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Their *words* and our *meanings*: anachronism and select primary sources of *Maratha* History.

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Abstract

Written history comes to us in linguistic and ideological layers which have affected historiography right from the time conscious modern historians have examined pre-modern texts as primary sources. An important problematic of modern historiography is the historicization of the modern mind which makes history a modern discipline. The structured understanding of history, a result of its having become a discipline, is useful to understand the past in many ways. At the same time an ideological understanding of history exposes the discipline to the dangers of anachronism. To save the discipline from these dangers and make historians truly self reflexive it is necessary for them to return to the sources with the tools of micro history in hand. This does not mean returning history to a so-called de-ideologized state, an impossibility in any case, but a periodic critical interrogation of the sources used by historians who have seen them before us. If new sources are found to fortify this critique of historiography well and good. This paper argues, like Marc Bloch and Carlo Ginzburg have done earlier, that the close reading of sources comprises an important part of the historian's craft. Unless the historian is alive to the resonance and dissonance between his language and the vocabulary of his sources he will end up misinterpreting them. In keeping with this observation this paper subjects select pre-colonial Marathi sources of the eighteenth century to a close reading with the aim of rescuing Maratha history from the pitfalls of linguistic anachronism. The aim is to understand the pre-colonial Marathi sources in a paradigm shorn of the ideological embellishments of colonialism and nationalism. Historians try to understand and write about the past but the point also is to understand the difference between how we perceive our ancestors and how they perceived themselves.

> Afterwards I went to Delhi. There by the orders of His Highness I took darshan of the Emperor. He spoke to me very graciously and gave me his blessing and I took the garments with which he presented me. It gave me pleasure to think that this favour was itself a part of God's favour towards me.
>
> Nana Phadnis, 1760 (Raeside 1984, 109).

> Every nationalist is haunted by the belief that the past can be altered. He spends part of his time in a fantasy world in which things happen as they should – in which, for example, the Spanish Armada was a success or the Russian Revolution was crushed in 1918 – and he will transfer fragments of this world to the history books whenever possible.
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> (George Orwell 1945, 110).

Historiography and ventriloquism.

The Webster's Dictionary defines anachronism as "a chronological misplacing of persons, events, objects or customs in regard to each other" and "a person or a thing that is chronologically out of place" especially "from a former age that is incongruous in the present." (Websters 1986, 82). The incongruity of the past and present is a serious problem of historiography because anachronism in history writing often results from ideology permeating the historian's imagination. It may be argued that ideology is omnipresent in the historian's imagination and consciously or subconsciously infiltrates his reconstruction of the past, but this caveat need not detain us here. As a linguistic condition created by the vocabulary of the present, ideology sometimes erects a psychological barrier between the historian and his sources. This essential *ideological* problem of conceiving the past and writing history was grasped, among others, by the

prescient Lewis Namier who warned us that "man clogs the free play of his mind with political doctrine and dogma." (Carr 1961, 47). Can a historian, we should ask, unclog his mind and think of a past in its own terms given the pervasive influence of the present on his mind? In the 19th century Leopold von Ranke would have answered this bothersome question with a nonchalance we can ill afford in our peculiar circumstances saturated in social media narratives as they are. The pendulum in our times has swung towards ideology, especially nationalism, so decisively that serious historians can no longer resist the allure of scientific objectivity. Perhaps the historian must try to unclog his mind, although, as Carr (1961) puts it, the "past is intelligible to us only in the light of the present; and we can fully understand the present only in the light of the past"(69). The question is how much of the present can we allow to dictate historiography? The problem of understanding the past in the "light" of the present, including of course in the language of the present, has exercised the historians' minds ever since history became a modern scientific discipline. There are observations on this methodological problem in the work of Marc Bloch (1953). For example, Bloch (1953) says, rather philosophically, that a "good half of all we see is seen through the eyes of others" (47). This includes what is read and heard today *and* the sources of history produced by past observers of events. Thus, to the short-lived joy of those who dismiss or trivialize history, the traces of our past seem blemished even before we incorporate them in written history. Bloch's telling comment raises the fundamental question of treating history as a credible modern discipline, an enterprise fraught with linguistic dangers. Language complicates the writing of critical history. Over time, the master wrote, the meaning of words with same spellings change. To, "the great despair of historians, men fail to change their vocabulary every time they change their customs" (Bloch 1953, 34). Thus words like *benefice*, *fief* and *villain* meant different things in different temporal and social contexts. So how do we interpret the past while language lays traps in our way?

According to Bloch, "a historical phenomenon can never be understood apart from its moment in time. This is true of every evolutionary stage, our own and all others" (Bloch 1953, 35). This may seem like a vindication of 19th Century positivism and warm the cockles of a post-modernist or radical partisan. That, however, is not the point because Bloch, after all, would hardly have advocated history's return to positivism! The French pioneer only wanted history to "renounce its archangelic airs" because an "understanding of people" is the aim of purposeful history. By understanding people who inhabited the past, Bloch introspected, perhaps the conflicts of the present can be avoided. In simple words, judging the past can produce drastic political consequences only too obvious in the age of sectarian conflicts in which we, the moderns, find ourselves living. Since the solution lies in a problem correctly stated, the past can be understood only if the historian becomes self-reflexive and alert to the anachronisms of the present in which he reconstructs history. Writing reflective histories is not the same as writing fiction in the name of history.

Carlo Ginzburg (2013) reiterates the dilemma pointed out by Bloch: "Historians start from questions using terms that are inevitably anachronistic" (105). An honest historian would modify his language as his research progresses from the general, which conditions his vocabulary, to the particular *and* back. In the process written history and the historian *both* are transformed and a synthesis evolves to another level. The fruit of such meticulous labor ripens over years spent in libraries, archives and the field. In sum, the dilemma created by modern language in which we conceptualize the past is solved *only if* the "tension between our questions and the answers we get from the evidence" is "kept alive." Ginzburg concludes the argument: "If the difference between our words and theirs is carefully preserved, it will prevent us from falling into two traps – empathy and ventriloquism."[1] In either of these two cases the understanding, of which Bloch wrote, will elude us. After all, the historian, like his human subject, is a social being

whose thoughts are conditioned by languages constructed by powers over which he has little control[2] (Hobsbawm, 2013). Further, what is true for history is also true for all humanities and, perhaps, also the sciences.

Language as a dynamic entity evolves in dialectics with state and society. It is influenced by social revolutions and technological change. Words travel over time and geographical distances hybridizing languages. Critical historians assert that the Industrial Revolution transformed the meaning of several words in the 19th Century creating linguistic meanings specific to the modern world. The transition from feudalism to capitalism and to industrial capitalism transformed European languages in numerous ways between 1450 and 1850. A forceful Marxist argument asserting this hypothesis is presented by Williams (1958). He mentions five key words which underwent a change in meaning and transformed the modern understanding of society in the 19th and 20th Centuries: industry, democracy, class, art and culture. If we add nation to these words, reading *inter alia* Gellner (2006), Anderson (2015) and Eagleton (1983), a new imagination of the past, we conclude, emerged worldwide in the 19th Century[3]. This imagination was romantic, hegemonic or counter-hegemonic depending upon the circumstances in which it arose. The nation, a *new* concept popularized by the *nationalist* literates who monopolized print capitalism in the 19th Century, spawned words in which the past was increasingly written in the 19th and 20th Centuries. Hobsbawm (2013) explains why and how literacy prepared the ground for the emergence of 'national' languages in late 19th Century (52)[4]. Nationalism created the nation in the imagination of men affected by class struggle. Influenced by the French Revolution, it predated the wars of the 'liberator' Simon Bolivar. Print capitalism assisted the process by creating imagined communities. The rise and spread of print capitalism as a corollary of the capitalist mode of production was crucial to the

transition from state to nation-state in the period marked by the rise of the modern West in world history (1500-1900).

In India the transformation of print languages was wrought by British colonialism in the 19th Century with salutary consequences. Although the printing press was started in Goa by the Portuguese in 1556, it remained unimportant to the medieval Indian polities in which literacy levels were abysmal. The ruling and trading groups could get along without printing what they wrote because it was unnecessary for them to educate the mass of working people. Therefore, literate medieval Indians wrote documents. Those which survived were mostly published after 1800 CE; the absence of a bourgeoisie in medieval India postponed India's print revolution. British colonialism imported the technology of print capitalism and the language of *civilization* which had evolved in bourgeois Europe into India creating a new vocabulary in which the *educated* Indian, began to imagine history. This had serious consequences for the development of modern political consciousness among various sections of Indians. The more the colonialist denied that India was a nation and could survive united only under British rule, the greater was the vehemence of the nationalist to the contrary. After 1857, due to the growth of universities, Indian nationalism and regional patriotism, the vocabulary of historiography changed. In consequence, the "difference", which Ginzburg underlines, between the words of the pre-colonial writers and modern colonialist and nationalist writers was obliterated by the contest of ideologies[5]. Indian history was taken hostage by the exigencies of colonialism, nationalism, communalism and caste consciousness.

Bloch and Ginzburg suggest a critical reading of *authentic* primary sources as a way by which the historian can maintain a healthy distance between *ideology* and his *craft*. Allegorically speaking, scientific history makes the historian a detective who arrives at the crime scene to reconstruct it by analyzing the evidence at his disposal meticulously

and fairly. By analogy, like a modern surgeon, he must sterilize his implements[6]. An *opinionated* detective or one under overt political influence will prove unequal to the task assigned by historiography. A critique of historiography is part of the historians' armory because sources are often misinterpreted by excited historians and without an understanding of historiography no written history is possible. The vocabulary of writers who lived centuries ago hide the key to a scientific reconstruction of the past. As Thompson (2017) puts it, the past speaks to the present in many voices which we must not only hear but carefully *listen*[7]. We can write our story only after listening to these voices which speak alien tongues for a considerable length of time. This does not mean that the historian is value free. It only means that a good historian comprehends the *difference* between his values and the *fruits of his own diligence* for too often revolutions happen in the historians' minds long before they are witnessed in history. The substantive world of the past is all too often different from the normative world the historian's mind inhabits.

The Vocabulary of Primary Sources

Words cause confusion. Take *Zamindar,* for example. It perplexes the Indian student of history and foreigner alike. It meant one thing in Mughal India and quite another in the agrarian Bengal fashioned by British revenue policy. While it referred to the class of large, upper-caste *absentee* landholders created by Cornwallis in 19th Century in Bengal, it signified a peasant-proprietor in the areas which eventually became Uttar Pradesh as also Punjab during the colonial period. Sometimes the words *zamindar* and *jagirdar* are used interchangeably confounding matters more. Comparatively speaking, what would the words mean now? The Hindi word *kisan* denotes a peasant-proprietor but is used to describe the peasantry *en masse* the overwhelming majority of whom are poor and

marginal 'farmers.' A marginal peasant who works as a farm hand to supplement his meagre income becomes a *mazdoor*. Below we focus on *desh*, loosely translated into English as country or the Urdu *mulk*. The phrase *deshbhakti* comes from *desh* and not *rashtra*. In medieval times *desh* denoted, in general, a *patria*. The meaning of *patria*, the root of patriotism, is natural habitat; *a patriot may or may not be a nationalist*. The armed rebels of 1857 who swarmed into Delhi were patriots and so were those, like the Mughal poet Dehlvi (2017), who found them boorish, rowdy and rustic in a cultured urban milieu[8]. The patriots of 1857 were not nationalists simply because they were not animated by nationalism. The later Tagore (2021), a good example, remained patriotic but became a critic of nationalism and the "general idea of all nations" which, in his times, produced Fascism, Nazism and Militarism between 1920 and 1940 (99). In modern Hindi and Marathi nation is *rashtra*. Used for the English word *nation,* it is conspicuously absent from several signally important precolonial primary sources. Even the nomenclature *Maharashtra*, derived from the ancient apbhransha *Maharashtri* or the word *maharathi* meaning a great warrior worthy of grants and remembrance is missing from primary evidence[9]. So the Marathas, who emerged from the peasant *kunbis*, were people who spoke variants of Marathi some of which are still spoken by castes not identified as Maratha. Extant literature on the subject suggests that the hybrid vocabularies of castes like the *Pardhis*, *Mangs* or *Ramoshis* are different from the lexicons produced by state-guided formal education. The standard text book school Marathi, like other state languages, is a comparatively new product manufactured in the shade of modern regional politics born in the colonial period. Ancient texts refer to contemporary Maharashtra as *Dakshinapath* or *Dandakaranya*. The English *Deccan* is the Sanskrit *dakshin* which meant a geographically spread *south* of the *Vindhyas* and the river Narmada. Here people sometimes refer to themselves as the *dakkhanis,* a generic word. That is how Ahmad Shah Abdali identified the vanquished of 1761 in a letter to the

Raja of Jaipur (Sardesai 1944, 44). In his eyewitness account of the Third Battle of Panipat, Kashiraj Pandit the *mutsaddi* and *vakil* of Shuja ud Daulah, uses the same word for the ones from south of the Narmada as well as himself. There is no mention of Maharashtra in his interesting text and the language in which Sadashiv Rao wrote him a letter brought to him by Bhawani Shankar Pandit, a fellow *deshasta* Decany from Aurangabad, is described as "Decan language" (Pandit 1791, 14)[10].

Historians know that most claims to origins are diverse and contested. One regimental history of the Mahar Regiment, raised in 1941 after a great struggle against upper caste discrimination waged by the Mahar recruits of the Maratha Light Infantry, claims that the word *Maharashtra* is derived from the *Mahar* caste[11]. The *Mahars* are described as the original aboriginal inhabitants of the region suppressed for centuries by Aryan outsiders. In fact, many important primary sources of Maratha history *do not* contain terms imposed on Maratha history by elite nationalism in the 19th Century. The words *desh* and *mulukh* are especially chosen as examples here. These appear in significant primary sources like the *Bhausahebanchi Bakhar*, *Holkaranchi Thaili*, *Panipatchi Bakhar*, Nana Fadnavis' *Atmacharitra* and the numerous letters written by the prolific letter-writer Antaji Mankeshwar the Peshwa's garrison commander in Delhi in mid-18th Century[12]. Also noteworthy is the fact that these and other primary sources were *edited* and published by nationalist scholars who probably sub-consciously assumed a congruence between their and the sources' meaning of these words. But these were honest men not given to mischief much in evidence on the *whatsapp* histories in circulation these days. Thus the documents preserved and edited by intellectually honest nationalists retain their original flavor. Thus the words which describe what the nationalists call Maharashtra are different in the *Agyapatra* written by a surviving minister of Shivaji, Ramchandrapant Amatya Bavdekar, at the behest of Shivaji's grandson Sambhaji, the son of Rajaram, around 1714. The *Agyapatra*, called an example

of *Shivkaleen* Marathi prose, was obviously influenced by the *Mahabharata*, *Arthashastra* and *Shukranitisar* (Bavdekar 1997). In this didactic text Bavdekar chooses the following words: *sarva dakshin desh* (all southern country), *dakshin pranta* (southern province), *pranta*, *mulukh* (mulk), *parmulukh* (*mulk* outside the *rajya*). These words refer to the south between the *Narmada* and *Rameshwar* seemingly united in a single state by the great Shivaji. This prescriptive text advised state-craft to a young king in a context removed from *the* national past imagined by the nationalist historians later. *Agyapatra* is supposedly about the ideal kingship practiced and inspired by Shivaji. Written to glorify *Maratheshahi* it does little to justify the communal twist of Maratha history; there is reference to *desh*, *raja* and and undifferentiated *praja* in it but no nation i.e. *rashtra*. Nana Phadnis' *Atmacharitra* deploys *desh* for the land south of the *Narmada* called Maharashtra today and eschews the descriptive categories found in modern normative histories[13]. The defeat and carnage at Panipat (1761) is mentioned in a para or two in this *Charitra* by an eye witness who survived the ordeal with great difficulty and some mercy shown by an elderly Durrani soldier who dissuaded his comrades from killing a young boy. The Panipat defeat does not become a lament in this contemporary text written by a high ranking Brahmin. More sources square with the impossibility of the transformation of *patria* into nation *before* the emergence of nationalism. Letters by Antaji Mankeshwar to Pune during the high noon of *Peshwai* refer to the Marathi *patria* as *desh* repeatedly. Antaji refers to a variety of subjects; travel, pilgrimages, revenue collections, settlement of accounts and troop strength. The movement of people to and from the *desh* is mentioned but the word *Maharashtra* does not occur. The sources separate the *desh* from *Hindustan* with reference to the *Narmada*, but precious little is said on a possible boundary between the *desh-dakkhan* and the deep south. This creates a hiatus between normative and substantive histories of the peninsula for where does the desh end? Modern place nomenclatures can barely answer this. *Jinji* and *Tanjore* were Maratha

riyasats and *Karnataka* had a substantial Marathi presence but were they outposts or parts of the *desh*? Shivaji's father fell from a horse and died in a place which today is in Karnataka. Was this part of his *desh* in the 17th Century? We don't, and perhaps will never, know the answers to these questions but we know that these answers cannot be sought in anachronisms. The descriptions and words of the 18th Century continued in the vernacular prose of the 19th Century even as the language of nationalism began impinging on historiography in colonial India. Thus Vishnu Bhatt Godse Varsaikar remembered travelling from the *desh* to *pardesh,* i.e. Hindustan, as a Brahmin *bhikshu* and was described, obviously in Godse's words, as a *dakshini* Brahmin by some rebel sepoys in Malwa in 1857 (Godse 1907). Why is the nomenclature *Maharashtrian Brahmin* eschewed in the memoir? The words and tenor of *Majha Pravas*, published after Godse was dead, remind us of the Marathi prose of the 18th Century although this short memoir of the great revolt was written decades after the end of the Maratha *riyasat*. In the context of such sources we are left little choice but to heed the wise words of Ernest Renan according to whom the so-called essentials of a nation, language, ethnicity, geography and history, keep changing in history and our imaginations of our ancestors (Renan 1990).

Conclusion

The argument against reading Maratha history in religious terms, as communal historians do for primarily political reasons, is quite old. The nationalist historian T. S. Shejwalkar, in an apology for the much maligned Sadashivrao 'Bhau' the *de facto* Brahmin commander of the Marathas at Panipat in 1761, summed up the issue the following words: "It is unhistorical, therefore, to call the battle of Panipat a Hindu-Muslim fight…Verily religion is the last resort of scoundrels!" (Shejwalkar 1946, xv).

Parochialism can safely be added to this qualification. Communal and nationalist interpretations of Indian history impose normative standards on India's precolonial past in a country obsessed with nationalism. These interpretations ignore the significant transformations of Indian memory and history brought about by British colonialism in India during the 19th Century. Further, the nationalist and communal interpretations appear problematic in the context of the language deployed by the precolonial chroniclers, blissfully ignorant of colonialism and nationalism, in service of social memory. *These men did not write a prose designed to justify the fantasies of future historians*. This essay has hopefully shown that linguistic meanings of a source can be transformed into convenient concepts by the historian at the altar of ideology. The historian in search of religious or political binaries reads the sources with a blinkered vision, misses the multifarious social and economic richness of the past and cultivates an unsympathetic attitude towards a time far removed from the age of modernity. In sum, he allows his political motives to impinge on the past uncritically. For the critical historian *aware of his bias* the way out of this ideological-pedagogical conundrum lies in reading the *primary sources* of history carefully with pencil and paper in hand and underlining the *difference* between the vocabulary of our ancestors and ourselves. This painstaking work is usually impossible to achieve over weekends. The answer to the imposition of normative criteria on history is not a counter-normative offensive, as is generally the case with polemical history writing, but a consciously cultivated distance between *our* normative preferences and *their* historical realities. Marshalling the technology of the historian's craft and putting it at the service of micro history is one way of steering clear of an absorption of history into ideology. This can only be attempted, and possibly accomplished, by a historian willing to subject his sources to psychological, sociological and political scrutiny. By doing so, as Bloch, Carr and Ginzburg suggest, the historian can create a new synthesis between the *micro* and *macro* histories only after years of

sustained and disciplined intellectual and physical labor. It must be remembered that language is both bane and solution to the historian in search of an authentic past and none could have expressed this better that Bloch (1958):

> Unlike mathematics or chemistry, our science has at its disposal no system of symbols unconnected with national language. The historian speaks only with words; hence, with those of his country. If he finds realities expressed in a foreign language, he must translate. As for that, there is no serious obstacle as long as the words refer to commonplace things or actions: that ready money of the vocabulary is easily exchanged at par. On the other hand, as soon as those institutions, beliefs, and customs which play a profounder part in the peculiar life of a society make their appearance, the translation into another language, made after the likeness of a different society, becomes an enterprise fraught with dangers. For to choose an equivalent is to postulate a resemblance (Bloch 1958, 162).

The sources speak of an unfamiliar land and people. Maybe a trace of those people survives in us and might possibly outlive our generation because history is a dialectic of continuity and change. Nonetheless the social, and *therefore political*, difference between people who conducted the business of their lives in a land three or four hundred years ago and ourselves is enormous. The problem of writing the history of pre-modern people is acute because the industrial revolution, and its international influence, created a new society in which the meaning of words was transformed irrevocably. Nationalist histories, called completely wrong by Hobsbawm, complicated the task of the historians

the world over (Wilks 2021). In India the early 18th century society was not very different from late 18th century society. As an illustration it can be said that Baji Rao II, of the Second and Third Anglo-Maratha War infamy, had the same mentality as his father Raghunath Rao who was instrumental in starting the First Anglo-Maratha War. The Mughal of the year 1700 CE probably shared the culture of his counterpart in 1800 CE but the same cannot be said of a poet like Ghalib who knew that the old world around him had changed once and for all. In sum, the late 19th century Indian society, in which vocabulary had become modern, was different in many ways from the late 18th century society. In general, the material and ideological life in the past was qualitatively different from today's nuclear and internet age. If our ancestors conversed in words different from the ones we use for our life purposes today, we must try and understand them in their pre-modern context. Wrenching words out of their context and imparting our meanings to them is to write convenient *but* dishonest history. A commitment to dishonest history is nothing but the propagation of political mischief. On the other hand, our ancestors may have used some words familiar to us but with different meanings. For instance, they wrote of a *desh*, *mulk, dakshin* or *watan* unlike the way a nationalist demagogue or poet speaks them. Neither of these words meant a nation to our pre colonial ancestors. Whether words change or remain the same, a careful reading of the linguistic polyphony in which our sources speak remains crucial to the historian's craft and micro history.

On the other hand, sometimes textual words don't change over time because the minds of the people using them don't change the meanings associated with those words. A good example is the 1883 Marathi *Majha Pravas* written from memory by a Konkanastha Brahmin, Vishnu Bhatt Godse Versaikar. This travelogue, translated multiple times, is known as an eye-witness account of the 1857 upheaval remembered from the perspective of an indigent Brahmin caught up in the events in north India i.e.

Hindustan (Godse 1907 [14]. Godse deploys words like *desh*, *dakshin* and *Hindustan*, in an 18th century *bakhar* like narrative, but eschews *Maharashtra* or *Maharashtrian* in a text conceived in the context of growing nationalism during the 1880s. The first Brahmin editor and publisher of this work, Vaidya, a Marathi nationalist, does not point this out. Godse is acutely consciously of caste, gender and regional identities throughout the text as most modern *savarna* Indians, but his own identity is primarily that of a southern Brahmin, as he makes the Hindustanis call him. This shows that it took time for elite ideas of nationalism to influence popular mentality.

Notes and References

[1] In fact, Ginzburg (2013) calls ventriloquism a "professional illness" most historians suffer (106).
[2] Hobsbawm (2013) mentions the "politico-ideological element" in the construction of modern languages in the 19th Century (111).
[3] According to Anderson (2015) language is decisive in the construction of bourgeois nationalism, a process in which the use of the print medium guides the consciousness of the middle classes. The ideological objective of this educated bourgeois project is to achieve a "coincidence of language-of-state and language of the population" found in a territorial political unit (78). Eagleton (1983) is well known for articulating the Marxist view that language and art are expressions of ideology in the making of which class struggle and the state play a crucial role.
[4] Before the emergence of large scale primary education there could be no 'national' spoken or written language. In the Indian subcontinent this process can be traced *only* to the colonial period post 1857 and, of course, the post-colonial period of national construction following the 1947 transfer of power in India *and* Pakistan. General primary education was unthinkable in medieval India in which literacy was the preserve of a tiny elite comprising *men* of the *savarna* castes.
[5] According to Hobsbawm (2013) everything about nationalist history is wrong. Also see Anthony Wilks (2021) on Hobsbawm's life and work.
[6] According to Ginzburg (2013) the solution to over-preconceived history is as follows: "The greater the distance from primary evidence is, the greater the risk of being caught out by hypotheses put forward either by intermediaries or by ourselves actually becomes. In other words, we risk finding what we are looking for – and nothing else." Further, this problem of imagining the past can possibly be overcome by resorting to a "close analytic reading" of primary sources in the pursuit of a micro history which makes for new and sometimes radically different generalizations (108-109).

[7] Thompson (2017) underlines the social purpose of history writing and asserts that an examination of the life experience of people who lived in the past produces interesting results for the historian.
[8] Dehlvi (2017) calls the rebel sepoys "uncouth purbias" i.e., uncivilized Easterners (115).
[9] For a scholarly discussion on the origins of the word Maharashtra see Acworth (1894). The evolution of Maratha identity has been critically analyzed in Deshpande, (2007). The Marathi *shahirs* (poets writing popular eulogies called the *powadas*) were the cultural forerunners of the latter day Maratha nationalists.

[10] The word Maratha or Decany troops is employed by Pandit (1791) to describe people from the Deccan in Bhau's camp but the word Maharashtra *does not occur in the memoir*.
[11] See Longer (1981), Introduction.
[12] For instance, Herwadkar (1997) describes the march of the Maratha army led by Bhau as leaving the *mulukh* at Narmada and proceeding towards Hindustan.
[13] Phadnis briefly describes his life experience in this short biography which his widow gave the British. It ends with the death of Nana Saheb (Balaji Baji Rao) and the appointment of his second son Madhavrao as Peshwa. The autobiography is undated and its expansion probably preempted by the increased involvement of Nana Phadnis in the troubled affairs of the Peshwa rule following the premature death of Madhavrao, the machinations of Raghunathrao and assassination of Narayanrao soon thereafter (Raeside, 1984).
[14] Chintaman Vinayak Vaidya (ed.), *Majha Pravas athwa san 1857 salchya bandachi hakigat* by Vshnu Bhatt Godse Varsaikar, Damodar Sanwalaram Ani Mandali, Mumbai, 1907.

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Innovation and Learning Ecosystems in Developing Countries with reference to India

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Abstract

The paper offers an alternative theoretical construct to understand the systemic approach to innovation in developing countries. A developing country firm is more often a learning entity than a knowledge-creating entity and faces a different enabling environment compared to developed economies. The institutional requirements of the systems of learning complement the institutions for systems of innovation. Growth and technological change are endogenous and require context-specific systems of innovation, training and skill-formation. The National Innovation Systems (NIS) approach must be complemented with the National Systems of Economic Learning (NSEL) to encourage inclusive, sustainable innovation. Innovation in developing countries is incremental than disruptive. Appropriate institutions improve the absorptive capacity at the individual, organization and economy-wide level in a systemic perspective of doing, using and interaction (DUI). Thus, innovation and learning systems' conceptual framework needs to be localized in many ways. Presence of a large informal sector also poses a challenge to the application of NIS/NSEL in developing economies.

Key words: Learning System, Absorptive Capacity, Skill formation.

I. Introduction

The concept of National Innovation System (NIS) should be transformed in developing economies to establish a national system of economic learning (NSEL) by doing, using and interaction (DUI). Science, technology, innovation (STI) and research are necessary for growth and competitiveness of nations with attention to dissemination and diffusion of borrowed, often imported technology to ensure inclusive and sustainable innovation (Lundvall et al., 2002; Lundvall and Lema, 2014). Innovation systems with focus on research and development and in-house product, process and organizational innovation should be complemented with systems that promote learning, training and development of competencies in line with technological developments. Technological efficiency depends on the ability to upgrade skills and learning abilities and train people to use this knowledge. Learning involves interaction supported by appropriate institutions with feedback loops. Interaction with local firms, MNCs, customers, suppliers and public-funded research institutions are crucial to innovation. This occurs in the context of innovation and learning systems comprising dynamic formal and informal institutions centred on diffusion of technology and knowledge in late-comer countries (Edquist, 2001; Lundvall, 1992, Casadella and Tahi, 2022). Learning capacities of individuals, organisations, firms, society and regions must expand. In time, emerging economies generate knowledge systems and indigenise technological change. Social inclusion along gender, region, sector and community lines is necessary for the well-being of people. With changes in social and technological needs, learning helps develop indigenous solutions to problems, build capacity, use local knowledge and promote sustainable growth. The paper contends that innovation in developing countries depends critically on the absorptive capacity to adapt borrowed technology to local contexts which depends on learning, training and skill ecosystems.

II. Knowledge and Innovation

The neoclassical approach assumes that firms have equal access to technology and no specific firm-effort is required to 'learn' new technology. It discounts the role of institutions and state-policy required to reduce transaction costs and ignores the political economy of the choice of a particular technology. Modern growth theories regard research and technological change

endogenous to the system and associated role of ideas and innovation central to economic growth and competitiveness. Growth depends not only on *what* but also on *how well* a country produces goods. Therefore, countries strive to become knowledge-based economies (KBEs) and deploy sophisticated technologies. The contribution of human capital and technological change to growth is aptly acknowledged (OECD, 1997; ADB, 2007; World Bank 1999). Knowledge, innovation, growth and sustainability are also integral to UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Innovation helps firms survive incessant competition or extract rents in oligopolistic systems which is Schumpeter's 'creative destruction' (Kozul-Wright, 1995). Well-defined and protected property rights enable firms to obtain monopoly rents from innovation. Innovation comprises complementary product, process, organizational and marketing aspects which in the context of firm-heterogeneity, is affected by internal and external factors. The latter forms the national innovation system (NIS) (Lundvall, 1992; Nelson, 1993; Freeman, 1987).

Innovation studies focus on research, production, end-use, interaction and dissemination or education and training (Chang & Chen, 2004). Furman et al., (2002) focus on quantification of the national innovative capacity which refers to the ability to produce and expand the use of new ideas. Other forms of analyses focus on determinants of innovation in countries which is reflected in R&D productivity in a systemic set-up. WIPO uses Composite Innovation Index made of 80 indicators while the Potential Innovation Index (PII) uses 18 indicators to understand innovation capacity (Enjolras et al., 2018). Overall innovation indicators include S&T variables, firm-specific variables and composite indicators (Casadella and Tahi, 2022). Most of these indicators cater to the NIS of developed economies and ignore the informal innovation aspects in developing countries.

The NIS framework, evolved in the context of developed economies, which operate on the frontiers of technology, is reflected in the indicators on STI and disruptive innovation. This systemic approach considers innovation path-dependent and insists on R&D in promoting innovation with feedback from stakeholders in the system. Its success presumes sound, strong and effective financial, legal, educational, political and social institutions and organizations to ensure efficient outcomes (Edquist, 1997). Juxtaposition of NIS may not suit the developing country milieu due to low in-house R&D and weak or missing institutions. Rather, the NSEL comprising

'learning by doing' focused on diffusion of imported technology and a DUI system affects innovation in developing economies. These countries chase moving technology frontiers to bridge the knowledge gap. A state based on the rule of law must minimize coordination failures and integrate national, regional and sectoral innovation systems; formal and informal institutions are complementary and power innovation (North, 1991; Scott, 1995). In developing countries, innovation is incremental (Lall, 1992) and new to the firm. The STI mode is weak and even absent in poor countries. The latter are dependent on open and external sources of knowledge than internal R&D as envisaged by the NIS approach (Gaillard and Bouabib, 2017). Developing countries lag in technological development and their catch-up is determined by their ability to explore, identify, adapt, assimilate and exploit technological knowledge obtained externally which is governed by their absorptive capacity (Lall and Pietrobelli, 2002).

