

2021, COVID, globalization and the future of the world's/ India's middle-class people

Or why the middle class are their own worst enemies

***Stay warned:** This essay holds a mirror to the middle-class people. Here, you might get an unflattering view of yourself. So, this is NOT for the faint-hearted. Read on only if you count yourself among the conscientious and the courageous.*

If you, the Middle-Class Person (MCP), suffer from a short attention span that enslaves you to the ill-conceived or induced notion that you can read no more than a 140-character tweet, or a WhatsApp message, or a paragraph at the most, read on only if you wish to find a permanent cure to that disease, which has led to your degeneration into an egotistical automaton, a self-centred epitome of greed, mediocrity and hypocrisy, and a conniving, potentially closet racist/casteist/religious clown.

We, the world's Middle-Class People (MCPs), are all victims of a massive systemic, systematic, subtle, and sophisticated scam. We have all been conned systematically over the decades, even centuries, by the flawed, evil-minded geniuses among the elites who are all united now, transcending geography, nationality, race, ideology, religion, etc.

The result of their evil, divide-and-rule strategy, which has been employed on a sustained basis over a very long period of time, is that we, the MCPs, have all become addicts of pleasures, comforts and conveniences. We the MCPs have become smug with our perceived (but, as you will shortly realize, largely undeserving, ill-gotten) success in traps called domains (areas of specialization). We the MCPs have been tricked into playing roles scripted by the elites.

Consequently, we the MCPs have become egotistic, greedy, selfish, self-centred, mediocre, duplicitous, narrow-minded, ignorant, lazy, fearful, insecure, cowardly, indifferent, apathetic, intolerant or arrogant vis-a-vis our peers, the underclass (workers, labourers, the poor and the underprivileged), community / society, and the environment / planet.

The intent of this essay is not to castigate, criticize, lambaste or portray the MCPs as inherently evil or flawed people. Rather, it is to awaken, enlighten, empower, embolden and stir fellow MCPs into positive action, so as to save ourselves.

It's now or never. Do or die. Take it or leave it.

Some musings:

Evil is becoming the new normal across the globalized, digitalized world – legitimized, institutionalized within 2-3 generations. The unthinkable, the unspeakable of the 1980s is now the new normal – acceptable, mainstream, legit.

Can something be done to stem the rot and reverse the descent into hell? (*Mind you, the novel coronavirus is still around, well into January 2021, mutating – variants galore globally – more than a year after it was discovered.*)

Before we elaborate on that, let's get a few definitions straight, for ease of understanding and clarity.

Evil = Lack of empathy – inability to view/experience things from others' perspective; hypocrisy; insincerity (or lack of basic sincerity; or the tendency to use, *totally unnecessarily*, some 'technique', fake 'diplomacy', evasiveness, deceit, etc, in relationships); wickedness (taking delight and deriving pleasure from meanness, cleverness, shrewdness, wiliness, crookedness, subterfuge); greed (for "more, more, more" of everything, including things that don't give any more pleasure, are addictive, and those that have been secured not by dint of hard work or effort but by stroke of luck or through chicanery, fraud, wrong / unethical means); inability to shake off the propensity to benefit/gain at the expense of others or in a way that wreaks heavy collateral damage on others who have *not* harmed us or who have actually helped us prosper, while strengthening those who will harm us and others in the long run.

Saturated-selfishness: Excessive self-centredness and selfishness not tempered or balanced with selflessness, community spirit, or measurable responsibility for, and proportionate commitment to, larger society/ecosystem as it exists today, in terms of scale/size, complexity and complicatedness.

MCP: Middle-Class Person (singular); **MCPs**: Middle-Class People (plural)

The elites with control over systems (vyavastha/వ్యవస్థ) are clever – they are leaving individual constituents (aam janta/సామాన్య ప్రజలు) with no choice but to cooperate with, accept, perpetrate, perpetuate and even take part in evil ...

Ordinary people (aam janta / సామాన్య ప్రజలు) are doing so too because they are led to believe (wrongly) that at an individual level, no-one is to blame nor responsible, because the whole system itself is flawed, corrupt, evil and can't be changed, resisted, transformed as it is too big, too complex, too complicated...

... whereas the constituent individual is too small, ignorant, insignificant, inconsequential, or caught up running the rat race on a treadmill.

And worse, any individual constituent of a system / వ్యవస్థ who doesn't march to the prevailing beat, or dares to question or change the status quo (system) will be ridiculed, resisted, criticised, questioned (over motives or sanity, by the insane ☺), ostracised, probably even victimized or persecuted.

