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What is Grreeaat about Great Britain Today!

(This article was written by me in 2008 and most of the British newspapers refused publishing it. After 2008, a number of other incidents have taken place which has further tarnished the image of this country. I sent this article to Mr. David Cameron when he was in the opposition. Instead of replying straight, his office offered me Conservative membership at a fee of 25 Pounds. It is not that I want to condemn the policies and systems of the country, it is my frustration that how such a great nation has come to its present state of affairs. Anyways, I might add more to this article later. Dr. Ashok Kumar)

Britain was once an imperial power, ruled almost a quarter of the world population spanning over 30 million square kilometers, now seems a mess with its just 60 million populace and an area of less than a quarter million square kilometers. There was a time when the Union Jack, the symbol of mighty empire, used to fly over 75 nations, now is being used as a two-piece bikini suit on the beaches of Brighton. The country which produced brains like Robert Hook, John Parkinson, Robert Boyle, Edmond Halley, Charles Montagu, Abraham Darby, Thomas Savery, John Kay, John Harrison, Thomas Bayer, James Watt, Hanery Cavendish, James Cook, Henry Cort, William Grove, James Joule, and the list is actually endless, is now producing school graduates who cannot calculate 23 minus 9 correctly. Simultaneously, Britain has a proud list of great monarchs from Alfred the Great to the House of Windsor, a great history since 9th century onwards. The contribution of the British Laureates to the literature is unparallel in human history. St. Bede, William Langland, John Milton, Shakespeare, D H Lawrance, Kipling, Tennyson, Oscar Wilde, Blake, Chaucer, Charles Dickens, and there must be hundreds and hundreds of more. In short, Britain has changed the face of the world and had contributed wholeheartedly in all possible spheres of human life.

But, one painful question keeps on hammering my brain and heart; what has happened to that Great Britain? And after analyzing some of the head lines in most of our distinguished Dailies, not only me, but every right thinking citizen of this country will agree with me that something has gone wrong somewhere. Let me start with the following routine headlines :

'British students are laziest in Europe, claims report'; 'UK has worst drug problem in Europe'; 'Britain still top for teenage pregnancies'; 'Uefa brands Liverpool fans worst in Europe'; 'British children among Europe's unhappiest and unhealthiest'; 'British teens

most sexually active in Europe'; 'UK 'tops binge drinking league'; 'British youths among worst in Europe'; 'British are the fattest in Europe, says Government'; 'Britain is sickliest nation in Europe'; 'British hospitals among worst for superbugs'; 'Poor diet kills 70,000 every year, report says'; 'Britain's NHS - One of the worst health services in Western Europe'; 'UK hospitals among worst in Europe for MR; 'UK cancer survival rates are among the worst in Europe'; 'Britain the worst for deaths from strokes' (Times), 'UK women officially the fattest in Europe';...And there are hundreds of such more headlines and stories in media which keep on reflecting the true picture of this once a great nation.

I think, now is the best time for introspection, not by the public alone but by all the concerned agencies including private and social bodies besides the government at all levels. To me in any democracy, the legislature, media and public are equally responsible for the development or deterioration of any country in any department. But finally, the onus always is laid on the government and its policies. In the UK, I have observed three basic shortcomings in the governance; Wrong Government Policies in immigration matters, lenient criminal and civil laws and non-existent Opposition in the Westminster.