The learning paradigm for late-comers comes from the East Asian model (Mathews, 1999). Developing countries address innovation in numerous ways. New technology and local capacity building are important for high-tech manufacturing, medium and low-tech sectors (Johnson and Lundvall, 2003; Muchie et al., 2003) and primary and tertiary sectors. Local knowledge systems in the informal sector must be incorporated to promote inclusive innovation (Jauhiainen & Hooli, 2017; Casedella and Tahi, 2022). The success of knowledge transfer from MNCs to the sub-units in host countries depends on the 'institutional distance' between institutional quality and profiles of the two countries (Kostova and Zaheer, 1999; Kostova et al., 2020). It addresses social issues and upholds localized institutional arrangements for individual and social welfare. Grassroots innovation taps the creative abilities of the poor and reduce inequality. Thus, dynamic NIS and learning systems confront the challenge of social, inclusive and green aspects of economic activity in the formal and informal sectors. The NIS in developing countries must deal with diffusion of knowledge which promotes sustainable development. This is more significant for developing countries because the impact of climate change and ecological degradation is asymmetrically borne by developing countries with implications for food availability, poverty reduction and generation of productive employment (Chaminade et al., 2018; Johnson et al., 2017).

The NSEL translates into developing firm-level and individual competencies. Like NIS requires a simultaneous development of regional and sectoral innovation systems, the NSEL necessitates sub-national and sectoral approaches. NSEL, at all levels, creates skill-ecosystems and increases the absorptive capacity of the economy in tandem with changing technology. This affects adoption, adaptation and assimilation of knowledge (Cohen and Levinthal, 1989, 1990; Bellon and Niosi, 1994). Interface between industry, academia and public-funded research institutions drives innovation. Innovation in developing countries lies below the technology frontier with policy-focus on the formal sector. A large proportion of innovation is *jugaad*, grassroots, frugal and inclusive. Learning systems are weak due to inadequate access to education, training and finances with regulatory capture rendering institutional structures fragile. Informal innovation performed in local contexts comprise local knowledge systems and capacities. Training institutions help create a scientific, innovative and capable workforce which can carry out shop-floor innovation. Part of these knowledge networks are the MSMEs which form a larger proportion of production units than large firms in developing countries. In developing countries informal systems of absorption and dissemination of knowledge coexist and are effective with formal tertiary education institutions. Both, formal and on-the-job training offered by the firm plays an important role in case of borrowed technology. Simultaneity in the systems of economic learning, vocational education and training (VET) and skill formation with the NIS are relevant to developing country growth and competitiveness.

Higher education institutions (HEIs) are central to the process of knowledge-creation with emphasis on critical thinking. Generation of new knowledge and technological development are path-dependent (OECD, 1997). Absorptive capacity and organizational routines must co-evolve with changes in knowledge structures to meet the requirements of the enterprise (Foss et al. 2013; Schmidt, 2010). Accordingly, the emerging economy firm performs a lesser role of a *knowledge-creating* and more of a *knowledge utilising,* information-processing and a *learning entity* and aims to improve its capabilities to adopt, adapt, assimilate and disseminate knowledge with intertwined individual and organisational objectives (Nonaka, 2007). It encourages 'individual, organisational and inter-organisational learning' (Lundvall, 2016, 594).

Firms have access to different sources of knowledge with associated technological paths (Edquist, 2001; Laursen, 2012). *Hence learning on part of an organization depends on the stock of knowledge with which the firm starts, given the absorptive capacity of the firm and the experience of its managers facilitated or constrained by its organizational structure. Overtime, these change to keep pace with changing knowledge structures, technology and organizational routines, depending on governance patterns. This recognizes the evolutionary and the dynamic relationship between knowledge, learning and capabilities*. Thus *creation, borrowing, adoption and utilisation of new ideas and capability-building are continuous and simultaneous processes*. Learning depends on individual proficiency, absorptive power and improved organizational routines. It occurs in the existing configurations and interaction with new knowledge necessitates formation of new organizational arrangements and dynamic abilities to address new problems.

With globalization most developing countries are closely integrated with the world economy. This creates opportunities for developing economies to access imported technology and appropriate gains from participating and upgrading in the global value chains (GVCs) in a typical model of offshoring. State policy facilitates the process of diffusion of borrowed technology by devising a *strategy of learning.* The latter also rests on inter-relation between various actors for exchange of ideas through formal and informal processes and networks. NIS with NSEL is needed in developing countries but in reality both systems are found to be isolated, weak and lack interconnection between institutions and organizations. Formal learning systems have to be combined with informal social relationships to help transfer knowledge to create dynamic comparative advantage. Further, the group of developing countries is a hetreogenous group and thus catch-up dynamics are different and require varied build-up of innovation capacities and institutions in different countries. The role of the state is central to the creation of appropriate, strong and effective institutions to internalize knowledge externalities and minimize transaction costs to make the market for knowledge and technology efficient but there is no one-size-fits-all NIS or NSEL. This requires indegenisation of borrowed knowledge via learning and institutional experimentation appropriate to the circumstances that prevail. It is important that innovation and technology is modified to exploit local knowledge-systems and build capacities at the sectoral, regional and local levels. History and context are important and despite the availability of the state-

of-the-art technology, the ability to create effective institutions may be weak in developing countries. Institutions govern the choice of techniques and assimilation of benefits by the society and no simple emplacement of borrowed institutions guarantees favourable development outcomes. Globalisation implies local systems of innovation and learning interact with global NIS. Institutional entrepreneurship on part of the MNCs results in the latter influencing host country governments to create effective regulatory institutions. With globalization and participation of firms in GVCs and international activity, NIS/NSEL has to be dynamic and evolve in line with changing demands and expect regulation and market delivery to be effective and curtail transaction costs. Hence NIS/NSEL should be dynamic and open but not necessary that these systems in different countries will converge with globalization. The ecosystem is specific to national and sub-national levels. STI policy varies and is shaped by the local milieu given that all spaces evolve in a path-dependent manner and brings out the role assigned to governments to create the NSEL. Knowledge is cumulative and a resource that allows economies to shift to new trajectories. The state has to coordinate the processes of innovation and learning, affecting the willingness, means, incentives and capabilities to learn and ensure access to knowledge. It has to establish cooperation between formal and informal information and learning structures and invest in education and research. In a learning economy 'the success of individuals, firms, regions and countries… will reflect their ability to learn' with production of knowledge and learning in a systemic perspective ((Lundvall, 2016, p148).

Skill-development is a lifelong process. Skills are cognitive, soft, IT and work-related. It is crucial to address the skill-requirements of the labour market and appreciate the role of skills in elevating living standards. With rise in hybrid modes of work, policy must focus on training of instructors, assess skills and training including VET and create a dynamic system of skill formation, training, re-skilling and up-skilling in association with employers and educational institutions to counter the threat of automation of low-skilled tasks. Post covid-19, the relevance of remote learning for VET and modular training needs attention to curtail learning loss with provision of equitable access to digital technologies.

III. The Learning Ecosystem in India

In India, education and creation of knowledge falls under the Ministry of Education. Training and skill is supervised by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) created in 2014. A National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship was launched in 2015 and National Council for Skill Development set up as the apex institution. Earlier, National Skills Development Policy, (NSDP) of 2009 was integral to the 12th Five Year Plan for 2012-17. The MSDE recognizes India's demographic diversity with large proportion of young working-age population. The MSDE has the Skill India Programme to create the skill-ecosystem with Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendra (PMKK), National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), Skill India Mission, National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET), Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS), National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (NIESBUD), Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE) and the Directorate General of Training (DGT). The National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS) was launched in 2016. The DGT, NCVET and NSDC are the three main institutions of the MSDE. The DGT is required to study the skills gap and take action on industrial and vocational training. At the state level, the Regional Directorate of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (RDSDE) addresses skill needs. There are 19 NSTIs for women and 14 other NSTIs across the country which fall under the RDSDE. The NCVET established in December 2018 is responsible for the implementation of the National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF) through the National Skills Qualification Committee (NSQC). NSQF was notified in 2013 and is responsible for classification of skills on the basis of knowledge, skills and aptitude. NCVET is in the process of setting up National Skill Universities. NSDC is a public-private partnership venture with an equity base of Rs. 10 crores. It aims to generate funds for skill development, bridge skill-gaps and set up skill development institutes with focus on employability. It aims to provide an enabling environment for skill formation and monitors the working of thirty-seven Sector Skill Councils (SSC). SSCs are non-profit bodies set up by NSDC under the Skill India Mission. These are sector-specific bodies to identify skills needed and demand-supply gaps including the skills of the marginalized communities and differently-enabled. The NIESBUD was brought under the MSDE in 2015 to organize training programmes for trainers,

entrepreneurs, women and marginalized communities. It also concentrates on skill-cluster development. Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE) established in 1979 has worked independently since 1994 under the Ministry of Industry. It became a part of the Ministry of MSME in 2007 and is now under MSDE.

The vision of the National Policy on Skill Development under the Skill Development Vision, 2010, was to create a pool of 500 million skilled people by 2022. Around 12.8 million workers enter the workforce annually against the capacity to train 3.1 million persons. Only 4.69 percent of the workforce in India has formal skill training and 8.6 percent received non-formal vocational training compared with formally trained workforce of 68 percent in the UK, 75 percent in Germany, 52 percent in US, 80 percent in Japan and 96 percent in South Korea (Talreja, et al., 2018). Almost 50 percent of the employers face skill shortage. There is little interface between industrial training institutions and industry or technology users. Mismatch between demand and supply of skills and lack of integration between skill development and formal education with poor infrastructure and shortage of trained instructors continue to be main challenges. In the first quarter of 2019 the unemployment rate for 20-24 age group was 34 percent and almost 40 percent for urban areas. One reason for this is poor training of the new entrants in the job market. Only 7 percent are formally trained. However, 33 percent of the formally trained workers in the age group 15-29 remained unemployed. Hence lack of appropriate skills is the main challenge. The government's Skill India Programme has a target of training a pool of 300 million people by 2022 under the PMKVY but only 25 million were trained by 2018. The funds budgeted and allocated to schemes under PMKVY were not fully utilized at the end of 2021-22 although the allocations are higher than previous budgetary allocations. Only 15 percent of those trained under PMKVY got employment. Overall recession lowers demand for skilled workers in favour of semi-skilled workers. Higher education, vocational training and skill development are not synchronized. Female participation is low in labour-force. More than 90 percent of workers serve the informal sector *sans* wage and other protection (MSDE, Annual Report, 2021-22). Varied training programs are needed across sectors and regions. Unemployment also arises due to technological changes in favor of capital, knowledge and skill-intensity. Emergence of GVCs means increased demand for skilled workers. The MSDE for 2017-22 estimates incremental human resource requirement of

103 million spread over twenty-four sectors with the largest shares of construction and retail followed by transportation and storage, IT and ITES, agriculture, auto components and capital goods. Across states, the largest number of incremental human resources are needed in Maharashtra followed by Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh.

A study by KPMG-FICCI (2016) with Sector Skill Councils for 2013-17 and 2017-22 across Indian states and 24 sectors notes that despite steady growth since the 1990s for a number of years the *demand-supply gap for skills has widened*. The study estimates a shortage of 109.73 million personnel in 24 sectors with top ten sectors facing 80 percent of this. It shows that the *vocationally trained workers* lack the skills needed by the industry which influences their employability. Academic and vocational training are not synchronized. In the world of work qualitative and quantitative skill-gaps persist. The need to promote TVET, upgrade curricula and develop vocational and technical skills with internship experience for transition from school to work is imperative. This is essential to sustainable growth. VET, with certification, for the informal sector and as part of schooling is necessary.

The main source of industrial training are the ITIs which provide the craftsmen training schemes (CTS) under the State Council for Vocational Training in more than 130 engineering and non-engineering fields to 8^{th}, 10^{th} and 12^{th} class drop-outs. The students after completing the diploma can enroll in apprenticeship programs to acquire practical experience. The student can upgrade to become a technician by joining the Advanced Training Institute. The number of ITIs has increased from 54 in 1953 to more than 10,000 in 2014 with more than 75 percent of the institutes in the private sector. Together they have the capacity to produce more than 1.53 million trained personnel. Overall training capacity of the system is around 4.5 million (12^{th} FYP). Out of an annual increment of 12.8 million in the labour force only 10 percent receive formal training. This points to the demand-supply gap in what employers want and what is available in the market of work. Estimates by leading consulting firms indicate that there could be a shortfall of 350 million people by 2022 in 20 high growth sectors of the Indian economy (Kumar, 2016). The pass-outs from these institutes find it difficult to be self-employed and their apprenticeship does not necessarily result in jobs. Vocational training is not considered respectable. World Bank's Enterprise Survey data on Skills Survey in India's auto-components, garments and textiles

industries in 2015 shows that ITI trained workers are theoretically sound but those with on-the-job experience perform better on the floor.

IV. Conclusion

In developing countries policy must focus on innovation and learning ecosystems to address problems of the bottom-of-the-pyramid. Movement towards green economy also needs new kinds of cognitive, literacy and life skills. State policy should ensure access to education and health which have social benefits. Learning and innovation systems need complementary institutions with integration of formal education with VET. NIS is a multidimensional concept which varies with local contexts. Developing countries have large informal sectors and innovations *there* are inclusive. Developing country ecosystems of knowledge are different from developed countries, emphasizing grassroots innovation. The NIS and NSEL are non-linear evolutionary systems attentive to competency to achieve equity and sustainable development. Inclusive innovation in the informal sector should be internalized in overall STI Policy which must promote innovation across all sectors. Innovation ecosystem in emerging economies must build capabilities via institutional experimentation. Deficient human capital negatively affects innovation. It is imperative that workers are skilled, up-skilled and re-skilled to avoid technological unemployment caused by labour-saving technological change.

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India in tumult: Populism, protest and mass mobilisation

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Abstract

Populism has already entered the realm of political science debate that encompasses a broad range of unusual movements, protests, and demonstrations, whether political, social, or economic. However, before delving into the conflict between democracy and populism, this article engages with the literature offered by several studies. In this regard, this paper adds to the current research by focusing on the Indian context. As this article will expound on the concept of populist culture, a large segment of the populace supports the dissatisfaction of the targeted group, making the issue more widespread in scope. In addition, to addressing populist culture, this article examines populist occurrences that occurred in the previous decades. Although populism is the central theme of this paper, which is in the construction process, as a notion, it is still in debate. In Indian history, the last few decades will be known for significant demonstrations and a popular administration in power. Populism, populist culture, and protest were all geared at making this country more democratic. While there has always been some debate among political intellectuals regarding populism concreteness, what we observe in the Indian context is a refined vision of populism aimed at the targeted people. From a strategic perspective, populism and democracy are inextricably linked; because populism frequently acts as a shadow image of democracy, and in a democratic framework, the rise of populist actors is a result of the loop formed by political praxis.

Keywords: Constitutional Expression; Democracy; Populism; Protest; Political efficacy.

Introduction

The world has witnessed revolts, movements, and protests since the inception of human society. The explosion of thoughts led people to break the autocratic rule and indulge themselves in the democratic structure. The twentieth and twenty-first centuries began with the era of acquiring and building a democratic framework in

those nations that were still a long way from democracy. The transition from the old monarchical model to the new democratic paradigm centred on "the people."

Even though populism is concerned with the people, several attempts have been undertaken all over the world to introduce democracy. Whether; it was a shot by the United Nations to exhibit democracy in Afghanistan after the 9/11 attack on the US or the unbound agenda of the Arab Spring to overthrow the reign of autocracy, corruption, and economic stagnation. And the battle of the people against authoritarian states, such as the iconic image captured of the 'Tank Man' protesting in front of the army against China's authoritarian government in Tiananmen Square. Though the prevalence of political praxis is a common flaw in democracies, even well-established democracies cannot avoid this predicament. Protests, demonstrations, and marches are manifestations of people's collective awareness and are known as non-institutionalised collective actions. The dictionary definitions of these phrases may differ, but the legitimacy of these outrages infers legality. Being a thin-centred ideology, populism's existence as an ideology lies upon the other thick thesis.

The twentieth century saw a rise in political expressions as the world reshaped its political identity. With the end of the colonial era came widespread movements for independence and liberation of states like Africa, Asia, and Latin America, ushering in a new epoch of rapidly developing countries. Populism arose as a political phenomenon in the 1940s when Latin America became the locus of this contentious philosophy. As political conflict transformed the world, populism emerged as an outcome of such disputes.

India, a diversified country in every way, is already a well-established democracy; nonetheless, we can notice a surge in popular protest. When a government attempts to impose measures that are contrary to democratic principles, the country is thrown into disarray. As Argentinian philosopher Ernesto Laclau (2005) explains, the element of political efficacy exists in the structure of institutions of governance. Therefore, the emergence of populist movements or populist politics is possible in a system where the breakdown of social, political and economic systems is possible.

Before delving into the rise of populism as a block to discover, it is necessary to dig into the literature available on this concept. Populism is a contested notion, and several attempts to define and redefine it with correct definitions frequently provoke controversies among social scientists, just like in the case of democracy, even when there is consensus on their operationalisation in the literature. (Goertz, 2006)

Because of the extensive classification of its content, populism; is frequently regarded as an amorphous phenomenon. The term is generally associated with movements, regimes, leaders, ideologies, policies, modes

of incorporation or forms of integration, and state structures. Social scientists have disputed, fought, and challenged numerous specifications, but the components of the constructive idea have varied the concreteness of the topic.

Populism

Ernesto Laclau (2005) propounded his theory of populism in a very abstract way; he argued that populism is an emancipatory social force through which a marginalised section challenges the dominant power structure. Moreover, it is about the popular engagement of 'the people' from that particular section in decision-making power. And the vantage point of this political scenario lies its roots in the historical conditions of the people from that specific group. Henceforth, populism believes that the people should have an increasing influence on decisions to achieve the highest possible degree of conformity between the rulers and those ruled.

Although there are other features of populism, for instance, some scholars categorise populism between left and right populists to demonstrate that right-wing populists are more dangerous than left populists. Others attempt to identify populists' particular profile of substantive commitments, which includes a dependence on majoritarianism. Some other scholars defined populism with a dimension of being seen as opportunistic populists, as they build their narrative through democratic rhetoric, the means to disarm opponents by pretending to be more liberal than liberals. Some interpret populism as a reference to the politics of redemption.

Laclau observed that the highest form of populism is socialism and was among the first ones who emphasised the antagonistic divide. Similarly, scholars like Mudde (2004) explained populism as an ideology; consisting of two homogeneous groups with the antagonistic relationship between 'the people' and 'the established elite'; the will of the people is considered the ultimate source of legitimacy (popular sovereignty). Whereas; scholars like Canovan (1999) assert that populism is beyond the simple political discontent and frustration; it's a politics of hope and labelled it as politics of redemption.

This paper will concentrate on the emergence of populism in India, a liberal democratic country. Most of the protests and movements that occurred in the last decades are prime illustrations of a clash between the government and the demonstrators. The creation of two antagonistic groups was evident, though backed by numerous researchers, as they advocated the populist thesis. The approach of the study is both descriptive and

analytical in character. The primary and secondary data was acquired from a various of books, magazines, research publications and websites.

Individual demonstrations against injustice and cruelty have occurred throughout history. Protest, outrage, and movements become crucial tools in a democracy, as they allow people to express their freedom of expression. Whether it is through circulating furious social media posts or indignant letters to the editor, perhaps by advocating their voices through legal means such as public interest litigation (PIL) or by taking peaceful vigils to raise their concerns.

Protests in India

The state structure, with its high political manifestations and antagonistic relationships between unjust civil societies, determines the dynamics of protest. Similarly, in the Indian scenario, the realm of being a fast-growing country, India deals with crime, pervasive poverty, an unjust society and a slow-moving legal system exposes some of the volatile reasons. Since the existence of such political, social, and economic praxis sets the stage for grievance redressal, an approach of legitimising demands, a function of multi-cultural democracy, becomes a means of free speech and expression.

According to the latest report on democracy released by the V-Dem (Varieties of Democracy) Institute at Sweden's University of Gothenburg. The study's title was 'Democracy Report 2022: Autocracy Changing Nature?' Based on the score in Liberal Democratic Index (LDI), nations got classified into four regime types: Liberal Democracy, Electoral Democracy, Electoral Autocracy, and Closed Autocracy. It assessed India as an electoral autocracy, rating it 93rd out of 179 nations on the LDI. At the most fundamental level, Högström (2014) argues ‘that if democracies have a low level of legitimacy and have low effectiveness, they are at risk of becoming non-democratic regimes’ they can be classified as weak. As this analysis indicates, Indian democracy is becoming part of a global trend in which an anti-plural political party promotes a country's autocracy.

The narrative established by the Indian government was gearing up all forms of populist movements to emerge. Considering India's history, asserting that protests, virtual protests, or demonstrations are not just a passing trend; they have significant importance. In the Indian context, mass protests have witnessed massive resistance

from the state. The conflicts between police and protestors are not exceptional in India's varied culture. To retaliate against the broken legal and state structures, people frequently take up the streets to protest and carry out some form of vigilante justice and vengeance. Recent protests have varied widely from indignation over infringement of free speech and expression to outright violence (murders of journalists Lankesh and Bhowmik) to criticism of increasing Islamophobia and lynchings of Dalits and Muslims (#NotInMyName) (The Wire, 2017). The assertion by mass mobilisation for collective resistance was very much visible in the Anti-Citizenship Amendment Act (Anti-CAA) and the Farmer's protest.

Demonstrations have received considerable attention in the last decade since there has been a straight confrontation between demonstrators and the authorities, as though; we are living in a protest epoch. In India, there have been various protests. Beginning with the Anti-corruption movement in 2011, women's safety (most famously Nirbhaya protests, which resulted in criminal law revisions) and student protests on numerous issues on state miscarriage of justice have all sparked demonstrations. The timeline of collective opposition against the state and its divisive, violent, and neoliberal agenda marks a watershed moment in Indian politics. All these recent protests are in confrontation with the state policies and have become the emblem of the collective voice.

India's pre-independence history was full of stunning protests and demonstrations. A sense of being from one nation-state brought people together to raise their voices against colonial rule. These could be traced back to independence movements when individuals began to develop a sense of belonging to a nation-state. These have varied from the bloody upheaval of 1857 to national movements spread across the country. The fight of 'us' against 'them' existed at the time, and the question facing us today is not about establishing a nation. As it has already occurred, the question is how we might become more democratic by preventing governmental forces from becoming authoritarian administrations. Subsequently, with the growth of India, innovations were taking place not only in the technological sectors but also in the techniques of protesting, garnering the nation's attention. In the iconic Chipko movement, a non-violent agitation of villagers hugged trees to protect the forest area or to fight against societal ills, Dalits dumped cow corpses in public places to protest the hierarchical and harsh caste-based employment forced on them).

Events leading up to the mid-decade, and India was through a change in administration, i.e., the extreme right government in the centre in 2014, which coincided with an upsurge in protests as the government pushed the populace toward the masculine Hindutva philosophy, epitomised by the Modi-led BJP government. Anand (2011) has outlined Hindu nationalism and Hindutva as schizophrenic nationalism; a nationalism that

encompasses a politics of imagination, insecurity, cultural transformation, and social mobilisation in a form that fosters violence and fear while allowing the myth of tolerant Hindus to remain unchallenged.

The Modi-centric government refers to a growth model that works in a fast pace decision-making mode particularly; dependent on the statistics they have in parliament. This legislature does things quickly in terms of planning, legislative changes, and bureaucracy, which ultimately leads to the degradation of political understanding as it leads to systematic inconsistency in the political realm.

As Kaul (2017) observes, 'the Modi tenure has been disastrous for minorities, environmentalists, labour rights activists, liberal media, progressive universities, socially and economically vulnerable groups such as Dalits (oppressed castes) and farmers, to name a few. She further mentions, the continued killings and beatings over the contentious issue of a "beef ban", murders of rationalists and atheists; an emboldening of Hindu extremist groups that act violently to enforce their principles or openly engage in hate speech against minorities fearing no repercussions; significant removal of environmental safeguards for business projects; policy-making through ordinances. Throughout the Modi administration, we have seen tremendous resistance and unending protests in Kashmir, anti-rape and anti-CAA (Citizenship Amendment Act) protests, and farmers' protests in India. As Chakrabarti (2022) asserts, protests have the ability to energise a restive populace by bringing them together in harmony, shot with the force of solidarity that comes through collective political action.

Protest and Populist Culture

Whether it was the Anti-citizenship amendment act or the Farmer's protest, both these protests were the answer to the present regime. Between December 2019 and November 2021, Indian streets erupted in protests, agitations, blockades, and conflict. Protesters gathered to oppose the contentious and discriminatory Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) of 2019 and its accompanying National Register of Citizens (NRC) provisions, which provide Indian citizenship to persecuted religious minorities from neighbouring Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. Only Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, Parsis, and Christians are eligible under this rule. In contrast, the NRC would be an official registry of all legal citizens of India. Individuals would need to present a specific set of documents by a specified deadline to be part of it. The Act got heavily criticised; since it explicitly makes religious identity a condition for Indian citizenship.

Since anti-CAA rallies were becoming increasingly significant, the central government strategy was to limit the scope of the protest: by curtailing civil liberties, shutting down the internet at protest sites; censoring news in the media; and arresting political opponents/students/dissenters/protestors in the name of restoring order and managing the COVID-19 crisis, with the usual justification of weeding out 'anti-nationals' who allegedly pose a threat to India's security and unity (Chakrabarti, 2022).

Another 2020 demonstration that jolted India and the world was the Indian Farmer's Protests. This demonstration occurred in response to the three farm acts passed by the Indian parliament in September 2020. Millions of farmers became part of these protests, majorly from north India. Farmers have been fighting the passage of three agricultural regulations backed by the government in parliament and hurried through based on statistics they have in the house. It is perhaps the world's largest protest in history. As previously; stated in this article, this extreme right administration moves quickly, and the course of action, wherein; acts got converted into laws, was evident in these scenarios. The three anti-farmer laws hurriedly passed without proper debate in the parliament were: the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020; Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020 and Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020. Protesters and opponents marked these agricultural legislations as anti-farmer because they would leave farmers to the "mercy of corporates." Farmers' unions projected that market-friendly policies would eventually eliminate regulatory protection, leaving them impoverished and with few options for a living in a weakening economy.

Although by assessing these protests, the battle of 'us' against 'them' was apparent, the growth of populist culture as a means of communication was substantial enough to build up protests on a large scale for supporting agendas that were not in favour of democratic principles. The notion of augmenting democratic ideals was critical in aiding the mobilisation effort. As these protests organised themselves, the possibility for collective action became a collaborative facet of the mobilisation. As per McGuigan (1992), to understand the function of populist culture, one must examine public communication, institutional authority, and from a materialist perspective, socio-economic relations. On a further note, McGuigan contends that "the study of culture is useless if it is not about morals."

Even though some protests have taken advantage of massive mobilisation, the legitimacy of protests has indeed been put into doubt. However, one such recent demonstration took place in the previous decade; adherents of the Dera Sacha Sauda sect went on an ambush after discovering that their leader, Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh,

had been convicted of rape by a CBI special court (The Hindu, 2021). Such populist protests are the result of religious cult emergence. According to Ostiguy (2017), populism is a two-way phenomenon defined primarily by claims and; builds a relationship between leaders and followers that represents the socio-cultural and politico-cultural as its components. Here, populism demonstrates 'the people' as empty signifiers (Laclau, 2005). These kinds; of protests put up a question mark on the viability of the antagonistic relationship, even though populism can combine divergent grievances.

Throughout the Modi government, there has been tremendous resistance and endless protests in various regions of the country, beginning with the revocation of special status under Article 370 in Kashmir, anti-rape and anti-CAA and farmers' protests throughout India. While anti-CAA agitations were visible across the country, anti-farm laws; were majorly concentrated in north India.

As McGuigan points out, the collective group that works on the values and morals establishes a culture. Similarly, various protests took place to work on the vacuity of the government's decision to amend the citizenship act, which has drawn the attention of the country and the world is Anti -Citizenship Amendment Act. To protest the punitive Act, which violated various aspects of the constitution, primarily Articles 14, 15 and 16 on equality and was inimical to the secular ethos, Shaheen Bagh became the site of the protest against the Citizenship Amendment Act. Although these protests; were primarily directed at the disputed citizenship laws. However, there was another dimension to the protests that took place in the northeast part of the country, which was specifically aimed at the Act's implementation in their areas, considering that enforcement would disrupt the uniqueness of their culture and language due to the influx of immigrants. While the Shaheen Bagh demonstrated against Muslim exclusion. Though the slipshod amendment made into the existing Act was itself questioning the government's vacuousness and giving the people to collaborate over the issue of integrity and fraternity of the nation.

Although farmers' protests were not widely apparent throughout the country, this specific protest caught the eyes of the world with its year-long determination to abolish legislations that; were unfavourable to the agricultural sector. Several marches and sit-ins were visible throughout the demonstrations. Many farmer's unions associated with the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) accompanied the protests. Protesters were primarily from the northern area, which included states such as Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh, and many farming communities from neighbouring states such as Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Karnataka, and Kerala backed the very cause. Protests opposing anti-farm legislations were backed not just by male

farmers but also by farmerette and farm workers and supported by labour unions from many sectors, i.e., namely, the manufacturing and service industries.

Conclusion

India gained independence in the mid of 20th century and has completed its 75th anniversary. When the British left India, they left behind a broken, needy, underdeveloped, and economically unstable country. There is no question that these large protests have shaken the country's foundations and encouraged ordinary people from all walks of life to provide their support to the cause. What's striking is that the recent farmers' protests not only want a protectionist state that resists privatisation but also aims to democratise it. This part of the demonstration is critical as the welfare state slowly crumbles. While simultaneously observing the menacing growth of a police state that employs force, surveillance, and other means to direct its authority to restrict and oppress, instigating its citizens to protest against the deeds that have become detrimental to a democratic and pluralistic society.

In the Indian scenario, the growth of such protests explains the emergence of populist movements and populist leaders, as people have always criticised the unjust authority of the state and participated in change. Political void becomes the reason for such activism, as Canovan's take on populism supports the idea of such activism, as her famous assertion on populism explains it as the "shadow of democracy". The above statement implies that 'the people' will follow democratic principles through populist mobilisation. Arditi (2004) emphasises the embedded possibilities. i.e., populism cannot be confined to a malfunction and while, populism is not identical to democracy, as a shadow that persists, it must be conceived as a possibility ingrained in the very practice of democracy.

As a result, whether it is a farmer's demonstration, an anti-CAA protest movement, a student protest, or a protest for women's safety issues, the populism that India preaches as a unified and integrated nation serves to enhance its democratic framework. People from several diverse backgrounds have gathered in favour of the cause, whether they are directly related to it or not. A large section of women of all ages participated in the recent demonstrations. The movement's power and reach of collective assertiveness keep the dispute between demonstrators and the government at the forefront. While the politicisation of protests and marches has undoubtedly impeded in the long term, activism cannot be defined and maintained unless the notion of community is understood and supported.

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Symbiotic Ecosophy:
Re-visiting Rabindranath Tagore's holistic approach to Ecologism

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Abstract

The issue of rapid environmental degradation and its repercussion on ecological sustenance have become a subject of public outcry. The fear of environmental decay now has surpassed expert's and environmentalist's domain and has spilled over to be everyone's concern as 'tragedy of the commons'. The great part of environmental issue involves normative question of what ought to be done? And this strikes at the very root of individual's sense of prudence and dilemma regarding environmental well-being. Rabindranath Tagore's understanding of 'ecology' can be interpreted as a philosophical reasoning. His entire intellectual endeavour can be termed as ecosophy. This article attempts to re-visit the ecological thought of the great visionary. Tagore's farsightedness regarding natural habitat and its relationship with the human world, the underlying compulsion to protect the former for the latter's existential sustenance and the ramifications thereof will be analysed through Tagore's lens and prognosis.

Keywords: Ecology, ecosophy, sustainable development, ecological harmony

Introduction

Prince Abhijit, brimmed with empathy, moved by compassion, surcharged with determination to establish ethical norm, dedicates his life for the greater cause of humanity. He demolishes the giant, sturdy, monstrous dam that not only obstructed the limitless sky, snarling at the authority of the Almighty, standing shamelessly naked in front of the Sun and the stars, but also gulping within itself human soul emptying mother's lap: the force of water cannot crumble my barrage; the fury of cry cannot tumble my carriage (Tagore 2015a, 337). Hunger's torment, mother's curse or a thirst's damnation cannot destroy the grandeur of the machine – such was the self-adulation of the architect of the gargantuan creation. Both the pride and its structure were however, demolished by benevolence and solicitude portrayed by Tagore in his oeuvre *The Waterfall (Muktodhara)* personified in the character Abhijit.

