution, Viz., the fundamental rights of the citizens. The fundamental rights are robbed of all values if the independence of the judiciary is destroyed. The judiciary stands between the ordinary citizen and the enormous power of the modern state not only in regard to fundamental rights, but also in regard to the citizen's rights developed through the growth of administrative law in the Leviathan of today. The judiciary is also the umpire between the union and the states. India's federal structure will be impaired exactly in the measure that the independence of the judiciary is impaired.
And the paradox, however is that the union of India today is at once a principal participant in the process of the appointment of judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts and a party in most litigation concerning the federal principle, not to forget a host of other issues of vital importance. To a certain extent, the states are also participants in the process of appointment of High Court judges as well as participants in a considerable volume of litigation concerning the enforcement of fundamental rights and other important issues. It is therefore, of the utmost importance for all of us to ensure that, be it of the union or the states, exclude influence in the selection and appointment of judges of the superior judiciary is not so wielded as to affect the independence of the judiciary.

Hegde believes, the problem concern all of us, lawyers and laymen, alike. It has unfortunately acquired graver proportions in the last decade and a half. The entire problem of ensuring the independence of the judiciary has become more complex, and the need for its solution has become more urgent. New issues have come to the fore. There have been unprecedented delays in the appointment of judges of High Courts. Ever

since he became the Chief Minister of Karnataka raised this matter on several occasions with the Union Law Minister and with the union Minister of State of Law and Judiciary. He regrets to add, without much success. The issue of transfer of High Court Judges suddenly came to the fore while many were behind the bars during the emergency in 1976. So did the non-confirmation of additional High Court Judges. The doctrine of committed judges propounded in 1973 in the wake of the supersession of the three of the senior most judges of the Supreme Court. The controversy has still not ended. These new issues, however; should not blind us to the old ones which continue meanwhile to linger unresolved. Foremost among them, of course, is the issue of the conditions of service of the Supreme Court and High court Judge.

The time has now come to tackle all these issues in earnest. They brook no delay. Apathy and neglect will aggravate them and we shall be faced with a situation where the entire structure will be so disastrously affected as to become beyond repair,

Hegde suggests first, the age of retirement of High Court Judges should be raised to 65 and of Supreme Court Judges to 68. Secondly they should be paid full pension after retirement on the scale of their salaries. Lastly, like the Comptroller and Auditor General of India, a member of
the superior judiciary should not be eligible for further office either under the Government of India or under the Government of any state after he has ceased to hold. Hegde is perplexed at the logic of bar on the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India under Article 148 (4) of the constitution is not made applicable to the judges of the Supreme Court and the High Courts. They wield far greater power and are in a much more sensitive relationship with the executive than the Comptroller and Auditor General of India. Every consideration which supports this very sensible bar in his case is even more applicable to the members of the country's superior judiciary. In the constituent assembly Dr. B.R. Ambedkar himself acknowledged that "The provisions that we are making for our judiciary are not from the point of view of the persons holding the office of a very satisfactory character; He also recognised that, a very meagre pension was being provided for."

Hegde is of firm faith that if the salaries are appropriately raised and full pension are provided for, the bar on employment under the government would not be fair at all. On the contrary, it would introduce a salutary safeguard to ensure judicial independence. The Law Commission of India also emphasised the importance of such a bar to state employment. Hegde earnestly commends these suggestion for
consideration.

In the same spirit, Hegde discusses another basic question, namely, the appointment of the judges of the Supreme Court and of the High Court. Under the present procedure, the Judges of the Supreme Court are appointed by the President only after consultation with the Chief Justice of India although he is free also to consult additionally "with such of the Judges of the Supreme Court and of the High Court as he may deem necessary". In regard to the High Court Judges, the Chief Justice of India, the Governor of the state and the chief justice of the High court must also be consulted.