Let us start from the immigration. The Home Office is in a total mess. Look at this news report; "The Home Office has come under fire yet again after it was revealed that 1,500 UK passports that should have been returned to their owners have gone missing." ".....It has since been revealed that 646,323 passports have been lost or stolen since December 2003, when the identity and passport service was launched – figures Mr. Hosie described as "incredible". Can anyone imagine that over half a million passports are lost by the Home Office? Has anybody ever heard such a news from any other country on this planet? Can we imagine how many illegal people are living in the UK? Strange are the ways of the Home Office. If a legitimate doctor or an engineer asks for a visitor visa from a developing country like India, the Home Office takes no time in refusing that. But if a murderer comes to this country, or somebody comes on a forged passport or a hijacker lands at the Heathrow, they are not only allowed to live here, but they are also provided with a flat, money, gas bills and what not! Thanks to the Human Rights here and bravo, the Home Office Policies.! Home Office has funny laws. For example, take the instance of international students. We could have a simple law that an international Student should come, study and leave. But no, Home Office loves making its own job cumbersome to the extent that it becomes messy and even the law enactors themselves forget what were the laws. Continuing with the law about international students, first, the colleges are fake which have been issuing fake letters of admissions, making millions of pounds, giving no taxes to the government. Then on those fake documents, fake students are granted genuine visas by the High Commissions Abroad. Don't, forget that in such British High Commissions, a lot of black sheep are existing who simply issue visas for money. Anyway, once that so called student comes here, he or she starts working. Working where? Again with the most corrupt and unpatriotic class of British businessmen or shopkeepers. These shops employ such students or illegal immigrants paying them as little as £ 10.00 per day for 12 hours job. If anybody doubts, one can visit the markets like Southall Broadway, Dudley Road and Soho Roads in Birmingham, Markets in Manchester, Bradford, Derby, all the construction sites, and all the Farms

spread over the length and breadth of the UK. The matter does not end here. The Home Office then allows the students to get married and settled. And this way, one student's case goes over for 10 years or so. Neither the student gains anything except paying all his or her earnings to the law-twister-lawyers nor the government gains anything from such lawyers most of whom don't even pay proper taxes and vat on their earnings from such activities. Similarly, it is marriage, children, children out of marriage, visitors, patients, terrorists, criminals, parents, asylum seekers and the list is endless. Thousands of families have rented their own properties and enjoying in Council Homes, thus cheating the System. And only those Systems can be floundered which has no policies and employ unfaithful, insincere, inefficient and the dishonest. The always confused Home Office has new policies everyday. Now it has started closing the already tight gates for the legitimate and qualified law abiding professional non-whites; while in the name of EU regulations, white-skinned illiterates and criminals from within the EU are welcome. Home Office is not only playing the most hatred Racist Card to hide its wrongs but also depriving UK of the good, qualified and skilled people. Just go through the Immigration Policies of the US and Australia who are leaving no stone unturned in welcoming the qualified professionals from all over the world, particularly from Asia. The Home Office is doing the wrongs and all the concerned departments, services and businesses suffer. The headlines I have given above from the newspapers are testimony to what I have said.

Forget Home Office for the time being. Do my dear readers know that the corruption is totally camouflaged under three wings of Finance in the UK, known as Grants, Regeneration and Charity. This once a great country, today have all the corruption under these three categories. In the name of religion, preaching, ethnicity, helping community, neighborhood watch, adult education, helping teenagers, care homes, business startups, and a host of other categories, the cunning minds are enjoying grants, that too in millions. Consequences are in front of us. Thousands of useless buildings in the name of religions are erected while we are short of school and hospital structures. Similarly, in the name of regeneration, millions of pounds are distributed every year to the already rich businessmen, real estate agents and other such shrewd organizations which have connections with the local legislatures, thus reaching to the top into the Westminster. The remaining smaller-smart ones go for Charities. Do any thing and collect any money in the name of charity. I have seen 100s of so called religious cults in the UK which with the help of local coteries start a Charity and the next day, Land Cruisers are bought. One can also start Charity in the name of Cancer, Drug de-addiction, old clothes, earthquakes in foreign countries, religious studies and so on.

If I start writing on just one particular subject in detail, I need 10,000 pages for each subject. Whether it is the Bureaucracy, Taxation, Business, Finances, Banking, Services like British Gas, Health, NHS, Telephone and Broadband nexus, Charities, Grants, Welfare System, Agency Jobs, Inflation, Rail Ticket business, On line shopping, Credit Cards or it is Communal Harmony, the role of Human rights, child abuse, Terrorism, Teenage crime, Drugs, religious intolerance and the subjects can be numerous, nothing seems right here.

