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Little stroke fell great oaks

The story is of Dassrath Majhi, who was a small labourer living in remote village of Bihar. The village folks have to cross a nearby mountain on foot to reach the town nearby.

When Majhi's wife went into labour he wasn't able to take his wife to hospital on time. This made him determined that he won't allow any other such casualty to occur.

Then he started digging the mountain with his traditional tools daily to make a road over it. He was ridiculed for taking such a task with such primitive tools.

Years went by and finally after more than 20 years of hardwork and persistence he was able to make his way.

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The herculean task was accomplished with small efforts every day. The great oak finally fell to such little and seemingly insignificant strokes.

Keep this story in mind in this essay we will discuss how huge tasks (great oaks) can be accomplished (fell) with little ^{efforts} (strokes) consistently. Then we will see do little strokes always succeed? or do hard and large strokes accomplish results sometimes.

Then at last we will look how to inculcate this ability to stick with small strokes (process). Let us start!

Humankind have been faced with huge tasks from ^{the} time it set foot on planet Earth. And as we take a dive in history to study them, we see more often than not steady little strokes have been victorious.

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Like when social reformers in 18th and 19th century India were faced with systematic women and dalit exploitation. These Dalits were forced to do menial tasks, denied education and even their sight was considered polluting.

Similarly women weren't allow remarriage, there was huge incidence of child marriage and were deprived education. Reform like Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Rom Mohan Roy, Jyotiba Phule fought against it by enlightening masses, opening educational institutes for deprived and even took help of Britishers for reform legislation.

By their efforts and of many others like Ambekar afterwards this systematic discrimination was uprooted and untouchability was declared illegal (Article 17). Today we see women like Indira Nooyi flying high and competing equally with all.

Similar have been the journey of India's Space Programme. Starting with meagre budget and handmade rocket transported on cycles under able guidance of Vikram Sarabhai, today we have become fourth country to soft land on moon via Chandrayaan 3 Mission.

ISRO has made these strides step by step from PSLV-3 to GSLV Mk III, from small satellites in lower earth orbit to missions on Mars and Moon. It has all been accomplished in little steps.

Equally interesting episode was of Thomas Alva Edison discovery of bulb. He tried more than 1000 materials but none worked successfully as filament. Still he kept his efforts and finally arrived at the right material.

~~little strokes~~ Similarly Congress was faced with huge task of uprooting

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British empire from India. They started with baby steps of using prayer, protest and petitions to highlight their demands. These consistent small efforts enlarged its mass base and finally Gandhiji using simple non-violent satyagraha was able to force Britishers out of India.

Likewise in South Africa, Nelson Mandela led a similar movement against apartheid. He also led mass movements and regularly voiced his opinion against discriminatory practice. He even spent life in jail for around 27 years but finally his efforts yielded results and came out of jail in apartheid free Africa.

Similarly in recent Arab Spring which started in Tunisia and spread across countries like Egypt, etc little strokes

by different parties were on display which ultimately led to downfall of dictators and rise of democracy.

'Anonymous' (a cyber hacking group) mass hijacked the online infrastructure used to suppress people's dissent, helped them communicate without surveillance. This all helped in its spread and finally bearing the fruit of democracy.

Now if we look at the pages of past, Galileo's story comes to our mind. He challenged the church's version of centrality of Earth. He proved that sun was at Centre of solar system and Earth moves around it.

As expected he was suppressed and forced house arrest. Finally he died with "epurus simove" (But the Earth does move) placed over his tombstone.

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The dent that his stroke created was further picked up by others and church's view of centrality of Earth was finally rejected by all.

Likewise, Oskar Schindler during World War II employed large numbers of Jews in his factory in order to protect them from Nazis. He bribed officials to increase the numbers in his factory. And even today "Schindler Jews" and their generations live us to tell of his small efforts on their lives.

Even today we have brilliant case of Israel and its water management. Being a desert region the little practices of harvesting and water optimization have enabled it to defeat mammoth problem of water scarcity. It today serve as an example for world.

But having seen a

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lot of examples of little strokes to achieve great things, obvious question strikes - do they always succeed?

Obvious answer is No.