Written in 1922, Tagore's creation Abhijit is still alive. G.D. Agrawal alias Swami Gyan Swaroop, a former professor of IIT Kanpur, had initiated an indefinite fast since 22nd June 2018 and breathed his last on 11th October 2018 at Rishikesh. His primary demand was to formulate a special law that will ensure free-flow of Bhagirathi River between Gangotri and Uttarkashi. He had protested against construction of dams on the Ganga and its tributaries. The ministry of power had to issue suspension order to the Loharinag-Pala hydropower project in Uttarkashi. Thus, even after hundred years of Abhijit's struggle, the battle to save mother Earth, making it cleaner and greener, continues.

Environment, in a broader sense, consists of both biotic and abiotic elements. Each organism is involved in a kind of complex web of relationship with its environment – physical and living. Ecology attempts to understand this web of relationship. It seeks to understand the basic question of why and how a particular organism can survive in a particular atmosphere and cannot in another. Soil, water, flora and fauna constitute the ecological infrastructure of society (Chakraborty 2001, 417-418).

Norwegian philosopher, Arne Naess in his thought-provoking work on ecology introduced the term 'deep ecology'. It stands against anthropocentrism that is concerned only with the effects of ecological degradation on human beings. Deep ecology inspired environmentalists to espouse the ethic called 'biospheric egalitarianism' that would place human being on a similar echelon with other species. From a philosophical standpoint, deep ecology requires consistent examination of pertinent human behaviour with regard to other living organisms, conservation and revamping of eco-system and a commitment towards preservation and betterment of life-support system through committed action.

Tagore and ecosophy

'In town, human society is to the fore and looms large; it is cruelly callous to the happiness and misery of other creatures as compared with its own…When I am in close touch with Nature…I cannot remain coldly indifferent to the abounding joy of life throbbing within the soft, down-covered breast of a single tine bird' (Tagore 2018, 118-119).

An outburst against anthropocentrism was voiced by Tagore way back in 1894. He not only criticised anthropocentrism but also metropolitan culture. The urbanites' indifference towards the well-being of other creatures except themselves resulted in deep anguish and anger in Poet's mind. He was re-asserting Indian insight and conviction that as a human being, deferential to the philosophical heritage of valuing all manifestations of life deserves respect, value and right to live (Bandyopadhyay 2019, xxvii).

Rabindranath Tagore's concern and understanding of 'ecology' can be interpreted as a philosophical reasoning. His entire intellectual endeavour can be termed as ecosophy. French post-structuralist Guattari and Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess coined the term 'ecosophy' or eco-philosophy. It is a philosophy that stood for ecological harmony or equilibrium, normative in character comprising of norms, rules, values and hypothesis regarding the state of affairs of the universe. Ecosophy reveals variations due to significant differences concerning not only 'facts' of population, resources, pollution but most importantly prioritises value-orientation. Naess, thus contends that ecological science, using facts and logic alone cannot answer ethical questions about how we should live. It requires ecological wisdom that 'deep ecology' seeks to develop focusing on deep experience, deep questioning and deep commitment. These constitute an interconnected system where each gives rise to and supports the other, while the entire system is what Naess prefers to call an 'ecosophy'- an evolving but consistent philosophy of being, thinking and acting in the world, that embodies ecological wisdom and harmony (Mukhopadhyay 2010, 347).

Rabindranath Tagore – the name itself provokes millions of eclectic thoughts of unifying schema, symbiotic contemplation and myriad universal prediction regarding multitudinous aspects of life – both biotic and abiotic, ecclesiastical and temporal.

Not an ecologist per se, but a philosopher both in demeanour and verity, Tagore imbibed in him spiritual consciousness enshrined in the Indian text Upanishad and its percipience. From a mere blade of grass and insignificant creepers to the heart-wrenching howl of a destitute – Tagore was equally moved by each and every phenomena of life existence and had anticipated concern and dilemma regarding environmental apocalypse and moral ruination. Environment, nature, ecological sustenance have been a recurrent theme in Tagore's consciousness and writing. As Dyson remarks, 'Tagore was…one of those farseeing individuals whose ideas show us the way forward in the modern world and who are going to gain importance as time passes. Those who are interested in "deep ecology" should find him a very congenial thinker. A "Green" to his core long before the term was coined, he was what is nowadays called a holistic thinker, never forgetting the whole even while concentrating on the parts. His Upanishadic background made him constantly aware of the interconnectedness of all things in the cosmos. He saw human beings as part of the universe, not set apart from it, and knew that the human species must live in harmony with its natural environment' (Dyson, as cited in Mukhopadhyay 2010, 353).

There hasn't been any sphere left untouched by the great prophet of humanism. This article attempts to re-visit the ecological thought of the great visionary this soil was fortunate to produce. Tagore's farsightedness regarding natural habitat and its relationship with the human world, the underlying compulsion to protect

the former for the latter's existential sustenance and the ramifications thereof will be analysed through Tagore's lens and prognosis.

Ecological harmony, humanitarian ethos and spiritual wisdom

My freedom is in the light and in the sky; my freedom is in the dust and the green grass (Tagore 1990, 141).

From the infinitum to the tiny green grass, Tagore would find freedom in every tranquil transcendence. He would rejoice equally at the delight of a mere firefly as it enjoys its life indebted to none (Tagore 1990, 582). Freedom of the soul, head held high, humility in character, strength in dedication, a compassionate heart – Tagore was reprising the essence of Bhagavad Gita where Lord Krishna tells Arjuna: 'I am the Super Soul, O Arjuna, seated in the hearts of all living entities. I am the beginning, the middle and the end of all beings' (Prabhupada 2022, 464). 'Furthermore, O Arjuna, I am the generating seed of all existences. There is no being – moving or unmoving – that can exist without Me' (Prabhupada 2022, 478). 'Know that all opulent, beautiful and glorious creations spring from but a spark of My splendor' (Prabhupada 2022, (479).

One tune that resonated constantly throughout Tagore's entire panoramic creation was his ultimate submission to 'Thee' – the universal and absolute consciousness. In his thought and cognition, in creation and action, he was echoing Arjuna where he tells Lord Krishna – 'You are air, and You are the supreme controller! You are fire, You are water, and You are the moon! You are Brahma, the first living creature, and You are the great – grandfather. I therefore offer my respectful obeisances unto You a thousand times, and again and yet again!' (Prabhupada 2022, 510). Tagore, like Arjuna pays his homage to the Almighty. He acknowledges and prays to every phenomenon – cosmological, transcendental, petty or ethereal as the creation and portrayal of God himself. Thus, from the stray bird to the unfathomable sea, for Tagore, everything was God's manifestation, therefore needs to be protected, paid homage to and empathized. All existence with its individuating character are part of the great Divine. Thus, to love the dust or the grass, is to love the Supreme Being.

Tagore, since his childhood had ingrained, inherited and internalised the essence of Upanishadic ecologism. He was born and brought up in such an ambience where the Upanishadic texts were read and mantras chanted daily, wherefrom he learnt the presence of peace and harmony in all existence. When Renaissance was celebrating the prowess of the Cogito, India from her remote past was saluting the power of compassion (*karuna*), love (*preeti*) and sacrifice in the interest of the larger whole. Unlike most of the western countries, India nurtured the idea of non-violence since ancient times. Non-violence and sympathetic disposition was

not confined to human species alone but went beyond and embraced species of all varieties and established relationship with even trivial, inanimate objects too. The root of this awareness can be traced to the teachings of Maharshi Debendranath Tagore '…the Gayatri which they were made to recite left a deep impression on Rabi's mind. The splendid cadence and intonation of this Vedic verse appealed strongly to his feeling for rhythm and his sense of the mysterious sublime. The Gayatri remained his lifelong companion and he continued to find in it a source of contemplative insight and strength long after he had discarded the sacred thread' (Kripalani 2017, 19-20).

The recitation opened the floodgates of poetic imagination and took him faraway into the land of Celestial Cosmos and to the living organism inhabiting the earth thereby breaking the selfish boundary of immediate concerns at the tender age of twelve (Bandyapadhyay 2019, 49) '…the state of realising our relationship with all, of entering into everything through union with God, was considered in India to be the ultimate end and fulfilment of humanity' (Tagore 2014, 83).

Tagore's ecological insight can be comprehended only when one situates his vision within the matrix of entirety – an ensemble of God's every creation. He lives and experiences his life holistically and nurtures his thought-process accordingly. Inclusivity and wholeness in perceptivity, capacitates him to perceive every phenomenon as connected to each other and also with the Supreme Being. Thus, as we are of the Divine, the Divine resides in us as well and His divinity is present in every creation '…in order to find him you must embrace all…whatever there is in the world as being enveloped by God…I bow to God over and over again who is in fire and in water, who permeates the whole world, who is in the annual crops as well as in the perennial trees' (Tagore 2014, 84-85). Thus, harmony is the elixir of Tagore's ecological insight.

The ecstatic joy that Tagore perceived within the lap of nature was a blissful delight at the sight of the 'object' which is beautiful. And as Immanuel Kant would have us ponder – where anyone is conscious that he has delight in an object independent of interest, it is inevitable that he should look on the object as one containing a basis of delight for all men…Hence, the beautiful is that which, apart from concepts, is represented as the 'object of a universal delight' (Meredith 2001, 300). As nature has the potentiality to arouse the sense of appreciation in all, therefore, it is imperative to preserve it for all as it provides 'universal delight'. In poem number sixty nine of *Gitanjali*, the Poet contends, 'the same stream of life that runs through my veins night and day runs through the world and dances in rhythmic measures' (Tagore 2022a, 55-56).

During childhood, the void created through the absence of direct intimacy with nature resulted in a strong urge within Tagore to perceive with all his senses every tempo of nature within soul. The deprivation had

inculcated within young Tagore to value the existence of non-human life within natural habitat. His longing to be with nature when he was confined within the four walls of Jorasanko instilled in him the strong urge to establish a living bond and relationship with not only birds, flowers, trees and even insects but also mountains, sea, sky and the horizon,'…there was no way of our meeting. So its attraction was all the stronger' (Tagore 2012a, 427). Tagore would even engage in conversation with nature. 'It was one of this banyan tree that I later wrote: Day and night you stand like an ascetic with matted hair. Do you think of the boy whose fancy played with your shadows?' (Tagore 2012a, 426).

One of the prerequisites of ecological consciousness is to establish and honour the relationship with the non-human world as well. Rabindranath, since his childhood, had fostered a strong kinship with all forms of life around him. He did not write any ecological precepts or formulated any theory. He was rather a living embodiment of the ecological cause who dedicated his life-philosophy for the sustenance of ecology.

In *Brikhshabandana* collected in *Banabani* (Tagore 2015b, 89-116), Tagore is found to depict in a poetic verse the deep yearning for different trees in his Santiniketan ashram. He would pay his homage to *Debdaru* and name the yet unknown deep blue flower as *neelmonilata* or his heart would dance to the tune of the leaves of the *amrakunja*. He would also reminisce his first meet with the *kuruchi* tree. Entering into dialogue with individual trees, feeling their pathos, understanding their pain, rejoicing their abundance – the Poet was a constant companion of nature, spiritually and corporeally too. If the first few poems were dedicated to the trees of his ashram as a mark of homage to them for their benevolence upon habitat, the song of *Briksharopan Utsab* was significantly Tagore's unwavering commitment to corporeal necessity of 'oasification' – of the parched and sparse areas of the district of Birbhum. Though the term 'oasification' was coined by Andres Martinez de Azagra Paredes in 1999, the essence of the process was perceived by Tagore way back when *Briksharopan Utsab* was introduced by him and his son in Santiniketan that transformed the place into a garden (Dyson as cited in Mukhopadhyay 2010, 358). Moving from the rich and green riverine south Bengal, Tagore's experience of the drought and sparse region of Birbhum compelled him to search for ways that would replenish and nourish mother earth's bosom. Tagore's ecological consideration was thus not confined to only poetic fascination or spiritual realisation but came down to the mundane and pragmatic level of activism.

Tagore had an umbilical bond with nature. He was in perpetual dialogue with every subtle existence on earth. Even 'silence' was a language to him – a language stronger than the spoken one. In one of his marvellous short story *Subha*, Tagore puts before the readers, the sensitiveness of a mute girl and simultaneously the unsympathetic obduracy of the spoken one who curses the mute girl for her 'abnormality', when everybody would despise her she would find respite in nature. Not only nature, Subha

found in two non-human dumb creatures another soulful respite from pain and agony – the two cows – who would understand her unspeakable language and feel the vibration of her footfall and would be her companion in tears and anxiety – whenever she heard any words that hurt her, she would come to these dumb friends. 'It was though they guessed her anguish of spirit…Coming close to her, they would rub their horns softly against her arms' (Tagore 2012b, 164). Not only animals or the natural environment, the girl, through anthropomorphisation of mother earth would seek refuge in her when her parents wanted to take her away to Calcutta for marriage. She left her room and flung herself down on her grassy couch beside her dear river. It was as if she threw her arms about earth, her strong, silent mother, and tried to say: 'do not let me leave you, mother. Put your arms around me, as I have put mine about you, and hold me fast' (Tagore 2012b, 167).

Tagore, through this character establishes the theme of unbounded attachment of the human and the non-human world. The same intimacy the world witnessed in 1973 in the famous *Chipko* movement at the Himalayan region of Uttarakhand. It exemplified love and dependence on nature. Reciprocity in love and affection, care and dedication remain the underlying theme of Tagore's ecological enquiry which is reflected even hundred years after he penned diverse characters with humanitarian manifestation.

In the short story *Balai* (Tagore 2015c), Tagore posits him opposite to anthropocentric man. Balai, Tagore's yet another impeccable creation, nurtures within himself the sole traits of trees, where the little boy establishes a deep empathetic relationship with them. The little motherless boy gets enthralled in the melody of clouds, rain and the trees. Seasonal changes and implantation of seeds infuses in him ecstatic joy. His heart wrenches when he sees plucking of flowers or twigs getting damaged and broken or petty weeds are removed from the garden and the grasses trimmed. Though nobody pays heed to his deeper pain and anguish he consoles himself by saying there are pains which are solely his own, and nobody would understand them. His profound bond with the *Simul* tree that he had been watering and nurturing drew the readers' attention to the fact of establishment of unconditional love between human and non-human world and how the little boy protects it within his empathetic amniotic sac from being uprooted. The tenderness that Balai exemplifies is certainly the highest manifestation of harmony in ecological relations.

Robbery of the 'soul'

-The Second Birth

A poet by disposition, and imagination being his elementary constituent, Tagore's conviction in real-life experiences helped him in realising life's essence. Philosophical supposition and scientific explanation would suffice to the fact that dualism exist. Rabindranath proceeds to bring within his argumentative fold

the existential imperative of the most complex of all being – the human world. 'In man …dualism of physical life is still more varied. His needs are not only greater in number and therefore requiring larger field of search, but also more complex, requiring deeper knowledge of things. This gives him a greater consciousness of himself…To the vital relationship of this world of food and sex is added the secondary relation which is mental…It is the dualism in his consciousness of what is and what ought to be … what is desired dwells in the heart of the natural life, which we share with animals, but what should be belongs to a life which is far beyond it […] So, in man, a second birth has taken place' (Tagore 2022b, 73-74).

It is the presence of mind and soul that separates human world from the non-human world. Thus, the presence of the same mental and moral faculty that humans are endowed with should be utilized for attainment of higher goals – the establishment of just and ethical behaviour through humanitarian norms of sympathy towards each and everything of this divine creation.

-Surplus in Man

Rabindranath's concern for the nature and non-human world does not emanate from any utilitarian consideration rather the entire reasoning is based on non-utilitarian justification (Tagore 2005). This surplus signifies a fund of emotional energy which is useless or superfluous in the sense that it is not regulated by self-interest, by any moral or other practical ends; there is the spiritual one – that requires fulfilment of our creative urge, our capacity to appreciate and enjoy (Sengupta 2001, 143).

Nandini- the protagonist of Tagore's play *Raktakarabi*, (Tagore 2015b) personifies beauty, humanity and compassion. Loving nature and working according to a code of ethics based on love for all is the basis of the feeling of unity that Tagore upheld (Bandyopadhyay 2019). Nandini enters with vibrancy of the natural world to inject in dead human soul the vitality of love and solicitude.

Tagore's ecological vision was overwhelmingly determined by the potentiality of humanism, the intonation of which was nourished by ethical norm and inclusivity. Humility, as against Greek's concept of 'hubris' was the vibrant tone in all of Tagore's creation and comprehension. If humility and compassion rejuvenate ecological consciousness, then Tagore's postulation reflected in the essay *Palliprakriti* (Tagore 2015d) can be considered as a philosophical atonement to corporeal indictment.

The Brundtland Report, published in 1987 had coined the term 'sustainable development'. But we find the ethos of the concept in Tagore's varied conceptualisation. In *Abhibhasan*, compiled in *Palliprakriti*, the Poet-philosopher warns against crossing the limits of nature. According to Tagore, machine has not only increased production and profit, it has also increased greed to an unprecedented level.

Greed, according to Tagore is a malevolent instinct (*ripu*) which is an anti-social element. As dacoits are anti-social malevolent element of the society from outside, greed is a similar element from inside. Greed ultimately leads to annihilation of social ethics and communitarian responsiveness and gives birth to unchecked individualism – 'cruelty means withdrawal into the self' (Bandyopadhyay 2019, 3). In *Upekhshita Palli*, Tagore issues a note of caution to man's lustful venture to even penetrate the skies forgetting that nature tolerates up to a certain limit. Nature takes its revenge when limits are crossed, boundaries are transgressed. It invites the doomsday. Tagore's concern bears more validity in today's ensuing apocalyptic trend. 'Indeed if everyone were to enjoy the current lifestyle of the developed countries, more than three additional planets would be required' (Vogler 2008). While recognising deforestation as the sole reason behind increasing warning of Northern India, Tagore reprimands man's reckless voracity towards nature's altruistic abundance. Long before the UN's Conference on desertification in the 1970, Tagore in *Aranyadebata* mentioned the menace of desertification in the once tree-covered areas of India. In the *Robbery of the Soil* (Elmhirst 2008), Rabindranath foretells human's impending self-annihilation.

Resuscitation of the soul

Rabindranath's eco-philosophy was not simply confined to contemplative estimation regarding nature and its interrelationship with the broader spectrum of life. He initiated his thought process regarding ecological enquiry only to set in motion his broader all-embracing *tapoban* ideology that he had inherited and inscribed in his soul. His soul-recuperating endeavour at Santiniketan-Sriniketan bears testimony to the fact that Tagore was not just a thinker with a poetic vision but an activist who dedicated his life towards ecological harmony as well. Santiniketan- the abode of peace was the sentient, experiential, microcosmic ecospace that Tagore had chosen for amplifying the harmonious tune of life in human soul. His Santiniketan experience was the eventuation of his lofty ideals, where man, in reality would find cognizance about life in the lap of nature. Not like the 'tame bird' in the cage, but the 'free bird' of the forest, Tagore instilled in the mind of the students of Ashram – the essence of freedom and inspired them to feel the pulse of harmonious reverberation amongst all the divine creation.

Conclusion

Materialism has eroded aesthetic orientation from human mind. Mechanisation-industrialisation with its gobbling propensity is withering away natural habitat, humane sensitivity, ecological balance, the flavour of flora and fauna, instead giving rise to monstrous instincts of greed, power, unrestrained materialism, disproportionate urbanism and alcoholism, leading to both environmental degradation and spiritual

annihilation. The present day glittering culture with its insatiable appetite is devouring exquisite and fine sensibilities from human soul. The elegance and refinement of nature is desired even today but not in the natural vista of the mountains or the sea, or in the distilled moonlit night but in the man-made sumptuous resorts.

In the context of Santiniketan ashram, Rathindranath Tagore once said: 'In spite of everything – all the poverty and want, the lack of every comfort and convenience – nobody complained because we really believed in simple living and took pride in our poverty' (Neogy 2015, 9).

Before we are punished for our greed and the earth proceeds further towards the great cataclysm, let us be obliged to the nature and find solace in the splendour of darkness, tranquillity in silence and affluence in providence. Tagore's eco-philosophical prognostication demands serious consideration to get to the bottom of present-day dilemma of life-situation in the ecosphere.

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Financing of Balance of Payments in India with Foreign Direct Investments: Issues and Challenges

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Abstract

Stability and cost of financing are two reasons for choosing non-debt creating flows over the debt flows. Financing BOP with debt flows would generate a fixed amortization cost, whereas non-debt flows need to be serviced only after the profits are made (Jalan, 1991). Due to the policy shift, the financing of BOP shifted in favor of non-debt flows under the liberalization period. Therefore, it is assumed that these kinds of financing with non-debt flows would have reduced the cost of financing of BOP in the post-liberalization period (Non-debt capital flows consist of FDI and FPI). Foreign investment has increased in the post-liberalization period, but a significant portion was contributed by Foreign Portfolio Investment (FPI) which does not have any qualities of FDI. However, a detailed and sound empirical investigation is needed to evaluate FDI firms' direct and indirect ex-post effect in the manufacturing sector on the Current Account. Nevertheless, empirical studies are also required to understand the level of foreign ownership and also the country-wise effect of FDI on the Current Account of BOP as the study expect a relationship between the level of ownership and FDI from different countries have an impact on the Current Account of BOP.

Introduction

In general, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is regarded as a catalyst of development in developing countries. FDI brings various benefits such as creating a favorable situation in Balance of Payments (BOP), technology transfer and diffusion, employment generation, competition, efficiency and productivity. However, India has attracted a large quantum of FDI in the post-liberalization period by creating a favorable business climate through relaxing

various rules and regulations. The Government of India has been engaging in competitive policies for attracting FDI flows in the post-liberalization period; however, many issues of FDI have not been empirically and adequately evaluated, including the BOP effect. The point of BOP is to be considered as a vital issue of FDI because the management of BOP in India has always been problematic since independence.

India had faced various problems related to the management of BOP from 1956 to 1991 (Jalan, 1991). However, India faced a severe BOP problem in 1991, contributed by financing a higher Current Account Deficit with highly volatile debt capital flows, which adversely affected the managing of BOPs. The management of BOP was difficult in late 1980 because the flow of External Commercial Borrowing (ECB) to India fell short with the mounting Current Account Deficit. However, the mounting Current Account Deficit in 1980 was being increasingly financed with costlier debt flows such as External Commercial Borrowings (ECB), Non-Resident Indian (NRI) deposit, and short term debt (Jalan, 1991). As a result of various uncertainties[1] at the beginning of the 1990s, investors lost confidence in the Indian economy, resulting in a massive outflow of capital and making the managing of BOP worrisome. The foreign exchange reserve in India was reduced to $1.12 billion at the end of June 1991, which was sufficient for only three weeks of import, and the country faced a BOP crisis, which forced the Government to go for economic liberalization.

Consequently, the Government of India appointed a High-level committee for reforming BOP[2] in India. The Committee emphasized a need to keep the Current Account Deficit at a minimum level. The Committee had also recommended that there must be a shift in the financing of BOP from debt to non-debt flows. Financing of BOP through non-debt flows, especially FDI, possibly expects the lower cost of financing with more comparative stability among other capital flows. Since then, India has had a favorable BOP situation up to the start of the Global Economic Crisis in 2007-08, manifested by a moderate Current Account Deficit

[1] Gulf war in 1991 was the main uncertainty in those periods and consequently resulted into a fall in remittances from non-resident Indians and turned non-resident Indian deposits into net outflows. The Gulf crisis was also resulted on a fall in the availability of commercial borrowings and the situation was further worsened because of the political uncertainty during that period of time and finally credit rating agencies downgraded India's which further worsened the situation.

[2] The High level BOP committee was constituted by the government under the Chairmanship of Dr.C.Rangarajan (vide G.O. No.1 (24)/91-BP dated November 19, 1991).

almost financed with non-debt capital flows. Unlike other years of liberalization, the Current Account Deficit rose to 2.3 percent of GDP in 2008-09, which was mainly contributed by the global economic situation and faced the financing of BOP in India made a difficult task because of the less adequate net capital flows. It can be seen that FDI flows to India has declined in 2009. But unlike other emerging countries, FDI flows show a decline in 2010 despite the growth recovery ahead of global recovery (RBI, 2012). Moreover, the financing of the Current Account of Balance of Payments was again difficult after 2015-16, in which India received less non-debt capital flows vis-a-vis Current Account Deficit. Therefore, the issue of management of BOP, especially financing the Current Account Deficit, is still a problem in the liberalization period.

This article discusses the issues of financing of BOP with FDI. The article is divided into four sections. Section II discusses the concept of financing of Balance of Payments. Section III discusses the categorization of debt and non-debt flows. Section IV discusses the Overview of Balance of Payments in India up to Liberalisation in 1991 Section V discusses the challenges and issues of financing of BOP with FDI which followed by summary of findings and conclusions

Section II : Concept of Financing Balance of Payments

Idea of financing BOP can be conceptualised in following way. BOP accounting contains three sub balance namely current account, capital account and reserve account, in which reserve account balance is nothing but the sum of current and capital account. Therefore, we can write

$$CA + KA = R \text{ - - - } (1)$$

Where, CA = Current account, KA = Capital account, R = Reserve account

The sum of current and capital account balance is overall balance or reserve account. Overall balance can have net debit or net credit. If it is a net credit, domestic residents are receiving more from abroad. BOP accounting is based on the double entry principle with every item booked as credit and a debit. Therefore, deficit and surplus can only show up in the balance; however, BOP will always in balance and equation for BOP would be zero.

$$BOP = CA + KA - R = 0 \text{ - - - } (2)$$

Current account deficit does not matter when it seen in terms of BOP framework. In a normal situation, deficit in the current account must be financed by the surplus in the capital account

and this is termed as financing BOP. To be more precise, suppose if a country's reserve are depleted (R=0) or if a certain level of foreign exchange reserve must be maintained, a current account deficit must be fully be compensated by a net inflow of foreign capital. Moreover, a country will accumulate foreign exchange reserve when the sum of the current account and capital account are positive.

Section III: Debt and Non Debt Capital Flows

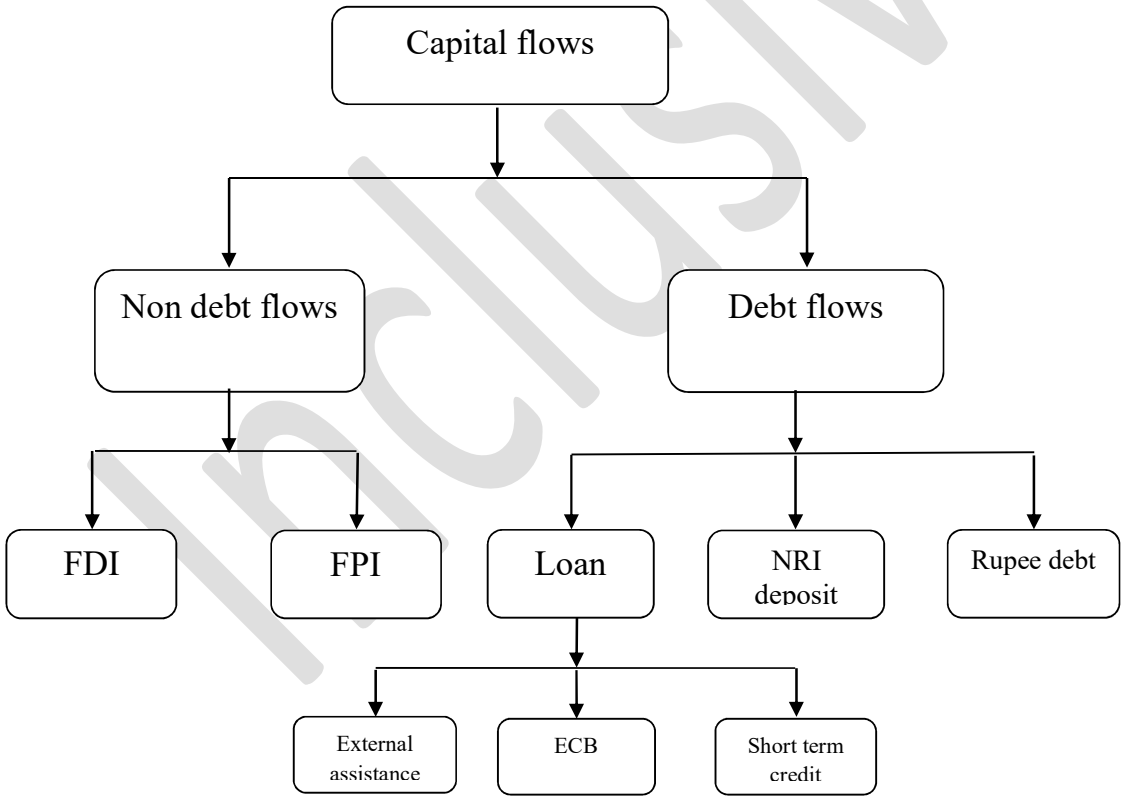

Figure 1: Debt and Non debt flows

Source: Constructed on the bases of Balance of Payments statement in India

Broadly, capital flows can be divided into both debt and non-debt flows, in which FDI and FPI jointly forms the non-debt capital flows whereas External assistance, ECB, NRI deposit and short term credit mainly constitute major debt flows in to India

Section IV : Overview of Balance of Payments in India up to Liberalisation in 1991

The period from 1951 to 1991 can be divided into two sub period on the basis of nature of financing BOP. The two sub periods are 1951-52 to 1979-80 and 1980-81 to 1990-91. During the first period official debt flows on concessional terms were mainly used for financing BOP, where as in the second period along with the official debt, private debt were also greatly used for financing BOP.

The First Period [1951-52 to 1979-80]: At the time of Independence, India faced significant deficit in the BOP mainly due to the high level of import and capital outflows, consequently there was a running down of accumulated sterling balance (Reddy, 2006a). After independence, India opted for a model of development characterised by what was then perceived as self reliance. In a nutshell, entire year under this phase was very difficult for India's BOP. This was mainly because of slow export growth in relation to import requirement and some external factors. Under this phase, India had to face three wars[3] and two oil shocks. First oil shock was happened in 1973-74, but there was no much spillover effect into BOP. The impact of oil shock to BOP was smoothened by the combined effect of buoyant exports, increase in the private transfers and external aid flows (Jalan, 1991b). Essential feature of this phase was the mode of financing, current account deficit in this phase was almost financed by the inflows of official debt on concessional terms. There was hardly any usage of commercial debt for financing BOP. The end of this phase, particularly from 1976-77 to 1979-80, considered as the golden years of BOP, in which India had a small current account surplus in two years. Consequently, foreign exchange reserve had increased and rose to level which is equivalent to about seven months of import in the end of seventies. Increase in the export along with the increase in the net invisible earnings was the main reason for improvement in the BOP in those periods. Export is benefited by the expansion in the global trade, rose at an annual rate of 6.8 per cent in volume terms and 15.6 per cent in dollars terms during that period. Due to the increase in the earning under transportation, travel, private transfers, total net invisible earning increased from Rs 193 Crores

[3] India had to engage three wars under this phase, first two were with China in 1962 and in 1965 and the third one was in 1971 with Pakistan

in 1974-75 to Rs 2486 Crore in 1979-80 (Rangarajan, 1994). During the end of 1970's issues relating the BOP came to occupy the center stage in terms of India's macroeconomic management. The second oil shock occurred in the end of 1970's severely affected the BOP in India. Spill over of second oil shock to BOP was more than what was happened in first oil shock in 1973-74.