It is the mockery of law all around. Poverty is tightening its vicious grip each passing day. Millions are under debt. Around half a million singles are homeless. Teenage murders are a common crime. Children can not afford Universities. Even the basic minimum services like Heat and electricity are so expensive that a common man cannot afford it. Hundreds of thousands of properties are repossessed every year. I would like to cite an example here. In Canada, the Heating is on continuously 24 hours for over 6 months during winter. And here in the UK, during the chilliest of nights, citizens cannot afford it. Only a couple of hours in the mornings and evenings, one can enjoy it, bare minimum for survival.

Life has become so much a mess that everybody is busy shouting at the unwanted bills, junk mail, garbage on the streets, inefficient banking, rising prices, less wages, racism, broken car wind screens by the hooligans, mushrooming insurance companies, misbehaving children and finally, the emergence of a totally insensitive and insecure society.

From our Software industry to Policing, nothing seems right. Just have a look on these two reports; According to Mike Banahan, Chief Technology Officer of Open forum Europe remarked at the Linux User and Developer Expo in Birmingham, “ The UK is a "third world country" compared with the rest of Europe where it comes to public - and private-sector interest in open-source software”. Another report in Telegraph as early as 27th September 1998 by Geoffrey Seed and Alasdair Palmer said that the Police corruption in UK is at Third World Levels. The Telegraph said, “Police corruption in Britain is now so widespread it may have reached levels which normally only occur in unstable Third World countries, according to a confidential document obtained by The Telegraph. The document, the minutes of a meeting organised by the National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS), and attended by 10 of Britain's most senior officers and policy makers, states that "corrupt officers exist throughout the UK police service". NCIS's Director of Intelligence said that corruption may have reached "level 2: the situation which occurs in some Third World Countries". For more details on Police Corruption, go through the 396 horror pages of “Bent Coppers.” written by James Morton

NHS, the showpiece health services of Great Britain, has nothing to offer to the citizens of the country. Only in the BBC News 4 on 27th February 2008, it was reported that last year 800,000 patients from England, did not pick up their Prescriptions simply because they could not afford them. In England 8 % and in Scotland 15% people can not afford Prescriptions. These are the reported figures. Unreported ones could be of any magnitude. Also ponder over some of the following headlines : “Alcohol related death rate doubles in 15 years”, “Breast cancer cases rise 80% since Seventies”; “UK lung disease deaths higher than most of Europe”; and so on. In another story on 16th January 2008 in Daily Mail, Jenny Hope has written, “Seven million patients can't find a dentist on the NHS for two years”.

What a shame when we British get this kind of publicity. “Light-fingered Britain, home of Europe’s champion shoplifters”. Britain is the shoplifting capital of Europe, with more than £1.5 billion worth of products a year being stolen by customers. Most of the goods

will be stolen in the four weeks before Christmas, with £26.4 million worth of items disappearing from supermarket shelves, shops and off-licences every day. Another £1.6 billion worth of products will be stolen by employees or lost in the distribution chain.” (Adam Fresco, Crime Correspondent, Timesonline Nov. 20 2007)

On the crime front, we are progressing leaps and bounds. According to a last year report in the Guardian, “Britain named as one of Europe's crime hotspots. Britain has the highest rate of burglary in the European Union and is also nearly top of the league for assaults and hate crime, according to a recent survey”. “London also emerges as the "crime capital of Europe" with the likelihood of becoming a victim - mostly of a range of petty crimes - said to be higher than all other EU capitals and even higher than cities such as Istanbul and New York. The findings will dismay Home Office ministers who boast that the 35% fall in crime in Britain since 1995 has brought the risk of becoming a victim down to its lowest level for 40 years”. (The survey is carried out by Gallup). In Short, according to the Metropolitan Police of UK data sources, during the year 2007 in London area alone, there were 211,586 recorded crimes which included 138 murders and 672 rapes. To the horror of our readers, the total number of recorded crime during 2006-07 in England and Wales, was about five and a half million or to be precise 5,428,273. Now with such appalling figures, for England and Wales, we can imagine the crime rate of whole of the UK.

