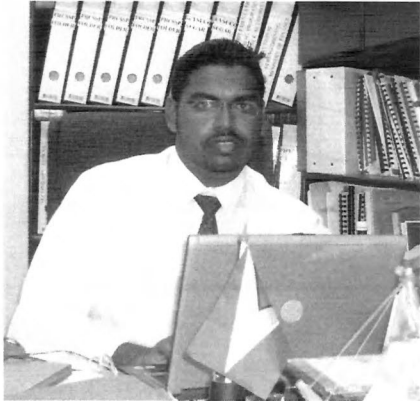


The Continued Relevance of Dr. Jagan Vision



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On this the 11th anniversary of the celebration of the life and works of Dr. Cheddi Jagan I wish for us to take a few moments in reflection on the relevance of the ideas, ideals and vision of Dr. Cheddi Jagan even today as we seek to advance the transformation process of Guyana and more so the development agenda of the developing world. The morality, ethics and social consciousness of the policies and programs propagated by Dr. Jagan, saw a society that bears as its hallmark equality and economic growth that is pro poor in nature. In an interview with Fred Rosen and Mario Murillo, Dr Jagan explained his ideology as follows and I quote, “ It gives me strong ethical beliefs in social justice, particularly in helping the poor, the underprivileged and the exploited.” This fundamental principle that shaped the development of ideas by Dr Jagan remains ever relevant today as the World continues to battle issues of the widening gap between rich and poor countries which over the past forty years account for much of the increase in worldwide income, inequality among individuals and households. In 1960, per capita GDP in the richest twenty countries was eighteen times that in the poorest

twenty countries whilst fifteen percent of the richest nations' people made eighty percent of the gross world income. By 1995, this gap had widened to thirty-seven times (World Development Report 2001). There has been an increasing polarization between the rich and poor nations over time. Dr Jagan felt that the fundamental struggle confronting developing countries was to seek a new international balance of interests in this period of globalization and liberalization. He positioned and I quote, "Developing countries will continue to be marginalized if we do not seek collectively a new global order." For him a New Human Global order meant development that would address such important issues as alleviation of poverty, expansion of productive employment and enhancement of social integration of the more disadvantaged and marginal groups. This comrades forms the most relevant and challenging issue for our world today as the achievement of a people-centered approach to social and economic development that creates an economic, political, social, cultural, and legal environment still remains unaccomplished and relevant to this date. Unaccomplished because approximately 1.1 billion people on the World lack access to water and a further 2.6 billion lack basic sanitation, approximately half the world live off of Us\$2 per day and one billion people live off of US\$1 per day, one of every seven children has no access to health care, nearly one billion people entered the 21st century unable to read or write, more

than 80% of the World population live in countries where income differentials are widening and more than 30,000 children die each day from hunger. This comrades reinforces the relevance of Dr. Jagan's ideas to this day and long into the foreseeable future. To understand the courage and vision of Dr Jagan in the propagation of the New Human Global Order at the time he did, we need to look at what was documented in the New Human Global Order prepared by the symposium on the New Human Global order and I quote, "President Jagan is to be commended for his courage and vision in promoting, what was at the time, an unfashionable concept, when most of the world was mesmerized by the hype over globalization"

Relevance to Young People

To our young people he left a message that if followed would help us to develop attributes and individual identities that when combined together would be so forceful that in every aspect of personal and collective darkness the light of our character would, thus creating a society that bears as its hallmark respect and service to humanity above all other individualistic vision we may harness over time. In describing his own transition through life path this is what he had to say and I quote, "I first wanted to be a doctor. Didn't want to be merely a specialist and craftsman and cure individual aches and ills. I wanted to cure the ills of society. I want to know that I have served humanity as a human being. All of us want recognition I am not interested in recognition conferred on the basis of my bankroll. When I would have passed away, I would like it to be recorded that Jagan did his bit in the service of humanity." (1964) **This is the karma and the life of the man we celebrate today - one that was selfless and determined to sacrifice all for the betterment of humanity. Even when power was snatched out of his hands by reckless forces he remained committed and determined to the cause he set himself and more importantly under no circumstances did he abandon the struggle or reduced the intensity of the struggle. What he did was to modify the means but the end remained remarkably the same. How can these examples of**

self determination, selflessness and dedication ever be irrelevant - these are attributes that need to be reenergized in our society and as such if we want to meaningfully celebrate the life of this outstanding internationalist let us commit ourselves above all other individual goals to live lives to the service and upliftment of humanity above profits and personal glorification. 'Let us do it the Jagan way'.

The Issue of Environment

Dr Jagan strongly believed in sustainable development, and as such the importance of the environment and the way we manage the environment were critical issues for him. He felt passionately that environment cannot and must not be separated from poverty and therefore should not be treated separately. If it is that economics is truly the distribution of scarce resources to meet everyone's needs then how is it that decision making on the international level is concentrated only in the hands of a few narrow interest thus resulting in the distribution of resources to meet a few people wants and not everyone's needs? The poor are not exploiter of the environment rather efficient users and sustainers of the environment as their survival depend heavily on it. Dr.Jagan rightfully believed that economic growth that ignores humanity and environmental cost can never and would never be sustainable. In his own words this is what Dr. Jagan had to say," World Environment Day 1994 **“the natural resources of our planet must be utilized for the benefit of mankind in such a way that they remain available for future generations, and that in the process of utilization, fullest measures be taken to prevent environmental degradation. Sustainable development is an all embracing process which is centred on human development. There are two major needs which have to be satisfied. One is to use natural resources for the material and spiritual upliftment of all**

people. The other is to maintain the delicate balance in nature reflected in the various eco systems adorning our planet.”

In Conclusion there are many today who question the ideology, vision and relevance of our party to deal with the various elements of distractions and dooms day prophecy that we are not capable of dealing with challenges. Let it be known that inbuilt in our political being in the PPP lies the will power to conquer and excel under most difficult and testing circumstances. Our history led by Dr. Jagan is testimony to this fact. Under similar condition at various points in the history of Guyana this was the response from Dr. Jagan and I quote, “Those who say that we are irrelevant, that we are finished, should be reminded that the same tune was sung after the dark days following the rape of our constitution in 1953 and the breakaway by the right and left opportunists in 1955 and 1956. But we won in 1957 and 1961. Today, though defrauded and cheated, we remain the strongest force in the country.”

How relevant is this today cannot be overemphasized with large sections of the media against us, the difficulties imposed by criminal gangs form some of the challenges that seek to return us to days and hour of darkness but endurance to confront these challenges in a unified way would ensure that the relevance and victory of our Party to overcome all aspects of evil remain forever the strongest political force in Guyana.

In conclusion, I once again leave you with the comforting though challenging words of Dr Jagan and I quote, **“Difficulties there will be; the battle will be long and hard. But win again we will. !”** 1966 (from *"The West on Trial"*)