Take any profession, industry, sector or system/vyavastha – banking, technology, medical/healthcare, entertainment, sports, media, judiciary, defence, law enforcement (police), organized religion, sarkar (governments), raajneeti (politics), finance, business... – for example.

Everything, everyone has been compromised, within just 2-3 generations! Indeed, the unthinkable, the unspeakable of the 1980s is now the new normal, acceptable, mainstream, legit.

The chain has to break.

Survival depends on breaking the cycle.

Being passive, indifferent, apathetic, cowardly, egotistic, greedy, lazy, selfish, mediocre, wily, shrewd, two-faced onlookers or fence-sitters is NOT an option.

Those individual constituents who proactively join the evil side and even take delight in wickedness, selfish acts, evil deeds, demoniacal traits ... and those fence-sitters who, like typical opportunists, bide time without ever taking a firm stance on neither this nor that (wrongly applying the *flawed logic* of past instances/experience) WILL perish at times of epochal change. Such an epochal change is just round the corner, by the way.

"Flawed logic" because the majority middle-class in Bharat, or in any other comparable fake/make-believe 'democratic' countries (ప్రజాస్వామ్య వ్యవస్థ/लोकतांत्रिक व्यवस्था), are under the impression that the current system has helped them to prosper.

Hence they are all heavily invested in keeping the status quo. They resist change.

There is learned indifference or selective blindness among them toward the ills of the same system.

The non-elites don't realize they didn't really prosper at all in the current system.

The elites have cleverly hoodwinked the non-elites into believing they are prospering too.

But what has happened, is happening is that the non-elites have always been running a rat race on a treadmill -- no real progress forward, but it creates an illusion of forward movement and fitness.

Even that has come at a tremendous price (trade-offs) for the non-elites, while thoroughly impoverishing and disempowering the masses (the underclass or the underprivileged -- బడుగు వర్గాలు / बेड़ा श्रेणी).

So, in a sense, the elites have cleverly used the the middle-income group (मध्यम वर्ग के लोग/ మధ్యతరగతి ప్రజలు) to make the underclass redundant, driving the latter toward elimination from the current system.

All the new "cutting-edge" technologies and corporatization of even sectors like farming will ensure that.

From the elite's perspective, that's the only purpose or utility of the the middle-income group (మధ్యతరగతి ప్రజలు/मध्यम वर्ग के लोग) -- to get rid of the underclass.

Once that goal is achieved, the the middle-income group (मध्यम वर्ग के लोग/మధ్యతరగతి ప్రజలు) themselves will become redundant too... because, by then new technologies will have evolved to such a "high" level that they would be able to perform everything that the middle class can now, and perhaps even better.

So, the assumption that the current vyavastha favors మధ్యతరగతి ప్రజలు/middle class is "flawed logic".

Merely because something 'appears' to have worked in the past, it does *not* automatically follow it will continue to do so in the future.

Things are changing. They are changing fast.

Every situation is unique -- *context* and *nuance* make every situation unique.

Those who fail to recognize this or ignore this will pay the ultimate price.

They **WILL** perish -- *sooner* than later.

And they can blame no-one but themselves!

Such selfish, self-centered, ignorant, greedy, mediocre, Janus-faced, indifferent, wicked, egotistical, arrogant, uncooperative, disunited, intolerant, lazy, wily, cowardly and insecure people (basically, the non-elites with no community spirit, no life-force), deserve to perish. Don't they?

For, those who ignore the messages in 'Ancient Wise Words' – that every individual's responsibility is not only to self/family but also to community, Nature and cosmos; and that every individual's responsibility is not only to do good and be righteous / dharmic thru right karma but also to **PROACTIVELY** resist evil within as well as without – **will** pay the ultimate price, that too sooner than later.

Inaction, indifference, ignorance, saturation-level selfishness that perpetuate status quo will push both the middle class and the underclass toward the cliff edge.

Only this time, in "Kali Yug", no avatar, mahapurush, mahatma, sadhu or sant will rescue us nor enlighten us, or take a bullet for us, or sacrifice himself/herself on the cross.

Strong, harsh words, you might think. Well, rest assured: Our intent is **not** to put a curse on the middle-class and the underclass during the January festival time, that too when a one-year-old killer pandemic is still raging.

Bhogi/Lohri represents the burning of negativities to ashes.

As the pandemic rages on and the future seems uncertain and the cliff edge seems close at hand, it is vitally important to take some time off to ponder, reflect, introspect and contemplate on issues concerning life, death and the forgotten/abandoned exploration of a higher purpose of existence in human form on a unique, 'organic', life-enhancing planet upon which homo sapiens are wreaking havoc, threatening its very survival.