The second period [1980-81 to 1990-91]: Because of the adverse situation in the end of 1970's, India had made an agreement with IMF in 1981, for a loan of SDR 5 billion under the extended fund facility. However, there was some improvement in the BOP during 1982 and 1985. This improvement was mainly due to the increase in the domestic production of crude oil, which helped to reduce the growth in total imports. Domestic production of crude oil has increased from 162 million tons in 1981-82 to 290 million tons in 1984-85, but exports were sluggish and showed a growth rate of 3.2% in the period between 1982 and 1985 (Jalan, 1991b). Invisible account also deteriorated during this period mainly due to two reasons, first, high increase in the interest payment; second, stagnation in private transfer and it mainly due to the arrest in the labor migration boom. BOP problem became acute after second half of the eighties and continued up to the liberalisation in 1991. In this period, external assistance fell short of financing need, and entire incremental deficit was financed through costlier forms such as ECB, NRI deposit, and short term credit (Jalan, 1991b). The current account deficit had been showing an increasing trend throughout the late 1980. One main reason was the persistence of high fiscal deficit, averaging around about 8.7% of GDP. High fiscal deficit during that period partly financed through private sector surplus. Higher reliance on monetary financing of deficit also led to rise in inflation to double digit in the early 1990's and adversely affected the relative price competitiveness of India's exports (Reddy, 2006a). Besides, dependence on high-cost external borrowing in the 1980's raised debt service ratio and debt service as a percentage of goods and service, increased from 9.3 % in 1980 to 18.2% in 1984 and further to 26.8% in 1990. The economy was plunged into a crisis as soon as these sources of financing were dried up.

The weaknesses of Indian economy were exposed by the Gulf crisis of 1990. The current account deficit rose to 3.1% of GDP in 1990-91. During the time, credit rating of the country was lowered, restricting the country's access to commercial borrowing and unwillingness on the part of normal banking channels to provide renewal of short term credit to Indian bank.

Due to the lack of confidence on Indian economy resulted a flight of NRI deposit. The severity of the BOP crisis in the early 1990's could be gauged from the fact that India's foreign currency assets depleted rapidly from $ 3.1 billion in August 1990 to $ 975 million on July 12, 1991 (Reddy, 2006a).

Section V: Challenges and issues of financing of BOP with FDI

FDI is expected to strengthen the BOP, especially on the Current Account, by additional foreign exchange earnings, possibly through exports of goods and services from the FDI firms. However, during the last decade, a significant part of FDI comes in private equity and is geared towards Brownfield Projects rather than Greenfield Investment (Reddy, 2008). Therefore, the expectation of additional foreign earning from the firms which received FDI has to be empirically invested before one arrives at any conclusion on the benefits of FDI on the Current Account. The firms that receive FDI can also generate additional foreign exchange requirements in foreign borrowings or import goods and services (Sen, 1995).

The manufacturing sector in India accounts for one of the significant sectors receiving FDI in the post-liberalization period. But the share of FDI flows to the manufacturing sector has been declining since the beginning of the first decade in the 21st Century. Compared to other sectors, FDI flows to the manufacturing sector are expected to have a strong and positive effect on economic growth in the host economies (Wang, 2009). In 2000-2005, the share of the manufacturing sector was 38.23 percent which declined to 24 percent in 2016-18, and then finally to 20.56 percent in 20019-20. However, the manufacturing sector accounts highest share in the total FDI flows in the liberalization period.

Around 54 percent of FDI flows over the post-liberalization period to the manufacturing sector were related to the type of mergers and acquisitions. Therefore it might not have been associated with any other capacity creation in the economy (Rao et al., 2014). Moreover, the import propensity of FDI firms in the manufacturing sector is relatively high vis-a-vis their exports (Joseph, 2016; Nagaraj, 2017; Rajakumar, 2005). Therefore, manufacturing is an apt sector to study the BOP effect of FDI since it accounts for the chunk of FDI inflows in the post-liberalization period.

The total effect of FDI on the Current Account of Balance of Payments can be divided

into initial and ex-post effects. The initial effect is the first effect, i.e., the effect of FDI flows on the credit side of the Capital Account of BOP. The ex-post effect happens after the initial effect, i.e., its effect of FDI on the Current Account of BOP. To make it more precise, after receiving FDI in the Capital Account of Balance of Payments, the firms that received FDI start affecting the Current Account of BOP through export and import of goods and services. This is termed as the expost effect of FDI on the Current Account of BOP, which is a long-term effect. The ex-post effect of FDI on the Current Account of BOP can be divided into direct and indirect expost effects. Direct expost effect consists of export and import of goods and services, dividend repatriation, royalty payment, professional fees, consultation fees, travel, technical fees, and other foreign exchange earnings and spending under the Current Account. FDI companies can conceivably increase the export propensity of the domestic firm through spillover effects can be one of the indirect effects of FDI on BOP. Moreover, FDI companies can reduce the total import bill through domestic production by the FDI firms for previously imported goods (Athreye & Kapur, 2001).

The Country-wise origin of FDI and its consequent effect on the Current Account of the Balance of Payments would explore other dimensions of the issues. It must be noted that FDI flows are mainly motivated by policy-related issues such as economic growth, the openness of trade, etc., in developed countries. In contrast, in a developing country, the flow of FDI is associated with a positive relationship with economic determinants such as Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF), trade openness, and efficiency variables (Saini, Neha, and Singhania, 2017). It can be seen that the share of FDI flows consistently declined from some of the developed countries such as Germany, Japan, and the United Kingdom. However, FDI from the developed world is motivated to cheap labor, whereas FDI from developing economies is encouraged to India's growing market for resource-seeking purposes (Zheng, 2013). The need for FDI in developed countries is for sustainable development, whereas developing countries mainly depend on FDI for economic growth and investment purpose (Saini, Neha and Singhania, 2017). Therefore, it can be argued that FDI from different regions would have a different effect on the Current Account of Balance of Payments in the host country.

Ownership control of FDI firms and its consequent effect on the Current Account of Balance of Payments is important given issues in the literature. It is observed that FDI firms are concerned about the leakage of technology and know-how. Therefore they usually prefer

to have complete ownership control and avoid joint ventures (Desai et al., 2004; Ramachandran, 1993). This strategy of FDI firms typically leads to follow the same production method in the host country, which leads to more import intensive for the firms in developing countries if FDI originated from the developed countries. From a transaction costs point of view, Multi-National Companies prefer wholly-owned subsidiaries (WOS) if they want to protect their proprietary assets (Raff et al., 2009). Multi-National Enterprises (MNE) prefer WOS, especially from advanced countries, because they can bargain with host countries. MNEs like Joint ventures if the host country is attractive in some areas such as market access or resource endowments (Nunnenkamp, Peter; Sosa Andrés, 2013).

FDI-related benefits in the host country are related to own shares because the subsidiary companies would receive more resources as technology transfer than Indian-owned firms (Ramachandran, 1993). Ownership choices of Japanese multinationals suggest that MNEs ownership control positively affects increasing productivity (Raff et al., 2009). The foreign ownership rises with the important MNEs assets. It varies inversely with the contribution of local assets available in the host country (Asiedu & Esfahani, 2001), and it is noted that the foreign production and highly diversified product lines are the most likely to choose minority ownership. There was also some support for the hypothesis that multinationals choose minority ownership for affiliates producing different (two-digit) output than their parents (Blomström & Zejan, 1991). Therefore, evidence in the literature suggests that the ownership structure is an essential consideration for many issues related to FDI and its effect on the Current Account of the Balance of Payments.

India had faced various problems related to the management of BOP from 1956 to 1991(Jalan, 1991) but faced severe BOP problems in 1991, which forced the country to liberalize the economy. The dependence of debt flows to finance the Current Account was the main reason for the worsening of the BOP situation in 1991. Consequently, the Government of India appointed a High-level committee for reforming BOP[4] in 1993. The committee emphasized that there is a need to keep the Current Account Deficit at a minimum level, and there must be a shift in the financing of BOP from debt to non-debt flows. Financing of BOP through non-debt flows, especially FDI, possibly expects the lower cost of financing with more comparative

[4] The High level BOP committee was constituted by the government under the Chairmanship of Dr.C.Rangarajan (vide G.O. No.1 (24)/91-BP dated November 19, 1991).

stability among other capital flows. Financing BOP with debt flows would generate a fixed amortization cost, whereas non-debt flows need to be serviced only after the profits are made (Jalan, 1991). Foreign investment has increased in the post-liberalization period, but a significant portion was contributed by Foreign Portfolio Investment (FPI) which does not have any qualities of FDI. Therefore, in general, it is assumed that these kinds of financing with non-debt flows would have reduced the cost of financing of BOP in the post-liberalization period.

In the BOP framework, FDI inflows to India record the credit side of the BOP, and various firms in the economy receive it. But the firms which received FDI might start affecting the Current Account of BOP through export and import of goods and services. The effect can be termed as ex-post effect on the Current Account of BOP. The effect can be divided into direct ex-post effect and indirect ex-post effect. Direct ex-post effect consists of export and import of goods and services, dividend repatriation, royalty payment, professional fees, consultation fees, travel, technical fees, and other foreign exchange earnings and spending under the Current Account. FDI companies can conceivably increase the export propensity of the domestic firm through spillover effects can be one of the indirect effects of FDI on BOP.

Moreover, FDI companies can reduce the total import bill through domestic production by the FDI firms for previously imported goods. Given the issues in the literature, ownership level of FDI firms and country-wise identity of FDI firms can also have an ex-post effect on the Current Account of BOP. Therefore, this study attempts to measure the ex-post effect of FDI firms on the Current Account of BOP in India and selected the FDI firms in the manufacturing sector, where the sector accounts for one of the significant sectors receiving FDI in the post-liberalization period.

Summary of Findings and Conclusions

Is India able to materialize the expected benefits of FDI on Current Account of BOP? What is the empirical reality of the ex-post effect of FDI on the Current Account of BOP? However, these are pertinent questions to ask when India has completed 21 years of economic reforms. At the same time, it is also essential to raise the question of- are these FDI firms in the manufacturing sector able to reduce the mounting Current Account Deficit by doing more export of goods and services relative to their import? A detailed and sound empirical investigation is needed to evaluate FDI firms' direct and indirect ex-post effect in the manufacturing sector on

the Current Account to answer those above questions. Nevertheless, empirical studies are also required to understand the level of foreign ownership and also the country-wise effect of FDI on the Current Account of BOP as the study expect a relationship between the level of ownership and FDI from different countries have an impact on the Current Account of BOP.

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Nationalist Claims, Politics of difference and Crisis of Citizenship in Assam

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Nationalist claims and mobilizations have, for long, been at the centre of politics in Assam. The exclusive and hegemonic nature of nation building process, both at the centre and regional level, is generally considered as the main factor that account for such assertions. The socio-political and economic domination that accompanied this nation building process produced counter nationalist claims on the part of different groups of the region. These nationalist claims are often justified on the basis of communitarian notion of collective rights and the relativist idea of human rights. While recognition of such rights is necessary to protect and promote the interest of these different groups, an overemphasis on such rights is not without problem. The cultural markers and boundaries of different groups have been reinforced and reinvented in their attempt to establish themselves as distinct cultural groups that are entitled for separate political status. These processes of 'othering' have created the problem of growing fragmentation of society and inter group conflicts in Assam. Unfortunately, communities that press for nationalist demands to oppose hegemonic imposition of majority groups often take recourse to similar practice of domination in relation to other minority groups that cohabit with them. On the other hand the Indian state in its eagerness to accommodate the nationalist claim through measures like creation of ethnic homeland has undermined the civic base of the polity and thereby producing serious crisis of citizenship in Assam. In such ethnic homeland the rights and privileges of individuals are not being determined on the basis of citizenship status but by their ethnic membership. It is in this context that the present paper tries to explain the rationale of emergence of nationalist aspirations in Assam; how such nationalist demands have fuelled a process of 'othering' with regard to inter community relations and highlight some of the tensions between individual civic rights and collective cultural rights associated with the manner in which such nationalist claims are sought to be accommodated in Assam.

Exploring the debate between individual and group rights

The attempted homogeneity attached to the nation building process has historically been based on non-recognition and silencing of certain groups of people. This has been considerably questioned in the recent past and non-conformity with the process has also been expressed on various grounds. As the process is caught up with the limitation of excluding certain identities and aspirations in what is called 'National' or supposed to be 'Common', it has created the conditions not only for alternative nationalist claims but also communitarian concerns. This political reality of modern nation-states can be foregrounded in the larger theoretical debate between individual and group rights by invoking the question of citizenship as a common identity and other group based ascriptive identities. The notion of liberal citizenship, based on the conception of common identity needs to be put in the context of understanding the individual as an 'abstract self' devoid of any particular identity. The communitarian critique of this 'unencumbered self' is also directed towards common rights of citizenship which remain inadequate in fulfilling the aspirations of an 'embedded self', for whom group identity remains essentially important to make certain choices in life. Arguing in this context Michael Sandel has invoked the relation between community and notion of justice, wherein the presence of love and shared goals in community may decrease the need of justice in the society. 'If people responded spontaneously to the needs of others out of love or shared goals, then there would be no need to claim one's rights. Hence an increased concern with justice can, in some circumstances, reflect a worsening of moral situation, rather than a moral improvement' (Sandel1982, 28-35)

The notion of collective rights seems to have provided an alternative to include the aspirations of groups, who otherwise face discrimination based on their group identities in the context of the relation between majority and minorities within a democratic polity. Emphasis has been given to consider and recognize 'difference' displayed by the groups that stems from their distinctive identities and which also becomes a basis for their discrimination. The notion of equality associated with citizenship rights fails to recognize such difference. Modern notion of citizenship that stresses upon universality transcends particularities and differences. However the idea of universality has left many grey areas to be looked into. 'In the late twentieth century, however, when citizenship rights have been formally extended to all groups in liberal capitalist societies, some groups still find themselves treated as second-class citizens' (Young 1989, 250). Therefore, the idea of citizenship based on the notion of 'difference' has been invoked to counter group-based discrimination, despite the presence of universal citizenship rights. However, collective rights also suffer from the limitation of restricting individual rights which otherwise guarantees equality of individuals at formal level. The endless pursuance of rights along the line of community and concession of the same by the state also generate the context of crisis of citizenship wherein agreement on 'common good' becomes increasingly difficult.

Therefore, one is caught up with the question of looking for a balance of such developments. It is also crucial to understand why group rights are important and have become dominant factor in the political discourse. 'Modern societies are increasingly confronted with minority groups demanding recognition of their identities and accommodation of their cultural differences' (Kymlicka 1995,10). The demand for recognition, seen as nationalist aspiration in specific context not only remains at the level of cultural rights but also is expressed through mobilization for political autonomy. The Indian context of understanding this larger debate presents peculiarities of its own. 'The Indian Constitution was to put together a notion of citizenship informed by the group differences and assigning a differential system of rights and obligations to citizens recognized on that basis' (Rodrigues 2008, 181).The adoption of the Constitution and the guarantee of individual rights as well as group rights for certain groups seem to have created a balance between these two notions of rights. The Constitution of India 'On the one hand tried to ensure that no community is out rightly excluded or systematically disadvantaged in the public arena, on the other hand, it provided autonomy to each religious community to pursue its own way of life'(Mahajan 1998, 4).

However, this attempted endeavor to create balance has not been considered enough to address the nationalist aspiration of certain communities within Indian Nation-State. The Northeastern region of India is one such context wherein the question of nationality, ethnicity and group rights intersects in such a manner that the understanding of the societies becomes increasingly complex. The concerns and conflicts related to collective rights and individual citizenship rights come out very sharply in this context.

Nationalist aspirations in Assam

The rise of nationalist aspirations on the part of sub-national and ethno-national groups in most of the post-colonial states has brought community politics into the forefront. The cultural and political assertions of these groups have redefined the nature of politics of these states with increasing focus on collective rights. The artificial nature of state making process that deprived these states of any congruence between their political and cultural boundaries and their cultural heterogeneity necessitated an urgent initiative on the part of these states for a nation building process that aim to replicate European nation state model in their own society. Under this model nation became the basis for organizing state and accordingly national identity is prioritized over any other identity. The logic of nation state, therefore, demanded creation of a national community and as a result nation states were invariably engaged in a project of homogenizing ethnic and other pluralities in to a nation. As in the case of European countries, the imitation of the nation state model by the post colonial states involves a state sponsored nation building project to create a national homogeneous community so that the

state can correspond to a nation. Given the demographic complexity of these states, such nation building process has produced serious consequences for the relation between dominant ethnic majority and other minority ethnic groups. Most of the post-colonial states in order to develop their 'nation' have sought to rely on the idea of creating a national society by integrating the diverse ethnic and other groups around the values and culture of majority ethnic group. The nation building process thus has acquired a hegemonic character in these countries including India and other cultural groups, while trying to contest such cultural imposition have come up with their own nationalist demand.

The resentment against such homogenizing tendencies is most acute in case of Northeast which is the host of different cultural groups. These different cultural groups reacted to the nation building process of India by developing identity assertion movements with demands that range from some kind of autonomy to complete independence. Identity assertion movement in Assam at the first instance led to the growth of Assamese sub-nationalism. The origin of Assamese sub-nationalism, however, can be traced back to pre-independence period itself when some of the newly educated people of Assam such as Anandaram Dhekial Phukon, Hemchandra Barua, Gunabhiram Barua etc. tried to assert the distinctiveness of Assamese language and culture (Mishra 1999, 80). Such sub-national aspirations of Assamese people developed more substance and intensity during the post-independence period that led them to articulate number of nationalist demands. The unabated flow of illegal migration from Bangladesh, fear of being turned into linguistic minority and sense of economic deprivation remained the main motivating force behind the growth of sub-national aspirations among the people of Assam and shaped the nature and content of such sub-national movement in Assam. A similar dichotomy of ethnic and nationalist aspiration can be observed with regard to the relation between pan Assamese nationalism and ethnic aspirations of different communities of Assam. As the Assamese people resented against the socio-cultural and economic domination of Indian nation, different ethnic groups Assam were equally critical of the homogenizing tendencies of Assamese nationalism. The identity consciousness of ethnic groups of Assam could be observed during the pre-independence period itself. However, in the post-independence period such identity consciousness got accentuated because of the exclusive nature of Assamese nation building process. The nation building process in Assam tried to secure the interest of Assamese speaking people but the very meaning of 'Assamese' was defined in such a way as to exclude the different ethnic groups of Assam. The project of making Assam for Assamese thus turned out to be machination for Assamese speaking people to capture the political power, to monopolize government jobs, services and other opportunities and to promote Assamese language and culture. The middle class of the different ethnic groups

that grew into sizable proportion by 1960's resented against such cultural, economic and political deprivation and initiated a similar process of ethno-national mobilizations to secure their interest.

Nationalist Project and Politics of Difference

The community politics structured around sub-national and ethno-national claims has contributed to the growing fragmentation of the Assamese society through a process of 'othering' based on the notion of cultural differences. The cultural identities are being created and recreated to differentiate one group from another as ground for claiming separate 'political space' for protecting and promoting one's own interest. The process of prioritizing the interest of one's own community has resulted in the marginalization of interests of other communities sharing the same socio-political space in the region.

The rise of sub-national aspirations of Assamese people is associated with a process of production of binary between 'Assamese' and 'outsiders'. The qualification for deciding who is an Assamese and who is an outsider is cultural affinity and not the place of domicile. All those people who share Assamese language and culture are considered as Assamese and people belonging to different culture, even if they are inhabitant of this land, are labeled as outsiders. Thus, people belonging to communities like Nepali, Bihari, Marwari and Bengalis who migrated to Assam at different point of history are seen as outsiders. These outsiders are seen as a threat to the interest of Assamese people and demands are raised to protect these interests from the domination of outsiders. Such demands include protection of economic resources of Assam from being exploited by the outsiders, prevention and expulsion of illegal migration and promotion of Assamese language and culture. In some chauvinistic turn of articulation of such demands even large-scale atrocities were committed against the members of outsider community. The incident like Nellie where a large number of people of Bengali Muslim origin were systematically slaughtered is testimony to this fact (Mander 2008). The clause six of Assam Accord stipulated special provisions for protection of political, economic and cultural interests of Assamese people. The clause, however, has remained unimplemented as a consensus regarding the meaning of 'Assamese' is still eluding. Recently the division among Assamese and outsiders is further sought to be reinforced through the process of updation of National Register of Citizens (NRC). Apprehensions were raised that such judicio-bureaucratic exercise of determining the legal citizens would create unnecessary harassment for large section of people without such legal documents. It is even being argued that clamour for NRC-at a time when empirical evidence has shown that immigration has ebbed-can be explained in terms of Assamese middle class anxiety over the growing visibility and presence of descendants of Muslim emigrant in urban middle class space (Basu & Das 2020).

The exclusive nature of Assamese nationalism can be observed in relation to the other ethnic communities of Assam also. The failure to accommodate the different ethnic groups within the ambit of Assamese nation has turned the nationalist mobilization in Assam into a hegemonic project for monopolizing the political, economic and cultural privileges exclusively for the Assamese speaking people. The sectional design of nationalist project in Assam is most obvious in its cultural manifestations. The nation building process in Assam in an attempt to form a homogeneous Assamese community on the basis of common language and culture sought to impose Assamese language and culture on the different ethnic groups of Assam. For instance, in 1960 Assam Legislative Assembly passed the State Official Language Act making Assamese the sole official language of Assam. Further in 1972 Assamese was made the only medium of instruction in college and University level. Such policies of cultural expansionism were strongly resented by the ethnic groups of Assam and created a permanent rift between Assamese speaking and tribal people of Assam.

The hegemonic and oppressive nature of Assamese nationalist project has produced counter ethno-national mobilizations in Assam. The different ethnic groups of Assam came up with their own narration of nation structured around their language, culture and heritage. It is being claimed that sacredness or distinctiveness of their nation can be actualized and protected through exercise of some sort of collective political rights. This inevitably involved a process of construction of differences under which selected aspects of one's own culture are identified and emphasized to distinguish themselves from others. Ethnic groups which developed nationalist ambitions to oppose hegemonic nationalist project, however, often take recourse to similar policies of domination and subjugation of other minor cultural groups. Thus, 'the national identities shaped around the struggle for greater political space in the shape of ethnic movements, in course, turn out to be hegemonic over the minority communities' (Roy 2005,2178). This in turn produces resistance on the part of minority groups against the hegemonic ethnic nation and the result of which is the proliferation of ethnic conflicts in the region. The Bodo nationalism, for instance, emerges through a multi-faceted contestation: against the Indian state, against the dominance of Assamese nation and clash with other peripheral and dominant identities such as Adivasi, Bangali and Koch (Roy2005). Bodo nationalism on the one hand opposes imposition of dominant Assamese nationalism, but on the other hand seeks to establish similar domination over other non-dominant identities. The competing 'politics of differences' has resulted in ethno-pathological tendencies among some of the ethnic communities of Assam. The occasional instances of ethnic cleansing drive can be seen as a manifestation of such ethno-pathological tendencies (Biswas 2002, 142). This explains the Bodo people hostility towards other communities like Adivasi and Muslim of East Bengal origin.

Crisis of Citizenship

The nationalist mobilizations in Assam have produced corresponding demands for certain rights exclusively meant for them. These movements aim for some kind of political liberation, seeks to monopolize economic opportunities and resources and try to promote their language and culture. The claim for these rights is advanced on cultural basis i.e., membership to a culturally distinct group entitle them to certain rights and privileges which the non-members do not enjoy. Here an important link is drawn between culture and territory and rights and privileges of one culture are prioritized over other cultures. Conferring of rights on the basis of cultural membership presupposes the priority of collective cultural rights over civil and political rights of individuals.

A persistent tension can be observed between individualized political principles like citizenship or rule of law and communitarian principles and practices in India. The post colonial Indian state has tried to overcome the 'assimilationist individualism' of a homogenizing liberal conception of citizenship by 'recognizing' and 'prioritizing' the sacredness characteristic of certain groups through enactment of relatively 'differentiated citizenship and creation of federal states on ethno-linguistic terms (Dev 2004). Such institutionalization ethnic entitlements, rights and privileges through the means of protective discrimination, however, has created unequal status of citizenship and initiated a process of unequalization of ethnic others in Assam as evident in the case BTAD area.

An affirmative link between culture and rights with regard to the region was endorsed during the period of colonial administration itself when they sought to create protected enclaves for 'aborigines' to allow them to pursue their customary practices including kinship and clan based rules of land allocation (Baruah 2003). In the post colonial period Indian state continued with such policy of protective discrimination in the form of extending sixth schedule status to different tribal groups living in relative isolation in erstwhile Assam. The granting of six schedule status to such groups encouraged the Bodo community to press for similar demands of a 'separate homeland' for them also. The extension of the ethnic homeland through constitutional instrument like sixth schedule to the Bodo community in a complex demographic reality of today raises some of the most difficult issues of justice, fairness and citizenship.

The demand for a separate political status by the Bodos has had a long history and dates back to colonial period. Since then, the movement has evolved through different phases. (Mahanta 2013) The first Bodo Accord of 1993 created the Bodo Autonomous Council (BAC) without any territorial jurisdiction. Under this accord areas with 50% or more Bodo population would be part of Bodo Autonomous Council. But some areas with

less than 50% population were included to give the BAC a contiguous area (Nath 2003). Dissatisfaction with Bodo Autonomous Council led to the signing of another accord in 2003 which provided for the creation of Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) with Sixth Schedule Status.

It is to be noted that originally Sixth Schedule Status was meant for only those schedule tribes that were considered to be relatively concentrated in the 'excluded' and 'partially excluded' areas of the colonial era. But the Sixth Schedule status was granted to the Bodos over a territory with mix demographic reality. Over the years through a long historical process different group of people migrated to this area and today it is inhabited by people like Koch Rajbongshi, Santhals, Bengali speaking Muslim, Bengali Hindus and other non tribal people. Thus, the government attempt to create an ethnic homeland for Bodos over a territory of mixed demographic reality produced serious inter-community conflicts. Different Bodo organizations in order to correct the demographic balance in their proposed ethnic homeland in favor of them had issued quit notice to non Bodo people and even ethnic cleansing were orchestrated occasionally under the aegis of Bodo militant wing to drive them out. For example, in 1994 following the BAC accord Bodo militant groups massacred about 1000 Muslim peasants in Barpeta district. They attacked Bengali Hindus in 1994-95 and in 1996 clashes broke out between Bodos and Santhals. Tensions again erupted in the Bodoland in 2012 between Bodos and Bengali Muslims. All these conflicts were part of this majority building politics (Pathak 2012). The non-Bodo communities also regrouped themselves to resist such move and armed group like the Adivasi Cobra Militants and Bengali Liberation Tigers attacked Bodo villages in counter retaliatory attacks.

The formation of Bodo Territorial Council in an area with mix demographic structure in effect has created a situation of differentiated citizenship. As the BTC has been designed as protective discriminatory measure to grant political, economic and social favors to Bodo people, it has led to the privileging of rights of Bodo people over the rights of members of other communities. For instance, in the BTC council majority of seats are reserved for the Bodos. The domination of Bodos over the social, political and economic life of BTC is not always official, quite often it is maintained through numerous unofficial and informal arrangement. This has produced a situation of 'two tier citizenship' with regard to BTC area. The people of BTC now can be reduced to two categories of citizens-the Bodos who enjoy full citizenship status with associated rights and privileges and Non-Bodos with second category citizenship status having fewer rights and privileges. In BTC the rights and privileges of individuals are no longer determined on the basis of one's citizenship status but by one's community membership. Thus, the government attempt to accommodate the ethno-national aspirations of Bodos through protective discrimination means has produced a situation of differentiated citizenship in BTAD

area with serious implications for tension between individual civil rights and collective rights. In a recent development the entire area has been renamed as Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR). However, there has been constant opposition from the non-Bodos within the BTR regarding such structure of autonomy, as this has been seen as an infringement on the rights of the non-Bodos. The Abodo Xurakhya Samiti has repeatedly demanded to remove the non-Bodo villages from the council area. The concession of collective rights to the Bodos, in this regard, has been seen as a mechanism of discrimination towards the non-Bodos.

Conclusion

Nationalist claims and mobilizations experienced by the post-colonial States have largely been rooted in certain form of nation-building process marked by exclusive and hegemonic characteristics. The initial attempt of nation building which was centered on the already given European model not only aimed at political and economic consolidation, but also a hegemonic (majority) culture in an otherwise diverse society. Therefore, rather than civic identity, ethno-cultural identity assumed a very strong position in understanding the post-colonial states. Civic membership in the political community encounters with communitarian concerns wherein the citizenship rights and collective rights become difficult to reconcile. Nation-building process, which otherwise emphasizes on homogeneity, faces resistance from various nationalist claims and aspirations from multiple groups within itself that counter this project of homogeneity. However, the sub-national claims in certain context may lead to rise of alternative forms of domination and attempted homogeneity which may be located within the post-colonial state formation process in India. In India, despite constitutional attempt the tension between civic and ethnic nations is quite apparent and it may be unfolded through understanding of group-based identities for political, economic and cultural consolidation and dominance.

The historical context and rationale behind such nationalist aspirations cannot be denied and one of such cases to understand the emergence of nationalist demands is the context of Assam. Movements, assertions, conflicts around the demand of political autonomy, cultural preservation have captured the politics of the region for a very long time. However, nationalist demands of one community have also fueled a process of 'othering' with regard to inter community relations, which is evident from the fact that smaller ethnic communities have also created a space of resistance towards Assamese nationalist aspirations. The entire process of accommodating such nationalist claims in the context of Assam highlights the tensions between individual civic rights and collective cultural rights. The context of Assam presents a situation not only of demands, but also of conflict. Due to the ceaseless emphasis on group-based aspiration one becomes puzzled with the question of citizenship defined by common civic rights. It necessitates a deeper understanding of the shrinking

of civic space and concerns for civic identity. It can be argued that the prioritization of rights is a complex task. The alternative understanding of citizenship points out to the limitations of common rights. Thus, denial of group rights becomes a basis of discrimination. However, provisions to address group aspirations have not produced the optimum solution to the question of group identity. For example, in Assam, the creation of various autonomous territorial councils although have addressed the isssue to certain extent, it has also created inter-group conflicts within such area. Therefore, there is need to think beyond such provisions which will address the issue of group aspiration and not infringe upon individual citizenship rights. Non-territorial provisions may be seen as one of the alternative ways to address such a situation.

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Post Truth and Covid-19: Mapping of Fallacy on Health Advocacy

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Abstract

With the growth of new media, the spread of fake news has become widespread. The present research has evaluated the challenges and representation of health advocacy of Covid pandemic during the West Bengal General Assembly Election, 2021 amidst fake news. There was a conflict in perceptions regarding health advocacy and political communication during the selected timeframe of the research. On the one hand physical distancing was a mandatory preventive measure against Covid-19. On the other hand, political parties were engaging people into mass gatherings. With the help of qualitative case studies and secondary data analysis the research has tried to evaluate the type of representation of news and its justification with respect to this scenario. Based on the theory of post truth, the research has highlighted the ways in which news are fabricated to create hype in mass media and thereby diverting the attention of the audience from a prominent issue like pandemic.

Keywords: Covid Protocol, West Bengal Assembly Election, 2021, falsification and fake news, health advocacy, media mapping, post -truth society.

Introduction

It was 2nd March 2021 when the Election Commission of India announced the notification of eight phases legislative assembly election schedule for West Bengal. On the same date, Covid- positive cases in India were 1,11,12241 (The Telegraph, 3rdMarch, 2021) and in West Bengal the number of active cases was 5,75,316 (Ananda Bazar Patrika ,3rd March, 2021). To boost up the Vaccination Campaign against Covid pandemic, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, took his first dose of Covid Vaccine on that day. In this backdrop the voters of West Bengal were informed that a 34 days long election was scheduled from 27th March to 29th April, 2021, for the State Assembly Election. Two contradictory narratives have emerged from the stated socio-political paradigm - one was political warfare' and another one 'combat against Covid pandemic. Interestingly, these two distinct concepts had been worked within the same ecology (i.e., geographical domain and public - audience phenomenon and period). Considering the pandemic situation, it was impossible to execute the strategies of health advocacy for Covid 19 and political campaign of State assembly election at a time among the same public. Health practitioners were suggesting to maintain social distance, using masks, try to avoid

mass gathering and using sanitizers as a part of Covid Protocol. On the contrary, political leaders were shouting to join in public rallies, processions, mass gathering and door to door public campaigns. Unfortunately, the media text also changed its position accordingly. Just to hold their popularity and circulation, media organizations also compromised on news value, worthiness, element, and design to publish news and views regarding two serious issues -' Covid pandemic' and 'political campaign of assembly election.' The media tried to navigate and form a public opinion based on their personal opinion, views, emotion, and political bias. This situation may be described as a deviation of mapping of health advocacy overlapping by political warfare.

