

# Editorial

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## Transforming adversity to opportunity

Diversity of beliefs, religion, traditions, customs, language and cultures presents diverse opportunities and impediments the world over. What differentiates a progressive culture or government from one steeped in tradition and blind beliefs is the way difficulties and drawbacks are perceived, and addressed.

The most developed countries in the world, at the best of times still have to grapple with myriad issues and internal conflicts which are social, political and fiscal in nature. The world has yet to witness or experience a perfect government, and indeed, governing is a thankless job. What keeps prominent personalities relentlessly pursuing the top posts of a country are the inducements and privileges in various forms that comes with the posts. It would be wishful thinking if we are to believe that leaders of the developed nations or states are above reproach; guided only by their altruistic beliefs and zeal.

After certain permutations and combinations of the existing political and economic atmosphere, everything boils down to just a few basic factors that determines the level of efficacy of a government- readiness to usher in changes no matter how radical or unpopular such a move might appear initially, ability to reach out and stay connected with the masses through its various agencies, the political determination backed by action for curbing corruption, despotism and nepotism as well as the humility to respect and give space for other machineries such as the law and media to carry out their roles in the society without any restraint or suspicion of unwarranted influence.

China, the most populous country in the world beset with the accompanying problems of overpopulation and underemployment, after a long struggle, realised the opportunities presented by its inherent shortcomings and shifted focus from an agrarian economy to one with optimum utilization of the abundantly available manpower for production and manufacturing to become the largest economy, surpassing the USA in the process.

Thailand, a small south-east Asian country has managed to utilize its agrarian economy to become the largest exporter of rice in the world, and coupled with the proactive development of tourist facilities, have managed to earn 10 percent of its GDP from the tourism sector alone, resulting in keeping rate of unemployment to less than 1 percent. Cut to the present India, and by extension, our very state with the sobriquet "mani gee leipak"- loosely translated as 'land of jewels'. There is no denying that we are proud of our rich culture, customs and traditions and we would go to any length to protect and preserve them.

We almost always refer to our 'glorious' past and 'developed' heritage at the drop of a hat. There is a sneaking feeling that we are becoming more than 'proud', that we have acquired a certain air of 'haughtiness' of a past we are unsure if we still deserve. It is time to introspect and reflect on the deviations, to own up our mistakes and review our moral and social standing. Everyone of us have a stake in making earnest efforts to make this state work and progress. It would be sheer foolishness to try and push each other off the boat as that will only result everybody getting capsized.

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## The other Face of "May -Day" In Europe & North America

By: Sanjenbam Jugeshwor Singh.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century 1<sup>st</sup> May was chosen as the date for "International Worker's Day" by the Socialist and communist to commemorate the Haymarket Affairs in Chicago. International Worker's day can also be referred as May -Day, but it is different celebration from the traditional May-Day celebrated in almost European countries as well as in U.S and Canada. May Days ancient Northern Hemisphere Spring festival and a traditional spring holiday in many cultures usually celebrated on 1<sup>st</sup> May. Dances, singing and cakes are usually part of the festival. The earliest known May celebrations appeared with the FLORALIA, festival of Flora, the roman Goddess of flowers, held on 27 April during the Roman Republic era and the Maiouma or Maiuma, a festival celebrating Dionysus and Aphrodite on an unknown date in May every three years. The Floralia opened with theatrical performances. In the Floralia, Ovid says that hares and goats were released as part of the festivities. Persius writes that crowds were pelted with vetches, beans and lupins. A ritual called the Florifortium was performed either on April 27 or May 3, during which a bundle of wheat ears was carried into a shrine though it is not clear if this devotion was made to Flora or Ceres. Floralia conducted with competitive events and spectacles and a sacrifice to Flora.

According to the 6<sup>th</sup> century chronicles of Jhon Malalas, the Maiuma was a "nocturnal dramatic festival" held every three years and known as orgies that is, the Mysterious of Dionysus and Aphrodite and it was known as the Maioumas because it is celebrated in the month of May. During this time, enough money was set aside by the celebrated with splendid banquets and offerings. Its reputation for licentiousness causes it to be suppressed during the reign of Emperor Constantine, though a less debauched version of it was briefly restored during the reign of Arcadius and Honorius, only to be suppressed again during the san period. A later May festival celebrated in Germanic countries, Walpurgis Night, commemorates the official canonization of Saint Walpurga on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 870. In Gaelic culture, the evening of April 30<sup>th</sup> was the celebration of Beltane (Whichtansact-to- Lucky fire), the start of summer season. First attested in 900 AD, the celebration mainly focused on the symbolic use

of fire to bless cattle and other livestock's as they were moved to summer pastures.