Nothing including these small strokes can succeed in all situations and circumstances. But ^{as} they involve less risks, miniscule efforts and ability for anyone to undertake them, their chances of success are more.

If we look at setbacks, take the case of Myanmar. The transition to democracy was slow and smooth for a period. Small strides were taken for progress in right direction. But suddenly ^{military's} ~~over~~ displeasure over elections reverted all the gains and democracy was shut in box again.

Likewise in Kyoto Protocol binding and ~~to~~ externally were put on countries to slowly

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revert back climate change. But it displeased many and due to conflicts it didn't get fully implemented on ground.

For an issue like climate change little strokes at slow pace may not be enough as highlighted by IPCC reports. We need to take large strokes at this issue of climate change to manage it.

likewise there are other issues in present and have been in past which were solved by violent and instantaneous strokes.

India in 1971 was facing large refugee problem with little support due to US siding with Pakistan. It took instant military action and brought down regime in East Pakistan within 11 days.

Similarly after independence India was having trouble with food security. We were

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dependent on imports and PL-480 programme of USA. To swiftly resolve it MS Swaminathan introduced 9M variety seeds and production went up immediately and we became food secure.

These large strokes may be needed when you want immediate results. But they require immense efforts and power. They can't be undertaken by a layman. Also their ~~are~~ chances of failure are high too.

American invasion in West Asia including Iraq, Afghanistan etc. have not yielded results and humiliated America on global stage.

So for wide penetration and continuous success little strokes can be a good way to fill great oats.

But currently ^{largely in} our society there has been lack of patience,

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tendency to jump to conclusions,
want of immediate results and lack
of faith in process.

These has resulted
in inefficient results and endured
our chances of long term success.

They have led to treatment of
symptoms rather than the cure
disease. This is highlighted by use
of freebies to tackle issues of
poor income.

Also, it has resulted in
consistent stuck problems. As seen by
Oxfam report in India top 10% owns
77% of wealth. This inequality has
stuck with us.

So keeping these in
mind we need to inculcate
patience among the youth. The
quote "Sabar ka fal meetha hota
hai" (Patient's fruit is sweet) need
to fixated in everyone's mind.

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It not to say we shouldn't dream big. Dreaming big is necessary for growth and progress but we need a clear plan to achieve it and consistently stick to that plan.

If every person of India identifies their own great oaks like Darrath Majhi and make little stakes to achieve it, nothing can stop India from becoming a developed nation by 2047 and taking its rightful place as "Vishwa Guru" in the world.

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Reality is the shadow of ideas

After World War II, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) was created. The idea was of mutual ~~deterrence~~ security and collective ~~deterrence~~. It was based on idea of ending conflicts and providing mutual prosperity.

Fast forward to 2022, when fast eastward expansion of NATO became the very cause of angering Russia. It has caused a bloody conflict killing thousands, displacing millions and infrastructural losses worth billions. It has caused a ^{global} slowdown affecting Europe, Russia, and America particularly.

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The organisation whose ultimate idea was peace and prosperity, although promoted it on paper and to an extent on ground as seen via no world war since 1940s. But it has also been the cause of recent Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Keeping this in mind in this essay we will look what is reality and ideas, and how reality is shadow of ideas. Then we will look for causes of being mere shadow. And at last we will see how to make reality mimic ideas. Let's start!

Reality is what exist on ground in this mortal world. It shows the things as they are in this world. It includes anything which can be experienced.

while ideas are mental construction. It is how

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we imagine a particular thing to be. Ideas are boundless and limitless. They exist in the realm of imagination.

Often reality is inspired from ideas. Only when we imagine a thing, we can bring it to reality. Like when man imagined circular wheels or use of animals for carrying load, these were brought in usage.

But often it is seen there exist deviations in reality from what idea ~~what~~ was in mind.

Let us take case of democracy, its idea was to give power to govern to all, everybody should be listened in decision making and all are empowered. Do such a true democracy exist anywhere? - NO.

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often booth capturing, money and muscle power in politics, dynastic parties, undemocratic practises like not listening to opposition, etc. erode the democratic spirit. A poor, has little say in working of government.

Hybrid regimes like China, Pakistan, etc. which call themselves as democracy but aren't are on rise. They all implement democracy in bits and pieces but don't do justice to its core idea.