Perpetuating the existing failed system either actively or passively (directly or indirectly), and not proactively supporting change-makers working toward shaking up the status quo, is tantamount to a "sin" – that is, violation of one's "dharma", which is always determined by context and nuance that make every situation unique.

For the global middle class, unwittingly becoming tools or puppets of the elites in the “game” of eliminating the underclass gradually, virtually means digging their own graves.

If the sole elite-manufactured purpose of the middle-class is to run a rat race on a treadmill, widening the gap between themselves and the underclass to such an extent that it can never be narrowed but finally results in the elimination of the underclass through smart, clever pre-empting of unmitigated anarchy (violent, destructive killer revolution), then the utility of the middle-class will also end at the precise moment of the underclass’ elimination.

From the perspective of the elites, when there is no more any underclass in society, there won’t be any need for the middle-class either. The middle-class, too, will simultaneously become dispensable.

But, a typical middle-class person’s common refrain would be:

“వ్యవస్థ బాగా పెద్దది, తప్పు ఎదో ఒప్పు ఎదో తెలుసుకోనేంత మేధస్సు, శక్తి మధ్యతరగతి మనిషి కి లేదు.”

The “system” is too big (or too complex). And an ordinary middle-class person does not have the necessary intellect nor power (or energy) to figure out what is right, what is wrong.

“జీవితం అలా ఒక మోస్తారు సాఫీగా ఒడుదుడుకులు లేకుండా వేళ్లే చాలు అనుకుంటారు.”

A middle-class person simply (or merely) aspires for a smooth, bump-free, average humdrum routine life (devoid of rude shocks, debilitating disruptions or unmanageable hardship).

This sort of reasoning betrays intellectual laziness, feigned helplessness and innocence, concealed hypocrisy, and selfish pursuit of materialism-oriented sensual life of easy comforts and pleasures devoid of responsibility, reflection, and real hard work (pursuit of excellence), but cloaked in the veneer of a “tough life of somehow making both ends meet against all odds, to support spouse and kids, and yet remain a law-abiding, tax-paying, conscientious, virtuous citizen”.

Fact is, a typical middle-class person of the 21st-century is a big-time beneficiary of globalization, a process that has brought him/her material comforts and pleasures, as well as access to resources and opportunities, that he/she probably does not deserve at all in the first place.

It’s also a process that has made him/her a parasite on the larger system, and a dependent on the brilliance of the flawed geniuses among the elites.

But the same globalization process is also wreaking havoc on nature (the environment), planet (ecology, biodiversity, climate), and societies (especially the global underclass), without which/whom everything would collapse or cease to exist in the first place.

Let us examine the professed notion that the typical middle-class person in India (or any other country for that matter) “does not have the necessary intellect nor power (or energy) to figure out

what is right, what is wrong”. So, is he/she a dumb, unintelligent, ignorant, helpless, innocent moron lacking in intelligence, knowledge and power?

In this age of social media, views and opinions on every conceivable topic under the sun abound. Who does not have an opinion on, say, politics, sports, entertainment, economic affairs, society, crime, technology, ethics, morals, so forth? Every MCP (middle-class person) is, of course, knowledgeable. And fancies himself/herself as a powerful person (voter) too – just examine the voting patterns in any election at the state/province or national level over the last several decades.

He/she knows how to play “the game”. The **M**iddle-**C**lass **P**erson (**MCP**) knows how to indulge in office politics, marital politics, societal politics. The MCP knows how to use intelligence to maximize personal wealth (through greed-fueled investments in stocks, chit funds, mutual funds, real estate, long-term financial instruments, etc). The MCP knows how to save on (or even evade payment of) taxes.

The MCP is capable of extreme hard work, as well as strategic and systematic work, to achieve “selfish” or “personal” goals. The MCP knows how to select the best smartphone or the most stylish or mileage-giving car/SUV, personal accessories, branded goods. The MCP knows how to bargain, and pay less (and less) to the vegetable-/fruit-seller, car cleaner, building security guard, house maid. The MCP knows how to jostle for a foothold or seat in a public bus/commuter train.

The MCP knows how to buy liquor during pandemic lockdowns, obtain complementary passes or out-of-turn tickets for celebrity/sports events, get the best/cheapest travel or holiday deals, or escape fines of traffic police and penalties of municipal authorities for rule violations. The MCP knows how to shut the eff up, go with the flow, put the head down, look ‘the other way’, curry favor with the “superiors”, all in order to land that overseas job, or an undeserving job promotion, or an increment, or a coveted posting, or an out-of-turn permission, a license...

