

The Climate Change
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CLIMATE change is on everybody's lips, from meteorologists to scientists, and now suddenly politicians, unknown writers and artists, media guys are seeing a newly discovered "Climate of Intolerance" everywhere. It's hot and happening, simply, "*Made in India*", by a motley crowd of disgruntled elements, who have jointly whipped up a hurricane, picking up some scattered leaf on the ground, lifting it sky high, and proclaiming that a forest has been uprooted!

Before I venture deep into the "*Climate of Intolerance*", I have to predict like a Clairvoyant, that this climate change will be a part and parcel of Indian politics for eternity. A new disruptivetool has been added to the tool kit of Democracy. The first likely victim of this newly devised tool is likely to be the long-in-waiting GST Bill. It is likely to remain in the Waiting List for a further long time. However there is nothing to wail about. I would like to remind readers about the sagacious words of **Winston Churchill**, "*I contend that for a nation to try to tax itself into prosperity is like a man standing in a bucket and trying to lift himself up by the handle*". This is exactly what our politicians and bureaucrats are trying to do. Projecting GST as a panacea for all our tax woes is misleading. Anyway I expect the "Climate of Intolerance" group to successfully stall the GST for many more years to come.

Winston Churchill had made a trenchant observation, "*When the war of the giants is over, the war of the pygmies will begin*". The pygmies are running riot, seeing intolerance in every nook and corner of India. Small incidents are inflated to gigantic proportions and a standard reply parroted, that there is a climate of intolerance pervading everywhere in India! They do not see such climate elsewhere, not even in Europe that is sharply divided on the refugee crisis, not even in the devastated Syria and Iraq, not even in U.S.A. which is rattled by the gun-culture and the rampant killings happening in Universities, Churches, and malls, not even in the clandestine surveillance of millions of citizens by Western governments, not even in the racist attacks on Asians regularly occurring in Australia, not even in the cheating by reputed car manufacturers, who have duped millions of customers selling defective cars (no Moody's rating for such entities). Nowhere in the world has one found the charade of returning awards as is happening in India. No doubt, it was a master strategy to corner the government in power, which was completely outwitted by the strategy. But this is going to be a permanent feature in future political battles and wrangles, as awards and medals are being freely distributed, which is neither respected by the giver nor the receiver. Everything has been reduced to a total farce. One cannot but agree with writer **Rosalyn Yalow**, when she observed, about the much acclaimed Nobel Prize itself that "*The Nobel Prize gives you an opportunity to make a fool of yourself in public*". That is exactly what our writers and other award winners were doing. However, this is going to be a staple feature henceforth in all political wrangles. It would be prudent for governments to stop distributing all kinds of medals and awards and thereby save taxpayers money. A good writer or artist will be recognized by the public acclaim they receive for their performance, film world is an apposite example of how the public judges their artistes and gives them name and fame. No government can substitute this by giving a medal or statuette or certificate. **Fortunately, only Indian Customs & Excise officers are not returning their reward amounts!**

Why are we such a raucous democracy? The newspapers and media are replete with reports of imbecile utterances of our political class and the engineered propaganda and fabricated allegations that make up our national discourse. Those who lost political power are unable to reconcile with their loss and will not permit any kind of reasonable

governance. Those in power show neither administrative acumen nor strategic thinking. While critics may ridicule "Beef" as too petty to warrant interference by the government, let us not forget that it was the same "Beef" that ignited India's First War of Independence. As **George Santayana** observed - *"Those who do not read history are condemned to repeat it."* *"The huge populace of this country bears all this political wrangling with stoic skepticism and fortitude. I once had the opportunity of being a co-traveler with an American on a train journey, and we had a hearty discussion about various aspects of India. At the end of the journey, the American was very apologetic and told me "If you don't mind, I think yours is a sham democracy". So true is his observation. Literally it is mobocracy masquerading as democracy, and greed of select families wanting to cling to power, by openly displaying bitterness and rancor, and making reckless promises. Their greed to remain in power is fuelling the unarmed combat dominating our roads and highways, in the name of dharnas and satyagrahas.*

The adverse economic impact, huge government spending to maintain law & order, and wasteful litigation, are draining out precious resources. Often, I feel that we are having a surfeit of democracy. Sometimes I think many in India may be feeling about Parliament, as King James I of the Stuart Dynasty felt about the House of Commons *"...at their meetings, nothing is heard but cries, shouts and confusion. I am surprised that my ancestors should ever have permitted such an institution to come into existence ."*

Let me conclude by quoting Churchill again, *"The best argument against democracy is a five minute conversation with the average voter"*.

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