Hegde suggests that the time has come to have a close look at the constitutional provisions and to consider afresh the method and manner of appointment of judges of the Supreme Court and the High Court. In this context he draws our attention to the observations made by the former Chief Justice of India, Mr. Justice P.N. Bhagawathi in the Judges case: "There must be checks and controls in the exercise of every power, particularly when it is a power to make important and crucial appointments and it must be exercisable by plurality of hands rather than be vested in a single individual. That is perhaps the reason why the constitution makers introduced the requirement in clause (2) of Article 124 that one or more
judges out of the Judges of the Supreme Court and of the High Courts should be consulted in making appointment of Supreme Court Judge. But even with this provision. We do not think that the safeguard is adequate because it is left to the central Government to select any one or more of the judges of the Supreme Court and of the High Court for the purpose of consultation. We would rather suggest that there must be a collegium to make recommendation to the president in regard to appointment of a Supreme Court or High Court judge. The recommending authority should be more broad based and there should be consultation with wider interests"14

Hegde does not fail to mention that judges themselves are also responsible for upholding the traditions of this office and the values and principles of an independent judiciary. The 14th Law Commission had referred to the decline in the standards of conduct of Judges on the Bench and outside. An unwritten but well settled code of conduct governs the judge's conduct and behaviour on the bench and his relations with the members of the bar, members of the government and with the public in general. The law commission observed: "If the public is to give profound

respect to the judges, the judges should, by their conduct try and deserve it. Not by word or deed should they give cause for the belief that they do not deserve the pedestal on which we expect the public to place them.

Unfortunately, some judges have in recent years descended from the pedestal right in to the arena of public controversy and delivered opinions on matters of controversy involving issues of domestic and foreign policy. Once in a while we have witnessed clashes between judges in public. The spectacle is a most unedifying one. If this tendency persists any longer it will assuredly lead to the undermining of public confidence in the impartiality of the judiciary and eventually the demoralisation of the judiciary itself.

Hegde is convinced that our objective should be to restore the judiciary the status, the prestige and the powers which the constitution so wisely and clearly envisages for it.15 To this we should be committed. We owe a common duty to work for it and to refrain from saying or doing anything that might harm it. In a very real sense it is a shared national duty. The judiciary, the bar, the members of the Government and indeed, all concerned individuals must pool their efforts in a nonpartisan spirit.

15. Ramakrishna Hegde- Thoughts and vision, Publisher Hegde 75 Felicitation Committee, Bangalore, August 2001, p.143.
so that the controversies of the past are put behind us, the problem is depoliticised and we can turn our minds towards securing overdue reforms which translate into reality the ideals of the founding fathers of the constitution.

Foremost among them in Hegde's mind was Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. It was he was who asked the Constituent Assembly on May 24, 1949, to consider "What rules to frame so that we can get the best material from the Bar for the High Court or Federal Court Judges. It is important that these judges should be not only first rate, but should be acknowledged to be first-rate in the country, and of the highest integrity if necessary; people who can stand against the executive Government and however may come in their way" To ignore that ideal is nothing short of a betrayal of trust reposed on successive generations of Indians by Jawaharlal Nehru.
Hegde talking about planning process in India and the pattern of economic development, draws our attention to Jayaprakash Narayan's observation "After 25 years of Planning 40 percent of the people are still living under what the economists themselves consider to be the minimum economic standard. Unemployment, including the educated, has grown at a steady rate of progression. Therefore, the thinking in Delhi has turned to ideas which are very similar to those of Gandhiji, namely that agricultural development must be made the basis of development on which an infrastructure of cottage and small scale industries widely spread over the land together with electrification, communications, marketing should be built up this not to suggest that the most essential large scale industries have to be neglected, but for countries which have shortage of capital and plenty of man-power and whose population is mainly rural, planning in terms of human needs, and not merely in terms of statistical rates of economic growth and the size of G.N.P. requires employment-oriented pattern of development such development, incidentally, will also ensure social justice. Needless to say education will to fit the development pattern something that India has singley failed to achieve".

Hegde is depressed with the present day scenario in terms of per
capita income, employment, educational standards. The situation now is worse than what it was when JP made the above observation. The GNP per capita is one of the lowest in the world and India ranks 15th from the bottom. Some of the countries having lower per-capita GNP than India are Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Nepal, Burma, Tanzania and Uganda, continuing population growth is resulting in lower quality of life for millions of people. The average annual growth of population remains high at 2.3 percent and the hypothetical size of stationary population is projected at 98.16 crores. The number of infants who die before reaching one year of age per thousand live births in a year averages around 90. The distribution of household income is totally skewed. The lowest 20 percent of the households share just 7 percent of the total income. On the other hand, the highest 10 percent corner 34 percent of the total income. The energy consumption per-capita in kilograms of oil equivalent is about 187 compared to about 5000 in the developed countries.  