The MCP knows how to land a place (admission) and fund the child/children’s higher studies in an elite/semi-elite “educational” institution or secure a job for his/her grown-up children through communal connections, networking, contacts, recommendations.

So, can we really argue the MCP “does not have the necessary intellect nor power (or energy) to figure out what is right, what is wrong”? Or, is it that the MCP’s intelligence has been infected by the virus of “saturated-selfishness” (to the utter exclusion of larger community’s/society’s interests from one’s priorities) – the said virus being designed, developed and injected by the elites into the society’s bloodstream, and happily and unquestioningly accepted by the MCPs as per convenience?

But isn’t that also the reason why society is still plagued by slums, poverty, illiteracy, poor infrastructure (haphazard development), poor sanitation and hygiene, inflation, migrant labor, unorganized sectors of economy, abysmal social infrastructure (lack of adequate hospitals, healthcare, good-quality schools, colleges, parks, playgrounds, libraries, committed media),

casteism, communalism, racism, nepotism, corruption, corporatization (privatization/commercialization) of essential sectors, fake democracy (clans, dynasties everywhere, including in entertainment and sports, not just in politics, government, bureaucracy or business)?

But the MCPs, it seems, strangely do not see the connection. They are content acknowledging the presence of the massive mess in life/society all right, but are also quick to blame the elites as well as the underclass for the same, in addition to other MCPs they imagine are at fault – basically everyone else except themselves, all the while refusing to look within, introspect: an easy way to absolve themselves of all responsibility.

“The rest of the peer group (MCPs) have got radicalized. They have sold their soul to the Devil. They have been converted into this or that. Even if I want to do any good, no-one will follow me. I’m not a leader. The world is beyond redemption. It’s a gone case. No-one will ever change. Nothing will ever change for the better.... So I want an easy way out. I want to do my own thing. I’ll have nothing to do with this wretched world anymore. I’ll just retire to some isolated place and pursue a simple dream, ‘far from the madding crowd’. Having already extracted my pound of flesh from this world, I’ll also adopt ‘I first’, ‘Me first’, ‘Myself first’, ‘Me and my folks first’ policy, like some countries have been trying to do.”

If they don’t plump for a copout, the MCPs tend to take the facile way out by finding false solace in delusion-creating narratives spun by “creative” spin-doctors, the poison of rhetoric of politicians, and the venom of divisiveness injected by leaders.

So: “Our nation is the world’s largest this or the biggest that”; “Our country is the greatest civilization”; “Diversity is our richness”; “Ours is a syncretic, secular culture”; “We have been victimized and enslaved for centuries, otherwise we would still be leading the world even today”; “blah blah blah”.

Is “a smooth, bump-free, average humdrum routine life” a fundamental right of the MCP? Is it really the professed innocent aspiration of the MCP? Is the MCP entitled to it without any terms and conditions? In this globalized, digitalized world of 21st century, does such a (smooth, bump-free, routine) life happen on its own through some automated process, without inflicting collateral damage on others as well as the society and the planet?

It’s all interconnected, and the MCP knows it too, but still adopts selective blindness (learned indifference) to facts. Deep down, the MCP knows he/she is complicit, but pretends he/she is ignorant, innocent, helpless, or insignificant (false modesty combined with shamelessness and smothered, subdued conscience/guilt).

Everyone knows it will all add up one day and blow up in one’s face, but everyone prefers to live in denial, vainly hoping the day of reckoning will arrive later than sooner, and the unfortunate future generations, their own children – not even grandchildren, forget it; and not themselves – will have to deal with it all.

Priority right now is to live yet another day, somehow survive, scrape through, bide time, make merry while you can, try to somehow perpetuate oneself and secure a future. That's what every organism is programmed to do anyway. Survive, eat, defecate, reproduce, die.

Rat race – survival of the fittest/meanest, right? And: Winner takes all – correct? To each his/her own (ఎవరికీ వారే యమునా తీరే), isn't it? For how long can this delusion go on? Selfishness that was (*seemingly*) a virtue yesterday will sound the MCP's death-knell tomorrow, or the day after.

The tide's turning. The inevitable, unstoppable 'Big Tsunami' (natural or 'elite-made') is coming. Beware!

Can something be done to stem the rot and reverse the descent into hell?

(Mind you, the novel coronavirus is still around, well into January 2021, mutating – variants galore globally – more than a year since it was first discovered.)

