

MANAGING A VISION: DEMOCRACY, DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNANCE (2005). By G.R.S Rao. Kalpaz Publications. Pp. 246. Price Rs. 750 /-.

THE BOOK under review has been published when the economies of countries all over the world are in the phase of transition due to the fact of embracing the idea of liberalization, privatization and globalization. During this transition period, a citizen is concerned about the visionaries and the vision with a mission for managing democracy. Therefore, the book entitled “Managing a Vision: Democracy, Development and Governance” is a boon for the readers to generate a sense of thinking on the relevance of democracy, development governance so as to understand the inter-play between democracy and development. The author has framed six main topics: Movement for Freedom; Vision of India; Mission Mode - The Challenge; Progression - Regression: The Quality of Change; Constitutional Deficit - An Appraisal; Tryst with Destiny - Managing the Vision.

The book generates many thoughts in the minds of readers as to the functioning of constitutional process with its ideological contents, the deficits in performance, the “economic heights and social sights” and the deficiencies in peoples’ participation.

On the aspect of constitutional deficit, the author has discussed at length with special reference to distortions of visions, faulted process of power and has underlined how the governance have fallen sick in implementing the spirit of Constitution and its fruits to the people of India. But still the author reposes full confidence on the people of India to set right the development through full participation.

The book written by G.R.S Rao, gives high inspiration to the readers due to the fact that it reflects, to some extent, the vision and the wisdom of *Lok Nayak* Jay Prakash Narayan, with whom the author has had long association. The forward written by one of the great legal luminaries V.R. Krishna Iyer J is also more inspiring for the readers.

The author’s reference to judgments of the Supreme Court and high courts in his elaboration on various topics is quite instructive. With rich experience in the area of public policy and social development the author has put on all his efforts in making this book more instructive for readers to understand democracy, development and governance.

The author while analyzing the different topics at length has come forward with concrete suggestions such as codification of privileges of



legislatures, electoral reforms, to adopt the *westminister* governance in India for transfers, suspensions or promotion and postings by a special group of senior bureaucrats. Social auditing, citizen's manifesto, citizen's charter's for ensuring accountability and transparency of the political and administrative institutions, state funding of election to avoid faulty exercise of power, realization by "privileged functionaries" to understand the reason behind providing privileges to them, sense of citizenship and a spirit of nationalism among the citizens are some of the valuable suggestions made by the author.

Under the first topic, namely, 'Movement for Freedom' the author has focused on universal and eternal values that have cherished our nation to be an "integrated whole". He refers India as a "polyglot society" and argues that the substance of the vision on India operates as a touchstone of liberal democracy, movement towards "*Sampurna Swaraj*" and "*Abhyadaya*", progression of freedom.

Under the second topic, namely, 'Vision of India' the author has focused on the visionaries and their visions who were ornamental and instrumental in providing Constitution to India. However, had the author given a critical view on the important debates on crucial issues in the constituent assembly the discussion would have been still more attractive.

Under the third topic titled 'Mission Mode' the author has analyzed the different factors that have introduced change in the society, for example, the freedom movement bringing the change to democratization, the translation of human right to bring political, economic, social and cultural change in tune with the Constitution and the change brought out by globalization and liberalization of economies.

Under the fourth topic, namely, 'Progression-Regression' the author has pointed three processes that could be evolved for the fulfillment of constitutional vision in India, namely, (i) integration of democracy and development, (ii) convergence of the economic "heights" and social "sights" set out while ensuring that no "contra-indicators" emerge and (iii) the nature and quality of socio-legal engineering so as to promote and sustain transformation of pluralist society into an integrated nation with the citizens experiencing pride of the citizenship.

According to the author, the most striking feature about the process of democratic, social transformation is that, in the five decades of Indian Republic, more and more caste groups are sliding towards backwardness. In this regard, the idea of social engineering for an equitable society mooted by the author is highly appreciable.

Under the fifth topic namely, 'Constitutional Deficit - An Appraisal' the author builds up a new concept known as "Contempt of Citizens," i.e.,



to say the political process in our democracy is such that there is more scope for corporatization of political parties.

The author is right in stating that high frequency of amendments to the Constitution affected through a process of partisan and confrontationist game of numbers rather than democratic consensualism. The author under this topic should have discussed the ways and means to prevent corporatization of politics and criminalization of politics to avoid distortion of constitutional vision.

Under the last topic 'Tryst with Destiny' the author has emphasized on social auditing which focused on the initiatives that the citizens, including all those manning the political parties and institutions of governance, as citizens first, have to commit themselves in order to strengthen the democratic character as a way of life, and more in the direction of the 'Tryst with Destiny'.

It is highly appreciable that the author has called for creative leadership in sustaining, nurturing, harvesting and enriching the Constitution for the progress of Indian society, for generations to come, to pass on the heritage, duly enriched, to the coming generations. The author invigorates the idea that the Constitution has the potential to convert India from being the numerically largest democracy into a great democracy.

In general, the author has arranged all the materials methodically. However, the book is priced a bit more.

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