

A Proposal for J and K

For 56 years the Kashmir problem has inflicted a heavy toll upon India and Pakistan. May I submit the following proposal?

Let India and Pakistan declare a moratorium on violence and intimidation in Jammu and Kashmir for the next 56 years. The two countries would jointly guarantee peace in the region, and respect the line of control (LoC) as intended in the Tashkent Declaration of 1966 and reiterated in the Simla Agreement of 1972. The two parts of J and K – one in India, the other in Pakistan – would be given full scope to promote in their respective ways two distinctive modes of social existence, one with a secular democratic constitution, the other with an Islamic constitution.

The people will be permitted to move from one part to the other for family reunion, tourism, education, employment, investment, or simply temporary residence for a definite period of time. Under certain conditions, the status of temporary residence may be upgraded to permanent residence, and then in some cases transformed into full citizenship. Such facilities are available to foreigners in many countries around the world. The people will then get an opportunity to explore, observe, compare and reflect on their own about the two alternatives represented by the two sides of the land. Such migration in course of time would reveal the reasoned decision of the people, after due deliberation in all fairness and freedom. This procedure will express the genuine choice of the people. A person will enjoy also the flexibility of reversing a choice, if necessary, within a certain period. This would be a vote with the feet, guided by a cool head, a warm heart, and comprehensive judgment of the people themselves over a length of time.

Every five years or so, the net immigration will be computed. The country showing net immigration will be compensated by the other country in terms of land or money or both. The quantum of land compensation per immigrant will be fixed on the basis of per capita cultivated land and

per capita other land in the two countries.

It is expected that the two countries would then vie with each other in good deeds so as to keep their people away from emigration. This by itself would have far-reaching consequences for peace and stability in the region and welfare of the people.

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Primary Education in MP

Francisco Leclercq deserves to be congratulated for taking on the mighty PR machine of the Madhya Pradesh government in his paper ('Education Guarantee Scheme and Primary Schooling in Madhya Pradesh', May 10). Perhaps it would have taken only a foreigner to write about these things, as Indian scholars and activists who have tried to bring up these issues in the past few years have been attacked and vilified by the formidable bureaucrat duo of Gopalakrishnan and Sharma as being pro-status quo and people-unfriendly (remember Eklavya being given the boot from HSTE?). More than anything, Leclercq's contribution is his heretical conclusion that the EGS is only a partial solution to the problem of elementary education and that the much-maligned regular school system doesn't come off so poorly in comparison.

For the past few years we have been asked to suspend our collective disbelief and watch as a completely new paradigm in primary education emerges from the drought-ravaged earth of MP – a paradigm that addresses regular teachers as a 'dying cadre', celebrates abdication of state responsibility in the name of devolution and ignores issues of quality, teacher-training, attainment, etc, on the plea of 'community-led education'. It is of course another matter that the half-baked experts who have conceived of this surreal model

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are at a loss for words when asked to quote a single example anywhere in the world where universalisation of primary education has taken place without strong state action, with poorly paid, untrained teachers and with pathetic facilities in the name of infrastructure. Have no fear, we are told, these are all unnecessary to attain the goal. Instead we are deluged with propaganda through paid advertisements in the national media, through signed promotion literature masquerading as 'occasional papers' and through a relentless harangue by the main protagonists of this theatre of the absurd.

Above all, Leclercq must be lauded for his courage in highlighting the privatisation of primary school education in MP. It may surprise many that the state has seen a record number of the RSS-spawned Saraswati Shishu Mandirs being set up during the same period as the Congress-ruled government has gone about destroying the state school system.

We await the next advertisement for clarifications.

Anup Kumar
Delhi

What Were You Doing?

In his review of *Globalisation and Its Discontents* (February 15) Robert P Flood makes one point both implicitly and explicitly. This is that Stiglitz had enough of a policy-making role at a fairly high level at the time when the Asian crisis was unfolding and IMF was putting together its firefighting packages. Notwithstanding the excellent credentials of Stiglitz and his authoritative scholarship on the subject of his book, the point noted by Flood is important. What Flood (implicitly) is asking from Stiglitz is a reasonable explanation of what he did at that time; if he kept quiet, why; and so on.

The point is of special relevance to all civil servants who enjoy the privileges and positions of civil

service, manage to be as non-controversial as possible during their service tenure, do not publicly protest over policies or programmes they see as inappropriate, and yet in their post-retirement phase vehemently criticise the policy mistakes and blunders of times gone by as if they had no role whatsoever at that time. It is very important that they state clearly why they allowed what was allowed, who if any stopped them from acting, what prevented them from taking a stand, and so on.

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Globalisation and India

Compliments to D N Ghosh for his well researched article, 'Global Business and Political Governance: Some Learnings from History' (May 3), chronicling the conception and growth of the idea of globalisation over the centuries and to this day when it has truly become a global phenomenon transcending every conceivable boundary. However, the article would have been all the more comprehensive in terms of its analysis if it had included the Indian context in its study. Most people perceive globalisation as being a western concept – an external reap, surreal to the Indian trade. I submit that this is not true.

If we study the commerce and industry of various kingdoms and dynastic rules across the ages of ancient/medieval/modern periods in the Indian subcontinent (of course, with the aberration of the British rule which permanently altered the trade discipline of the nation), we would find overwhelming evidence of cross-border trade and a free mingling of markets. And such an enterprise was not the initiative of the individual merchant in these markets – it had implicit and explicit support of the governance as evidenced by routine high profile visits of the royalty, visits by assigned diplomats to neighbouring kingdoms – brought about to discuss military and trade and business matters and to obtain consensus, forge bonds essentially

for the protection of their sovereign freedom and freedom of trade. As early as that age our kings had realised the benefits of bartering each other's strengths to substitute inherent weaknesses of their markets. In fact, several kingdoms even had tax/cess impositions for goods entering or leaving the respective boundaries.

Further, it would be quite an interesting insight if we could know how morality behaved itself in these circumstances. The western world resolved its dilemma of moral responsibility by delinking profit-making from spiritual endowment, but the perspective of Indian religion is diametrically opposite to this mid-path. Indians treat religion not as a ritual but as a virtue and no part of life, whether it be a word or a deed or an action, is deemed divorced from accountability to the realm of conscience. How did religion interact with the profit motive of the business mind and where was the concentricity of all the factors – religion, business and politics?

Of course, the scale and parameters of trade as it existed at that point of time might have been different; but the essential point here is to recognise that ideas of free cross-border trade, global presence, flow of factors of production across boundaries of a sovereign state are not entirely western – though their nomenclatures are. And it would have helped to understand how the globalisation phenomenon is operating in the Indian theatre given this history and the current business environment.

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