On May Day, Bulgarians celebrates Irminden. The holiday is associated with snakes and lizards and rituals are made in order to protect people from them. In Czech Republic, May Day is traditionally considered as a holiday of love and May as a month of love. The celebration of spring are held on 30<sup>th</sup> April, when a Maypole is erected- a tradition possibly connected to Beltane, since bonfires are also lit on that day. It is a public holiday on 30 April. On May 31<sup>st</sup> the Maypole is taken down in an event called Maypole felling. On 1<sup>st</sup> May couples in love are kissing under a blooming tree. May Day or Spring Day is a national holiday in Estonia, celebrating the arrival of spring. More traditional festivities takes place throughout the night before and into the early hours of 1 May. In Finland: Walpurgis Night is one of the four biggest holidays along with Christmas Eve; New Year eve and Midsummer. Walpurgis witness the biggest carnival style festival held in Finland's cities and towns. The celebration which begin on the evening of 30<sup>th</sup> April and continue up to 1<sup>st</sup> May. Typically center on the consumption of Sima, sparkling wine and other alcoholic beverages. Student's traditions, particularly those of engineering students are one of the main characteristic of Vappu. On May 1561, King Charles IX of France received a lily of the valley as a lucky charm. He decided to offer a lily of the valley each year to the ladies of the court. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it became custom to give a sprig of lily of the valley, a symbol of springtime on 1 May. The government permits individuals and workers organization to sell them tax free on that day. Nowadays, people may present loved ones either with bunches of lily of the valley or dog rose flowers. In rural regions of Germany, especially the Harz Mountains, Walpurgisnacht celebrations of Pagan origin are traditionally held on the night before May Day including bonfires and wrapping of a Maibaum (Maypole). Young people use this opportunity to party, while the day itself is used by many families to get some fresh air, Motto: Tanz in den mai! (dancing into May). In Greece, 1 May is a day that celebrates spring. The most common aspect of modern May Day celebrations in Greece is the preparation of a flower wreath from wild flowers. The flowers are placed on the wreath against a background

of green leaves and the wreath is hung either on the entrance to the family house/apartment or on a balcony. It remains there until midsummer night. On that night, the flower wreaths are set alight in bonfires, known as St John's fire. May Day has been celebrating in Ireland since pagan times as the feast of Baltane and latter time as Mary's day. Traditionally, bonfires were lit to mark the coming of summer and to grant luck to people and livestock. Old traditions such as bonfire are no longer widely observed though the practice still persist in some places across the country.

In Italy, it is called Calendimaggio or Cantar Maggio, a seasonal feast held to celebrate the arrival of spring. "Maiais" is a superstition throughout Portugal, with special focus on the northern territories and rarely elsewhere. Maiais is the dominant naming in northern Portugal, but it may be referred to by other names including Diadas Bruxast Witches day), O Burro (the Donkey, referring to an evil spirit) or the last of April as the local traditions preserved to this day occur on that evening only. People put yellow flowers of Portuguese brooms, the bushes are known as giestar. The flowers of the bush are known as Maiais, which are placed on doors or gates and every doorways of houses, windows, granaries, currently also cars, which the populace collect on the evening of the 30<sup>th</sup> April when the Portuguese brooms are blooming, to defend those places from bad spirit, witches and evil eyes. The placement of the May flower or bush in the doorways must be done before midnight. On May Day, the Romanians celebrate the arminden (or Arminden), the beginning of summer, symbolically tied with the protection of crops and farm animals. The day is celebrated to ensure good wine in autumn and for people and farm animals' alike, good health and protection from the elements of nature (Storms, hailiness pests). People will have parties in natural surroundings with fiddlers for those who could afford it. Then it is customary to roast and eat lamb along with new mutton cheese and to drink mug wort- flavored wine or just red wine to refresh the blood and get protection from diseases. On the way back, the men wear lilac or mug wort flowers on their hats. In Serbia, Provomajski Uranak (Reveille on May 1<sup>st</sup>) is a folk tradition and feast that consist of the fact that on May 1, people go in the nature or even leave the day before and spend the night with a camp fire. Most of the time, a dish is cooked in a kettle or in a barbecue. Among Serbs this holiday

is widespread. Almost every town in Serbia, has its own traditional first-of- May excursion sites and most often these are green areas outside the city.