Hegde provides education an excellent example of the sad state of affairs. More than half of the primary schools having building have no blackboards, nearly 60 percent of the schools have no safe drinking water

facility, and most of the schools have no lavatories. The percentage of urban population has doubled in the last 20 years creating related problems. Over 70 percent of the labour force is employed in agriculture which largely depends on the vagaries of monsoon. The pressure on land is enormous and the number of unemployed and underemployed is on the increase. Forests are vanishing at an alarming rate.

Hegde observes that, outcome of the years of planning has been the emergence of Two India's—an India characterised by high tech and sophisticated industries, advances in the field of nuclear energy development, development of satellites in a geo-stationary orbits prosperity and five star culture and the traditional India steeped in poverty, unemployment, hunger, disease and illiteracy. The planning as a process for rapid economic development was an integral part of the nationalist movement long before the independence. Many of our leaders were critical of the policy of Laissez Faire followed by the then rulers of India.

Dhadabai Navoroji, the Grand old man of India had argued "In reality there are two Indias—one of the prosperous, the other poverty stricken. The prosperous India is the India of the British and other foreigners. They exploit India as officials, Capitalists in a variety of ways, and carry away
enormous wealth to their country. To them India is, of course rich and
prosperous. The more they can carry away, the richer and more prosperous
India is. The second India is the India of the Indians the poverty stricken
India”

Hegde notes that economic dualism in the country still persists.
It has in fact become more acute. We have the rich rolling in wealth and
the poor in abject poverty. We have the urban India with all amenities
and the rural areas with not even safe potable water. Planning
commission established in March 1950 by the Government of India has
been preparing plans for the most effective and balanced utilization of
the countries resources. It has since then been functioning as the nodal
agency of economic planning. During the last five decades of planned
development, the Indian economy has undergone a structural
transformation. The growth rate has also picked up in recent years. Though
there are many positive factors there is more than sufficient ground to
be critical of the performance.

Hegde takes a look at the planning methodology presently adopted
in our country. Although planning is a concurrent subject in the

17. Ramakrishna Hegde, "Planning process in India" JP Memorial
lecture, JNU New Delhi(1986, Published by Government of
Karnataka 1986, p.2.
constitution, the areas of development are clearly earmarked for the centre and the states. Although long term plan perspectives are visualized, normally five years plans are prepared. Within this framework annual plans are prepared. This is an operative document with programme details and outlays. The targets are also specified. The National Development Council is the apex planning body. This council is assisted by the planning commission, a non-statutory technical body. These two agencies determine the strategies and priorities of approach to plan formulation and federal resource transfer to the states for plan purposes.

In the process, certain basic issues get glossed over. There is no involvement of the states in determining the strategies and priorities though they have a major planning, implementation and financial role while determining the total outlay of the plan which covers both the investment of the centre and the states, there is no scientific approach in their relative shares. When the planning commission decides on the state outlays, there is no indication of central investment in the states. These investments are generally of a huge magnitude and have considerable impact on the state's economy and employment. There is regional inequality in the central investment. Centrally sponsored and central sector schemes are on the increase continuously. Many of these are launched with political overtones and fall clearly outside the domain of
the central Government and are not of national importance.

Hegde believes, in a mixed economy like ours, the private sector has an important role to play. However, the relative shares of the two sectors never get discussed. Further, the planning process suffers from infirmities in the matter of financing of the private sector outlay. A recent phenomenon is the excessive borrowing by both the central government and the public sector units. If this goes beyond reasonable limits, it may be difficult to meet the private sector outlay and thus protect the over-all size of the plan. The budgetary support for the plan is on the decrease despite deficit financing and phenomenal growth in tax revenues.

The range of products to be produced in the public sector has never stabilized. We have failed to maintain efficiency and productivity in the public sector. When it is so, without any proper thought and calculation, we continue to invest in all sectors including five star hotels. These are not areas on which investment was contemplated initially.

