



Editorial

Unbroken Civilisations' Challenge between Sustainability and War

Bharat and China, two unbroken civilisations influenced many big and small countries in their neighbourhoods for thousands of years. Continuity of these civilisations have been due to Ecologically Sustainable Trans-generational Progress (ESTGP) discovering nature-tempered human excellence. Their high-context communication was the instrument for assessing and normative living by, with and within nature. Holistic normating was the way of creating sustainable solutions to problems from within and from similarly experienced geography and cultures. This did not hamper their unique traits, rather added values of continuity which no finance capital utilisation in capitalist structure can offer for millennia. This has also been the reason that China and Bharat were in constant interaction and exchange which enriched them even before British colony and trade in the area.

However, by following western ideology and instruments, both have weakened their own strength of ESTGP which could have been their offer to the world. Can both dare to think in their own civilisational track and innovate? This is to be understood in present reality where China and Bharat are posited in a straight line where in all senses USA and Russia are two end points. Over the last quarter to a century, their positions were that of choice between the two points. How does the Asian paradigm of unbroken civilisation once offered by them pacify the epigones of two endpoints? All other countries are on both sides of the straight line but not in fixed points. This straight line is full of questions.

America, Bharat, China and Russia - what are their stances towards each other or as binary or trinary? How far do their interests in other countries influence decisions? How far does any of the four utilise other countries in scoring the other three? Whether their short term goals align with long term goals? What are their alignments: economic or civilisational or both? How far are their stands in the interest of Ecologically Sustainable Trans generational Progress (ESTGP) of human-nature balanced existence?

Uperficially, all the four swear by peace. Question is not how truly they stand for peace. Question is how do they envision peace- as existential reality or interregnum between two escalations. How do they propose to wade through the complexity of conceived reality, utilising communication pits? Let us look at these questions from the construct of BARC i.e. Bharat facing the America-Russia-China triangle. How does She plan to wade through the complexity of conceived reality, virtual reality, economic factuality and civilisational reality of thought process as well as communicative action? Bharat's assessment of complexity and negotiating the same in communicative action may help the cause of ESTGP or fail.

Her natural readiness to harness strength from within to protect samaj (transgenerational community or society) from critical dependency on networked capitalism of consumerist and propagandist nature has been demonstrated twice in the last twenty five years. On both occasions, 2008-2009 and 2022 onwards, economic growth decelerated worldwide, Bharat remaining an exception. It did not happen in the Monrovia isolation strategy of the USA; it was on the civilisational strength of social capital despite majoritarian democracy's 75 years journey for shift from social bonding to political society formation. In framing the complexity, this is an added advantage; sometimes frustrating for the trio.

As Bharat has to face and exist in complexity, it is important to reinvigorate its Samaj in villages and remnants of the same in urban centres. If we try to face complexity following Western neo-liberal economic growth seeking strategy, by the time we catch the bus, the ESTGP goal of civilization will be lost. If strengthening samaj is accepted as the internal general policy to guide every branch of activity of the state, ESTGP resilience will be achieved. Bharat's space programme, guided by civilisational positioned scientist-cum-technocrats starting from Vikram Sarabhai, could internalise such values. Even today, when huge funding is internally available, our research and innovation in the space programme demonstrates these values of our trans-generational living.

A system in tune to this may ensure the country the cushion of intra-dependence with capacity to remain sovereign. Why?

Russia is a trusted friend; however, it has to take care of China--the neighbour and close ally too. Moreover, Russia has its own axe, posited in the state's policy about neighbours, to grind. The US policy towards Russia's neighbours is its headache. Bharat experienced a stoic neutrality on part of Russia during her period of hostilities with China. Except for this compulsion, Russia and Bharat have come to help each other during the crisis.

It is easy to wish that China and Bharat too become trusted friends but internal contradictions and external ambitions of China together could make this a short-living reality, even if forged under the US pressure. Once pressure is removed from either of the two (going to happen in near future), whether they have long term goals of coming closer will be tested. Both countries may learn here from Bharat-Russia relationship which have assisted each other in crisis and continued during peacetime. A caveat here: Long border neighbourhoods in Digital-industrial-Developmentally powerful countries are yet to achieve this trust. Mutual trust works only when the big common enemy gnaws. The Russia -China trust built over several decades and in the shadow of the Cold War is the testament.