Pandemic and risk in India

India is a densely populated country with 464 people/ km2 and a population of 1380 million people (World Meter, 2022). According to WHO, (2021) India ranked second in the infection rate globally and had the fourth highest mortality rate between 3rd Jan 2020 and 6th May 2021. According to Lal et al. (2021) since India is a developing country so its vulnerability to Covid-19 was higher than that of the developed country. The authors further opined that the higher a region is in terms of its demographics the greater it was susceptible to the risk of the pandemic. It has been highlighted in this research paper that due to a complex urban and social system in different districts of India it was difficult to address the hazard.

Gautam et al. (2021) argued that managing pandemic scenarios has been quite a challenge for a long time in India. Referring to past epidemics witnessed by the country, the authors pointed out that India lacks proper technology and equipment to combat such hazards. From the concepts of Breman et al. (2020) it can be counter argued that in a civilization affected by the concepts of discrimination and pollution pattern, the pandemic amplifies the fear of contamination in which substantial parts of the population are forced to work and live. Social distancing fits well with a customary law of isolation. The transition to an informalized frugality should be seen in the environment of India's hardwired social inequality performing in wide poverty. In the havoc created by this pandemic, politics and governance have further distorted the formerly largely prejudiced balance between capital and labour. Samaddar, (2021) highlighted that even though it was the media who is to be primarily blamed for lack of sensible reporting on Covid pandemic and the livelihood of the migrant workers yet one cannot deny the failure of organised politics. The author further expressed that it was the role of the media to awaken institutionalised politics but both the pillars of democracy failed to ascertain the importance of helping the people in need.

Halder, (2022) opined that the two major reasons behind the spread of coronavirus have been population density and mobility in India during the second wave of the pandemic. During this phase, the announcements of General Assembly elections took place which led to the rapid spread of the disease across the entire state. From the first day to the last day of elections in India the number of mortality ratios was gradually increasing day by day. During election time the overcrowded election related rallies and people gatherings lead to the spread of coronavirus into the mortal body. In a densely populated country India, there were no special preventive measures taken to reduce the spread of the diseases during the election campaign amidst the pandemic scenario. In this period, public health related problems subsequently increased and it thereby increased the mortality rate (Halder et al. 2021). Considering the availability of healthcare facilities, it can further be argued that hospital beds were limited in both government and private hospitals. In this case not only the Covid positive patients suffered but the patients with other chronic diseases also had to suffer to a great extent. Even vaccinations were also not distributed duly in that span of time due to the rapid and spread of pandemic and high mortality rate (Rana et al. 2021).

Government and policy makers were taking initiatives for distribution of coronavirus vaccine but the area and population pressure were reducing the total target of distribution of vaccine over the entire country (Mukherjee et al. 2021). During the election period the demand for oxygen had also increased and people were dying due to lack of oxygen and proper medical treatment. Only election is the main reason for spreading the coronavirus again in India because of mass gathering and election related programs. Everyday people were dying but no political party took any step forward to stop their election related programs or election campaigns and mass gathering (Halder, 2022). Furthermore, the GDP of India was hugely affected due to the lockdown previously. Many people from the low- and middle-income families in India lost their jobs and stable source of earning during lockdown. Now, due to election after the alternate surge of coronavirus the country again witnessed another lockdown affecting the economy of lower income families. Hence, there were a number of socio-economic problems being witnessed during the election campaigns that further affected the measures previously taken to combat the pandemic.

Mapping of News in pandemic: Issues and Challenges

Expressing a vision about the 'new millennium,' former President APJ Abdul Kalam acknowledged twelve parameters like, *"health care for all, evolution of technology, information processing and distribution ..." (*Kalam, 1998). Sinha (2018), coined a narrative that reads as, *"information society as / versus informed society: the gateway".* A society in which information has become the dominant source of productivity, wealth,

employment, and power is described as an information society (Dijk, 2006). Information can tell us everything. It has all the answers but their answers to questions we have not asked, and which doubtless don 't even arise (Sinha,2018). It can be argued that the dominant mode of construction of information society is marked by a 'new- gaming structure' of information processing. This paradigm is significantly controlled by media organizations, the State and political parties. This delicate handshaking between three catalysts is enough to describe the degree of interest of public good over two catalysts i.e., health advocacy and political communication during Covid -19 period.

In this context one relevant discussion is who will articulate a media mapping for collective issues and approaches related to Covid pandemic. An effective mapping could restrict different forms of miscommunication and also control emotional perceptions and views on objectivity. Again, a media mapping is a sensitive attempt in any public health advocacy system to retain a 'trigonometric approach' of information processing. These are identity - seeking information, receiving information and narratives of text and context. An exclusive group of reporters who have some amount of research regarding Covid guidelines and/or have literature –based ideas about the chances of overlapping of narratives between health advocacy and political warfare, may draw the map of news on pandemic. These reporters would act as a 'knowledge workers' (KW) to design (mapping) the content. Media advocacy and media mapping are two sensitive issues to develop a public health literacy during any crisis situation, like Covid pandemic. Hence the degree of objectivity of media mapping is directly proportional with the degree of impact of media content among the public.

During Covid the State and Non -State organizations had tried to develop a public opinion on Covid Pandemic. In any crisis period, like Covid 19, three parameters of news mapping help to form a public opinion. These three catalysts are: road map of networks, systems, and audiences. In March –April, 2021 three such knots that are identified for making the information society an informed society on public health communication. Perhaps this is the first area of media narrative from where a manifestation of fake news may be articulate. If the media are serious about campaigning against the Covid pandemic then they should publish or broadcast news and views against public rallies or mass gathering the then common activities practised by all political parties. Whereas, reality told that a group of media houses deliberately published some deceptive communication that political parties were concerned about Covid protocol when they organized mass rally or public gathering. Deceptive Miscommunication Theory (DeMiT), would explain the degree of deviation of news mapping to maintain Covid Protocol during the period (March-April,2021)

In the recent past the meaning of 'post -truth society' has become vaster and more multifaceted, deviating from its original notion of political identity. Scholarly articles and research on public debate defines that post truth as a situation (black phase of society) where no one respects 'truth' may be citizens, politicians, or audiences. Out of the three forms (citizens, politicians, or audiences) of 'receiver-sender' entities, the present paper focuses on the 'real-time media audience.' It has been identified that the ecology of fake news is bounded by sloppy, careless journalism, growth of unfettered social media and 'trap of TRP' (television rating point). Collectively it encourages to create a manufactured, fake polarization within the democratic framework, uttering unethical politics and political activities and some pseudo cognitive stress among media audiences (Harsin, J, 2018, &Greitemeyer. et al, 2021). Media audiences can thus be defined in different and overlapping forms: by place, by people, by medium, by content and by time (Mcquail, D.2005). In post truth society the audience can be explained as, 'all those who are actually reached by particular media content or media channels. The audience can also exist as an imagined target or intended group of receivers. It may coincide with a real social group or public" (Mc Quail, 2005). Narrative of fake news in post truth society opens a new window of media research that tries to distinguish credible and unreliable news articles. During Covid 19 period some media academicians and media professionals published a series of research on how the 'netizen' would be able to spot fake news regarding social media. Two parallel new waves hit the society at a time. Covid -19 pandemic on one side surge of fake news on other. It was established that a meaningful relationship has been working between the amount of fake news to which the audience was accessed and the number of Covid 19 vaccination doses recorded. It was an attempt to stud the quantification the impact of degree of proliferation of the fake news over on to take decision of vaccination. (Che et al. 2022). In the era of internet and social media it is too challenging to reduce the quantity of fake news articles and increase public health literacy to misinformation for the sustainable growth of any issue of public health and hygiene like Covid pandemic. Considering its seriousness, a constructive scientific methodology has been practiced based on natural language processing (NLP) and machine learning (ML) techniques to identify the unreliable news content and visuals of Covid protocol or related rumours on pandemic. It also gives some light on the behavioural study of the Indian internet users during 2020-2021. WhatsApp was one the major sources of Covid 19 misinformation in our society. Considering the insights about the behaviour of Indian internet users during the pandemic it was revealed that WhatsApp was one of the prime sources of Covid-19 misinformation in the country. Nearly 50% population of total of the country are using WhatsApp that is 390.1 million in 2021 (Statista, 2021) but there are no constructive data about how many users are practiced fact -checking technique

of the news before forwarding the same to the other subscribers. Hence, a new paradigm of information literacy is needed over media literacy to design an objective based news and views in the post truth era.

In 2018, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), published a handbook for education and training on, 'Journalism, Fake News and Disinformation'(Kefalaki, 2020). In this policy making working paper UNESCO developed seven modules like, 'Truth, trust and journalism: why its matters;' 'News industry transformation: digital technology, social platforms and the spread of misinformation and disinformation;' 'Combatting disinformation and misinformation through Media and Information Literacy' and so on. New media and information literacy became more relevant when Covid out broke its second round. Significantly, the period witnessed two levels of fact checking of news articles and visuals regarding assembly election campaigns and Covid -Protocol, vaccination etc. During that period, we witnessed several news copies and visual elements in print media, local channels, web portal and social media ecology, like WhatsApp and Facebook that violate the public good. They published and broadcast fake news, which lends itself to undermining the credibility and authenticity of information on Covid Pandemic and maintaining Covid Protocol overlapped by political campaigning.

It was a sad reality that during that time the post truth phenomenon was orchestrated and bulk of disinformation were published and broadcasted to confuse and manipulate the voter regarding mass rally and public meeting. It had been campaigned through the news articles that mass rallies were arranged after ensuring the guidelines of the Covid Protocol. So, voters should not worry that political campaigns may increase the 'positive cases' in Bengal. But all we feel is that it was really impossible to ensure the Covid Protocol on an individual level when fifty thousand or one lakh mobs had participated in a rally. Covid pandemic showed that along with India, in several countries of the world, trust in media and journalism was fragile and weakening due to its post truth attitude.

Case study on fake news and fallacy during West Bengal elections

On 16th May, 2021 Hindustan Times reported that the number of Covid positive cases had increased 40 folds after the mass gathers before West Bengal General assembly elections (Hindustan Times, 2021). There were arguments regarding the ethical issues with such mass gathering during a pandemic scenario. During that phase when even migrant workers were even not allowed to travel from one state to the other without an RTPCR it has been observed that the mass gathering was allowed by both the ruling party and the opposition party. On the contrary on January, 2022 Indian Express had reported that considering the Covid-19 scenario the West

Bengal State Election Commission had decided that the civic body poles were to be postponed to 12th February, 2022 instead of January (Mitra, 2022). Here, comes the irony of the situation because the time when number of Covid positive cases were more than a few lacks the government did not bother to postpone the elections. On the other hand, during the municipality elections at the beginning of 2022 when the number of Covid positive cases were quite under control and the education institutions even reopened in West Bengal the government postponed the municipality elections in fear. In the game of power and popularity politics has repeatedly shown its colourful yet unpredictable nature. Hence, after the above-mentioned scenario it can be argued that the threats from pandemic were neglected during the general assembly elections during Covid-19 pandemic. From eminent media organisations like The Indian Express, (2021) to small news portals like Ideas For India, (2021) had criticised the act of conducting election during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, these media organisations collectively failed to generate public opinion or even awareness among people to stop the mass gathering.

In the conflict of interest between the need for assembly elections and the surge for checking Covid pandemic cases a new narrative emerged. This new narrative was related to fake news that were spread during the West Bengal General Assembly elections 2021 amidst the outbreak of pandemic. According to Majumdemder, (2022) West Bengal recorded the highest number of recorded cases against fake news on social media in 2021, counting for about one- fourth of the total similar cases across the country, according to National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data. West Bengal reported 43 cases of fake news on social media with Calcutta alone recording 28 of these cases, according to data published by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). Bengal witnessed a high rattle electoral battle in 2021 between the ruling Trinamool Congress and the opposition BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) with the two sides leaving no stones unturned in reaching out to the people. Social media was heavily used by all political parties, including the TMC and the BJP, to push their narratives as they fought the election on the ground and online. There was a blame game between the two political parties which shifted the focus of common people from spread of pandemic to the political propaganda eventually. Dahiya, (2021) further reported that as several cases of post-poll violence marked the triumph of Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress (TMC) in the 2021 West Bengal Assembly Election, a resemblant propaganda war continued to dominate the ecosystem of the social media within the state. Social media addicts aggressively reacted to the videos and images that were allegedly showing the' intensity' of this violence, numerous of which went viral with misleading claims and were latterly called out by fact- checkers and other media organisations. The news of violence between workers and supporters of different parties including the

BJP, TMC, Congress and Left Front started making headlines as soon as election results were declared on 2 May. As per reports, as numerous as 17 people have lost their lives in this process due to the rapid spread of fake news and deliberately designed false news.

For instance, image of an injured woman from Bangladesh was retrieved and linked to the West Bengal violence which went viral over different social media as a fake news. A tweet carrying the image with a deceiving claim that it shows a woman who was assaulted in West Bengal, had more than 1,500 retweets and 23,000 likes by the time it was identified as the fake news. In addition to this, an image from the protests lead by 2019anti-CAA in Bengal was extensively spread with the hashtag' '#PresidentRuleInBengal'. It had around 400 likes and as numerous retweets by the time it was filed as a fake news even though it was being debunked by multiple fact- checkers. In another case, a videotape from Bangladesh, where a group of men can be seen forcefully carrying a woman down from her house has been made viral with a claim that these are *"Muslim men who are assaulting a Hindu girl in broad daylight in West Bengal."*(Dahiya, 2021). It can be analysed from these instances that there was a deliberate attempt to create a havoc during the General Assembly elections as well as its exit polls lead to the formation of such faulty narratives. The Wire, (2021) counter argued that there were some organisations like *AltNews* who had investigated the matter and tried to debunk the fake news as soon as possible but they could not cope up with the rapid spread of the fake news over the course of time. In this fight against what remained reflected was the spread of Covid-19 and the intensity of the pandemic. It can be further argued that ideally during the Covid-19 pandemic, mass media had a crucial role to play in ensuring advocacy on health and most importantly spreading awareness on the pandemic. Yet, it has been observed that there has been a rift between the concepts of health communication and political communication as observed by the mainstream media.

Ghosh, (2022) opined that important people, groups, political parties, and media now take expedient to strategies similar as falsification, manipulation, or deception to impact and control the mortal mind. This kind of manipulation has been termed as post truth. Now, in this post truth society considering the above-mentioned case studies it can be argued that politics is the most important beat of reporting and it thereby creates a situation where issues like health and even a pandemic is often neglected. Here, in case of West Bengal General Assembly Elections post truth acted as a catalyst which eventually shifted focus of the audience from pandemic to politics.

Conclusion

From this research it has been evaluated that the fact post truth is associated with falsification and manipulation which are mostly done by people at power including individuals, groups, political parties, and media. In other words, post truth is a deliberate deviation from truth through the process of falsification and manipulation. In this case the falsification has been done by fabricated information spread in the form of fake news. Here, it has been clearly observed that a pandemic scenario has been completely neglected while the West Bengal General Assembly elections were being conducted. Both the political parties involved in this process conducted numerous numbers of mass gatherings without proper precautions against the pandemic. This had further increased the number of Covid-19 cases in the state to rise 40 times than that was before. In the preliminary phases of elections media organisations highlighted the negative impact of mass gathering and campaigns but in the later phases with the upsurge of fake news it has been observed that these commentaries had stopped untimely. The falsification and fake news lead to riots and conflicts in different parts of the state which is why the media organisations focused on debunking this information. In this process it was observed from this article that the mainstream media lost the track from Covid-19 and rather focused on the spreading awareness against the fake news on politics. It is already known that political beat of news is still considered to be the most important beat but considering the global crisis due to pandemic media organisations were expected to provide equal importance in health advocacy. However, from the present research it can be concluded that there was lack of representation of health advocacy due to upsurge of fake news regarding political parties and the massive impact of elections in the state. It can be finally concluded that the commencement of election and fake news acted as an inhibiter in ensuring health advocacy during Covid-19 pandemic.

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Fallacies of Gender Justice: use and abuse of legal provisions in India

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Abstract

Indian women are lagging behind in enjoying the opportunities that the society and the state have created for its citizens. However, it is also simultaneously true that abuse of law is not uncommon which make both men and women victims of injustice. In this context, questions are raised whether the entire legal arrangements treat both the genders on equal terms or not. In reality it is found that gender equality has remained unfulfilled and instances are not rare where men are victimised by partisan enforcements of the legal instruments. Since this paper deals with gender, gender justice and gender inequality, it specifically highlights the Indian legal system relating to gender justice. This study also addresses the reasons and problems as to why gender justice is unresponsive to men's equal right in India.

Introduction

Every gender has its own identity and the society determines its role in terms of that identity. A society constructs the notion of gender depending on the social and cultural role of sex identities. The assigned roles of genders, determined by the society change from time to time due to the changes in the attitude of the society.

Indian culture had its beginning in the Vedic age. (Menon 1999, 2). In the Vedic age, Indian women used to enjoy high status (Nair 2011, 19). Later, women's position had gradually deteriorated in the post-Vedic period (Menon 1999, 3). Later their position had declined further that persisted even during the colonial period. During the Medieval period, Indian women relegated to *'andarmahal'* that made them completely *'pardanashin'*. Thus, over the periods Indian society has become unequal and patriarchal in nature. Child marriage and the practice of *'Sati'* had gained society's approval. Despite the appearance of some enlightened women, India have never been able to elevate the position of women, except a few from the privileged social classes. Yet it is sensible to acknowledge that the reformers like Raja Rammohan Roy and Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar made some bold attempts to reform and uplift the position of Indian women (Forbes 2015, 19-20). As a result, a modicum of changes has undoubtedly taken place in women's lives, notwithstanding the intransigence of some traditional obstacles to resist any radical change.

Gender and Gender Justice: a non-partisan standpoint

The concept of 'gender' is not conceived as a tool to analyse the biological differences between male or female. It refers to both masculinity, femininity and other new identities gaining currency in the emerging discourses. This signifies that the word 'gender' relates to the qualities or characteristics that the society attributes to every sex. Biological factors define the human beings either as male or female, while the society reconstructs and transforms them into men or women. Evidently the term 'gender' is not divorced from a social set-up consisting of all men and women, yet clearly separated from each other on the basis of the roles assigned by the society in terms of dominant cultural norms (Rowbotham 1992, 12). Thus, it is noted that the importance of gender is deeply entrenched, and the forms of gender relations are not identical everywhere, rather conform to the level of modernisation and socio-cultural developments.

Gender justice is a multifaceted concept that varies from society to society and assumes various meanings in different cultural contexts. Nonetheless it is understood as fair delivery of services and unbiased distribution of common goods in compliance with administration of law that governs a society. In a constitutional system gender justice acts as a remedy against injury, injustice or wrongdoings. Here an emphasis is given to reduce gender inequality by enforcing the unbiased notion of 'gender justice', which would overwhelm the factors of inequality and displace the biased attitudes in order to create a convivial social climate, required for uplifting the quality of life. Gender justice is then viewed as a device to improve gender relations leading to gender equality. In this way the subordinate gender is given the necessary space and opportunity to offset the repression of the dominant gender to ensure gender justice (Bhatt 2009, 515). Therefore, the notion of gender justice creates a high moral ground to repudiate the supremacist attitude of the dominant gender in a given situation.

Gender Inequality and Gender Injustice

Gender inequality evinces the perpetual fact that men and women are not equal. Every gender has its own characteristics and attributes. Thus, every gender cannot be equal, they are unique by themselves (Banerjee 2021, 102). Gender inequality is intrinsically connected with the position and roles assigned to both male and female, ascertained by the dominant cultural norms. Roles are socially constructed, determined by the prevailing cultural norms (Picq, n.d. chap. 10). Studies reveal that sharp gender inequality is conspicuous in education, employment, nutrition, life expectancy, family and community, political participation and so on, although its consequences differ from culture to culture.

The problem of gender inequality is pervasive which affects almost all areas of human actions. At the same time repression hampers communication and other vital skills (Bhatt 2009, 521). It is perpetuated by domination governed by systematic arrangements that restricts people's unhindered participation. More so when it is incontrovertible that injustice can affect anyone's life, irrespective of his or her gender identity. Some glaring forms of gender discrimination are cited below:

Gender Justice and its requirements

Man's relation with woman in a particular society points to the questions regarding the concept of gender (Bhatt 2009, 13). Gender justice is not merely equal distribution of resources between men and women. It practically deals with the qualitative aspects of each gender. Gender justice points out the necessity of equal opportunity of each gender and also strives to promote education and social progress of each of them. Along with this, the objective of gender justice is to provide enough strength to both men and women by imparting them how to lead a successful life by balancing family and workplace. Hence, gender justice as a concept underscores the importance of both men and women's intimate involvement with vital social resources and goods as a sign of equitable advancement.

Indian legal framework and gender justice

In India, gender justice is inherently connected with human rights. Women's rights in India are considered as an integral part of the human rights and are inviolable in nature. Indian Constitution has specified certain special provisions for women. Accordingly, laws in India have been enacted within the ambit of those provisions which are fairly capable to protect women's rights. Thus, the range of women's right and empowerment in India can be gauged by delving into the relevant legal arrangements specified below.

Legal framework under Indian Constitution to protect Women's rights:

i. The State may make any specific provisions for women and children (Article 15. (3));

ii. The State to create provision to ensure maternity leave and reasonable and decent working conditions (Article 42);

iii. To foster tranquillity and the feeling of brotherhood among all Indians and to condemn all such actions that are detrimental to women's dignity (Article 51A. (e));

iv. At least 1/3rd seats (which includes the numbers of seat allocated for women who belongs to the Scheduled Caste community and also to the Scheduled Tribes community) out of the entire number

of seats will be filled by the process of direct election in every Panchayat must be reserved for women and such seats in a Panchayat would be allocated through rotation to various constituencies (Article 243D. (3));

v. At least 1/3rd out of the entire number of offices of Chairpersons in the Panchayats in every level must be reserved for women (Article 243D. (4));

vi. At least 1/3rd seats (which includes the numbers of seat allocated for women who belongs to the Scheduled Caste community and also to the Scheduled Tribes community) out of the entire number of seats will be filled by the process of direct election in every Municipality must be allotted for women and such seats in a Municipality would be allocated through rotation to various constituencies (Article 243T. (3));

vii. The posts of Chairpersons in Municipalities shall be allocated for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and also for women in the manner provided by legislation by the legislature of a State (Article 243T. (4)).

Provisions under Indian Penal Code, 1860 and protection of Women

Amongst all the national laws, the most significant is the Indian Penal Code, 1860, which covers several offences, and different kinds of offenders can be booked by the legislative measures of the Indian Penal Code, 1860. The provisions relating to offence against women along with their respective contending sections are as follows:

i. Homicide for Dowry, Dowry Deaths or their attempts (Section 304B);

ii. Assault or criminal force for outraging modesty (Section 354);

iii. Sexual harassment (Section 354A);

iv. Assault or criminal force for disrobing (Section 354B);

v. Voyeurism (Section 354C);

vi. Stalking (Section 354D);

vii. Kidnapping & Abduction for different purposes (Sections 366-366B);

viii. Trafficking (Section 370-370A);

ix. Selling and buying minor for the purpose of prostitution (Section 372-373);

x. Rape (Section 376-376E);

xi. Torture on wife by husband and his relatives, both mental and physical (Section 498A);

xii. Insult the modesty of a woman (Section 509).

Women centred legislations other than Indian Penal Code, 1860:

i. Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956;

ii. Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 (28 of 1961) (Amended in 1986);

iii. Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 (Amended in 1995);

iv. Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971;

v. Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013;

vi. Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2018;

vii. Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986;

viii. Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987 (3 of 1988);

ix. National Commission for Women Act, 1990;

x. Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act, 1994;

xi. Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005;

xii. Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006;

xiii. Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (PREVENTION, PROHIBITION and REDRESSAL) Act, 2013.

Thus, it is apparent that the Indian legal system, headed by the Constitution has provided ample provisions for the protection of women's rights, dignified social position and above all their empowerment. But on the other hand, there is no such equivalent set of laws with the objective to protect men's rights, position and dignity even when they face discrimination, repression and exclusion. Apathy of the state amounts to denial of human rights to men who like women constitute a significant percentage of India's population.

Gender Justice and Indian judiciary

The notion of gender justice is embedded in the Indian Constitution. It is found in the Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles. The Constitution of India not only guarantees equality to women but also empowers the State to adopt measures in the form of positive discrimination in favour of women. The State has taken several steps for the safety and security of women. Indian judicial system too under the auspices of the Constitution has always played an active role to ensure women's rights. But it is

not out of place to mention that there is now a need for legislations that would empower the judiciary to safeguard men from injustice and insecurity. In this paper a few important cases have been cited to validate the need for gender equality and justice from a non-partisan and unprejudiced standpoint to ensure fairness and justice to both men and women.

In the case of Sushil Kumar Sharma v. Union of India **(Sharma v. Union of India, 2005. 6 SCC 281)**, the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India upheld that the complaints related to dowry demand with ulterior motive are inimical to fairness and justice. In this context the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India has raised a question as to what remedial measures could be taken to prevent the abuse of law. The Court upheld the view that for such a false and frivolous complaints it has become necessary for the Legislature to find out ways to stop such false and frivolous allegations against a guiltless person. The Apex Court of India viewed that till the enactment of a legislation, the Court would have the authority to act for the reinforcement of justice.

In Inderjit Singh Grewal v. State of Punjab and Another **(Grewal v. State of Punjab and another, 2011. 12 SCC 588)**, the Hon'ble Supreme Court decided the applicability of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 after divorce. In this case mutual divorce under Section 13B of Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, was allowed in the year 2008. After such mutual divorce, the wife filed a complaint under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 before the Magistrate with an allegation that she has been forced to leave the matrimonial home by her husband. Ultimately when the matter appeared before the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, the Apex Court of India upheld that in the event of a divorce granted by a Civil Court, the wife is not eligible for any reliefs under Section 12 of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005.

In the matter of Narendra v. K. Meena **(Narendra v. Meena, 2016. 9 SCC 455)**, the Apex Court of India had to decide on an appeal, filed by the husband after the trial court's order of divorce was overruled by the impugned decision rendered by the Hon'ble High Court of Karnataka. The matter appeared before the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in the form of an appeal by the husband.

The Hon'ble Supreme Court of India ruled that compulsion or forcing the appellant husband to abandon his parents (who depends on the earning of the appellant husband) constitutes cruelty on the part of the respondent wife and could be a good reason for a decree of divorce under Hindu Law.

Gender Justice in Indian society

Social change like other changes is inevitable. Nothing is constant and the Indian society is not an exception. Since the ancient times, the Indian women have suffered a lot, but the patterns of sufferings are not similar.

Society has changed over the periods and the position of women has also improved to some extent. The Indian Constitution, contemporary laws and universal education have opened up vistas of opportunity for Indian women (Bhat 2015, 188-189). Yet India has not achieved gender justice in true sense of the term. The laws once made to protect women sometimes lead to miscarriage of justice. Therefore, fairness in the realm of gender relations has become a far cry in Indian society. One significant point to note is that previously women were the victims of social system, but the modus operandi of the present legal system amounting to abuse of law sometimes victimises men as well and force them to suffer a lot (Kumar 2018, 78).

Media reports on men as victims

Today in Indian society many false accusations are found utilizing the laws that favour women. False cases to take revenge against men, extort money or trap men are also not few and far between. Instances are there that show men too are victims (Banerjee 2022, 162). Several real incidents of kidnap, murder, honey-trap and acid attack, which all have happened against men provide a real picture of victimisation of men in recent times.

Man kidnapped by Tinder girl and murdered

Priya Seth has been charged with extortion, ATM theft, fake rape threats, prostitution, honey traps and other offences in addition to defrauding thousands of men. Dushyant Sharma, whom 27-year-old Priya Seth met on Tinder a dating App, was allegedly kidnapped and murdered in 2018. She said that over the last eight years, she had deceived hundreds of men and nonchalantly explained how she and her colleagues murdered a guy, put his body in a bag and then threw it along the Delhi-Jaipur highway. The 27-year-old Dushyant Sharma was captured by Priya Seth using the dating app Tinder. With the assistance of her associates Dikshant Kamra and Lakshya Walia, the racket's ringleader Priya Seth abducted Dushyant. They then collected Rs. 3 Lakhs from the victim's father without notifying him that his son had been fatally stabbed earlier in the day. Police discovered Dushyant's body inside a suitcase by the Delhi-Jaipur highway, which is how the case came to light. The killers of Dushyant were caught by police 10 hours after his body was discovered (Mirror Now, 2018).

Honey trap case of 2020 in the vicinity of Chandni Bagh Police Station

A 40-year-old lady from Panipat's Chandni Bagh Police Station area, Haryana, the primary accused, has made 19 fictitious gang rape cases. In addition, the alleged woman who lured wealthy men into honey traps before demanding money from them was working hand in glove with a female sub-inspector named as

Yogesh Kumari. However, their most recent scheme disastrously backfired when they planned to capture a businessman from Panipat; as a result, the entire situation was disclosed.

Under the direction of DSP Pooja Dabla, a Special Inquiry Team (SIT) was established. Following a 60-day inquiry, the gang rape accusations were removed from the case. The Special Inquiry Team (SIT) also made the primary accused and the lady Sub-Inspector parties to the case. The primary accused was taken to the police station after which she was taken into custody. Likewise, the police began looking for the lady Sub-Inspector (Team VFMI 2020).

Acid attack on a man

Since his parents passed away, 25 years old Shyam Singh has been residing with his aunt at Mayur Vihar. Shyam was employed at a business located close to the area where the alleged woman lived. The name of the accused women is Anjali. She was a resident of Gohana. The aunt of Shyam alleged that Anjali used to call Shyam regularly. Anjali, the accused, according to the aunt, arrived her home with a marriage proposal for Shyam. But a few days later, they learned that the accused had previously been married once before and had dumped her first husband. Due to this reason he proposal of marriage was rejected by Shyam's family. But Anjali continued to call Shyam after that. In an effort to get the accused's family to stop pestering them, Shyam and his aunt complained to the accused's relatives. After this incident, Anjali started threatening Shyam to wed her or else she wouldn't let him live in peace. In this way Anjali started to force Shyam to marry her. After coming to know about the warnings from Anjali, Shyam's aunt advised him to be alert. On the day of acid attack, Shyam was out to purchase milk at a place named Sonipat, where Anjali suddenly appeared with a five-litre can and hurled acid at him. After the acid attack, Shyam was sent to a private hospital where his condition was serious. Shyam's aunt lodged a complaint against Anjali by a FIR at Sonipat Police Station and the police started investigation against Anjali (Sakshi Post 2022).

Reasons of state apathy towards Men's Right

It is generally held that men are solely responsible for unfairness and cruelty, gender inequality and violence in public as well as domestic sphere (Diwakar 2016, 2). It is understood that the male atrocity is the only problem making the state apathetic towards the distresses that men are forced to endure (Diwakar 2016, 3).

Injustice to Indian women have undoubtedly left a deep scar and Indian society is bound to put an end to this social evil. But the partisan attitude to favour women (Kumar 2012, 291) has created some unwarranted consequences (Kumar 2018, 77). In India, the legal framework complies with the social trends and almost there have been no attempt to reform and make the society liveable for all. In this age of media dominance and prevalence of social media, representation of social issues concerning gender relation is not always

fair. Besides, manipulation of public opinion has also made gender justice a difficult proposition (Diwakar 2016, 7).