Hegde is not happy with the planning process for being highly centralized.\textsuperscript{18} Earmarking of outlays and release of central assistance in terms of expenditure incurred sector wise are instruments effectively

\textsuperscript{18} Ramakrishna Hegde "Planning Process in India" J.P. Memorial lecture, JNU New Delhi 1986, Published by Government of Karnataka, 1986, p.9
used by the centre to ensure that states do not deviate from the approved plan. While it is fashionable to talk about decentralized planning, no significant steps have been taken by the planning commission to facilitate such decentralised planning, no significant steps have been taken by the planning commission to facilitate such decentralised planning. The Chief Minister of Karnataka repeatedly pleaded for this, planning should start from the grass root level. The villagers should decide on their priorities. The grass-root and district organisations are not involved in the planning process. They have no say in the formation of the plan supposed to be for their development, therefore much that is contained in the plan is divorced from the reality.

In this respect Janata Government of 1983 decided to transfer all district sector and local schemes to the Zillaparishads and mandal panchayats together with the resources and administrative machinery. These democratically elected representatives will take full responsibility for plan formulation and implementation. The planning machinery at these levels is also being strengthened.

Various poverty alleviation programmes have been under implementation as centrally formulated model schemes. Quite often, these benefits have been forced on the beneficiaries without reference
to their needs and skills, it has also been inadequate. The loan melas have done just this. These programmes would become counter productive if the mode of implementation does not undergo a drastic change. Ill-conceived lending have not only worsened the plight of the poor, but also affected the working of the banks. Bank assistance has been in vogue now, yet a large percentage of the population particularly in rural areas are economically backward. It is in fact difficult to identify beneficiaries assisted to cross the poverty line to have really done so. It is precisely for this reason that the Karnataka state had decided on the revolutionary step of comprehensive credit scheme to help the needy. The idea was to make the target group, economically independent within 15 years. This scheme was the first of its kind in the country during Hegde's Government. It was aimed at increased productivity and self-employment.

Again Hegde draws our attention to JP's priorities of economic development. It was quite clear and totally different. Speaking about famine in Bihar in 1961 he observed.

"The emphasis on investments made in agriculture was on giant dams and expensive irrigation projects. These again the priorities, in view of the limited financial and other resources should have been fixed differently. Heeding the warning from recurrent droughts, more attention
should have been given to minor irrigation works and to utilisation of river and ground waters. In course of time large irrigation systems might replace minor irrigation works but the task is to spread the available resources in such a manner that even the humblest means of irrigation such as well or earth band across narrow streams, are made full use of in the immediate present. Later, as agriculture develops and there are more internal resources available, minor works could gradually be replaced by larger ones. In the long run the process would have proved to be more economical and far more productive and fair to the general mass of the peasantry."

The strategy enunciated by him for planning process in India was equally eloquent. As an ardent advocate of rural industrialisation and agro-industrial communities he said "To use Vinobaji's expressive words, why should the people be made to wait for wealth produced at the top slowly to percolate down to them......" Here, when a huge population with too little land, living on a bullock-cart economy is suddenly confronted with imported automation economy, the problems of growth assume an entirely different complexion, requiring an entirely different treatment.

Hegde fervently hopes, therefore, that on the eve of the planning there would be some fresh thinking on this question. There seem to be only two possible alternatives.

(a) Either to produce wealth as efficiently as possible in a few centres and keep the rest of the country more or less on subsidies or

(b) Produce wealth in every home, hamlet and township. That either, a few have to be employed and the rest kept on doles or all are employed and make some kind of living.
Globalisation is a term that means different things to different people. It appears everywhere and is almost taken for granted. We may start with a definition of 'globalisation' with emphasis on its economic dimension. Globalisation is a process of transnationalisation of production and capital, and standardisation of consumer tastes, and their legitimisation with the help of international institutions like World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Trade Organisation (WTO) obviously the process is a move towards a borderless regime of free trade and transactions based on competition. For countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America which sought to undo the colonial past, this means a series of economic reforms towards liberalisation as all of them had resorted to a controlled regime in order to have an autonomous development of their own, Beginning 1980's, most countries of the world have taken to market mediated economic forums and liberalisation, India is a late comer and efforts towards reform and strong liberalisation may be said to have started only from July 1951.