In Spain, May day is celebrated throughout the country as Los Mayos (Lit; the May's) often in a similar way to Fista de las Crees in many parts of the Hispanic America. People sing popular songs (also called Maïos) making mentions to social and political events (around a decorate tree or sculpture) during the past year, sometimes under the form of converse, while they walk around with the percussion of two sticks. Today the tradition became a competition where the best sculpture and songs received prize. In Sweden, the more traditional festivities have moved to the day before Walpurgis Night, known in some locals as simply last of April and often celebrated with bonfire and a good bit of drinking. However 1<sup>st</sup> May is celebrated as International Worker's Day. Traditional English May Day rites and celebrations include crowning a May Queen and celebrations involving a Maypole, around which dancers often circle with ribbons. Historically, Morris dancing has been linked to May Day celebrations. May Day has been celebrated in Scotland for centuries. It was previously closely associated with Beltane evening. In Wales, the first day of May is known as Calan Haf or Calan Haf, and parallels the festival of Beltane and other May Day tradition in Europe. Traditions would start the night before with bonfires and is considered a spring night when people would gather hawthorn and flowers to decorate their houses, celebrating new growth and fertility. While on May Day celebrations would include summer dancing and May carols other times referred to as singing under the wall, May Day was also a time for officially opening a village green. In Canada, May Day is celebrated in some parts of the provinces of British Columbia, Quebec, New Brunswick and Ontario. In Toronto, on the morning of 1<sup>st</sup> May, various Morris dancing troops from Toronto and Hamilton gather on the road by granadier, café, in High Park to dance in the May. May Day was also celebrated by some early European settlers of the American continent. In some parts of the United States, May basket are made. These are small baskets usually filled with flowers or treats and left at someone's doorstep. The giver rings the bell and runs away. This ishow, May Day is celebrated in various parts of European & North Americans countries.

Writer can be reached to: [sjugeshwor7@gmail.com](mailto:sjugeshwor7@gmail.com) Or WhatsApp's No: 9612891339

## Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS) : a management option for Parkinson's disease



Dr Amitabh Gupta  
HOD Neurosurgery, Batra Hospital.

Introduction Parkinson's disease (PD) is a progressive disorder of the nervous system that generally affects overall body movements in people over 60 years of age, occurring decade earlier in familial cases. It usually begins with symptoms which are barely noticeable like tremors in hands or inability to execute simple coordinated movements like signing or eating food, face may show little

or no expression, or arms may not swing while walking and soft or slurred speech. These symptoms may be enough to diagnose PD by an expert neurologist / or a neurosurgeon performing DBS surgeries. Patients affected by advance state Parkinson's demonstrates varying degrees of stiffness of body, slowness or difficulty in initiating movements or freezing.

What causes PD?

In Parkinson's disease, loss of dopamine-producing cells leads to excessive and abnormally patterned activity in both the Globus pallidus interna (GPI) and the subthalamic nucleus (STN). This is evident by the fact that "Pacing" of these nuclei with a constant, steady-frequency electrical pulse corrects this excessive and abnormal activity. What are the risk factors for Parkinson's disease? Age - 60 yrs and above.

Genetic - Having a blood relative with Parkinson's disease.

Sex - Men.

Exposure to toxins - Ongoing exposure to herbicides and pesticides.

Treatment for Parkinson's disease and when to consider DBS?

For most patients suffering from early Parkinson's disease, levodopa and other antiparkinsonian medications are usually effective for maintaining a good quality of life. However, with the progression of disease, medications can produce disabling side effects. Many patients on long-term levodopa develop troublesome dyskinesias, excessive movements that often cause the limbs and body to writhe or jump. In addition, their dose of levodopa no longer lasts as long as it once did. This may lead to "on-off fluctuations," a condition in which the ability to move changes unpredictably between a mobile ("on"), state when medication seem

to work, and an immobile ("off") state in which little effect of medication is apparent and normal movement is very difficult. Once on & off effect sets in, medical relief from PD symptoms become unpredictable. When patients no longer have an acceptable quality of life DBS should be considered.

How to treat with DBS ?

In deep brain stimulation (DBS), surgeons implant electrodes into a specific part of your brain. The electrodes are connected to a generator implanted in your chest that sends electrical pulses to your brain and may reduce your Parkinson's disease symptoms. It's effects are completely reversible. DBS can stabilize medication fluctuations, reduce or halt involuntary movements (dyskinesias), reduce tremor, reduce rigidity, and improve slowing of movement.

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