But you can hear and verbalize the thoughts in the MCP's mind: "If the Apocalypse is on its way, bring it on. I'll push my luck. Vaccines are here in record time. If I'm lucky, I'll survive, in which case I'll try to thrive again somehow. Let the truth, the future, and aspiring/potential change-makers be damned. After all, this is Kali Yug, bro."

CONCLUSION

To reiterate:

The biggest enemies of the Middle-Class Person (MCP) are **short attention span** and **a scattered mind** incapable of both focusing on his/her real/enlightened self-interest and distinguishing real enemies from real well-wishers.

By the way, if you have **short attention span**, and have an expectation that everything should be given to you on a platter, in a jiffy, because you are a very busy person with a hectic lifestyle and a premium on time, it is highly likely you are an idiot, an ignorant, egotistical, selfish, self-centered, greedy, hypocritical person who has got all his/her priorities wrong. It is likely you have an exaggerated sense of self-importance, and an overactive imagination that your life and your presence on this planet are of significance and make a huge difference.

Reality could be more sobering. You and your ilk may have already become expendable by now. You and your ilk bring no real value to the world. You and your ilk may be parasites on the larger system. You and your ilk have no real power nor knowledge or intrinsic merit. You and ilk may be just existing, surviving, drifting, floating about.

And, you must be naive, impressionable, gullible, prejudiced, biased, and hence vulnerable to cons, tricks, rhetoric, slogans, emotions, advertising, marketing, ideologies, etc. You must be spending all your time, energy and hard-earned (or ill-gotten) money on ultimately useless, inessential, unproductive, indulgent, fleeting or futile relationships, activities, products or services.

And, you must be confused and conflicted. You must be indifferent, irresponsible and apathetic toward the big picture (community/ society/ planet), obsessed as you are with "I, Me, Myself,

My folks". You may not really know what is in your, and your family's, real long-term interests. You have strong likes and dislikes and preferences, and are a slave of your 'comfort zone'.

You want to live your whole life in ignorance, denial, delusion, seclusion, isolation. You can't deal with reality, truth. You will trust and follow the butcher, the enemy, and treat real friends and well-wishers as enemies or pariahs.

You are doomed. And not a tear will likely be shed for you on your demise.

The MCP needs to realize his/her philosophy and approach to life so far has been one of "minding one's own business"

-- to 'each his/her own'.

-- Entrust, outsource, delegate larger responsibilities of community/society to the elites (politicians, bureaucrats, administrators, policymakers, people running massive institutions like defence, judiciary, law-enforcement agencies, celebrities, businesspeople, etc), and happily struggle away with total focus on personal/selfish goals.

Well, that has been the story so far in a nutshell.

The MCP believes this approach to life and living has paid rich dividends and will continue to do so in the future, no matter what.

All that the MCP needs to do is don't rock the boat, go with the flow, resist change and perpetuate status quo.

Two facts need urgent attention here:

1) That selfish approach has NOT paid rich dividends but has extracted a very heavy price in the form of trade-offs.

Make no mistake: the trade-offs made so far have extracted a very heavy price. There is no contradiction in what is being said here. While it is true the MCPs have received a lot indeed, they have also surrendered or lost a great deal more valuable than what they have received, raising serious questions over the balance in (or lack thereof) the trade-offs made. The trust reposed in the elites by the middle-class and the lower-class people has been violated to an unimaginable, probably irreparable, irretrievable extent.

By their acts of chicanery and evil -- financial scandals, anti-people policies, deliberately denied/slow/haphazard development, under-development of hard and social infrastructure, pollution, compromised manufacturing, subversion of institutions, criminalization of politics, government, religion and society, corruption in every sphere including elections, disempowerment of consumers,

citizens, voters, employees/workers -- the elites have proven themselves unworthy of people's trust.

2) Resisting change, perpetuating status quo will lead to the MCPs' further disempowerment, destruction, death and extinction. From now on, if the middle-class people do not unite and act PROACTIVELY (and peacefully, creatively, legally and patriotically) and, worse, reinforce the status quo through indifference or resistance to change, two things will likely happen:

i) The elites will be encouraged and compelled to exploit the people's passivity to turn on the heat and tighten the screws even further, using even more chicanery and brazen evil via draconian measures and authoritarian laws, ushering in totalitarian and dystopian regimes;

ii) The long-suffering lower classes will turn increasingly restive, risking unmitigated chaos and anarchy, resulting in destruction of everything built assiduously so far, and also probably in direct killer attacks on the middle-class (who, from the perspective of the lower classes, are the accessible Enemy, since the powerful elites will ensure they will continue to remain beyond the physical reach of mobs).