A consensus seems to be emerging that wholesale globalisation should be replaced by selective globalisation. Former prime Minister I.K. Gujral speaking at the conference organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry on August 16th 1997 stated in a very forthright manner. "The days of 19th century capitalism where any outsider could come and overwhelm you are over. Outsiders are welcome. But they will not be allowed to drown us and take over Indian companies. They will be allowed to invest in sectors where we need them.... Indian trade and industry will get all the benefit of paternity and it will not be allowed to face unfair competition". More over it must be understood that liberalisation and globalisation are not ends in themselves, they are only means to achieving social goals. These goals are high growth rate, self reliance, full employment, bettering the lots of poor to put it in a nutshell, growth with equity. Globalisation, if it has to have a meaning for the developing countries, should help to improve the lot of 85 percent of the world population in these countries. Ironically, globalisation is helping 15 percent of the population of the industrially advanced countries. They are able to take advantage of unequal bargaining power at the WTO and force the developing countries (India being no exception) to open their

potentially huge markets to foreign goods and services and capital and financial flows, without giving adequate concessions in return. Human Development Report (1996) categorically states; "while globalisation has often helped growth in strong countries it has by-passed the weak. The poorest countries with 20 percent of world's people, have seen their share of the world trade fall between 1960 and 14 percent to less than 1, percent. and they receive a meagre 0.2 percent of the world's commercial lending. The question therefore is: Globalisation for whom?

According to Ramakrishna Hegde, all over countries now, the WTO and its mandate have begun to impact upon virtually every aspect of economic activity. Not surprisingly therefore its scope and agenda have also emerged as an intensely political issue in the domestic arena, with parliament and civil society pay it far greater attention than before. The Uruguay Round Arguments were unprecedented in scope and commitment within the international framework. Developing countries accepted multifarious obligations spanning many new areas, including services and intellectual property, in the hope of securing improved market access for their products. A realistic assessment of whether and the extent to which these hopes have indeed been realised must form a critical ingredient of our preparation.
And there is no doubt that we are today witnessing an era of globalisation which while opening many more opportunities for people all around the world has also thrown up many challenges. Trade, technology capital flows and the communications revolution are helping to accelerate economic growth to a significant extent. They also offer enormous potential to developing countries towards poverty eradication and development. For these objectives to be realised, however; national efforts need to be reinforced with a fair and conducive international trading environment. It is this last aspect that we are most concerned.

Hegde cautions that, in our enthusiasm to embrace globalisation, we should not assume that establishing uniform norms, standards and policies within an institutional framework will catapult us all towards efficiency, competition and single global market place. Rewards of globalisation spread unequally and inequitably, unless care is taken and correctives are applied. A "one size fits all" approach that we see in evidence with at best a transition flexibility offered here or a more lenient threshold there, allied with some technical assistance, has serious limitations and is not sustainable in the long term. Also the challenge of globalisation is not only to preserve the benefits of global markets and competition but also to scrupulously desist from encroaching on the space
for local governance which is necessary for ensuring human development and welfare in accordance with people's wishes. In our evaluation and assessment of the Uruguay Round Agreement we need to keep these considerations in view.\(^\text{22}\)

Hegde notes, in the agriculture, there is an inherent inequity in the agreement itself which allows developed countries to continue to maintain high levels of protection, which are not allowed for developing countries. But even where market access benefits are to be extended such as in the form for limited quantities of agricultural products, there is arbitrary administration resulting in their partial or complete non-utilisation year after year. Agriculture is one of the areas where new negotiations are mandated to commence by January 2000. We need to work towards introducing greater equity and balance in the agreement and dismantle trade distorting measures, while at the same time ensure the objective of domestic food security for developing countries.

Marketing access for developing countries is getting affected in other areas as well. This is because far from implementing obligations to undertake 'positive efforts' for securing growth in international trade

\(^{22}\) Ramakrishna Hegde, key note address at the G-15 Ministerial meeting" Published by Government of India 1999. p.2
for developing countries as per the Marrakesh preamble, the developed
countries have resorted to widespread use of anti-dumping and
counterveiling action while the aggregate rate of duty in the developed
countries have come down, tariff peaks, tariff escalation and non tariff
trade barriers for the product lines of interest to the developing countries
are nullifying any material benefit. The adoption of unrealistically high
standards that effectively constitute technical barriers to trade combined
which resort to sanitary and phytosanitary measures have also
substantially eroded the market access commitments given by the
advanced countries.

