

**UNDER DEVELOPMENT AND
SUPERSTITIOUS BELIEFS**

Abraham I. Kovoor

**Thermal Power and Temple
Complex**

It was reported that, in connection with the 100th birth

anniversary of the late Mr. D. J. Wimalasurendra, arrangements were made to lay the foundation stones for the construction of a temple complex on the dam site of the

Mousekelle reservoir, and to dedicate them to God Saman, the "guardian deity of the Samanala Adaviya", and invoke his blessings for the "successful completion of projects based on rivers which have their sources in the central massif, the domain of Saman".

Could Mr. Wimalasurendra, the far-sighted engineer, have ever envisaged that several years after his death - in a space age - some people of Sri Lanka would be squandering taxpayers' money to build a temple complex in the hope of obtaining electric power through the blessings of a non-existing legendary god? Are we given foreign exchange, by the World Bank and friendly "materialistic" countries, to build temples for the regional gods of Sri Lanka or for development projects?

On reading this in the local news papers, the shocking news about the sacrifice of a 22 year old girl by the Adivasi tribes of Madhya Pradesh, India, for ensuring the strength of a river dam under construction, came to my mind. Speaking about this incident in the State Assembly of Madhya Pradesh, the Chief Minister Mr Sethi said, "This tragic crime resulted from the superstitious belief held by the illiterate and ignorant hill tribes of the area that the guardian deity of their hills could be pleased by the shedding of blood of a virgin on the dam under construction".

All those who were responsible for this gruesome religious ritual are today in Indian jails. It is gratifying that our people in Sri Lanka do not share the belief of the hill tribes of Madhya Pradesh! Our virgins

**THE CURRENT WORLD ECONOMIC SCENE
AND ITS IMPACT ON DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**

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A solution must have a lasting impact on the attitudes and psychology of the people. It has to be worked not only within existing political and social conditions and the value system but also taken into the possible changes that can be foreseen. This requires a new approach and a new scenario towards global economic development. The ideals and aspirations of the younger generations will have to be given adequate weightage. Economic problems affect the youth of the developing countries most while in the developed countries they are faced with a different set of problems. But in all cases the youth are seeking to establish peace through methods that may be different. Youth does not tolerate extremes of wealth and poverty and openly favour have-nots against the haves. Equity in the distribution of income is one of the objectives through which they aim at increasing efficiency of workers, raising dignity of labour preventing unfair competition, exploitation and all types of privileges. Youth are frustrated as employment opportunities are limited. What is therefore required is a new look at the strategies of develop-

ment, and a new look at the methods of achieving the ultimate goal. Any exhibition in the form of "emperors new clothes" will not only alienate the younger generations but will make them lose confidence in the methods. Apart from pressing for timely corrective action to restore world economic health and stability, there should be an acceptance of the urgent need to reform the existing system on a time bound programme of action.

Let me conclude my remarks by saying that the world economic malaise may be on a Kondratieff 50 year cycle but the instruments available for correcting this can be applied successfully only within the context of an interdependent world. The adjustment process itself has to be a global one and any attempt to go alone by any single country will only confuse the issues. Concerted efforts on demand management policies together with supply policies need to be defined, evaluated, identified, discussed, accepted and implemented. The bleak economic future before us cannot be solved by resorting to abstract expressions of political and economic semantics.

ECONOMIC REVIEW 1982

THE BEST OF THE ECONOMIC REVIEW

are not in danger of being sacrificed to god Saman!!

While we in Sri Lanka try to make rain by prayers and poojas, Let us see what the leaders of our neighbouring country, India, are doing. I quote below a news item from a Indian newspaper:

"The artificial rain-making experiments by seeding the clouds in the catchment areas of the Madras city's water sources, which began last week, will be continued till the end of the month.

"The experts in rain making will then move on to Coimbatore for similar operations in the hydral areas of the Nilgiris. Till the middle of November they will be shuttling between Madras and Coimbatore, inducing the clouds to shed the rain in these two areas.

"The result of the cloud seeding experiments in Poondi area near Madras for the past one week have been encouraging".

Although the masses in India are as superstitious as those of Sri Lanka, they seem to be more fortunate in that some of their leaders are prepared to discard primitive superstitious beliefs, and march forward towards progress and prosperity using scientific methods.

Again under the caption "Pirith for a Week" the following news appeared in the Ceylon Daily News:-

"A week-long pirith ceremony begins today in the Senate Library to invoke the blessings of the Triple Gem on the country. Members of the public and many Buddhist organisations

have been invited to participate".

Able-bodied men and women all over the country are invited to spend one full week without doing any work. Can we afford to do so because there are "materialistic" people in the West to work hard for us and give us their surplus? How true Lord Fenner Brockway was when he said that the prosperous nations of the West should put a stop to the practice of giving aid to the so-called developing

countries! This is exactly how the priestly class originated. When the primitive man, who lived by eating the flesh of animals he hunted, evolved into a farmer he could produce surplus food. Crafty ones among primitive farmers started to live as parasites on the workers consuming their surplus products on the pretext of possessing miraculous powers to help them to make their "life after death" better!

ECONOMIC REVIEW JUNE 1976

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