There is no gainsaying that the current system has made the MCP selfish, self-centered, greedy, mediocre, ignorant, smug, self-entitled, dependent on the brilliance of flawed geniuses among the elites, a parasite on the larger system, insecure, fearful, cowardly, narrow-minded, egotistic, intolerant.

On top of that, the MCP has given away all his/her power to the elites. That is not all. The MCPs, in a sense, have been conned into conspiring with the elites to continuously disempower the underclass (the workers and the poor and the underprivileged sections of society).

Stated differently, the capitalist system of free-market economics, and its political cousin, the fake democracy, which have enslaved you (the MCP) for decades now, are designed to trap both the middle-class and the underclass (the "have-nots") in an internecine downward spiral to mutual elimination, while empowering the common enemy, the elites (or the "haves").

This system works by hoodwinking the middle-class into cooperating with, and not resisting, much less seeing through, the elites' evil game-plan: to create, strengthen, deepen, and perpetuate so-called "progress" (the unsustainable 'wonders' of 'modern' science as manifest in the form of technologies that create body- or sense-related material comforts, pleasures and conveniences that are NOT essential but optional). Such "progress" is made to appear as desirable, the very goal of life. It is the seductive 'front-end' of modern culture characterized by avenues for indulgences and a dog-eat-dog, cut-throat rat race on the middle-class treadmill.

All the striving and efforts of the majority non-elites produces wealth that is funnelled into the elites, with a few crumbs thrown at the masses. Those crumbs are the seductive, kitschy, seemingly pervasive 'front-end', whose hypnotic or mesmerising effect holds the majority non-

elites in non-stop thrall, while the main cake is spirited away to the back-end for unfathomable activities that are off bounds for the ordinary people.

In your mind's eye, rewind to a few decades back. Now, dear MCP, ask yourself: even though you may own a few toys of the adults (property, car, numerically larger bank balance, jewelry, appliances, gadgets, etc), are you today really better off, more empowered, more knowledgeable, fitter, really happier, peaceful, healthier? In real mathematical terms, is the wealth-knowledge-power gap between you and the elites narrower today, as compared to the same gap between your parents and the elites of their time?

You know the honest answers, don't you?

The majority non-elites have no say in the direction of evolution of so-called cutting-edge technologies like automation, driveless vehicles, drones, big data, artificial intelligence, virtual reality, augmented reality, internet of things, industrial internet, genetically modified foods, stem cells, new materials, 5G, 6G, designer drugs, etc. But the masses are led to believe such technologies represent amazing progress. Are they? Or, will they eventually disempower the non-elites, making them redundant and expendable? In other words, the non-elites are cleverly manipulated to dig their own graves as well as those of the underclass.

While the non-elites got entangled in, and seduced by, the front-end of modern culture, every conceivable institution has been subverted and made corrupt, inefficient, incompetent, ineffective, starting from the holiest of the holy institutions such as religion, government, medical and healthcare, judiciary and defence to media, entertainment, business, industry. The ill-effects of this nasty con-game are pervasive in every society: haphazard development, crumbling or unadequate hard infrastructure, lack of social infrastructure, poverty, slums, diseases, illiteracy, climate change, global warming, environmental degradation, ecological imbalances, compromised biodiversity, withdrawal of welfare, financial scams, unethical scientific pursuits, widening wealth gap.

The reality of today is this (which will aggravate, become extremely acute, going forward -- if the status quo is perpetuated):

-- as a voter, the MCP has little choice but to pick (or alternate between) thugs, criminals, corrupt netas (politicians), incompetent, inefficient, illiterate rascals, dynasts, or glib, suave, sophisticated, smooth-talking celebrities/super-achievers coopted by the elites during elections, irrespective of parties. Once the election results are out, all sorts of behind the scenes dramas ensure a further mockery and rape of democracy are committed with impunity, disregarding people's mandate, to the utter bewilderment and exasperation of voters.

-- as a consumer of products/services/technology/content, the MCP no longer has a voice or any say, and is treated like a persona non grata, an invisible person who deserves no individual respect or attention, nor a quality product or service at affordable price. And even if you are able to shell out big money on a perceived quality product/service/content, there is high chance it will become obsolete sooner than later or redundant even when still usable as after-sales service is withdrawn, new models or updates are introduced and advertised seductively. The MCP as an

individual is not consulted at all in a meaningful, effective, practical way when it comes to the direction of evolution/progress of technologies, upgrades of products, services, content, or technologies. That is decided arbitrarily and flung at the masses (who include the MCPs) in a top-down manner. There won't be any privacy nor individual freedoms (which will be curtailed in the name of lockdowns, outbreaks, security issues, work-from-home, etc).