Hegde observes, in the services sector, liberalisation has thus far
been restricted to the modes of supply of primary interests to the
developed countries. The only mode in which developing countries have
a comparative advantage movement of natural persons and we are talking
about movement of highly skilled service providers and professional
remains effectively circumscribed. Even the minimum commitments in
this mode undertaken by some of our trading partners are subject to a
so called "economic needs test" which virtually seals off real access to
their markets.

In Hegde’s view, the key to international competitiveness is to a
large degree determined by access to advanced technologies, As the first world science report of UNESCO has pointed out, the gap between developed and developing countries is now not so much a 'resource gap' as it is a knowledge gap. Industrialised countries for instance, hold 97 percent of all patents worldwide. But the means for bridging the technology gap through transfer of technology which is implicit in the TRIPS agreement, is not easily forthcoming. It is therefore, essential that measures are taken to operationalise Articles 7 and 8 of the agreement which seek to promote transfer and dissemination of technology and prevent possible abuse by right holders. More fundamentally, it is also necessary to recognize the sovereign rights of nations over their biological resources. We need also to ensure that right holders of traditional knowledge derive legitimate benefits when such knowledge is used, rather than being faced with continued piracy.

Hegde suggests that we should conduct mandated reviews on some of the agreements including TRIMS, TRIPS, dispute settlement understanding. We the developing countries should press for inclusion of issues like Government, procurement, trade and investment, trade and competition policy and trade facilitation and industrial tariffs.

23. Ramakrishna Hegde, "Key note Address at the G-15 meeting". Published by Government of India, 1999 New Delhi-P-5.
We need carefully examine proposals for inclusion of each new issue based on its relevance or relationship to trade a part from its implications for our development policies, scope and timeliness. There is also the question whether member countries with limited resources will be able, service handling of negotiations on additional subjects, at a time when the WTO agenda will have been already loaded Hegde calls upon the developing countries and its alliance such as Group 15 (G-15) who are at different stages of development and our reaction to the proposal may differ from one to the other. We need to, however totally reject inclusion of new issues such as social clauses or governance which are not related to trade. The efforts to induct such issues in the WTO are thinly disguised efforts to impede the free flow of trade in items of export interest to developing countries.

Hegde analyses that, the WTO work programme on some of the new issues has so far not thrown up only conclusions which would convince the WTO members of the need and desirability of multilateral regimes in these areas. At this stage, the preparatory process must address the concerns listed at the topmost tier of the issues referred to in the Geneva Ministerial declaration, namely the concerns relating to implementation of the existing agreements, with a view to removing asymmetries there-
in. The mandated negotiations in agriculture and services, as also the work relating to mandated reviews, should constitute the core of the negotiation agenda. Trade negotiations cannot continue to be an exercise in which we yield market access even as access obtained by us is thwarted or undermined. The development dimension must be restored to its pristine position on the agenda of the W.T.O. Regarding proposals beyond this, we need to clearly analyse them to decide which cannot be taken on board at any cost and which proposals need further examination and refinement. As a major developing block, the G-15 could agree that while we are ready to listen and examine the proposals of others, we must also in turn obtain understanding and concessions on our own proposals on implementation issues in advance.24

HEGDE'S VIEWS ON SECULARISM

Hegde calls for secular ethos to find assertion. And secularism has been too narrowly interpreted and has, with the politicisation of religion wrongly entrenched the divisive concept of majority and minority. The constitutional goal of fraternity should be the larger objective we must seek.

Codification of diverse personal laws should be effected on terms consistent with constitutional principles and values rather than as an instrument for securing artificial and forcible uniformity that would be destructive of plurality. Such a code must be seen as a means of securing greater equity in family relations.