But Russia-China trust was the ideological trust arising in the lower stage reality of development for compulsion against the capitalist world. At that point, the US had superiority on every front-- money control, technology control, mind control and strong control over NATO allies. That was the period of high industrial society growth in the West for which Eurasian giants were no match. Restraining the craving of people and the ambition of the most gifted persons were counter-productive, hastening the collapse of the Soviet and compulsion of disruptive practice adoption by China during the same decade. The lessons of keeping complexity evolution at a lower level for social stability derived from long unbroken civilisation saved China. The US helped its journey towards capitalistic growth in the wish that the ghost of communism would thus be over. Instead, China grew stronger with central command solving problems that industry and market experience within the country. Hindsight shows that even the communist China, except for a few decades, remained in its epigenetic DNA of unbroken civilization.

Both Bharat and China are on the same page of civilisational wisdom here. Bharat, despite adopting the Western type of parliamentary democracy, put in her constitution the imprint of civilisational virtues. By accepting the reality of low -level conflict as the cause of human development in physical, psychological and spirito-mental spheres, the world would be able to recognise both civilisations' capability to protect, improve and proceed in the path of ESTGP. Likewise, both countries have to recognise the social memory and social psyche as the live wire of several thousand years, not to be replaced with western notions of development and democracy. Once this limit is drawn, things are bound to change. For China, it is easier given the writ of the one party democracy.

Bharat, from a non-western foundation chose the Western democracy of industrial ambition where profit of the few people mattered most in the investment plan. For the common man, there is a notional chance that everyone may move up the ladder. For Bharat, a mismatch in socio-political argumentation stems from accepting reductionist thought process, not as a part of the toolkit of the holistic but as the main guiding

proposition of the last two hundred years. The course correction in declaring the holistic goal of National Education Policy 2020 is a well beginning. It shall impact Bharat's capability to cope with the complexity of the globe on its own terms.

Whether the memory of two civilisations developed during the last few thousand years can change the non-holistic way of deciding things? Neither a holistic or reductionist way can dissolve uncertainty with a certain set of strategies. Both civilisations, laid in a grand timeline of happenings have acquired one uniqueness – patience for long term goals. And they have common orientation towards goals, not as states but as convergent civilisations. Hope that the West does not succeed in tricking these two countries to recognise the state as more integral to civilisation than family, individual and society. Adopting short term esteem fulfilment pathways, the two can't serve to lead the globe's hankering for ESTGP. ESTGP is much wider than sustainable development or calls to go back to nature or to assign duties to states for carbon reduction. The obstacle arises as China savours higher visibility and acceptance worldwide by adopting a capitalistic development path with Chinese Communist Party's writ on every activity. Geo-political stake of China's state-sponsored business investments in the Indian subcontinent are an offshoot of this. This may be the point of friction or points of opportunity for Bharat depending upon her desire to play it in others' fashion or own style.

Foreign policy innovation is the key. Democratic Bharat has grown fast during the last two decades in neo-liberal capitalist path which passes through the market. Can Bharat prioritise China for civilisational cooperation based on underlying commonality? This is an investment in time for reversing perspective; not difficult given China's love for whatever own.

Let this editorial come to its logical end with Rabindranath Tagore's ambition of recreating an Asian viewpoint to look into the world. It has been written all over Asia. Bharat and China's innovations in mind training and technology with human control, in trade and settlements found its self-actualisation. That, for thousands of years, offered us strength to exist with the normalcy of being and becoming . The challenge is how fast we reverse to that path of unbroken civilisation - identifying its nodes and internodes across the globe.

The USA deserves a special mention in this scheme to bring Bharat and China to explore sustainable solutions to future tremors. Russia being the friend, an Eurasian sustainability paradigm will work together. With vast territory, strong indigeneity, longitudinal mental resource, horizontal physical resource and transverse communication of long standing, a perfect set is being readied.

Biplab Loho Choudhury

Editor-in-Chief, IJPED