-- as a citizen, there is nothing the MCP can do individually to make systems and institutions function optimally, efficiently, anymore, as there is no accountability nor transparency, in spite of so-called new progressive laws (like Right to Information, LokPal, etc).

Recent events like lockdowns, GST implementation, and demonetization have exposed the reality of India. They have also exposed how inure and insensitive and indifferent and apathetic a typical MCP has become to the disempowerment, woes and disenfranchising of the lower classes like the farmers and farmhands of Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Punjab/North India, migrant workers, slum-dwellers, daily wage-earners, unorganized sector workers, so forth.

Going forward, 2021 onward, a voter (MCPs included), without being touched physically, attacked or assaulted, will be made further inconsequential and powerless through sheer manipulation and abuse of technology or new ways of voting. Votes of the lower classes will be further bartered or traded. Names will disappear from the voter lists, and the administrative procedures of reinstating them into their place will dissuade and discourage the MCPs from taking part in the electoral process at all.

Disinformation, rhetoric, lies, emotional content on mainstream media and social media will create confusion, fear, anger, insecurity, hate, etc, and swings in mood and decisions of voters.

Introduction of technologies like digital payments, digital currencies, cryptocurrencies will take the frauds of the financial and monetary systems (especially credit/loans created out of thin air) to the next higher level. Already, new laws will make even fixed deposits of banks insecure, guarantee-less. We have already witnessed the meltdown of several banks and cooperatives that left their depositors in the lurch. We have seen how the secretive, sudden surgical strike of overnight demonetization savaged small businesses and individuals.

Next, withdrawal of physical cash (money) and its gradual, imperceptible replacement with invisible, intangible, digital currencies / cryptocurrencies will create unspeakable, sophisticated, institutional "loots", in the name of system breakdowns, server outages, software virus, hacker attacks, phishing scams, etc.

It is entirely in the realm of possibility that the MCP could wake up one day and discover his/her digital bank account has been emptied of all digital cash, leaving him/her bankrupt, defenceless, remedy-less and compensation-less.

Such a fate has already befallen the underclass who, decades back, unsuspectingly accepted an unfair, sinful system and helped perpetuate the status quo through ignorance, indifference, unquestioned faith / acceptance / cooperation, indulgences, or trade-offs, hasn't it?

Whatever "assets" -- cash, jewellery, property, bank deposits, financial investments, land, so forth -- that the MCPs might think they own, will be slowly, gradually, inevitably spirited away, or devalued, making them worthless or disappear over a period of time, just like the system so far has bankrupted and totally disempowered the underclass. Just recall the mechanics and the method of the Global Financial Crisis of 2008-09.

That is not all. In the name of climate change, environmental conservation, etc, digital technologies will pre-empt travel of all kinds, thus restricting free movement of people and talent and skills and ideas.

Work from home could mean lower salaries but higher consumption of inane, zombifying online content (including largely useless, high-sounding "education" for children) and services, with no recourse to quality, after-sales service, protection from frauds.

Thus, status quo would not only reduce incomes but gradually but incrementally melt away that which has already been secured, eventually making the MCP an asset-less, powerless, spirit-less person.

An MCP like that will thus become dispensable, ripe for elimination/extinction, without any guilt or second thoughts on the part of the elites because the MCPs deserve all that -- after all, haven't they done, or helped do, the same to the underclass?

2021 truly is the beginning of a new era as determined by the elites. This is just the beginning, from their perspective.

We the MCPs (Middle-Class Persons) have not seen much yet, except the digital tip of the coming virtual reality of the dystopian iceberg. Let not the talk of vaccines lull you into complacency, false sense of security, victory over virus, vain hopes of "return to normal", or trusting the enemy.

Just look at the COVID-19 data like number of deaths, and infection cases, geographical spread, onset, virulence and disappearance of waves across geographies, and the timing of "sudden", systematic, seemingly coordinated emergence of virus mutations and variants across geographies, rushed development and approvals for vaccines....

Also look for what is missing in the data. Recall where your mind and attention have been drawn to over the last year, in spite of debilitating, unprecedented, unexpected and unimaginable disruptions to life and living. Remember there have been distractions, temptations, confusion, information overload. Understand your own propensity to shut off your mind and wallow in denial and delusion and short attention span, your comfort zone, and in the known and the familiar. Expect the same going forward.

That is how "the game" is played. Beware!

The MCP does not realize the game has changed, probably permanently. His/her game needs to change as well. This time, for the better.