It cannot always be claimed that use of law by women has always been fair and perfect. Instances are not rare when it is found that even women falsely accuse men with numerous charges. As per the report of the National Crime Records Bureau 2019, in India amongst the cases relating to crimes against women, 7 cases have been withdrawn by the government during investigation, 464 cases ended as FR Non-Cognizable, 32497 cases ended as Final Report False and 29925 cases ended as Mistake of Fact or of Law or Civil Dispute (National Crime Records Bureau 2021a). Thus, false cases lodged against men is a significant problem and sometimes it is found that several cases were filed to fulfil grudge and grievances and also to compel men to come to the bargaining table for material benefits. As a result of longstanding sufferings many married men prefer to commit suicide. As per National Crime Records Bureau Report in India, higher number of married men have committed suicide than female in between 1999 to 2019 (National Crime Records Bureau 2021b). Due to absence of social acceptance of the problem many men are scared of marriage which would finally cause a great harm to Indian tradition based on marriage and family.

Suggestions

Despite Constitutional provisions, Indian Penal Code, 1860 and some other legal instruments too, are not comprehensive to provide equal treatment to both men and women. In view of this bleak scenario some corrective measures might create a social environment, propitious for gender justice in the true sense of the term. Considering the present loopholes, a few steps mentioned below would hopefully be able to eliminate the current discrepancies and factors of discrimination between men and women. They are:

i. To spread social awareness on human rights;

ii. To come out from the old concept of gender justice and to treat individuals not completely in terms of his or her gender identity;

iii. To fight against each and every incidence of oppression and favouritism for any gender;

iv. To amend laws to eradicate gender bias;

v. To find out and support the individuals irrespective of any gender, who are relatively weaker;

vi. To run counselling and assist the suffering individuals irrespective of any gender identity;

vii. To generate social and cultural development of all;

viii. To ensure educational development of all;

ix. To see economic development of all; and

x. To run awareness programme to remove the age-old beliefs of masculinity or of femininity.

Conclusion

The typical age-old idea of gender justice in India tends to create gender discrimination. The Constitution of India is not only the source of fundamental laws but is also an outstanding piece of literature. Now, it is the duty of the legislature and the judiciary to understand the real problems and formulate laws within the ambit of the constitutional principle of equality and justice. Age-old and biased provisions should be replaced by new set of laws to ensure equality, fairness and justice. Since law is a dynamic concept, legal guardians must not be hesitant to carry out their responsibility in creating a congenial atmosphere for everyone. According to Amartya Sen, the wellbeing of an individual is related with his/her 'capability' (Leela 2005, 169). Hence, well-being of individuals, put together with the development of capability would ensure fairness and justice without any narrow gender preference.

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(Mis)Governance Issues in Arunachal Pradesh: Inclusivity, Equilibrium and Nation Building in the Periphery

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Abstract:

Could there be a reversal of the phenomena of good and effective governance over time due to changing public priorities of a large democracy such as India and relative deprivation guided by national exigencies? In this article based on findings from an ethnographic study using participant observation in the remote area of Desali circle in Arunachal Pradesh, we contend that it is possible and also highlight mis(governance) issues in the region. These issues of mis(governance) are found to be brought about by various factors such as the development of the core areas at the expense of the peripheries, relative importance assigned to each 'periphery' based on its relevance as a 'buffer zone' to protect the national integrity from Chinese aggression, the friction between tradition and modernity and lastly, the majoritarian basis of large democracies. The article also explains the presence of non-functional remnants of infrastructure as 'structures of legitimation' of the Indian nation in such misgoverned, frontier areas; through a subtle form of disciplinary power of the state.

Keywords: Arunachal Pradesh, Relative Deprivation, Inclusivity, Equilibrium, Governance, Misgovernance, Nation Building

Introduction

Democracies aim for and claim that they stand for good governance today. It is generally perceived that well established democracies on the bedrock of legal institutions and effective governments eventually lead to good governance and the consequent development of the individual and society (Schmiegelow 1997, Sandbrook 2001, Joseph 2001). However, several viewpoints rooted in a critique of majoritarian democracies have also noted the deficiencies of large democracies in addressing the demands and concerns of the relative minorities. Such viewpoints resonate with the viewpoint originally expressed by Tocqueville as far back as the 19th century that democracy could thus be 'a tyranny of the majority' in some cases (Tocqueville 2000); the original intention of the establishment of the democratic structure notwithstanding.

In the context of such works, this paper based on ethnography in the area of Desali circle in the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh, draws attention to a curious phenomenon of a reversal of good governance in that area over time. We highlight the lack of basic amenities and public facilities in the area, the access of which was possible a few decades ago. It discusses various factors responsible for such a reversal of good governance mechanisms in the area; including but not limited to factors such as the development of the core areas at the expense of the peripheries, relative importance assigned to each 'periphery' based on its relevance as a 'buffer zone' to protect the national integrity; the friction between modernization and tradition and the majoritarian basis of large democracies.

Study Area and Methodology

The ethnographic study based on participant observation was conducted at the Desali administrative circle under the Lower Dibang Valley district of Arunachal Pradesh. The state which was erstwhile known as the North East Frontier Agency till 1987, signifying its importance as a buffer area for the Indian nation in relation to China, Myanmar and Bhutan; is divided into 25 districts of which the Lower Dibang valley district is one. The Desali administrative circle established in 1959 is an administrative division of erstwhile NEFA (Economics and Statistics Department Office of the DC Dibang Valley District 1987),

exclusively inhabited by the Idu Mishmi tribal community, one of the 26 major ethnic tribal groups of the state; in villages scattered along the Ithun river, which is a sub-tributary of the Brahmaputra River. The Desali circle according to the Census of 2011 has fifty-two villages with a total population of about 864 out of which 418 are males and 446 females with a sex ratio of 1,067 females per 1000 males (Census India 2011).

The ethnographic interactions were conducted from June 2021 to February 2022. Initial impetus to conduct such work came from an auto-ethnographic insight into the conditions of the people of Desali; one of the ethnographers/authors being an inhabitant of the area. Being an explorative, qualitative study, so sample size was determined beforehand. Verbal informed consent in the local language was obtained from all the participants with which we interacted after they were made aware of our study and research work. The reason for taking verbal informed consent in lieu of written informed consent is because of the poor educational background of the participants who found it difficult to understand the written informed consent form in English. We followed the rationale of data saturation in our sampling and data collection as enumerated by Glaser and Strauss (2017). Interactions were held with the inhabitants until data saturation was reached, that is, until the point when we were convinced that 'additional data do not lead to any new emergent themes.' (Given 2015). Our findings, analysis and discussion are presented in the following headings.

Changing times, Shifting priorities

The Chinese aggression of 1962 was a turning point in the history of political development of Arunachal Pradesh erstwhile NEFA (North Eastern Frontier Agency). It gave a sharp wakeup call to New Delhi to reassess its Nehruvian idealism manifested in its stance of *Panchsheel* w.r.t China and to realign its domestic and foreign policies along realist fault lines. *Panchsheel,* also known as the 'Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence' appeared for the first time in the 1954 Indo-China Agreement on Trade and Cultural ties with Tibet, and was much championed by the then Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, as the keystone of peaceful Sino-Indian relations (Dasgupta 2016). However, such idealism of peaceful existence was rudely shaken by the 1962 Chinese aggression. After the Chinese aggression, the frontier region entered into a new discourse and praxis of 'nationalizing' and integrating the frontier region with India (Baruah 2003, Bath & Babin 2021). As a part of this nation-state building project,

the government expanded its infrastructure and military buildup along the Sino-India border at Arunachal and other border states and continues to do so today. As a reactive response to the Chinese aggression, various areas in the frontier region that were hitherto ungoverned areas were brought under the single line uniform administrative system and were made an appendage to the larger nation building process. The introduction of an administrative mechanisms in the Desali circle in 1959 (Choudhury 1978, 59) was one such manifestation. It witnessed the introduction of infrastructure and corresponding governance mechanisms. Consequently, the circle was once a thriving town and assumed an important hub for the education, health, economic activities and other social exchanges in the region.

However, there has been a gradual breakdown of administrative structures and governance mechanisms in the region since the last decade of the 20th century with a shifting change in government's priority assigned to the area. A resident of Taloni village of the Desali circle (Male, 60 years) recalls:

> Once upon a time, Desali town was known for the administrative and commercial activities. It had all the functional agencies of government including paramilitary forces and police. However, with the changing priorities of the government, all the services usually delivered by the government were gradually withdrawn and their focus shifted towards near the border areas. And on the other hand, lack of political will from our representatives to restore the governance mechanism has also led to the reversal back and left us to live a primitive life struggling for the survival in this current situation. (Translated from the local language into English by the authors. All subsequent transcripts have also been translated likewise).

As a result, the process of modernization and development has failed to penetrate inwards into the Desali circle and beyond; having come to a standstill at the district headquarters at Roing. For instance, an official report of the Directorate of Research, Arunachal Pradesh dating back to 1997 notes that people in the Desali and Hunli areas are primarily engaged in 'traditional agriculture practice and domestic household jobs while their counterparts in Roing township

and surrounding villages carry out trade and business activities like running a shop, a PCO, a knitting centre, contract work, etc.' (Pandey et al 1997, 101); depicting the lack of penetration of modernization.

National exigencies, political populism and 'conditional development'

The lack of attention paid to Desali circle in terms of social and economic inclusion and this 'failure to bring the Indian government to them' is not a depiction of the entire developmental narrative of the state in relation to the Indian nation. On the contrary, two parallel developments stand in stark contrast to what is transpiring in Desali; namely, the rapid urbanization and development of the core areas of the state which are mostly located in the relatively 'plain' areas and a shifting focus on building up of security and transport infrastructure along the more adjacent border towns and areas. Rapid development has changed the landscape of core areas near capital and district headquarters. For instance, in 2021, Pema Khandu, the Chief Minister of the state shared videos of supercars speeding across well-constructed national highways in the Upper Siang district, awing the public and garnering praise for rapid infrastructural development in the state (Trends Desk 2021).

However, this stands in stark contrast to the peripheral areas such as Desali, which is still in the dark when it comes to developmental and basic human needs despite being one of the oldest administrative divisions in the state. No proper road and connectivity are present despite it being located at a mere distance of 127 kms from the district headquarters, Roing. A motorable road connects Roing to Hunli sub-divisional area, which lies midway between Roing and Desali. But the road onwards from Hunli to Desali which was constructed in 2001, had collapsed in 2003 and no significant efforts have been undertaken to repair the road even after two decades of the event; according to the inhabitants of the region. Consequently, all the essential goods are physically carried by load carriers wherein the participation of women and children are very high.

> Due to the absence of road connectivity, we are facing serious problems particularly, during medical and other emergency situations. We are compelled to carry all the essential items including critical patients and trekked more than forty kilometers to reach

> a motorable road and vice-versa. We are not Chinese or Tibetan refugees, but we are Indians and *Arunachalees*, so we also deserve at least basic facilities to live dignified life here in my own ancestral land. (Female, 27 years, Chanli village).

In terms of communication network, the town also has neither network nor internet connectivity. The administrative circle has no cellular tower, so they are dependent on the BSNL network available at Hunli circle which could be accessed only at the top of the hills. The villagers often climb to the top of hills to make an urgent phone call in times of medical and personal crises.

> During the time of crisis situations, we often face a lot of difficulties. Just to make a single call, we have to climb to the hilltop and because of its frequent disruptions, availability of network remains uncertain. During the COVID-19 pandemic, all the educational institutions in the state were switched to online classes. How can we expect our children to attend online classes when there is no electricity and no internet facilities here in a remote village? (Male, 34 years, Taloni village)

Electricity is also virtually absent in the area. Government records suggest that all the villages were electrified under the *Deen Dayal Upadhyay Gram Jyoti Yojana scheme* which aims to provide continuous power supply to rural India. However, we found that even though the electric poles have been erected up to the last village of Dopowa, there is no electricity.

> Under the said scheme, we had received electricity for two days only. Afterwards, due to the natural calamities, all the installations were brought down. And since then, we are living in the dark. As night falls, we are only dependent on solar lamps, kerosene lamps and firewood for survival. There is no modernization here in terms of electricity or lighting. (Male, 40 years, Dopowa village).

Lack of such basic amenities lead to a vicious cycle, wherein government personnel do not wish to stay in the circle for their work; and conduct such work from the district headquarters at Roing. The absence of government personnel in turn leads to a lack of understanding of the

situation and a neglect of the need to infuse development in the circle. The new generation also seek to migrate to other areas, especially the plain regions in search of better educational and career opportunities.

In addition, infrastructural developments in the area are guided more by national exigencies and security concerns; and less by concerns of good governance. The Indian nation seems to be guided by a notion of 'national integration' that was best formulated by Weiner as the 'the process of bringing culturally and socially discreet groups into a single territorial unit and the establishment of national identity', the establishment of a 'national central authority over subordinate political units or regimes which may or may not coincide with distinct cultural or social growth'; linking the government with the governed by bridging the elite-public gap; the achievement of a 'minimum value consensus necessary to maintain social order' by promoting common values through political socialization; and the construct of a common goal-oriented society that would enable the government to act on programmable utilitarian goals (Weiner 1965). Such a notion of national integration is not only 'methodologically incorrect' but also 'insensitive to the question of sub national identities and loyalties' and negates the basic features of a democracy- plural identities and cooperative federalism (Navlani 2006). We find such a mode of national integration manifest in the quest of the Indian nation for geographical continuity and hard, demarcated protected, physical borders that mandate inclusion and exclusion; rather than aiming at a holistic, soulful integration of the fringe areas through socio-economic development and enhancement of capabilities. In fact, the entirety of the development narrative in Arunachal has been shaped by a concern for national security (Aiyadurai & Lee 2017). Driven by such security concerns mainly to facilitate smooth deployment of personal and ammunitions along the border, the government has mooted construction of an ambitious Arunachal Frontier Highway along the MacMohan line connecting Mago-Thingbu in Tawang district to Vijaynagar in Changlang district in the eastern side (Singh 2014). While this proposed highway is supposed to meander through Desali, it is yet to be seen how such a security-oriented construct of a highway impacts the governance of the region positively.

Democracies at times fail to consider the concerns of the minorities. For a majoritarian democracy such as India, it is often seen that developmental concerns of the nation based on

the utilitarian principle of the greatest good of the greatest number outweigh the concerns and traditions of the few; especially those living along the peripheral region. It has been noted that traditions run deep in the Desali region; as is characteristic of a tribal region that has its own rich cultural identity and history. Consequently, it has been noted that the process of modernization has not had a smooth sailing in the region (Pandey et al 1997, 110) and the need to 'accommodate traditions' in the process is apparent. It is therefore difficult to assume that any form of 'development' conditional on the national exigencies vis-à-vis China, security concerns and the movement of army in the area; without taking into concern the traditions, customs and concerns of the indigenous tribal people in the area would have any significant effect on ameliorating the state of decadence when it comes to governance and socio-economic development in the area. As per our ethnographic accounts in Desali, a sense of 'otherness' of the developmental works in the border areas, of it being undertaken not for the area but only for the sake of New Delhi pervades the area when it comes to such a top-down approach to development, that is contingent on the security needs of New Delhi. Thus, the development narrative appears conditional that has a zero-sum impact and the people are 'alienated' from such developmental works. The people therefore feel excluded from the process and are generally disinterested in such sort of 'conditional development' being carried out along the border region even though it might have a spillover effect when it comes to governing the area. Development and governance in the area therefore should be guided by holistic policy planning that also considers the traditions and customs of the local communities. A sense of involvement and inclusiveness in the process of development needs to be inculcated through a localized bottom-up approach. Only then would the process of 'national integration' in spirit, while maintaining unity and diversity would be achieved. Keeping borders solid and the inhabitants within the limits of the borders, while excluding and repelling external aggression is simply not enough to be seen as 'national integration'.

Facades of Legitimation and Nation Building

The Desali circle and its villages including Taloni also present a curious picture of presence of selected infrastructural works that were initiated, some completed, but most of them in a state of functional decadence. For instance, the Desali High school which was established in the 1964 (according to the inhabitants of the area), stands atop a hill completely abandoned in the

year 2014 even though the physical monolith of the school remains intact. The same goes for Taloni Primary School. The only school which is currently functioning under the Desali circle is the residential school of Jamupani with a total intake capacity of fifty students. Inhabitants expressed their despair that it was the non-availability and absence of teachers along with the lack of infrastructural and financial support from the government forced the schools to be defunct. Similarly, the region also lacks in other basic parameters of human development such as medical, public health and other line agencies. A well-constructed public health center has existed since 1965 and was renovated recently. However, it is locked from the outside and there is a complete absence of staff such as a watchman or peon, let alone a nurse or a doctor; during the entirety of the period of our study. Inhabitants of the region live in a state of despair and have to struggle on a day-to-day basis for even the most essential of needs such as medicine and education, that the Indian public elsewhere take for granted. Consequently, all the policies and programmes of the government related to the health services which are critical for the women and children fails to reach the intended beneficiaries in the area.

> We are completely unaware of the various medical schemes related to women and children since there is no one here who could inform us about such things. In fact, we never had an opportunity to get prenatal as well as postnatal checkups done here; so, we generally seek a cure from the local priests. (Female, 36 years, Desali).

All the various line agencies such as Public Works Department (PWD), Rural Works Department (RWD), Power, Administration, police and so on were eventually found missing in action. Evidently, there is a widening and deepening of the gap between the government and citizens resulting in a governance vacuum in the area, which needs immediate attention.

What is the purpose of the existence of such physical structures and infrastructures then, if they are non-functional? These infrastructural facades and physical monoliths present in Desali serve as an important legitimizing tool for the process of 'national integration' and New Delhi. By placing such monolithic markers as 'stamps' of the Indian nation-state in the region, they serve as 'structures of legitimation' of the Indian nation state. These buildings and defunct

roads, even if they are in a state of decadence, is a footprint of the presence of the Indian nation and serves as a constant reminder of the region being a geographical part of India. This is crucial especially in the context of Arunachal Pradesh being an area that is contested by China; and of the inhabitants being indigenous minorities that do not necessarily conform to the generic majoritarian way of life in India. These monoliths therefore function as a means to dissimilate the 'disciplinary power' of the state in the area, by constantly reminding the people that they and the region belong to India. Disciplinary power of the state, operates within and beneath such structures in stealth and 'brings into play relations between individuals' (Foucault 1982, 786) that are of course guided by hierarchical 'divisions, inequalities and disequilibriums' (Foucault 1979, 94) present in any sort of relationship including that of the state-citizen.

Conclusion

Development and governance in the state of Arunachal Pradesh is extremely uneven and is 'conditional' on various factors as noted above. In the peripheral areas such as Desali, the government seems to be more focused on a notion and process of 'national integration' driven by security concerns, presence of 'visible' structures and mechanisms of legitimation such as security forces and monolithic structures. We contend that such a notion and process of 'national integration' is shallow and misplaced. It is unlikely to bring good governance to the region. On the contrary, this has caused only reversal of governance in the area. If there is a desire to infuse an Indian identity and to promote integration of the indigenous people in the region with the Indian nation, it would be prudent for New Delhi and policy makers to rethink, reassess and realign the developmental plans by considering the concerns, needs and traditions of the region beyond the security paradigm.

People in Desali and other adjacent regions continue to live in dark space dying for the basic human needs. However, they seem to have not lost faith in the inclusive good governance as of yet. As Marx rightly noted, 'it is precisely the desperate situation which fills me (the people of Desali) with hope' (Marx 1843). It is now high time that New Delhi and other stakeholders including the state government focus on substantive development rather than a

cosmetic one; by taking into account the concerns, needs and 'despair' of the indigenous people in the area. There is thus a need to 'uniformize' the process of development, by taking into account various factors as mentioned above, to avoid the zero-sum effect. Focus must be on priority areas such as restoration of the governance structures, development of both physical and non-physical infrastructures like roads and connectivity, medical and health, education and other key allied line agencies. This will help usher in a new era of good governance and socio-economic development in the region and to realize the true meaning of Indian democracy and co-operative federalism. Inclusivity and enhancement of human capabilities to bring egalitarian justice in our societies should guide us in our quest for good governance and a well-functioning democracy.

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Women's Bodies as a Site of Violence: Sexual violence against Tamil women during Sri Lankan Civil War

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Abstract

The paper attempts to explore how and why Tamil women's bodies became sites of war during Sri Lankan civil war and what role their sexual violation played in achieving the objective of ethnic cleansing of Tamil-occupied areas of the Northern and Eastern parts of the island. Sexual violence during times of conflict is believed to be a widespread phenomenon. The rape historically seen as a spoil of war or as an individual act towards women of the enemy rather than an ideologically and politically motivated systematic attack. Today there is an increased understanding, due to increasing international attention to the issue, that rape can be forced, vaginal, anal or oral penetration and is used as a strategic and systematic tactic during armed conflict. During the Sri Lankan civil war, the rape of Tamil women by the Government of Sri Lanka was widespread yet empirical pieces of evidence concerning its prevalence show it is a limited phenomenon. The paper is using narratives obtained from five interviews of Tamil refugees who had fled the war and are staying in Tamil Nadu in various Tamil rehabilitation camps.

Key words: sexual violence, women, war, ethnic cleansing.

Introduction

Sexual violence against women has been prevalent since ancient times and manifested in various forms in the conflict zones like rape, sexual abuse, sex slavery and forced sexual labour. However, it has recently gained much international attention. The mass rape during the Rwandan Genocide (1994), and during the Bosnia and Herzegovina war of 1992 drew media and women organisations' attention to this prevalent normalised practice of massive-scale sexual violence during the conflict against women (Kuloglu 2008).

Rape can differ from other forms of sexual violence e.g sexual harassment, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation and other, since it is wielded as a weapon against women of the opposite side. The wars in Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Liberia, Darfur and others are examples in which rampant mass rape of women was used as a weapon to not only annihilate the enemy of but humiliate them. This can take various forms e.g groping, kicking, and squeezing genitals /in the case of men/, electric shocks and insertion of objects like rifles, machetes, glass and rods (Amnesty International 2002, Human Right Watch 2002).

Leatherman (2007), argued that causes of conflict-related sexual violence are multiple and complex. This form of sexual violence against women is structural and systematic and ranges from violence in domestic

spaces to conflict zone. Such patterns of violence are ramifications of deeply entrenched patriarchy in our society's core - centring on male dominance and their control over resources which also encompasses women. The subjugation of women boosts the ego of the patriarchal society where the female body is perceived as 'territory' needing protection, hence owned and controlled by males in the name of protection (Colombini 2002).

Women and their sexuality have become a topic of discussion in the context of anti-colonial and nationalist movements in South Asia, especially in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (Chatterjee 2012). Women's sexuality has not only been a focal point in the construction of the nation but has also been used in creating and defending a nation's honour and purity. Such constructions of notions of women and their sexuality have rendered women's bodies a site of violence where violence is unleashed to humiliate and punish families and communities. The gendered analysis of society explains why violence against women would be effectively used against a community where it is considered a cultural taboo (True 2004, Engel 2006). Often women and girls are raped and sexually abused in public or in front of family members, and sometimes they are forced to watch; women are raped precisely because violation of their 'protected status' has the consequence of shaming their husbands and family members (Thomas and Ralph 1994). This is due to the understanding in the traditional community that any form of sexual transgression both forced and consented to outside the purview of marriage carries the capacity of disintegrating family and community (Thambiah 2005). In this context, protecting the honour of the nation lies essentially in protecting the women who are part of that nation from warring factions as well as from their consensual sexual transgression. Thus, as Zarkov (2001) pointed out, men fight to protect their women eventually protecting their honour and at the same time rape enemy's women to dishonour them as rape is equated to the emasculation of the community or nation.

Rape as discussed above is not only used for torturing and degrading the enemy. UNRISD (2005: 215) reported that it is also used as a strategy directed at ethnic cleansing as seen in the war of Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. In the context of war, ethnic cleansing means rendering an area ethnically homogenous using force or by intimidation to remove persons of given groups from the areas (Commission of Experts appointed by Former UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali 1992 cited by Salzman 1998). Ethnic cleansing can be accomplished through the use of sexual violence, mass killings, forced deportations, torture, concentration camps, destructive of private and cultural property and the blocking of humanitarian aid (Salzman 1998). Rape as an objective for ethnic cleansing has two dimensions attached to it. The first dimension points to the methods of 'impregnation' to have children who belong to the same

ethnicity/nationality as the perpetrators (SKJELSBAEK 2006). The second dimension is to force the ethnic group to flee from their areas thus cleansing the area from a specific community (Kaufmann1996).

In this paper, the researcher wants to explore how and why Tamil women's bodies became sites of war during Sri Lankan civil war and what role their sexual violation played in achieving the objective of ethnic cleansing of Tamil-occupied areas of the Northern and Eastern part of the island. This paper is part of my doctoral research and is based on the narratives the researcher collected while doing fieldwork. The paper contains mainly three parts. In the first section, the paper will briefly evaluate the sociocultural underpinnings in Tamil society that underscores the secondary position of Tamil women, and secondary data on sexual violence during the Sri Lanka civil war. For this paper, conflict-related sexual violence includes rapes, gang rape, sexual abuse/harassment at checkpoints, sexual torture, and harassment during military surveillance (/detention centres). In the second session, the paper will look into narratives as methods and methodological limitations. The final section will look into data from fieldwork to understand how rape and sexual violence of Tamil women's bodies mark the ethnic boundary between the Tamil and Sinhalese communities.

Tamil women and Sexual violence

When the political struggle for separate Eelam by Tamils was converted into a military struggle in Sri Lanka, an unprecedented scale of human rights violations by militants and the repressive response to this violence by the state targeting civilians contributed to the militarization of society, especially in the northern and eastern part of the island (De Mel 2007). Sexual violence against Tamil women also emerged as a widespread phenomenon during the Sri Lankan civil war. In the documentary *Sri Lanka's Unfinished War,* various testimonies pointed out that the act of sexual and gender-based violence is not only limited to combatants but often targeted innocent civilians too. Tamil women were particularly targeted not only because of their gender but also due to their class, ethnicity, political affiliation and involvement with military groups. The documentary includes testimonies of victims and survivors of war crimes (Sri Lanka's Unfinished War documentary 2013). Yuval Davis and Anthias (1992) said women's caring and nurturing roles make them an essential part of the armed struggle. These are roles via which women are constructed as caretakers, educators of children and especially keepers of family relations. Thus, women are sought for maintaining and transmitting social and cultural norms, traditions and values (Palmary 2013).

In the interaction between nationalism and Tamil women, their bodies are considered as important in various ways. Often, the focus is on the women's bodies and therefore inevitably on their sexuality and Tamil women are supposed to contribute to the creation of a distinct ethnic or national identity. Radhika Coomaraswamy in *A Question of Honour* said that the good women are those who protect the honour of their community by restricting their sexual desires and marriage outside of their community to ensure that the generations of the community remain of pure ethnic origin (1999). Women are the first to introduce their children to their ethnic identity while embodying the agenda herself by following ethnic dress code and cultural norms. This shows that nationalism goes hand in hand with conservatism and traditionalism. De Silva (2005:15) says that the locus of cultural investment lies in a sexual body which is also considered a national body. Women are obliged to wear the national costumes to carry ethnic marking on their bodies (Coomaraswamy 1999 in Piyasena 2010). The use of the female body in this sense makes her a cultural symbol of a certain ethnic group that keeps an ethnic identity alive.

Patriarchal values are the guiding principles in gender relations on the island (Mukund 1992, Pandian 1987). A Tamil woman is, generally as daughter, wife or as a widow under the care and protection of her father, her husband and her son, simultaneously. This idea to protect women (young women/ girls) by their parents, guardians and other male family members is still influential in social decision making, especially in the traditional family milieu (Herath 2007). The Tamil girls, here, are raised similar to other South Asian countries. The societal norms, traditions and values dictate the respected, accepted, and desired behaviours of girls. This made women and girls bound by several specific gender obligations. Tamil girls and women (married) are put under obligation to preserve the family's good reputation.

Hrdlickova (2008) observes no matter what happens with them, they are blamed for their misfortune. Therefore, women are responsible for guarding themselves and their daughters to ensure their chastity. Thus, Tamil women not only become the culture bearers of their community but also protector or watchdogs of fellow women's chastity. Hoole and others (1990) said that a sexually violated or raped Tamil woman is often treated as an outcast, considered bringing shame on their family and their community. Even, their behaviour and appearance such as certain traditional attires they wear become representative of their culture. The transgression of these boundaries (sexuality, behaviour and clothing) is met with serious punishments in forms of humiliation, disowning by the community and violence (including killing) by male members of the community.

Tamil Center for Human Rights (TCHR) has recorded large number of rape and murder cases of Tamil women by Sri Lankan security forces in the conflict zone. The organisation believes that rape on the island during the war has been used as a weapon of war against Tamils. The actual number of rape cases is far

more than recorded by them (or other organizations) as many Tamil women who survived the act want to remain unidentified due to cultural perceptions and sensitivities within the Tamil community (TCHR 2004). Moreover, the perpetrators of sexual violence are from the state security forces like police personnel, Armed forces or para-militaries making them afraid of making the complaint against them (Human Rights Watch 2013, Traunmüller, Kijewski & Freitag 2019). While in a large number, the incidents of sexual violence against Tamil women have gone unreported due to many obvious reasons like the humiliation of family and ostracization from the community (Participant 5, interview on 27th July 2022).

Narratives as a Methodology

The paper contains the narratives obtained from five - interviews of Tamil refugees who had fled the war and are staying in Tamil Nadu in various Tamil rehabilitation camps. Kulandaswamy (2000) mentioned that Tamil suffered the worst since the riots in July 1983 that started the civil war engendering the migration of many Tamil to various parts of the world and India. They flee their native place due to rampant violence and increasing uncertainty about their future and for the safety of their children (Patil and Trivedi 2000). Similar to any other weapon, rape also inflicts physical pain and emotional and psychological trauma; it impacts the survivors, their close kin, and community members causing a lasting impact on all of them. The researcher believes that narratives provide a space for the creation of collective memory and provide a voice for sexual violence. Narratives also empower the victims and their families and help them to demand justice.

Narratives are significant for a researcher as they provide a site for examining the truth that is ascribed to lived experiences of the people. Hence, narratives are not only renditions of 'truth' but also reflect the dynamic interplay of various elements in the war. In the post-migration setting, Hussain and Bhushan (2011) say that refugees attempt to make sense of their personal experiences which allows them to make sense of past events that also support them in negotiating their lives within the host nation (communities).

As we have understood so far, narratives are the process through which individuals use (autobiographical) memories to make sense of past experiences. Heather Johnson (2014), in her work on asylum and border, proposed engaging with unauthorised voices and making them heard. By making the voices of 'unheard voices heard' especially of 'people from below' (refugees), it challenges the representation of refugees that assumes their abstract nakedness (Malkki 1995:12) rather than considering them real people with real eye -witnessed stories. Refugee voices and first-hand testimonies can be imperative in conjunction with academic research. In this context, Hynes (2003:1) points out refugees are specialists in their own experiences. Portelli (1991), in his book *The Death of Luigi Trastulli*, shifts the focus in the memory-based-

oral history from factual and historical accuracy to the meaning and nature of memories. He emphasised making 'ordinary voiceless' narratives (views) to be heard for understanding the realities of suppression on the ground. The memories enhance the values of the oral accounts because they illustrate how people make sense of events and turn them into significant experiences (Portelli 1991:26). From the constructivist perspective, knowledge about social life is embedded in the subjective experiences of the individual.

The researcher believes that the statistics of sexual violence and rape during the Sri Lankan civil war were difficult to obtain. Tamil Women often refrain from reporting the crime due to shame, stigma and fear of ostracization. Besides, documentation of the sexual violence during the Sri Lankan civil war was increasingly difficult due to the ignorance of government towards the plight of women (Tamil) and administrative restrictions on addressing and documenting the issue by international and local organizations. Due to restrictions imposed by the GoSL during the various phases of the war, it was difficult to measure, quantify or document or estimate the number of Tamil women who experienced wartime rape (Human Right Watch 2013, Gowrinathan 2012). The researcher will begin by describing the participant briefly before discussing the narratives. All interviews were transcribed by a paid transcription service.