According to Hegde apart from the promotion of fraternity, secularism calls for other measures. First, a review of history and social science texts wherever perverted by selective and prejudicial treatment. Secondly, the drawing of a distinction between religion and cultural appreciation so that the richness and texture of India's diverse cultural heritage is made widely known and understood. And, thirdly, the creative initiative to promote national integration including activation of the National Integration Council as an instrument for forging national solidarity and mediating differences. Finally, protecting the current status
Hegde is of the view that our country is divided among major communities and minor communities. There are several parts in this country, not only parts, in the same state: he gives the instances where in one region if a community is a major community, in another region the same major community is minor community and the minor community becomes the major community. For instance in Kashmir, Kashmir Valley Muslims are in majority, in Jammu it is the Hindu and in Ladakh both Hindus and Muslims are minorities There Budhists are a majority. What a wonderful country and what a wonderful people we have. He does not think this unique feature is found in any other country of the world. And this will be the source of greatest strength. But it is of great misfortune, that due to politics seeds of dissension, hatred have been sown. These people who always lived like brothers have been taught to kill each other and religious fanaticism is the by product of politics and that too narrow politics. For selfish things in no community one can find more than one percent of people who are intolerant of the other.

Hegde says, it is this microscopic minority in the same community

that wants to take advantage of mutual hatred and mutual disrespect. We have a great heritage and culture. It is not possible for us to forget Mahatma Gandhi who laid known his life for communal harmony. Gandhiji’s murder should have brought all communities in this country into one united large community in this country because Gandhiji was murdered by a person belonging to his community. We have not learnt the right lesson. Incidence of communal violence are on the rise.

Hegde observes that the root causes of communal violence are silly, absolutely small it had happened in the same community there would not have been any violent reaction. Hegde tells the instances where a boy and a girl have an affair if they belong to the same community, the society ignores. They may call and warn them. But by accident if it happens between those belonging to different communities, the whole of one community will stand opposing the other community, taking up the case of the girl or the boy. Sometimes these things do happen and similarly there are other instances where the provocation was really on account of unpleasant development.

Hegde suggests that the different leaders of the different communities must keep a perennial watch of what is happening in this own town and meet from time to time to see whether there is any cause of tension and that can be removed. He mentions the case of Punjab, a homeland of Sikhs. This state is known for communal harmony.

Education, says Hegde should play a very important role both in the matter of maintaining national integrity, national integration and promotion of communal harmony. He calls upon one and all not to poison the minds of little children who are innocent. And not to sow the seeds of dissension and hatred. To induce the love of life in their hearts, love for each other, love for the country. So it is necessary to spread the ideals of secularism, communal harmony and protecting the interests of minorities.

In this regard Hegde accepts recommendation of the minorities commission with certain modifications.

1. The minorities should be made aware of their rights and only then, they would fight for them.

2. The Government should not treat communal riots as merely a law and order problem. There should be vigorous implementation of anti-poverty and social welfare measures which to a large extent blunt the edges of social conflicts.
HEGDE ON 50TH YEAR OF INDEPENDENCE

Hegde thinks that the 50th year of a free nation with stable democracy is a great occasion to celebrate and rejoice. He recalls during the first two decades after independence August 15th, our Independence Day was celebrated with enthusiasm and happiness. There were few Government sponsored functions. It was celebrated as a national festival by the people simultaneously. Private citizens decorated the buildings and residential houses with festoons and flags. We could see the national flag fluttering everywhere in cities, towns and villages on top of multi-storeyed buildings, houses and huts in slum areas and on top of the public transport, private vehicles including cycle rickshaws.

But on the occasion of the golden jubilee of our independence, public enthusiasm is conspicuously absent. No, one barring the duty-bound officials and politicians appear to be interested in celebrating the 50th year of Independence, which incidentally falls on the eve of the 21st century. Why is the public dispirited, Why are the people dis-interested? Why this universal apathy? questions Hegde?

Five decades ago, on this very day, Pandit. Jawaharalal Nehru spoke

of a free India having a 'tryst with destiny'. This dream was shared by millions of people in our country. Gandhiji taught us morality in public life. He told us that the means must be as pure as the ends. Panditji taught us lessons in human dignity, values of democracy, and decentralisation of power. He inculcated the spirit of national, social and emotional integration. He told us that India's beauty and strength lay in its unity in diversity. He also laid a strong foundation for the economic progress of the country through planning.

Hegde questions what we have done with the bequest of Gandhiji, Nehru and other stalwarts of the freedom struggle? The public apathy is not so much due to the disappointment on the economic front as due to the total disillusionment caused by the political debauchery. The common man today feels cheated of the fulfilment of his dreams and totally helpless. He has hardly any reason to feel proud of being an Indian citizen.

