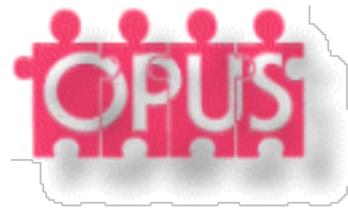


## AN ORGANISATION FOR PROMOTING UNDERSTANDING OF SOCIETY (OPUS)

### India and the World at the Dawn of 2015 Report of a New Year's Listening Post



Encouraging The Reflective Citizen

#### **Part 1. THE SHARING OF PREOCCUPATIONS AND EXPERIENCES.**

In this part of the Listening Post participants were invited to identify, contribute, and explore their experience in their various social roles, be those in work, unemployed, or retired; as members of religious, political, neighbourhood or voluntary or leisure organisations, or as members of families and communities. This part was largely concerned with what might be called, 'the stuff of people's everyday lives', that relating to the 'socio' or 'external' world of participants.

One of the thought in the minds of the group was regarding the political flux that the country had been through in the last year which continues into the New Year. On one hand we had the Prime Minister of our country representing our nation in a foreign land bringing a great honour to our country. On the other side we also have the same Prime Minister's associates trying to forcefully convert citizens into Hinduism in order to wipe away minority, resulting in lot of confusion in the minds of people.

Apart from the political flux the country is witnessing, a participant also brought to light about the cultural confusion present across the nation. She stated that due to the influence of western culture the essence of the Indian culture is being lost. For example, in India to strengthen the bond between the husband and wife, the wife would take a fast on the full moon day and pray for her husband and later in the night would have their supper together, while these days it is hardly being practiced and the trend has changed into a candle light dinner. Due to this cultural confusion resulting from various such practices we see a lot of extremity in the society, with people partying on one side and on the other side another set of people struggling hard for their daily living.

Due to this confusion and extremity people are losing the sense of responsibility and are trying to live a glamorous life. One another participant shared an incident that she witnessed about a young mother. This woman was about the age of 18 years and had three children. They were of below poverty group and one of the children was physically challenged. The children didn't go to school and were shabbily kept and looked unhealthy, while the mother was dressed fancily and looked healthy. This made the participant question whether

there is a pressure from society to prioritize on how they look over the basic responsibility that there are vested upon.

Another predominant thought which was seen in the minds of most people in the group was about the various number of abuse cases and the bomb blast attacks across the country and the world, which instilled fear and a sense of insecurity among the members of the society.

One of the participants shared how pathetic it is for people to attack children and the schools, who are considered to be the weaker group of the society. While another shared her experience of being a mother and the fear she has while sending her child to the school. She stated that schools were considered to be one of the safest places for children. But these days knowing that the teachers themselves can bring harm to the child it becomes hard as a mother to stay at peace while the child is away from home. Another participant raised a concern for the women's security and the fear one goes through while travelling or even while returning back home at night after the work.

While we were still talking about the fears and insecurity caused by abuse another participant shared an incident which was reported in the newspaper. A man gave a fake complaint against the school regarding his child's abuse only to get some monetary benefits. Hence a participant commented on this incident as an abuse of abuse, resulting due to the lack of sense of humanity. This made the group wonder how much information has to be shared with the public and whether the media is giving too much of details because of which such incidents are seen.

This session was concluded by a participant who said that everything lies in one's own mind and can control these if tuning of mind happens in the right way.

## **Part 2. IDENTIFICATION OF MAJOR THEMES**

In Part 2 the aim was to collectively identify the major themes emerging from Part 1. From several presented these have been drawn together under the following interrelated themes:

In the second part of the discussion we tried to derive themes from the open discussion we had in the first part. Some of the major themes we obtained are as follows:

- Self-centeredness and lack of responsibility.
- Sense of shame leading to reactivity.
- Lack of ownership.
- Political flux.
- Unable to strike a balance.

- Engraving fear
- Confusion of logic and emotions.
- Deteriorating sense of humanity.
- Weaker being targeted
- Fear of abuse
- Culturally confused/ stuck
- Abuse of abuse
- The power play of money and politics.
- Too much responsibility or ignorance
- Fear of living life
- Ignited road with nowhere to go
- A fire wall for every mind not for every soul.

### **Part III: Analysis and Hypothesis Formation**

In this part we tried and analysed the information obtained from the first and second part of the discussion and found the deepest layer of the social system. All the themes were interconnected and led from one theme to another, as it was hard to derive at a certain hypothesis. But however the group worked together in forming hypothesis based on their commonalities.

1. Because of insecure minds the members of the society are confused and hence result in not taking up responsibility and ownership.
2. Fall out of collective is leading to abuse of abuse and hence the weaker are being targeted.
3. Power play of politics and money is leading to the individualistic us, thus resulting in lack of warmth and fear of abuse.
4. Engraved fear among the members of the society leads to lack of ownership resulting in imbalance of the societal dimensions.

The entire above hypothesis are interconnected and all result in the weaker being targeted, abuse, lack of ownership and responsibility, no sense of humanity and hence creating an imbalance and confusion in the society. India is a collectivistic society where one would take care of the other in their community and society on the whole. But these days it is turning out to be an individualistic society where there is power play of money and politics. Each person is concerned about their own wellbeing and upliftment that they are even forgetting their own family members and are constantly in a competition. Thus it is resulting in imbalance of power, economic status, culture and various other factors in the society.

Due to this intense competition and individualistic lifestyle of people, are living in a constant fear of losing their comfort zone and are having an insecure mind. Because of this fear they tend not to take up others responsibility and do not claim ownership when faced with a problem.

This lack of responsibility and ownership due to fear can be well understood with the incident where a person lies on the road struggling for his life due to an accident and no person from the society wants to aid him as they would get into trouble. Hence leave the man to die which shows that people are losing the sense of humanity and are becoming self-centred. As in the present scenario children are not capable of protecting themselves when they are being targeted.

Other hypothesis that emerged were

- Holding one in shame makes us culturally stuck resulting in fallout from the collectivism.
- Because we are culturally stuck women are expected to be responsible but are leading to ignorance.

Because of cultural confusion due to the influence of western culture people are moving towards the extremes thus creating imbalance in the society. We can also see the women who are westernised in their appearance and ways of life are restricted due to the Indian culture and the family setup. Hence they tend to engage in extreme practices resulting in ignorance of basic responsibilities.

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