Participant List

Participant with Pseudonym	**Gender/Age**	**Methods of Interview/Date of Interviews**
Participant 1 **Gargi**	Female/56	Face to Face 21st February 2022
Participant 2 **Suman**	Female/33	Zoom 3rd March 2022
Participant 3 **Supriya**	Female/47	Face to Face 22nd February 2022
Participant 4 **Suresh**	Male/41	Face to Face 22nd February 2022
Participant 5	Female/ 72	WhatsApp

Veena		27th July 2022

Narratives from the field

The first participant who participated in the research project and gave her interview is Gargi. She came to India in 1997 along with her husband and a one-year child. Before coming to India, she used to spend her whole day working in the household and taking care of family. She responded that

I have not seen any rape and there is no one in my family who had experience any forms of sexual violations. I know about a woman who was raped in my native village at midnight. She was in her mid 40s. She was married and had children. She was alone in the house that night along with her children. At mid-night she was taken away by five men (Sinhalese). Later after some hours they found her unconscious and naked. She was raped by them. The incident caused panic among us. Many families in that village left their house and migrated to other places.

The researcher observed while taking interviews that the relationship between narration and trauma is rarely linear. Especially in case of rape (of women), through the word theoretically means a forceful invasion of a women's privacy to an extreme level irrespective of their identities, but questions on sexual violence (rape) on people who have experienced and their community member is also an invasion of piracy as it put such people in similar pricky situation.

The second Participant was who openly talked about the raped that happened with the Tamil women was Surpriya. She left her village in 1989 following the death of her husband. After the death of her husband, her brother and his family took care of her and her sons. She came to India with them and since then she is staying in the camp. Both of her sons are married now. To one the questions about rape, she responded that

> Everyday we used to hear about rape and killing of Tamil girls and women… I met a woman in Mannar. She came with the same boat we came. She stayed with us for some days. She told me that day she was going to meet some relatives near her house but on the way she was forcefully grabbed by three people wearing military uniforms. She had her one year old child with her. They raped her and in front of her they killed her child.
>
> She said this incident caused insurmountable pain and agony in her family. She also said that her mother-in-law became ill after hearing the death of the child. After that incident her family left the house permanently and shifted to another place and after some months the whole family migrated to India (interview on 22nd February 2022).

Veena, Participant 5, was bereaved and talked about the rape and killing of a woman from her extended family staying in Jaffna.

> In December 1999, my cousin's sister-in-law was raped by the Army… She was pregnant at that time. At night soldiers came into their house, dragged her into the forest and raped her… In the same villages, they killed many people. The next day villagers found her half dead.

She said that

> It is difficult for girls or women to tell their families about the rape that happened to them. Usually, parents and families hide the events from their relatives. I happened to meet another Tamil woman at the hospital of my native, who suffered the same fate as my sister-in-law. She told her husband that she was sexually assaulted by two local Sinhalese men. After the incident, the husband started living separately. He did not tell anyone about the incident but distanced himself from her. He even questioned the birth of their child and never accepted the child as his child (27th July 2022).

She said women fear telling about such incidents as society does not understand emotional and social experiences as well as the trauma that they experience because of such incidents.

However, other did agree that Tamil women were raped in large numbers but refrained from talking about it. The researcher understands that the victim's sense of guilt and feeling of shame that her body has been violated or touched by foreign person creates a veil of silence that can last for years. The feeling of shame and fear of stigmatisation stop victims from telling their predicament to people they know and to the unknown also.

Saavedra and Saroor (2017) , in their work *A Gendered Approach to Transitional Justice in Sri Lanka* argued that armed conflict exacerbated women's vulnerabilities in the conflict zone of North and East of the country. They mentioned that women became particularly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse due to gender stereotypes, social inequalities and discrimination that confined them to the home and demoted their position of power in the community. A variety of other reasons prevent victims from addressing the issue and availing legal course- fear, shame, social stigma, community and family disapproval and others. In this context, Suresh said

> Sexual abuse and rape are considered as taboo in our society. There are parents and family who refuse to talk about it. They think it will harm the family's honour (Interview on 22nd February 2022).

Conclusion

In the traditionally patriarchal social structure of the Tamil community, the perception of Tamil women and their roles and functions within society are explicitly formulated. The Tamil females are reduced to their

reproductive capacities. This attitude certainly affects the overall treatment and perception of women and plays a part in the process of ethnic cleansing by the usurpation of women's bodies.

In all the narratives above, it is clear that Tamil women are raped because of their specific identities. The above narratives also hint at the fact that mostly uninvolved and innocent Tamil women became targets. The three cases also show that rape and rampant sexual violence forced their families to leave their hometowns and these families did not return. This shows that the rape of women can be effectively utilised to destroy or forcefully remove the targeted population and ensure that they do not return. In the Tamil-inhabited regions of the island, as apparent from above discussion sexual violence has been used systematically during war to instil fear among the Tamils. The fear made many Tamils to migrate and abandon their hometown permanently.

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Stereotypes, Omissions and Decadal Transitions: The 'Reel-Life' Portrayal of Indian Muslim Men and Women In Bombay Cinema

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Abstract

Gaston Roberge says, "Cinema is a great interpreter of the past and constantly programs the memories of its audience". While performing the obvious functions of entertainment, films continue to be used to view and access history of the place from where they originate. They also create as well as reiterate and reinforce certain perceptions, which society laps up almost sub-consciously, hardly critiquing or questioning it, most of the times.

As H. Karim (2000,10) notes, "Misuse of the terms related to Islam is endemic in the transnational media." The politics of negative stereotyping and creation of a homogenous outlook has led to a major cultural misunderstanding creating marginalised, consolidated and exclusionary constrained spaces for the minority community. And these exaggerated representations of the community as inferior to the west defined norm by virtue of their "oriental", "incomprehensible" differences, hardly paint them in the real light.

The paper critically analyses and examines the Muslim figure in Bollywood as a model, manifestation and representative of the larger Islamic population in India. It looks at Bollywood as a space; a canvass which paints the minority community in a certain shade, making them socially suspect. The paper endeavours to critique the representation of the Muslim figure, through a critical and nuanced understanding of the dynamics of Bollywood image building, stereotyping, misrepresentations and the study of recurrent "Islamophobic" themes and storylines. The research would engage and focus on the "Us" and "Them" dialectic, finding a common thread of these stereotypes to contexts of war, conflict, violence, disunity and gender misrepresentations.

Keywords: Cinema, Bollywood, Muslims, stereotypes, 'other', misrepresentation

Media is a significant social agent which can build images, catalyse community perceptions and reiterate a layered sub conscious approach towards minority groups, subjecting them to exclusionary pressures on the pretext of them being "the other" with alien characteristics, almost against the values and ethos of the mainstream. In the very process, the inherent diversity, typology and individual uniqueness of the minority community like Islam, based on nationality, ethnicity, cultural practices those influenced by assimilation and theological differences gets completely marred and blatantly unjustified.

Islam is heterogeneous, it is diverse, its practices vary from culture to culture, innately drawing on to the society in which its members originate. However race is linked to public attitude while addressing Islam (Muslims are mostly referred to as predominantly Arabic) but in most cases Muslims as a community of faith are not a race as they do not belong to any single culture. Yet the perception and depiction of Islam is largely based on the hegemonic western construction of the non-western societies as the Other; "as alien, distant, antiquated, irrational, sensual and passive" (Edward Said, 1978). Islam is always looked at in the purview of Orientalism" those which are "systems of representation framed by the hegemonic political forces of colonialism, post-colonialism and neo-colonialism, which act towards bringing 'the Orient' into 'Western' consciousness, Western dispensation and under Western dominion" (Richardson, 2004, 5). "The orientalist approach to Islam can be summarised as essentialist, empiricist and historicist; it impoverishes the rich diversity of Islam by producing an essentialising caricature" (Richardson, 2004, 5).

It is also important to note that these representations are gendered. Dominant stereotypes portray men as foreign (and more recently local) terrorists or extremists, where as women are constructed as repressed "hijab" wearers who need to be liberated from patriarchal oppression and violence.

This western connotation of the other, a marginal group on the peripheries of society with certain incomprehensible differences, got reiterated in the Indian mainstream Media too, especially in Bollywood. The "us" and them dialectic got manifest in Indian society forcing Muslims to live vilified as a community at large. Media started creating a whole host of images signifying Muslims as "fundamentalist, orthodox, scripturalist, militant, terrorist, undemocratic violent, suicide bombers hijackers and religious fanatics," (Dunn: 2001). These adjectives which broadly stereotyped all Muslims into one negative whole were linked to the contexts of war, conflict, violence and sexism.

Not that media alone can be blamed for the negative branding of Muslims and Islam. Barker and Galasinki (2001, 7) argue that "texts are unable to police the meanings to be constructed from them". Various other social factors other than the Media discourse, contribute to stereotypical constructs of Muslims and Islam. And the media persons themselves are borne out of a particular set of social conditioning, educational and cultural environment on the basis of which they formulate their own and in chronology the media's image of Muslims.

In the Indian context the Muslim image has been shaped, reiterated, perpetuated and consolidated by historical political developments in addition to the Western propagation of dominant stereotypical "Orientalist" imageries. Indeed, the media as an institution plays a significant and predominant role in the cultural production of knowledge (Poole, 2002). While the media is fluid and changing, so is its portrayal of Muslims in a "changing" and "moving in and out" perspective of Muslims, reliant on the chronology of events occurring overseas or at home.

The aftermath of one of the greatest exodus in Indian history- the wounds of India's partition is a poignant and vulnerable emotion that affects each one of us and is coloured by our own subjective interpretations of our lived-in experiences of the time, as narrated to us by our ancestors who lived to witness it. The tragedy of this momentous event killed thousands of people, displaced millions of families, scarring their lives with an indelible black ink of humiliation, insult, hatred, fear and paranoia. Quite interestingly for Indian filmmakers of the later decades, the pangs of Partition became a major point of reference to base their depictions of Muslims as the "other" through a distorted and propagandist lens.

The filmmakers of those times chose to consciously stay away and ignore the traumatic subject. However the changing polity between India and Pakistan, successive wars and a fragile and strained relationship post the wars led to an emotion of great distrust between the two neighbours. Indian cinema (commonly christened as Bollywood) shifted its position of ignoring this phenomenon as a taboo subject and started generating antagonistic discourses on Muslims and their association with Pakistan.

The phenomenon got tempered with the 9/11 attacks in America and the stereotypical branding of Muslims and Islam as synonyms of terrorism became ubiquitous both in Bollywood as well as Hollywood. These filmmakers concentrated on creating a sanitised view of oneself and a muddied portrayal of the other- a dangerous and alarming proposition.

Over the decades, Muslim characters projected in the Media, especially Bollywood have undergone sanguine changes. Quite interestingly the systemic erosion of Muslims onscreen mirrored the social fall of the Community into marginalised, ghettoised, consolidated pockets, almost always socially suspect. Dominant and frequent images of bearded men in white robes and skull caps, with rosary beads in one hand and machine guns in the other and uneducated women laced in 'hijabs' and 'burqas' form the contemporary Media staple. The lethal combination of these stereotypical images and a tainted historical intolerance has resulted in a difficult socio-political environment where Indian Muslims are forced to repeatedly refute claims of their "un-Indian-ness" and pledge their loyalty and patriotism to the country.

Bollywood mirrors India and creates fleshed out dimensions of the cultural terrains in India. Quite interestingly it has succulently portrayed the changing face of the Muslim community since Independence. And these representations of the community in Bollywood have been greatly affected by the political events, major conflicts and wars over the years. What is alarming however is the formulation of quick and dry stereotypes, reckless clichés, and twisted logic, devoid of any sensitivity, objective perception and cinematic subtlety. And this dangerous potion is projected on 70 mm giant screens armed with Digital Dolby effects, seeping into the numb, spell-bound, highly impressionable minds with great ease, compelling them to damaging conclusions.

Traditionally Bollywood in the fifties and sixties portrayed Muslim characters as 'Badshahs' (Kings), 'Nawabs' and 'zameendars' (feudal landlords), mainly an affluent Indian-Muslim thrive community, well-versed in the arts with a penchant for poetry, culture and finer sophisticated leanings towards grandeur and regal paraphernalia. 'Mughal-E-Azam', 'Tajmahal', 'Bahu Begum', 'Chaudhween Ka Chand', 'Mere Mehboob' and many others with Muslim protagonists and central characters are some of the commercially successful, mainstream Bollywood movies, depicting as well as testifying Muslims to be an inherent, integral part of India. The pivotal Muslim characterisations in these films as culturally conscious, using refined language, having a poetic disposition and a taste for soulful music all depicted a rich cultural tradition of the Indian Muslims, as a part of mainstream society. A case study of this genre, the Mughal emperor is a stock in trade of the historical Bollywood period film; one who represents the composite culture and secular credentials in the Indian sense and has equal regard for all religions. In the magnum-opus 'Mughal-e-Azam', the central figure Akbar creates ripples of Hindu-Muslim unity by marrying a Hindu wife, allowing her to follow her religion, celebrating Hindu festivals to even doing away with the 'jeziya'(income tax) imposed on his Hindu subjects. Quite unusual to Bollywood, a song and

dance number "Marhaba" is dedicated to this pragmatic act of his in what seems to be the first version of the republic day parade.

The seventies saw a distinct change in the characterizations of Muslims, who continued to remain aristocratic but were pushed towards hedonist pursuits and trivial preoccupations. These indolent nawabs, chewed betel nuts, extravagantly splurged their money and time on "nautch" girls and courtesans, amidst indulgent "Lucknowi qawwalis" and "mujras". He could be an artistic character but unsuited to the modern world, harbinger of his own downfall (Shatranj ke Khiladi, 1977) or a decadent drunk who divorces his wife, in a fit of anger, by merely pronouncing talaaq three times (Nikaah, 1982); or a melancholic but thoroughly refined gentleman (Mere Huzoor, 1968); a paradoxical figure who may ill-treat his family, but would never forget his manners, is always impeccably dressed in the 'sherwani" and speaks flowery "Urdu" with proper "adab" (etiquette).

Such films broadly called the "Muslim socials" exoticised and fantasized the Muslim figure, limiting their representations as Urdu-speaking erstwhile aristocratic elite arousing nostalgia of the last beleaguered Islamic culture. The themes of these 'socials' largely pertained to love and romance of the elite, rather than the political and socio-economic issues plaguing the whole Muslim community. This era in Bollywood also witnessed a "fetishized and glorified sexual" image of an alluring woman, one who would be able to change the course of history. Almost repeatedly the female protagonists were seen as "courtesans", dressed ornately in bridal and regal paraphernalia indulging in superfluous Urdu poetry, music and dance (Pakeezah, 1972). These female Muslim characters were noticeable for their elaborate and sophisticated mannerisms in terms of their language and day to day activities but also indicated a sexist, degraded, repressed portrayal as the exoticised victims of male fantasy, forced to the life of a prostitute.

'Umrao Jaan' (1981) adapted from Mirza Mohammad Hadi's novel by the same name marks the journey of a courtesan of colonial Lucknow in the post 1857 historical scenario. Samina Khan points, "Umrao Jaan presents a blend of theatrically feminist perspective and Islamic values. The character of Umrao Jaan is a presentation of a Muslim woman's quest for a dignified identity and metamorphosis of some such women who are multiply marginalised on account of patriarchy and society". What is brought to the forefront in the representation of the various women characters in Umrao Jaan is the mixed identity of the Muslim women with their other Indian counterparts. The identity of Umrao Jaan subverts suffering into insight through a timeless tale of self-

realisation sans dogmatic assertion and blatant revolt. Here is a emotionally strong and intellectually powered woman with a supreme level of realist consciousness.

Quite interestingly, the 'kotha' or the space within which these courtesan women operate is independent, self-determined and empowering especially if one compares it with the insignificant, marginal geographical spaces of the 'respected' and 'conventional'.

The 70s and the 80s witnessed a gradual erosion of the Muslim characters from their pivotal spaces of lead protagonists to marginal characters, almost like a side kick to the main plot. The flowery, sophisticated Urdu got lost to the patois of the street; the characters became mere adjuncts to a "Hindu" protagonist, broadly stereotype as "maulvis", "darzis", "qawwals" at a "dargah" or a "tawaif". The secular credentials of Bollywood in such portrayals became a misnomer as the Industry chose to toe the "Hindu" hegemony, delegating an Indian Identity to Hindu characters and systematically "othereing" the Muslim characters. The cult movie "Sholay" (1975) focussed on Secular harmony and restoration of moral order in society by depicting peaceful coexistence of the majority and minority communities, but here too "Rahim Chacha" as the Imam Saheb (holy cleric) reiterated the formulaic and stereotypical Muslim image adorning the margins of the plot as if embodying sheer token presence in the larger scheme of things. In fact there are many such instances of second fiddle portrayal like the loyal Pathan in Tagore's cinematic adaptation (Kabuliwala), the earnest friend (Zanjeer, 1973; Hey Ram, 2000), claiming their fifteen minutes to fame as the Hero's side-kick or his avuncular guide.

Bollywood during the 80s heralded the changed and distorted face of Muslim characters metamorphosed into synonyms of terror and "jihad", symbiotic to Kashmir and Pakistan based on unexamined prepositions. The 1982 film 'Nikaah' (Marriage) underlines the traumatic repercussion of the practice of triple 'talaaq' (divorce) on the woman. The protagonist Nilofer, despite belonging to an aristocratic and affluent Muslim family, being a beloved of her husband loses her all, when in a fit of rage and conflict of male ego, her husband pronounce triple talaaq and abandons her. While this kind of divorce (Talaaq-ul-biddat) as per the Islamic Laws is highly condemnable and disapproved (as it was only legitimised as an emergency measure by Caliphe Umer), the film projects it as being integral and regular to the Muslim community, thus, generating a dangerous typed discourse as minority women predominantly being victims to the Muslim laws.

'Roja' (1992), the climactic movie drummed up hyper-nationalist rhetoric, foregrounding the ideological conflict between a 'Hindu nationalist' versus the 'Islamic terrorist', drumming up. Sooner than later, louder tones and tenures increasingly accentuated the Muslim as a questionable identity, 'othered' and demonised in movies like 'Diljale' (1996), 'Border'(1997), 'Sarfarosh' (1999),), 'Pukar' (2000), 'Maa tujhe salaam' (2002) 'LOC' (2003), 'Fana'(2006), 'Kurban' (2009) and many more. 'Mission Kashmir' (2000), 'Fiza (2000), "Dhoka" (2007) and "New York" (2009) are few movies though, which at least try to look at the underlying reasons that have stimulated a defiant outlook of the violated "other".

The demonized representation of Muslims got manifest in the movies of the late nineties and early 2000, perhaps as a catharsis to the Babri Masjid demolition, successive riots and bomb blasts in Mumbai, the Kargil war between India and Pakistan and finally the momentous 9/11 attack on the very heart of World economic forum, America's twin towers. The chain of events reopened the scars of partition and thus emerged a growing anti-Muslim rhetoric against Muslims as uniform stereotypes of terror, religious fundamentalism and paranoia, especially in Bollywood.

While many of the movies projected the Hindu male as a secular figure, the Muslim on the other, was anything but tolerant and justified and almost a fatal threat to the national harmony. A case in study is the portrayal of Shaila Banu's (Manisha Koirala) father Basheer in Mani Ratnam's Bombay (1995). Adorned with all the physical stereotypes, his is a despicable "other" character, "his mind twisted with hatred towards Hindus, with a detached Indian identity. His residence betrays his denial to be Indian through a symbolic imagery of a Pakistani flag hung in his courtyard. The famous "Kehna hi kya" song sequence picturised around ornately scalloped archways is a picture perfect setting, but the sudden departure of the heroine from this ornamental frame, while the camera and the omnipresent narrator's perspective hangs on, creates an eerie feeling almost lending itself to the horror genre. Later, during the riot sequence, skull-capped men are shown stampeding, butchering and plundering around; the camera personifies the Muslims as overt aggressors and perpetrators of violence and Hindus as victims of their revenge, hatred and ire. Later when a group of Hindus burn a locked taxi full of Muslim characters, it is almost like a legitimate punishment to their sins.

The opening scene in 'Gadar, ek prem katha' (2001) depicts scenes of mayhem and mass genocide; butchered Sikh and Hindu bodies arrive on a train from Pakistan, with a bloodied message, "Indians learn from us how to slay", almost a subtext to the incitement and justification of the

revenge taken by the Sikhs and Hindus. This is followed by a Sikh family directing their daughter to poison herself, lest she be disrobed and violated by the Muslims. a liberal, rational Sikh rescues a Muslim woman during the Partition riots and allows her to follow her religion even after marriage. On the contrary, the Muslim father is a despicable human being, out to meet his own vested political interests, hardly sensitive to the happiness of his daughter. The tolerant man is asked to prove his loyalty to his wife by cursing India; at this point he gets defiant and bashes the entire Pakistan army, single-handedly.

'Pinjar' (2003) opens with a serene view of the golden temple with a peaceful Sikh procession consecutively juxtaposed to violent rampaging by the defiant and vile Muslim mob; yet another subtext holding the other community as the primary offenders, responsible for the ensuing violence.

In 'Roja' amidst all the high-pitched patriotism, the voice of the normal, ordinary Kashmiri is ominously absent; 'Roja' asks no questions, offers no choices, but of course opens floodgates of slash-and-burn Indian Muslims implicitly implied to be operating in connivance with a Pakistani agenda at heart. Amidst such exaggerated, unsympathetic, demonised portrayals the spectators have been unwittingly trapped as "subliminal conquistadores" bound to share the overheated negative perspectives of not just one but many a filmmakers.

The negative and stereotypical images are becoming so ingrained to the subconscious that they appear normal to even the Muslim audiences. They are quintessentially being characterised in two extremes but very different perspectives, either as silenced victims or as sexually available, exotic bodies. And in both cases of extremes, their oppression remains with the man himself. The constant media generated images of victimhood or sexualisation hints to the hetero normative society of the times where any kind of pleasure is neither directed nor enjoyed by a woman. And this forms the very basis of the stereotype that Islam and the Muslim community is synonymous to oppression and exploitation of their women kind.

The concept of 'Hijab' also generates abundant discourses where the Muslim woman who veils becomes particularly noteworthy. As Karim comments, the "Northern mass media have the tendency to declare manifestations of Muslim belief such as the call for decency in films, wearing the hijab, or even performing the Muslim prayer as certain signs of 'Islamic fundamentalism'" (2000, 182). The post 9/11 scenario rendered an over-simplistic reading of these veiled women as inescapably exotic figures, with an ominous streak thereby hardening stereotypes and

misconceptions. As a number of scholars have noted (Jiwani, 2009; Karim, 1997; 2000; Razack, 2004), mediated depictions of Muslim women tend to display certain consistencies, many of which fit into the categories identified by Fleras and Kunz in their description of media images of minorities: "invisible", "problem people", "stereotype", and "adornment" (2001, 9). While the specific stereotypes may differ on points of detail, they have a common historical lineage.

While films like 'Train to Pakistan' (1998), 'Gadar' (2001) and 'Pinjar' (2003) significantly aim to reinterpret the partition history, they are also pivotal in portraying the politically tensed pulse of India and Pakistan. Quite notably, the portrayal of Indian Sikhs and Hindus as protagonists and Pakistani Muslims as antagonists is a recurrent and reinforced theme.

However in these very orchestrated scheme of events, where Bollywood has acceded to its own political and economic agenda in marginalising the minority community, a few films deserve a special mention for portraying the Muslim characters for once as victims; 'Saleem Langdey Per Mat Ro' (1989) critique the trials and travails of the middle class Muslim youth, M. S. Sathyu's 'Garam Hawa' (1974) capture the universal human tragedy of a Muslim couple caught in the mindless communal violence of Partition. A few other cult movies, 'Coolie' (1983), 'Chak de India' (2007), and 'My name is Khan' (2010) with a pivotal Muslim protagonist attempt to redeem a positive space for the Muslim figure, through acts of benevolence and goodness.

During the last few decades, there has been a conscious and concerned attempt to delve deeper into the crevices of the psyche of Muslim women, with films like Fiza, Sardari Begum, Bazaar, Mandi and many more as they stand "triply disadvantaged as members of the minority community, as women, and most of all as poor women", (Hasan, 64). In Bazaar, the camera's eye percolates through the physicality of the female protagonist Najma, closing on every moment of her struggle and strife, within. The cramped and claustrophobic interiors of her home correspond and compliment the chaos within. In a sequence where expensive purchase of jewellery and bridal finery are displayed symbolically as products of the Market, her statement "Bazaar mein sabse sasti cheez hai, toh woh hai aurat" is a summary of the trials and tribulations of each one of her kind.

The 1998 movie 'Zakhm' (Wound) is an epistemic film, as it unequivocally focuses on the angst of a Muslim woman, caught amidst the rapture of India's secular social fabric. She is forced to erase and alienate her Muslim identity through changes in her appearance, lifestyle and even her

mode of worship to such an extent that even her sons are oblivious of her true religious identity. Throughout the length of the film, she is not even addressed once by her first name, forcefully suggesting her withdrawal and shrinkage into a world of anonymity, in order to survive in a setup, otherwise hostile to her religious conformities.

Perhaps 'Mammo' (1995) and 'Zubeida' (2001) have been the two most befitting tributes to the syncretic ethos of India, where a personal narrative take shape into a socio-historical reflection on the lives and times of Muslim women, post partition. While Mammo signifies the dialectic of two nations, two sisters and two homes interspersed with the angst of migration, displacement and homelessness, it is also a story of these feisty-fiery sisters trying to live life on their own terms at one level, and also attempting an interconnectedness of two estranged nations on the other. 'Zubeida' is the tale of a mother through the serendipitous eyes of her son; the mother who dares to defy the socio-cultural norms of the times, and chases her dreams of love and companionship, leaving behind her new born child who finally meets her tragic end. The very fact that 'Zubeida' is more flesh and bloods, prone to vulnerabilities of the human psyche, make her stand out as more wholesome, more realist depiction of a woman from the minority community.

In films like 'Mission Kashmir', 'Fana' and' Fiza', it is the Muslim woman who serves as a foil to the male Muslim protagonist's ideas of religious extremism and provides a non- traumatic mooring to his past and also a direction towards a better future, by reforming and bringing him home. In both these films, the heroine is not just the reigning force to reckon with but also deeply patriotic as opposed to her un-patriotic male counterpart. In Fiza, the protagonist Fiza demonstrates her patriotism to the Hindu politician, when challenged about her sympathies to Pakistan, an assumption he simply makes on the basis of her Muslim identity. In her statement that Muslims who wanted to go to Pakistan had already left in 1947 and those who remained were true Indians, she not only establishes her own loyalty but also dispels the common suspicion of a section of majority community towards the "Indian-ness" of the Indian Muslims. Fiza is the unusual and rarely seen independent Muslim woman whose Muslim identity is pivotal to the plot of the film, despite being type caste in a given stereotypical compartmentalisation, primarily because the film was made by Khalid Muhammad, a noted Indian film critic and a Muslim himself.

The term 'representation' entails implicit subjectivities in not just framing an issue, but also its selection. It raises larger concerns of portrayal and interpretation through philosophical and ideological perspectives. In the film format, the various elements of story, the leit motifs plot,

dialogue, songs, music, performance and other technical aspects of screenplay, cinematography and editing create layered approaches to even a uniform viewpoint or ideology.

According to Qurratul Ain Haider, "the various economic and sociological problems of the Muslim community cannot be isolated from the problems of the general backwardness and poverty of Indian masses. Muslim women are as modern and backward as their counterparts in the various income groups in other communities." While textual Islamic values hold Muslim women in esteem and dignity, its the representation of the historicity of feminism in Islam which is a problematic, more so because of unilateral portrayals of women as victims operating within set stereotypes.

While cross-cultural representations based on fear, resistance, exploitation and marginalisation of the feminine problematise gender, it would perhaps be wiser to categorise films as epicals. musicals, chronicles, romances, coutesantes, melodramas, parallels, mafiates, comedies, satires and so on rather than branding them under the broad, fanciful and misconceived category of the 'Islamicate'.

To conclude with, D. Lindalf (1996) emphasise that, "with a simple flip of television channel or radio station, or a turn of the newspaper or magazine page, we have at our disposal an enormous array of possible identity models". That is the overarching power of Media in general and Bollywood in particular, especially in the Indian scenario. Islam appears most often in stories that can be coded in some way, as violent. These repetitive images of despise and hatred towards a particular community have long been stereotyping, typecasting and vilifying people.

"That people are suddenly more interested in Islam could be a positive development, but if the knowledge that is produced only reinforces an Orientalist perspective, then this will be an opportunity lost." (Poole, 2002:3). With media's power to shape and reshape social perceptions, the need of the hour, thus, is to break away from redundant clichés and stereotypes and weave stories about real people, real lives irrespective of any community bias. Films can be made a repository of integration, inclusion and assimilation of shared concerns, interests and goals stressing unselectively on basic humanitarian values and ethos that pervades the Indian society.

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The Rhetoric of the Depressed Past: An Enquiry into the Oral History Interviews of the Women Tribal Leaders of Narmada

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Abstract

The stability of particular groups of the population can occasionally be impacted by government-sponsored development projects in a democracy. One such large-scale project that upset the balance of the locals, primarily the tribal people who had settled along the banks of the Narmada River, was the Sardar Sarovar Multi-purpose Project. Even though non-profit groups like the Narmada Bachao Andolan, led by intellectuals and social activists like Medha Patkar and Arundhati Roy, have attracted attention on a global scale, the hardship experienced by the indigenous inhabitants has frequently been given second-class treatment. An effort by Nandini Enquiry Oza called "Oral History Narmada" aims to give a voice to the suffering and struggles of a group of people who are still marginalized because there is no effective way for them to express their resistance. The main focus is on Nandini Oza's oral history interviews with two tribal women who were protestors and NBA leaders. It chronicles the lives of tribal women who were intertwined with their ecology and whose way of life in a democratic society has been endangered, uprooted, and stripped of their homes. It is crucial to comprehend how oral history gives marginalised people the authority to resist and gives them a place to start a conversation with people in hegemonic roles. The testimony of these indigenous women supports the sustainability of the environment in the face of development projects, but they fall short in practice, and they make a case for pursuing environmental justice in a representative democracy.

Keywords: *Ecology, Environmental Justice, Indigenous Women, Resistance, Oral History*

Introduction

Post-independent India witnessed many major developmental projects being launched and executed in a period of three to four decades. The disadvantage of being a young democracy with a diverse range of population, which keeps expanding with time, is that many sections of society go under represented or worse, unrepresented. Their necessities thereby go unheard, their histories often erased from the dominant, mainstream records of history. It is a great challenge for any governing body founded on democratic principles to be as inclusive as it can be. In the efforts to drive a nation to progress, the marginalised sections of the society being pushed to oblivion is a matter of genuine concern for the betterment of that nation.

The forced erasure of sections of people from a nation's developmental history calls for an alter-narrative. The need for resistance emerges from within and outside the marginalised community. The writers of history, the ones with agentic power, have a significant choice to make regarding the subjects for historiography. Oral history narratives can be regarded as one such resistance method of historiography that gathers testimonies from those down under. The communities that have been shunned to the periphery of a society that lacks a proper medium of expressing or recording their experiences of oppression, brutality, and exploitation at the hands of those in power form the ideal choice for a historiographer adopting the oral history method.

Oral history strives to preserve the screams of the silenced voices of any society by providing them with a legitimate medium of expression. This paper focuses on the role of Nandini Oza's Oral history interview collection titled Oral History Narmada in bringing out the dark experiences of the Narmada struggle from the testimonies of tribal women leaders of Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA). The aim of this article is to examine the dependent livelihood of the tribal communities that resided on the banks of river Narmada which were closely enmeshed with nature. It also attempts to trace the ecological degradation that the development project, Sardar Sarovar Project (SSP), and its direct impact on the habitat and livelihood of the indigenous communities by giving particular focus to the interviews of two women tribal leaders of the NBA. The article further discusses the interconnectedness of ecology and woman and offers a solution to the problem at hand through the concept of Environmental Justice for an inclusive nation.