Hegde observes, the first two decades after independence were a saga of success, slow but steady. The crisis in the functioning of multi-party politics in India began when Indira Gandhi succeeded in placing herself above the Congress party. When the Congress Parliamentary Board, by a majority vote refused to bow to her wishes in 1969, Indira
Gandhi split the party. That was the biggest blow to principled politics in our country. Thereafter there was no recovery from the political degradation. Since then time and again, political parties have split for reasons that have nothing to do with ideology, policy or the national interest. The causes have invariably emanated from the clash of personal ambitions and egos of the leaders. This disease, which ruined the Congress in 1969, spread to other parties also and has today assumed alarming proportions, undermining the credibility of democratic process and political stability. The two efforts that were made (in 1977 and 1988) to bring the like-minded parties together with a view to providing an alternative to the ageing and degenerating congress failed for the same reasons clash of personal egos and emotions.

Hegde analyses that fragmentation of political parties has inevitably caused instability due to the fierce competitions among political groups to build vote banks on the basis of sectional appeals. As a result the national interest has been sacrificed at the altar of caste, communal and regional ambitions, we are now promoting diversities in the name of protecting group identities at the cost of national identity and unity. Policy formulation has today been reduced to catering to the vote banks of sectional interests which often go against the national interest. In the
process, we have lost national ambition, national character, national pride and national will. The spectre of national disintegration is staring at our face today.

Hegde notes that since 1990, the political system has been almost entirely dominated by caste politics. Not only is there a veritable caste war in politics, but there is a caste war in administration and a caste war in other institutions. Its consequences are frightening if this trend is not corrected.

On August 15th 1947, the foreign rulers transferred power to the Government of Independent India. Fifty years after, the Indian rulers are yet to transfer power to the Indian people. Empowerment of the people has remained a slogan. Even after the constitutional amendment, the so-called local self-Government at the village and district levels is run by bureaucrats and political bosses. Gandhi said, "self Government is better than good Government". But today, we have neither self-Government nor good Government.

According to Hegde our failure to change the administrative and educational system after independence has contributed a great deal to the complexities of the crises. The Westminster model is obviously not
suitable to our conditions. For instance, "The First Past Post" method is anti-democratic. The present electoral system has been the main cause for moral degradation in politics. It is the fountain head of corruption. An electoral system in which money and muscle power and misuse of administrative machinery have a dominant role to play, cannot ensure free and fair elections. Most of the policy pronouncements made by the Government as well as ruling parties have remained mere slogans to hoodwink the people, whether they be land reforms, anti-corruption measures, electoral reforms, public accountability. In fifty years, we have not been able to provide to the people even basic necessities of life including potable water.

During the 50th year of Indian Independence Hegde asks a simple question: Are we proud to be Indians? Despite obstensible affirmations, the answer will be indisputably in the negative. We are not even as proud as we were 30 years ago. India then had a role to play in the international affairs. Its voice was heard with respect in the comity of nations. Economically though not very strong, we were surely on the road to progress. We had won three wars. there was political stability. We can be proud of our science and technology but in other field the scenario is

dismal. By 2000 A.D. India would have larger number of illiterates than the whole world put together. We still have 39 percent of the population living below the poverty line. We have more than 100 million people who are either totally or partially unemployed. We have the worst infrastructure systems. We have more than ten million blind people and an equal number of physically challenged.

India is one of the poorest countries in terms of per-capita income and India has the reputation of being one of the nine most corrupt countries in the world. Indian society is more divided now than 30 years ago. Administration from top to bottom is suffering from incurable paralysis India has crippling external and internal debt burden of over Rs. 10,00,000 cores. While the common people are suffering from inefficient, corrupt and callous administration, politicians are busy in fighting for power and remaining in power by hook or crook.

Economic reforms came a quarter century too late. Even then they have failed to transform the country's economy mainly on account of inefficiency, red tapism and bureaucratic and political corruption. We may not agree with the western theory that politics is but a distilled version of economics. But the dominance of party politics on economic must and if we want to be a global economic power which is a must and
we have all the resources for it. For the last twenty years, economic decisions were taken mainly on political considerations. A recent survey has said that while China will take 15 years to reach half the present rate of capita income in western countries, India will, at the present pace take 150 years to achieve the same. Hegde questions if we can afford it?²⁹