



## Relevance of Jawaharlal Nehru

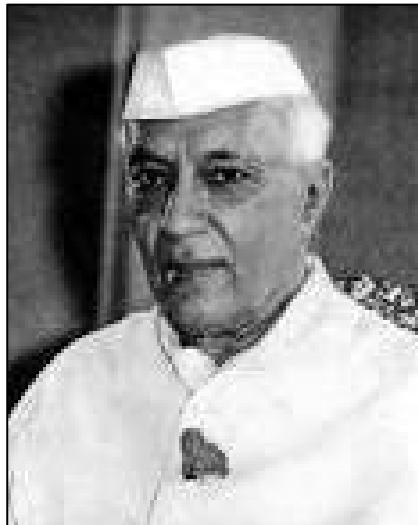
*Souribandhu Kar*

We celebrate the 125<sup>th</sup> birth Anniversary of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru who was the first Prime Minister of India. Nehru by his imagination and idealist vision has shaped the destiny of India after the freedom from the British Empire. He was an extraordinary giant of our freedom struggle, a prominent maker of modern India and the Chief Architect of our democracy. He has inspired the people of India to create many sided constructive activities for a better society.

He was a great statesman acclaimed by the world leaders. He was fighter against communalism and upholder of civil liberties. He wrote "The future has to be built on the foundations laid in the past and the present". It is the credit of Nehru who has given us a political system based on three principles, i.e. Democracy, Socialism and Secularism.

When in our neighbouring states like Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal, democracy is always in an upheaval state, we have inherited a robust parliamentary democracy

and democratic institutions which continues without any hindrance. It is because of Pt. Nehru. Nehru, not only valued democracy uppermost in his mind but also campaigned in the elections to educate the people of Indian about the importance of democracy.



His political commitment reflects in his approach to pluralism and secularism and against communalism. Talking about communalism Nehru wrote, "It must be remembered that the communalism of a majority community must of necessity bears closure resemblance of nationalism than the communalism of a minority group. One of the best tests of its true nature is what relation it bears to the national struggle. If

it is politically reactionary or lays stress on communal problems rather than national ones, then it is obviously anti-national.....".

"Now it is enough to blame Muslim Communalists. It is easy enough to do so, for Indian Muslims as a whole are unhappily very backward and compare unfavourably with Muslims in all other countries. The point is that a



special responsibility does attach to the Hindus in India both because they are the majority community and because economically and educationally they are more advanced .....

“Many a false trail is drawn to confuse the issue, we are told of Islamic culture and Hindu culture, of religion and old customs, of ancient glories and the like. But behind all this like political and social reaction and communalism must therefore be fought on all fronts and given no quarter. Because the inward nature of communalism must therefore be fought on all fronts and given no quarter. Because the inward nature of communalism has not been sufficiently realized, it has often sailed under false colours and taken in many an unwary person. It is an undoubted fact that many a congressman has almost unconsciously partly succumbed to it and tried to reconcile his nationalism with this narrow and reactionary creed.....”

“Communalism bears a shirking resemblance to the various forms of fascism that we have seen in other countries. It is in fact the Indian version of fascism. We know the evils that have flown from fascism. In India we have known also the evils and disasters that have resulted from communal conflict. A combination of these two is this something that can only bring grave perils and disasters in its train.”

Addressing the joint session of the Pakistan and Indian Newspaper Editors’ Conference, New Delhi on May 4, 1950 he said, “I am prepared to apply one test to Pakistan and India and, as far as I am concerned, it is an adequate and sufficient test. The test is what the minority thinks of the majority and not what majority thinks. So long as the minority in Pakistan does not feel secure and does not trust the majority, there is something wrong there. I am prepared to

apply this test to India, too. So long as the minority in India does not feel secure and is not prepared to repose its confidence in the majority, there is something wrong here too. We must consider both sides of the case objectively and fairly, if we do not do so, we put ourselves in the wrong and take a lop-sided view of the situation.”

He noticed that two grievous blows had been dealt to the country—first the partition of India and second the assassination of Gandhi. So, he retorted the people of India to root out the deadly disease of communalism. He tried to rebuild India firmly on secular polity and pluralistic society.

After the demise of Nehru, the then President, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, said, “our thoughts today go out to him as a great emancipator of the human race, as one who has given all his life and energy to the freeing of men’s mind from political bondage, economic slavery, social oppression and cultural stagnation.”

He was the architect of the non-alignment policy, as the foreign policy of our country. Non-alignment was not a negative policy maintaining equidistance from two super-powers. The policy of non-alignment was an indigenous product, emanated from Indian’s long struggle for freedom.

Speaking about this policy in the Parliament on December 9, 1958, he said “what I have done is to give voice to that policy (non-alignment) – I have not originated it. It is a policy inherent in the circumstances of India, inherent in the past thinking of India, inherent in the whole mental outlook of India, inherent in the conditioning of the Indian mind”. So, the independent foreign policy of non-alignment of Nehru is for India’s national self interests.

Many questions the failure of Nehru on the matter of relationship with China and Pakistan.



Nehru paid his attention to cement close and friendly relations with neighbours. He considered a friendly relationship with China is essential for peace in Asia and worked for the cooperation of both the countries. India was the first Asian Country to recognize China in 1949. In April 1954, an agreement was signed between China and India and the preamble of this agreement laid down the principles which was known as Panchsheel, the five principles of peaceful co-existence. That was the guiding factors for the relations between both the countries.

Nehru tried to link up the political independence with the economic independence, abolition of unemployment, and the raising of the standard of living of the masses of the people, most of whom had been sunk in poverty. He tried to implement the socialist programmes and instituted the Planning Commission in 1950. The objective view of the Planning Commission was liquidating illiteracy, eliminating epidemics, expanding health facilities, raising the average life span, a rational population policy for economic growth, removal of regional imbalances and strengthening the national unity and it must work towards achieving the goal of an independent economy based on its own resources, its own

market and as far as possible on its capital accumulation.

To sum up the life and achievements of the first Prime Minister of India Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, let us quote what the veteran Communist Parliamentarian Prof. Hiren Mukharjee wrote in his book "Gentle Colossus".

"For four decades and more, this gentle colossus strode our Indian World and his place among the great figures of our time is secure. But his uniqueness lay in the unobtrusive opulence of endowment which gave him, in the thick of politics and in the face even of frustrations, a peculiar refinement and grace of spirit."

"It may be that history will judge him harshly, but for his own people who have known something of his mind and heart the task of judgement is not so simple. If he shrank from jobs set him relentlessly by history, he did it not by reason of guile and pretty calculations but by reason of the love he bore mankind".

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Souribandhu Kar, Plot No. 5012/5853, Gajapati Nagar, Bhubaneswar- 751005, Email : sbkar1948@gmail.com.