Leave crime aside, look at the youngsters in this country. We start with alcoholism. “Most youngsters drink alcohol by the age of 13” was the head line in The Independent of 7th February 2008. Nigel Morris wrote that “Britain has arrived at a "worrying tipping-point" where a majority of the nation's 13-year-olds – equivalent to 350,000 youths – have already started drinking alcohol, (Home Secretary Jacqui Smith has warned). In another story by Laura Clark on 26th July 2007 in Daily Mail, she said: “Out-of-control' British teens the worst behaved in Europe: Drink, drugs, violence and under-age sex soars among the young. They are more likely to binge-drink, take drugs, have sex at a young age and start fights”. The report, from a think-tank closely linked to Labour, says “the collapse of family life is at least partly to blame”. According to a Canadian Content Forum, Laura Roberts said : “27% of British teenagers regularly get drunk, compared with just a tiny 5% in Italy and 3% in France. 44% of British teenagers have had a fight in the last year, compared to just 28% of German teenagers. “British teenagers are 'worst behaved in Europe”. The following headlines in our own newspapers and websites should be enough for us to stop for a minute and think about our children : “British children 'among Europe's unhappiest and unhealthiest” (Daily Mail), “British teens most sexually active in Europe” (CBS News), “Britain tops European league for cocaine use” (Independent), “British youths 'among worst in Europe” (FT dot Com) “Britain has highest rate of teenage pregnancies in Western Europe” (BBC News)

Let us have a look on some other important aspects of our daily life. On the wages front, we are almost at the bottom as compared to other developed nations. Let us not look at the income per capita. It is a very misleading way of the governments world over to cheat its public. If a couple of hundreds of millionaires live in a country, then it is useless to calculate their incomes and assets as that of the other poor citizens. The fact is that an

average person is not getting even 175 Pounds per week in the UK. Wage difference between male and female is stilling existing here despite the Women Equality slogans. Tax system is so heavy and tough that the poor always suffer. Have a taste of some more news headlines : “UK state pension is the worst in Europe”; “UK bottom of the league for holiday entitlement”; “Gender pay gap in UK worst in Europe”; “UK jobless households highest in Europe”; “UK has lowest maternity pay in Western Europe”; “Britons have worst state pension in EU”; “Millions of Britons are being condemned to poverty in old age by the worst state pension in the EU, a study shows”. (By Sean Poulter, Daily Mail on 12th November 2007)

Poverty is a curse. Everybody and every government knows it. But do the British Government, the member of elite G8, is aware of the economic condition of a common man? As far as our government is concerned, it is as if there is no governance in this country now. Let us look at the situation of poverty especially among our children. In a BBC report of 14 February 2007, “The UK has come bottom of a Unicef league table for child well-being across 21 industrialised countries. And look at this BBC report of 13th June 2000, “UK condemned over child poverty. Child poverty in the UK is among the worst in the developed world, according to a report by the United Nations Children's Fund, Unicef. The UK ranks 20th out of 23 countries in the table of relative poverty - classed as families with an income less than half the national average. While the number of children in poverty has remained stable in other industrial nations over the last 20 years, it has tripled in Britain. But it is still behind countries like Turkey and the Eastern European states of Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic”. What a shame! During these 8 years, government did nothing since 2000 in this regard. It means, instead of doing something towards child poverty, we have just gone one step further in the last 8 years, from the rank 20th, we have reached 21st.

Some other headlines over child poverty : “Deprived UK children 'still trapped by poverty' (By Graeme Paton, Education Editor – Telegraph) “The gap between rich and poor has failed to narrow under Labour as class barriers remain as rigid as they were in the 1970s, according to research published today. According to research from the London School of Economics and Surrey University, the UK is now at the bottom of international league tables for social mobility as children face "stark inequalities" from birth”.

“The number of children in the UK living in relative poverty increased by 100,000 last year - a "moral disgrace" that leaves the Government's policy objectives ‘in tatters’, campaigners said”. Official statistics showed the number of children living below the poverty threshold rose for the first time in almost a decade in 2005/06, up to 2.8 million from 2.7 million. (‘This is London’ website 22.2.2008). Ashley Seager wrote in Guardian on 28th March 2007, “Official figures showed relative poverty - those living on less than 60% of average incomes - rose to 12.7 million people in 2005-06, from 12.1 million the year before.”