Similarly in past, in 10th mandala of Rigveda, Varna system was visualised. It was for division of labour and societal ease.

But in reality it become a system of deprivation and exploitation. Shudras and dalits were reduced to menial labourers and had zero mobility in society.

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Likewise, the idea of colonisation by colonisers of Europe and America was the spread of modernism, advanced technology, and to reform primitive society by new values of reason, justice, etc.

Although there were done to an extent like introduction of railways, reform derogatory practices like Sati Pratha, etc., but largely colonial system was for exploitation. Even new inventions like rail were used to enhance reach of exploitation.

Similarly, the ~~theory~~ idea of communism by Marx was of stateless society and equality of availability of resources to everyone. It involved equality in every sense.

But in reality the way it was implemented by USSR or China was quite different. Powerful state did exist which controlled all resources of

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society. There were attempts made at equality but due to corruption nothing got implemented properly and inequality persisted.

Similar issues were with idea of Free Market Theory by Adam Smith. The core idea was that invisible market hand keep demand and supply in check. Everyone looking for their own self benefit leads to benefit of all.

However this idea wasn't in full force even in so called market economies of West. Today welfare economics is being prioritised with elements ^(shadow) from free market theory.

Likewise if we look at American foreign policy ideas, they are governed by respect for sovereignty, promotion of peace,

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countering terrorism, etc.

But if we look at US invasion of Iraq, Afghanistan they were guided by values like national security taking precedence over values of peace, ^{respect for} sovereignty and even sanctity of human lives.

In this way when Max Weber proposed Bureaucracy ideas it was based on that structured and layered system would result in faster work, clarity of roles and reduced nepotism via selection process.

Now, If we today look at Indian bureaucratic structure it do promote clarity but it is also harbouring corruption, red tapism, negligence towards people, etc.

Similarly, Education system basic idea is that education

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will lead to enlightenment, scientific spirit, growth and inculcation of morals.

Keeping these in mind our Indian education system was modelled. But real implementation has shown its not inclusive and doesn't develop proper moral behaviour. Educated people learning computer science engaged in hacking, cyber bullying, etc. shows travesty of education system.

But all these examples point to one single question—If reality is inspired from ideas why they are merely only shadow?

The reasons can be practical issues in implementation of ideas on ground. Gandhiji's idea of Gram Swaraj is hindered by lack of capacity of gram

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panchayats and insufficient financial resources.

Also an idea can't be implemented all across the world uniformly, variation as per local needs are needed. As Russia adopted Marxist communism^{and} India adopted Fabian socialism adapting to varied needs with core idea being same.

Sometimes idea may be too idealistic to achieve. We all want superconduction in our power system but its just not feasible today.

Also over time, even if originally reality was very close to idea, inefficiencies might creep which could cause divergences. ^{As} America shifted toward Keynesian economics after 1928 depression.

Many of the ideas assume altruistic world and doesn't

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account for human inherent self bias. As in idea of climate action guided by equity, accessibility and differentiated responsibilities isn't getting fully implemented due to inherent national interests.

But ~~also~~ not always ideas too widely differ from reality. The idea of using artificial intelligence to do human tasks is in fluctuation today. Today's generative AI like Chatgpt can understand and talk like humans.

They can even generate pictures based on text or drive cars.

Likewise the democratic setup of early vedic period of Sabha, Samiti and Vidhata was very close to inclusive and participative democracy.

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Also not always do we need to copy true idea into reality. Many factors like own needs, international experience and the usability of idea in particular context need to be looked.

But surely we do need to make sure that even if we diverge slightly we don't allow negative and harmful effects to creep in. In this regard we first need that ideas are modified to suit practical demands. Also multiple stakeholder approach is taken for varied viewpoints. And also timely reform is taken for remove any negatives and excessive unnecessary divergences.

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India's philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam can be the limelight which can guide us in critical task.

At last, ideas expand our reach, imagination and viewpoints. Good ideas are for welfare of mankind. So, it becomes our duty to implement them in spirit in reality so that they can serve their true aim of serving mankind and no other institute like recent NATO can deviate from goal of common prosperity.