To reiterate, the MCP also does not realize he/she has already received a lot. He/she can continue to receive even more, provided the MCP first admits to himself/herself that he/she has been immensely fortunate, even lucky, to have received so much in life already, probably undeservingly, and that the same process has wreaked immense havoc and collateral damage on the hapless underclass, society, the environment and the planet.

So, the way forward is to recognize the cosmic laws at work, and change one's concept of life and one's worldview. Having received so much already, it's time to lift oneself to the next higher level in the evolutionary process.

Share PROACTIVELY to receive even more. Or risk losing what you have already.

Stop being indifferent to evil all around; PROACTIVELY, *peacefully, legally (constitutionally), creatively and patriotically* resist 'evil'.

It's time to cast off selfishness, mindless greed, crass consumerism, ego, disunity, risk-aversion, and mediocrity.

What's urgently required are these:

- broadmindedness, moderation, pursuit of excellence, risk appetite (in terms of becoming boldly entrepreneurial for the benefit of society, not just for profit, which should be incidental and used to create a virtuous spiral/cycle);
- what's also needed are humility in place of ego; and unity, understanding, tolerance, empathy, cooperation and collaboration in place of isolationism, intolerance, primitive animalistic/subhuman traits;
- what's essential is an attitude of giving, to balance the shameless, heartless approach of taking, grabbing and accumulating;
- what's needed is escape from the clutches of love of status quo and reflexive resistance to change;
- what's of paramount importance is the willingness to overcome learned aversion to so-called "heavy" stuff (intellectual discourse) and resolve to detach from "light", mind-numbing, dumbing-down, zombifying, inane, insensate media and market discourse.

If the MCPs quickly reorient themselves to this new life ethic, they will not only secure what they already have but also receive even more. The MCPs have to overcome both addiction to mediocrity and fear of big success.

Every MCP should have inner clarity how he/she will help make the world a better place when he/she becomes a multi-millionaire, or even a billionaire.

Else, the MCPs will end up paying the ultimate price – with their life as well as those of their loved ones, if they don't change their ways; if they continue to unthinkingly, madly, vainly persist with the desire for status quo; if they resist, sabotage, scuttle, thwart, ignore, or fail to

proactively initiate efforts for positive change; or if they fail to support, cooperate and collaborate wholeheartedly with change-makers.

HERE'S THE FINAL DEAL:

For bad or for worse, we find ourselves at the fag end (or the last chapter) of a very long story, whose beginnings go back a very long time, to the very start of modern society several millennia ago, when the template of 'many-for-few' was laid.

The underlying template has survived for ages, remained the same, while actors, their disguises, their acts, the scenes and settings, kept on changing, finally bringing us to this current, ongoing last act/scene of the sordid, unsustainable, planet-ravaging, species-destroying drama.

Simply put, given the size of the human population now, status quo (or no change) would confirm the mathematical certainty that the middle-class Titanic will inevitably, unstopably sink. Which is why, the evil elites are doubling down PROACTIVELY on their time-tested script – they want the status quo; they will brook no change; they want the underlying template untouched; they want the non-elites to shoot themselves in the foot, dig their own graves and perish, this time for good, so that there is no need for old wine in new bottle anymore, because both the old wine and the new bottle are not only no longer necessary (the non-elites are totally defenceless) but unsustainable, dangerous (given the precarious state of the planet). The elites already have a vision for a post-middle-class, post-underclass world.

If you, the Middle-Class Person, decide to stick to the same script as well, and swear by status quo (no change), then realize you will forfeit any moral right to complain ever again. Do not ever complain against corrupt politicians, crime in society, haphazard development, poor infrastructure, lack of this or that. Just shut the **EFF** up and lump it from now on. Just as you exploit the underclass, you and your family will be exploited by the elites of the coming totalitarian, authoritarian regimes of dystopian societies; and you will all be exterminated in your own lifetime, SOONER THAN LATER.

Dear MCP:

Here's the deal. The choice before you from 2021 onward is this:

EITHER

More vanity, selfishness, self-centredness, greed, ignorance, insecurity, fear, cowardice, status quo, hardship, rat race on a treadmill, destruction, death, extinction

OR

We are all victims of a massive systemic, systematic, subtle, and sophisticated scam. If we don't change the status quo NOW urgently ... if we don't embrace BIG CHANGE proactively and wholeheartedly ... our very survival will be at stake. Our survival depends on change, renewal, continued growth, pursuit of excellence, bigger responsibilities (of community), which will produce bigger success, a life of moderation (in terms of sense gratifications and sensual enjoyments like comforts

and pleasures) and discretion, resulting in sharing, higher values, peace, fulfillment.

Choose wisely.