Let us move on the British roads now. On the roads and motorways front, we are getting from bad to worse. Look at some other headlines : ‘British roads 'unfit for purpose'; Britain's transport infrastructure is "not fit for purpose"; according to the Policy Exchange

think tank. It said Britain has the most congested roads, the fewest motorways and "some of the worst public transport" among leading industrialised countries. (BBC 15.1.2008). In an another report by Road Users Alliance dated 15th November 2007, it said, 'Decades of under-investment have placed the UK motorway network at the bottom of the EU-25. Road File 2007/08, the annual compilation of road statistics published today by the Road Users' Alliance (RUA), reveals that Britain has more cars per motorway mile than any EU-25 nation. Far from competing with Germany or France, Britain's roads languish on a par with Lithuania, Slovakia and Hungary". The same story is with our airlines, airports, rails and other modes of transport. Instead of elaborating on this issue, I would like to give the following news headlines as a reference : "Britain has highest rail fares in Europe"; "BA worst in Europe for lost bags and delays"; "BA is worst performer in Europe": "UK transport costs higher than any country in Europe"; "Heathrow has worst airport delays in Europe"; "UK-based ferries have worst safety standards in Europe, study finds" (This is quite an old report, published in Independent)

Now, the much publicized privacy of the citizens. On the other side of protecting the privacy of the UK citizens, every government effort seems a sham. First of all, all the information of the citizens is taken before hand, without any purpose. For example, we make a phone call to any Service Agency and they record all our conversation and our personal details. Even if we apply for a job, first of all, our personal information form is asked for. Then millions of people's data's are lost. The memories of recently lost CDs containing 25 million persons' data must be fresh in the minds of all the readers. Look at this headline, "Britain rated worst in Europe for protecting privacy - Britain, the country with the world's biggest network of surveillance cameras, has the worst record in Europe for the protection of privacy, according to a report from a London-based international watchdog. The UK is billed as "an endemic surveillance society" alongside Russia, the US, Singapore and China in the survey of 47 countries by Privacy International (PI). (Guardian 31.12.2007 by David Ward).

Now let us ponder over the 'serious rubbish'. Whole of the nation is becoming a great dust bin. No proper recycling is done. Segregation of rubbish is still not popular among the citizens. All major dustbins on the road sides are overflowing always. And the landfill sites are scarce, thanks to short-term policies on this matter. For further reference, read this news report : ""UK still top of the rubbish heap: The UK is the "dustbin of Europe" and dumps more household waste into landfill than any other EU country, the Local Government Association has said. More than 22.6m tons of UK rubbish was buried in landfill in 2005 - the same amount of rubbish as the 18 EU countries with the lowest landfill rates combined, although together they have almost twice the population of the UK." (Edie 13 November 2007). Even on the pollution side, the scenario is quite bleak, "British Power Station Pollution Worst In Europe (Green Building). "Britain among worst in Europe at car recycling" (Guardian), "Britain's recycling record among the worst in Europe" (Independent).

The above report seems enough for us to realize the fact that we stand nowhere near our international competitors on the literacy front, science and technology, sports, communications, arts etc. We are just growing in number each day, just aiding to the

increased rate of crime, guns, knives, prostitution, pedophiles, racism, disrespect for elders, intolerance for other religions and communities and what not!

Havelock Ellis said, “What we call 'Progress' is the exchange of one nuisance for another nuisance”. This is true but we should start in terms of what Sir Winston Churchill said, “We shall not fail or falter; we shall not weaken or tire...Give us the tools and we will finish the job”. We will have to start from somewhere. There must be a lead to follow to come out of the puzzle. And that is to my mind, the honest initiative by the government, the participation of common man into the policies, respect for family system and values, the positive role of human rights and a strong judiciary. We need doctors, teachers and professionals, whatsoever skin color they have, and not terrorists, hijackers and illiterates in the name of EU regulations because they are white skinned. British Government must show the courage to formulate proper immigration laws and honest workers to implement those laws. Besides that, a strong Opposition in the Parliament and a communication system which connects the constituents to its elected leaders, not for individual problems but collective. It is never too late. If the steps are not taken immediately, the days are not far when UK will become Darfur and the world will ask....”What is Grrreeaaat about Great Britain?”

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