Sardar Sarovar Project

When a dam is built across a river, it not only obstructs the natural flow of the river but also disturbs the equilibrium of the life surrounding it. As environmental activists came forward to file petitions to issue a stay on the construction activities, they were in fact buying time to create awareness in the people of the region as well as draw the attention of the authorities in the country and across the globe towards the impending ecological crises that was sure to arise from the implementation of the project. Narmada Bachao Andolan, with its leading spokespersons Medha Patkar and Baba Amte, invited worldwide attention to the issue, especially that of the sponsors for the project, the World Bank. Although the bigger motive behind the project was the development of the nation, the ecological concerns it posed should not have been ignored as it had far-reaching effects on the lives of the indigenous people as well as the nonhuman life encompassing it. The work, *Development and Dispossession in the Narmada Valley*, argues that "The simple act of building the dam [...] might be seen as a contest between the victors and losers of an "accumulation by dispossession" process." (Whitehead 2010, 1), wherein the losers are clearly the indigenous community living in close communion with the forest and the river.

The Narmada Dam was built by forcibly displacing many people from their livelihood and many species of terrestrial and aquatic animals from their natural habitat. It also resulted in the submergence of many hectares of the forest causing the loss of wildlife and homes of people who lived on the banks of the river. In spite of the glorification of the hydroelectric power project and the vain promises of electricity, irrigation, and drinking water purposes that it might meet, dams are never the best solution for it. The investment of capital and loss of natural resources during the construction of the dam is never proportionate to the outcome reaped from it. With time, issues of sedimentation and subsequent de-siltation turn hydroelectric dams into a high-maintenance affair. Not only is the output not in proportion with the capital investment and maintenance charge going into it, but it also comes at a huge price of the destruction of the forest, obstructing the natural flow of the river, displacement of communities living on its shores and also the submergence of forest land and thereby loss of irreplaceable wildlife. The human lives affected in the process are tribal folks who lived in communion with nature. They had been forcibly displaced from that area and their resettlement was never properly taken care of, stealing them of their homes and livelihoods. Whitehead says, “[w]hen issues regarding the social and the environmental ‘costs’ of dams are raised, they are usually answered through a projection of future benefits to

increasing gross domestic product (GDP). The reality that those who gain from dams and those who bear the expense are two separate categories of individuals is obscured by a cost-benefit analysis. (Whitehead 2010, 2)

Until the mid-20th century, people or communities that fall outside the spectrum of 'civilized' societies were not entitled to the ownership of the lands they inhabited. In the book, *Development and Dispossession in the Narmada Valley,* Whitehead details this practice when she says, "[t]he legally tenuous entitlements of aboriginals, Adivasis, or the indigenous population means that for many developers, these areas can remain a kind of *terra nullius*, or empty space." (17) *Terra nullius* is a Latin phrase that translates to 'land of no one' leaving the one who discovers the land with the right of occupation. (Whitehead 2010, 17)

Whitehead delineates the "common thread running through narratives of submergence, compensation, and resettlement […] that displaced populations lacked state-recognized entitlements to landscapes that they considered part of their past sovereign territories." (Whitehead 2010, 18). Not only are the indigenous communities ripped off their homes, but they also failed to find representation or rights within the country they live in. This failure to identify them as individual citizens of the nation entitled to legal rights has forced them to remain silent and outside the margins of the 'civil' societies for whom the 'development' processes must go on.

> The Sardar Sarovar Dam was being built on the Narmada River in west-central India when the Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA) filed a public interest lawsuit to stop it. On October 18, 2000, the Supreme Court of India dismissed this lawsuit. The ruling disregarded research by the NBA that showed insufficient resettlement for dam oustees and backed up the Gujarat government's claims to the contrary. The majority 2-1 opinion also placed restrictions on future public interest lawsuits by declaring that the court should refrain from interfering with administrative judgments and from "undertaking governmental tasks or functions" (Randeria 2003; Wood 2007: 185). It referred to the NBA's case as publicity interest litigation, lauded the advantages of dams for national development, and permitted dam building to proceed alongside suggested enhancements to relocation and rehabilitation, rather than before they had been put into place. (Whitehead 2010,139)

Such an unfavourable judgment not only rendered a blow to the environmental organizations and NGOs but the indigenous communities who have been wronged as well. When the government that is supposed to protect its people turns against them in the name of progress, people are bound to lose their faith in that government.

Resistance through Oral history

> "Oral history seems to be a technique best adapted to an investigation into the past of downtrodden populations like Dalits that left no written remains, according to this study. When historians gather oral testimonies from witnesses, they may "give a voice, or perhaps more correctly, listen to repressed voices and delve further into the realities of those historically marginalized people who have been 'hidden from History.'" (Perks & Thomson 2016, ix)

As Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson rightly remarked in their work *The Oral History Reader (2016)*, oral history serves as a methodology for historians to record history from 'down below'. This ensures that the suppressed voices find a medium and that their lives subjected to oppression of any kind are brought to light. Thus, oral history aims at the subversion of hegemony exercised by the state-sponsored history of those in reign.

Resistance, for an underrepresented group, can be far more challenging than those frequenting the mainstream media. This calls for a novel medium through which their struggles and suffering may be brought to light – to the government and worldwide. It has been stated that oral history may be seen as a "democratized perspective of history" in which "anyone's life experience becomes part of history" in research on Dalit history titled, "Oral History and Dalit Testimonies: From the Ordeal to Speak to The Necessity to Testify." (Heering 2013, 43). Although the NBA managed to grab the attention of many, it somehow failed to represent as its leaders the indigenous people working behind it. Medha Patkar became the face of the movement which was originally powered by thousands of tribal leaders - men and women. While illiteracy paired with a lack of English education pushed them further away from media attention, they eventually found their voice through Nandini Oza's oral history project- *Oral History Narmada*. For the first time, the tribal leaders of NBA could narrate their concerns, the pain of their struggles, the atrocities meted out to them by a government in which they still haven't lost faith, and their hopes for a better future where they could reclaim their "Mother", River Narmada. (Oza 2020)

The Women of Narmada

1. Dedli Bai Vasave

One of the senior women leaders of the NBA, Dedli Jahangir Vasave recounts the tribal struggle alongside the environmental activists who fought against the construction of the Sardar Sarovar Dam. She begins her account by expressing her discomfort to speak Marathi and her wish to choose Pavri – a local tribal dialect –- as her linguistic medium. She has been a resident of the Dhomkhedi village since her childhood days. It can be deduced from her words that in spite of the hardships faced, she liked her life in the village. The construction of the dam, as it is evident from her words, was only rumored to be built in an adjacent village of Dungargoan. However, it was with the arrival of Medha Patkar, whom they affectionately call Medha Tai, along with the environmental activists that the indigenous communities came to know of the actual plan. They had been living in darkness and were not properly notified by any officials of the government about the decision to move forward with the construction.

Following the formation of NBA under the leadership of Patkar and Baba Amte along with educated tribal folks like Keshavbhau and Kevalsingh Vasave, gradually through meetings held in Dhomkedi and neighbouring villages the tribals came to know that the dam was going to be built in the valley they resided. These meetings enlightened them to accept the need to fight for their rights. Ironically, the fight for rights was launched against the government, which must have taken actions with the best interest of its people in mind. Its failure in ensuring the indigenous communities their legal rights not only disrupts the people's faith in the government but also initiates ecological repercussions.

Most tribal communities in India follow paganism and worship elements of Nature. Their gratitude towards the ecosystem that nourishes their lives translates as their prayer to the environment. Dedlibai narrates how their lives had been enmeshed with the forest and the river Narmada. "If our agriculture failed, our forests sustained us. We used to get many vegetables and tubers. and when some Timber member of our house broke, we would get a replacement from the forest and hills, Bamboo also. Whenever a piece of timber broke there was enough in the forest. Such was the bountiful life. It was a pleasurable life and we had no trouble." (Oza 2020)

> Today the government continues to create problems for us and so we decided to set on the satyagraha in the village after village. The government responded by setting up police camps in our village. In Hurung, Bharad, Hika, Dhomkhedi, Nimgon in each village there were police camps. Why did the government have to put police camps in these villages when the villages belong to us? we had our rights

over our villages. The government wanted to loot us and that is why they set up these police camps. (Oza 2020)

As it is evident from Dedlibai's account, the government turned a blind eye to the plight of the tribal communities, which are as integral to the demography of the nation as any other community. By setting up police camps in the villages where these innocent people resided, the government was exercising repressive mechanisms to suppress any kind of uprising. Women who refrained from attending the meetings initially, stepped in willfully as the word spread that their village will be submerged in the reservoir of the proposed dam.

2. Pervi

Pervi talks about the forest department staff and their bribery of the tribal livelihood, eating up their chicken on which the family was dependent as a source of income. She narrates how the leaders of the Khedut Mazdoor Sangathan were beaten up by the forest department officials and how the residents endlessly paid fines for which no receipt was ever provided. She remembers how she would go to the meetings just to sit there at first. Later she evolved into a leader. The indigenous communities, in Pervi's words, were not informed of the upcoming dam. She gathers from her memory how there came two helicopters one day whose purpose these tribals were not aware of until much later. As they went to watch these giant mechanical birds land, they did not realize it was for their doom. (Oza 2020) "We had never thought that our big Narmada would be damned", says Pervi. "We were not told beforehand that our livelihoods would be jeopardized by a dam", she adds. (Oza 2020)

The government played a dirty game on them by taking away their land and letting it submerge underwater. "Our house and cattle were also left out and we were unable to find land", she says. She recounts how the only substitute they had to survive on, the forest was also snatched away from them. "We have these forested hills and we have wood, and we have grazing land for our cows and goats. We were told that there is no land. The government had told us we will be given land for land but many years have gone past." (Oza) Her memories of the sufferings inflicted upon her community by the government is evident in these accounts commingled with despair.

> [A]nd we were a little happy but we now have to face the very big problem of submergence by the dam. We held meetings here and then went to cities to protest. We first went to Navagaon. [...] We had gone for a meeting where many people had come opposing the dam. At night, we slept in the temple. We fled and put up at a temple. The meeting was at 12 noon the next day. We were not allowed to sleep

> nor were we allowed to sit at the marketplace. The police came after us. We fled from there too, to a temple on the banks of the Narmada. We were asked why we had come although these questions are not asked in temples. We said we had come to serve/pray. We stayed there for the night. The next morning once again we walked along the banks of the Narmada. We went to another temple in another village where again the police came after us. Then we went to another village and fled along the river and walking about like this we finally met Medhabai and had a meeting at a road crossing. After the meeting we set out to a rally but the police stopped the rally for a little while. We argued with the police that our lands are going to be submerged (due to a dam) and so we want to talk to the Government. We were arrested and put into buses that arrived all of a sudden and we were taken to Rajpipla. We were all freed at night after having been arrested! We were told to go back to where we had come from. A person in Rajpipla took us to a house and cooked and arranged for a little food to eat and then got us onto a bus to Kavant town. (youtube.com 2020)

The negligence of the government to the plights of the tribal community can be heard in screams through her words. In addition, the Indigenous culture which has long survived in isolation, away from the company of the forest, while coming in contact with the urban civilizations, is denigrated to a lower status. The sheer intolerance exhibited by the temple authorities and police can be regarded as exemplifying the attitudes of the city dwellers towards these forest dwellers. While in reality, each civilization and each habitation is unique in its own way, when their paths cross, a general intolerance is shown to those living in communion with the natural environment.

Ecology and the Woman

The brunt of maintaining a house and its people have always fallen on the fragile shoulders of the women in India. It is a reality rooted in patriarchal dominance and intergenerational oppression. Under such circumstances, the plight of the indigenous woman is often doubly oppressed not only by her tribe but by the so-called civilized society as well. Women have historically handled the household's non-monetized biomass-based subsistence economy, including the utilization of firewood, cow dung, agricultural waste, organic manure, and other materials. (Kaur 2018, 3).

> Her space had often been relegated to the innards of the house, commingled with the environment and the forests. Her daily chores that commenced with collecting water for the family from the nearby river up till the very last chore – the feeding of the cattle and poultry –are all closely enmeshed with nature. The bond thus shared between a woman and the environment can be equated to the umbilical connection

between a mother and her baby – a connection that continues invisibly even after the cord is severed. This connection has resulted in the development of indigenous knowledge of nature that had been for long disregarded, shunned as an old wives' tale, and critiqued under the microscopic scrutinizing eye of the patriarchal society drunk in science. The assault of contemporary science resulted in a systematic marginalization of women's unique understanding of nature and their reliance on it for "staying alive." (Kaur 2018, 3)

A revival of this indigenous knowledge is elemental for establishing environmental justice in any community. (Adamson, Joni, et al. 2016, 100) Panthoi and Khuraijam in their 2022 article, argue the role of the tribal woman in connection with the natural environment. They claim that the earth is a representation of the mother, the source of all life, in indigenous beliefs. Thus, the tribal woman is the mother, nurturing the culture and history and safeguarding the soil, nature, and the universe itself. The most empowered group of people are women within the context of such cultural and social beliefs. (Panthoi and Khuraijam 2022, 7997) This foregrounds the interconnectedness of the indigenous woman and her environment and subsequently gestures to the effect environmental degradation has on her livelihood. The interdependence of beings in an ecosystem indicates the apparent loss of equilibrium that could surface from the destruction suffered by one entity of such a web. This calls for the need to lay the grounds for exercising environmental justice in order to ensure sustainable living and equitable access to resources.

Environmental Justice

According to the Environmental Justice (EJ) definition provided on the Environment Protection Agency of the United States' official website, Environmental Justice (EJ) is "the equitable treatment and meaningful participation of all people regardless of race, colour, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies." (Learning about Environmental Justice) The concept of environmental justice encompasses the indigenous communities as stakeholders in the development and policy-making of a nation. It vouches for equitable representation in terms of the legislature and in the implementation of national policies with respect to the environment. The voices of the indigenous must be heard. Oral history in this particular scenario acts as a medium of amplifying the voices, otherwise muted.

According to Giovanna di Chiro's statement in Keywords for Environmental Studies, "the pursuit of environmental justice is a social, political, and moral struggle for human rights, healthy environments, and thriving democracies led by residents of communities most negatively impacted by economic and ecological degradation." (Adamson, Joni, et al. 2016,100). In this scenario, it is an evident case of ecological degradation for the sake of economic benefit. It is problematic as it muffles out the screams of despair of those directly affected by the developmental process in addition to the fact that the indigenous communities do not benefit at all from such an 'economically benefiting' project. This is indeed antithetical to the very core principles of democracy as the project fails to be inclusive of certain sections of the nation while filling the pockets of certain others.

Conclusion

Nandini Oza successfully captures the long-buried sentiments of a community and their forceful estrangement from their habitats in her brave attempt to bring out the legacy of the struggle the indigenous communities of the Narmada region have endured, some of whom lost their lives in the process while others lost their livelihoods and what they believed to be their "home." She makes a silent call for the practice of environmental justice inside any democratic government, for that matter, in an effort to give voice to their tortured memories of the battle. *The Oral History of Narmada* can therefore be seen as a siren to those in power, a reminder that resistance is possible even for those lacking. It also serves as a reminder that the voiceless will eventually gain a forceful voice.

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Sustainable Development and Health in India: Progress and Way Forward

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Abstract

A robust health system is crucial for achieving sustainable human development. Inclusive health is often instrumental in the progress of a country. To attain the health goal under the sustainable development agenda, it is of utmost importance to address various daunting challenges existing globally in the realm of health sector. These among others include expediting the progression of reproductive and child health, containing the spread of communicable and non-communicable diseases along with execution of universal health coverage by 2030. A strong governance along with sufficient investment in the health sector will only be capable of ensuring quality health care services to the people and simultaneously make a move towards universal health coverage in the true sense of the term. Although India has taken initiatives to make progress in this sector, there exists ample scope and opportunities of possible interventions that may raise the potency of the policy measures adopted by the government so as to assure proper, nondiscriminatory, low cost health services to all individuals without compromising on its quality.

Key Words: Sustainable development, health, India, universal health coverage

Introduction

The adoption of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the United Nations often referred to as the Global Goals dates back to September 25, 2015. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development comprises 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets that were adopted by 193-member states of the United Nations. These goals are an immediate call for action to be taken up by all countries, be it developed or developing, in

the coming 15 years in a bid to end poverty, hunger and inequalities, ensure good health and well-being and address climate changed related issues in global alliance. The 17 SDGs are:

1. No poverty
2. Zero hunger
3. Good health and well being
4. Quality education
5. Gender equality
6. Clean water and sanitation
7. Affordable and clean energy
8. Decent work and economic growth
9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure
10. Reduced inequalities
11. Sustainable cities and communities
12. Responsible consumption and production
13. Climate action
14. Life below water
15. Life on land
16. Peace, justice and strong institutions
17. Partnerships for the goals

The SDGs are not only broad, far reaching and meaningful but are also in congruence with the requirements of the underprivileged and the most susceptible population in the developed and developing nations. They have distinctive features with a very sharp emphasis on 'equity and inclusiveness'. The SDGs despite having a nature of a cyclopedia, 'health' has always remained at its the prime focus. The basic premise of SDG-3 which is often referred to as the 'Health Goal' is that 'ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.' Intertwined with nine other goals, it is supported by 13 targets which enclose a wide continuum of matters related to health and have relevance for developed as well as developing countries like India (United Nations n.d.).

Target 3.1: Reduction of global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births by 2030.

Target 3.2: End preventable deaths of newborns and children of less than 5 years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births by 2030.

Target 3.3: End the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and fight against hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases by 2030.

Target 3.4: Lower one-third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and encourage mental health and well-being by 2030.

Target 3.5: Fortify the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol.

Target 3.6: Bring down the number of global casualties and injuries from road traffic accidents to half by 2020.

Target 3.7: Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes by 2030.

Target 3.8: Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all.

Target 3.9: By 2030, reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination significantly.

Target 3.A: Bolster the implementation of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in all countries, as appropriate.

Target 3.B: Support the research and development of vaccines and medicines for the communicable and non-communicable diseases that primarily affect developing countries, provide access to affordable essential medicines and vaccines, in accordance with the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health, which affirms the right of developing countries to use to the full the provisions in the Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights regarding flexibilities to protect public health and in particular, provide access to medicines for all.

Target 3.C: Substantially increase health financing and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workforce in developing countries, especially in the least developed countries and small island developing States.

Target 3.D: Strengthen the capacity of all countries, in particular developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks.

While SDG 3 primarily aspires to terminate the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other communicable diseases by 2030, addressing other health priorities related to child, reproductive and maternal health, mental health, non-communicable diseases, mortality and morbidity associated with pollution also remain at its focal point (United Nations n.d.). The goal also specifies some other important facets of health including Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and access to safe, efficacious, cheap medicines and drugs for each and every individual who needs medical help. SDG 3 gives a major thrust to extensive research and development activities coupled with increased financing of global health and making all countries well equipped to manage and mitigate various health risks.

Countries and sectors around the globe have channelized resources and have geared up efforts to meet the goals and targets of SDG framework so as to warrant good health, peace and prosperity in the planet. India has also conceived and framed its National Health Policy 2017 in line with the SDGs. The country has initiated health packages like The National Health Protection Scheme (Ayushman Bharat) covering medical expenses for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization for below poverty line people along with launching of Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Pariyojana where citizens by using Jan Aushadhi Sugam application can search for generic medicines in nearby Jan Aushadhi Kendra. In this context, this paper, by reviewing reports and scientific literature existing in the realm of sustainable development and health tries to focus on India's commitments towards achieving the SDG targets pertaining to health amidst several infrastructural deficiencies. The paper additionally tries to identify the areas of possible improvement in the government's health insurance programmes in order to make them more effective. Section 2 highlights the linkage between sustainable development and health from a global perspective. Section 3 provides a brief overview of health infrastructure in India. Sections 4 analyses India's progress in marching towards fulfilling the target of Universal Health Coverage and the way forward with section 5 making the concluding remarks.

Sustainable Development and Health: A Global Perspective

Health is an integral component of sustainable development. This is very much evident from SDG 3.8 target which says 'Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all'. Most OECD countries extend economical and cost-effective ingress to a conglomeration of extensive health services. Nevertheless, they face challenges in maintaining and strengthening such all-pervasive systems. These challenges, discussed below are more severe in low- and middle-income countries. Hence, broadening the scope of health services is undoubtedly the need of the hour in such countries.

Maternal Mortality Ratio: As per WHO estimates, it is the low and middle-income countries that witness about 94 per cent of maternal deaths (WHO 2019). In the year 2017, Sub Saharan Africa and Southern Asia corroborated about 86 per cent of maternal deaths worldwide with Southern Asia alone accounting for approximately one-fifth of maternal deaths (WHO 2019). The main reason behind these casualties is lack of basic health care amenities which are considered essential at the time of giving birth.

Adolescent fertility: Young adolescents represent around 8 per cent of the global population with around 545 million living in less developed nations (UN 2020). It is the low-income countries that experience early adolescent childbearing in the age group of (10 to14) years (UN 2020). Adolescent mothers are more exposed to the threats of pregnancy complications including deaths. Also, children born to adolescents are often underweight and suffer from diverse health related disorders (Kishanrao 2019).

Mental, neurological and substance use disorders: These disorders are very much rampant, incapacitating and often become the cause of untimely deaths (Patel, et al. 2016). Although the repercussions of these disorders on social and economic well-being are grave yet they are quite neglected and underrated. Recently, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated mental health disorders owing to factors like fear of job loss, panic attack etc.

High fertility: As per World Bank data, the global fertility rate was 2.4 children per woman in 2019 with lower rates observed in economically advanced countries vis-à-vis backward countries. The top 10 countries with highest fertility rates are Niger (6.8), Somalia (6.0), Congo (5.8), Mali (5.8), Chad (5.6), Angola (5.4), Burundi (5.3), Nigeria (5.3), Gambia (5.2), Burkina Faso (5.1) (World Population Review 2022). Countries exhibiting high fertility frequently bear the brunt of maternal, infant and child mortality (Kishanrao 2019).

Child and infant mortality: Although scientific reports claim a decline in global child mortality rates from 22.5 per cent to 4.5 per cent during 1950-2015 period yet the world has a long way to go so as to attain the SDG for child mortality which aims to bring child mortality rate to as low as 2.5 per cent in all countries by 2030 (Roser,

Ritchie and Dadonaite 2013). This would mean that atleast 97.5 per cent of all newborn babies would survive the first five years of their life, irrespective of where they are born. However, at present 3.9 per cent of all children die worldwide before attaining the age of five. This means that on average 15,000 children lose their lives every day (Roser, Ritchie and Dadonaite 2013).

Primary health services constitute the main pillar of UHC. Scientific research and reports signal that in view of the ongoing trends, not less than 5 billion people will be deprived access to health care in 2030 (The World Bank 2021). In the year 2020, 5 million children below the age of 5 died largely due to causes which could have been averted and a whopping 810 women died every day from pregnancy related issues and child birth (UNICEF n.d.). If the current trend continues then 48 million children below the age of 5 will die between 2020 and 2030 and what is more alarming is that half of them will be newborns (UNICEF n.d.). Hence, considering the gravity of the situation, it becomes utmost important to invest more in the health and wellbeing of infants, children and mothers. Also, mental health disorders and adolescent health need adequate attention so as to make a remarkable progress towards achieving UHC.

Health Infrastructure in India: Some Glimpses

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare introduced The National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) to facilitate the provision of quality health services to the most vulnerable population of the rural areas. NRHM refurbished as National Health Mission (NHM) conceived the attainment of a sound and robust public health infrastructure in both rural and urban areas so as to ensure optimal provision of services. Janani Suraksha Yojana and Mission Indradhanush are two subsidiary programmes that were initiated under NHM.

The government of India in a bid to protect the informal sector workers constituting about 93per cent of the total work force in the country and the underprivileged households against the perils of health spending which often forces them to land up in acute poverty and indebtedness, has come up with health insurance schemes as a part of social security provision to these people. The Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) is one such scheme introduced by the central government in 2008 with a total sum insured amounting to Rs. 30,000/- per family per annum on a family floater basis. Under this scheme, the state governments were advised to include at least the following benefits in the package (National Portal of India n.d.): The unroganised sector worker and his family (unit of five) will be covered, cashless attendance to all covered ailments, hospitalization expenses, covering most of the common illnesses with as few exclusions as possible, coverage of all pre-

existing diseases and inclusion of transportation costs (actual with maximum limit of Rs. 100 per visit) within an overall limit of Rs. 1000.

However, despite these efforts if we look at the country's total health expenditure as a percentage of GDP over the period 2014-2015 through 2018-2019, we see that total health expenditure as a percentage of GDP has fallen from 3.9 per cent in 2014-15 to 3.8 per cent in 2015-16. It has remained stationary in 2016-17 and has dipped to 3.3 per cent in 2017-18 and further to 3.2 per cent in 2018-19 (NHA 2022). Also, the government health expenditure as a percentage of GDP stands at 1.28 per cent in 2018-2019- a dip by 0.07 per cent as compared to 2017-2018 (NHA 2022). Moreover, various government schemes lacked affinity towards primary health care. Another mammoth challenge that India with 1.34 billion people is encountering at present is what is called the "triple burden of diseases". This includes high maternal mortality rate, infant mortality rate, communicable diseases, the growing burden of non-communicable diseases and the surfacing or re-surfacing of infections such as TB, dengue, Nipah etc. In addition to this, there is also the problem of exorbitant out-of-pocket expenditure. As per estimates from the World Bank about 22.5 per cent of the population in India still strives on less than $1.90 a day (2011 PPP). Needless to say, that a heavy out-of-pocket expenditure will worsen the plight of Indians living below the poverty line. The out-of-pocket expenditures in India as a percentage of total health expenditure during 2018-2019 is around 48.2 per cent (NHA 2022). If we go by the World Bank estimates, out-of-pocket expenditure as a percentage of current health expenditure in India stands at 54.78 per cent in 2019 (World Bank 2022). Restricted access to government or the public health care system often forces patients to look for medical help in the private sector or non-governmental providers of health services. This is the prime reason for exorbitant rate of out-of-pocket expenditures. In India, most of the public sector hospitals not only reel under immense pressure but also carry on their duties in extremely hostile work environments. Lack of adequate monetary resources, scarcity of well-trained medical staff, irregular and unpredictable supply of scientific appliances and medicines often have a disastrous impact on their day to day operations. Restricted government funding for health service provision in India is the main reason responsible for this situation (Gupta 2020). Some estimates from (Rural Health Statistics 2020-2021) reveal that -

- A total of 1224 Sub-Divisional/Sub-District Hospital and 764 District Hospitals are operating in rural India as on 31st March, 2021.
- There are 15274 and 26929 doctors and 42073 and 90435 paramedical manpower available at Sub-District Hospital and District Hospital respectively.

- There are total 148608 and 284227 number of beds available at Sub-District and District level Hospitals.
- Although the specialist doctors at Community Health Centres (CHCs) have increased from 3550 in 2005 to 4405 in 2021, as compared to need for current infrastructure, there is a shortfall of 83.2 per cent of surgeons, 74.2 per cent of obstetricians & gynecologists, 82.2 per cent of physicians and 80.6 per cent of pediatricians.
- Overall, there is a shortfall of 79.9 per cent specialists at the CHCs vis-a-vis requirement for existing CHC.
- The percentage of allopathic doctors at Primary Health Centres (PHCs) has increased by 56.2 per cent in 2021 as compared to 2005. But considering the total requirement at all India level, there is a shortfall of 4.3 per cent of allopathic doctors at PHC.
- There has been an increase in the percentage of Auxiliary Nurse Midwife by about 61.3 per cent in 2021 vis-a-vis 2005. The gross deficit in the post of Female Health Workers / Auxiliary Nurse Midwife is 2.9 per cent of the total requirement as against the norm of one Female Health Workers/ Auxiliary Nurse Midwife per Sub Centre (SC) and PHC.
- A close look into the man power position in urban India reveals that 20937 Health Worker (Female)/ANM is in-positioned at PHCs. There are 20.6 per cent posts which are vacant and shortfall of 30.8 per cent of Health Workers (Female)/ANM at PHC, out of the total requirement at all India level (Rural Health Statistics 2020-2021).

According to (Rural Health Statistics 2020-2021), there are a total of 5439 PHCs in the urban areas, 25140 and of 3966 PHCs in the rural and tribal areas respectively as on 31st March 2021. The number of SCs in urban, rural and tribal areas are 1718, 156101 and 26351 respectively with 470, 5481 and 975 CHCs in urban, rural and tribal areas respectively as on March 2021. The Indian Public Health Standards (IPHS) specify a set of homogenous norms to cater to the primary medical needs of the rural inhabitants through PHCs, SCs and CHCs while on the other hand, the district hospitals and sub-district hospitals look after the secondary health care management of the people (Jain 2022). A report published by NITI Aayog pointed out that only half of India's population can make direct admission to 35 per cent of hospital beds (NITI Aayog 2022).There is also a paucity of government-operated health care units offering services at the tertiary and secondary levels in metropolitan cities. This intensifies the urgent need to fortify the dilapidated healthcare condition in India along with revamping of the existing PHCs, SCs, CHCs so as that no one is denied access to healthcare facilities (Jain

2022). Also, amendments are required in IPHS benchmarks for upliftment of the district and sub-district hospitals so as to meet the medical needs of the masses more responsibly.

Progress Towards Sustainable Health Care in India and Way Forward

As against the backdrop of the existing health scenario in India, it becomes absolutely prudent to move towards a UHC-based health structure to foster inclusive and sustainable development in the country. In order to pave the way for accomplishing UHC, the Cabinet backed The National Health Policy 2017. Its central aim is to 'inform, clarify, strengthen and prioritize the role of the Government' in sculpting the health system of the country in totality (National Health Policy 2017). The central government introduced a noteworthy flagship programme in the health sector known as Ayushman Bharat in accordance with the recommendations of the National Health Policy 2017 so as to make a significant progress towards accomplishing Universal Health Coverage (National Health Authority, Govt. of India n.d.). This initiative has been drafted to realize the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and its predominant pledge to 'leave no one behind.' The objective of the programme is to make revolutionary interventions to holistically tackle health related various concerns in primary, secondary and tertiary care systems covering preventive, promotive, curative, rehabilitative and palliative care (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Govt. of India n.d.). This scheme has two integral elements viz Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) for delivering Comprehensive Primary Health Care (CPHC) services and Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY) for providing secondary and tertiary care to the vulnerable section of population (National Health Authority, Govt. of India n.d.), (Press Information Bureau, Govt. of India 2018). Some other initiatives adopted by the government to usher in reforms in the Indian healthcare system include establishing National Health Authority (to monitor proper implementation of various health related programmes under PMJAY), Nikshay Poshan Yojana (to provide nutritional support to TB patients), Intensified Mission Indradhanush (to focus on universal immunization), inaugurating the Swachch Bharat Mission (to expedite efforts to obtain universal sanitization coverage), etc. (Gupta 2020).

Although AB-PMJAY was implemented with the objective of lowering the out-of-pocket expenditure in India the evidence indicates that the insurance schemes under UHC meant to ensure sustainable development failed to provide the much sought-after solace to the intended beneficiaries with out-of-pocket expenses shooting up for the users of the schemes vis a vis the non-users (Bhanot 2021), (Zodpey and Hasan Farooqui 2018). Infrastructural bottlenecks, malpractices, faulty implementation, unscrupulous activities are some of the

reasons which can be held responsible for this. Some chronic diseases like blood pressure, diabetes, psychological disorders etc. demand a sustained and continuous treatment and may be best diagnosed in an outpatient care setup without admission into the hospital (Zodpey and Hasan Farooqui 2018). Also, those thriving on jobs that fetch them remuneration on a per-day basis often tend to escape hospitalization as that would mean loss of daily income for them. So, for such cases health insurance schemes must be so formulated that they must be inclusive of the outlay on OPD provisions, diagnostic procedures, and pharmaceuticals for non-hospitalized treatment. Health schemes must be tailor made suitably by taking into consideration the socioeconomic status and health requirements of the population and must encompass old and the infirm, differently abled children, survivors of any mishaps on road that need a prolonged treatment regimen (Zodpey and Hasan Farooqui 2018). To tackle the issue of high out-of-pocket expenses on medicines which account for nearly 70 per cent of the total outpatient spending, medicines must be made available to people at affordable prices (Sarwal and Kumar 2020). The National Health Policy 2017 prioritized the need for providing medicines free of cost along with enriching the process of acquiring drugs and medicines by channelizing adequate finances in this regard (Maurya and Das 2022). Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Pariyojana is a step taken in this direction with the objective of bringing quality and generic medicines within the easy reach of all concerned . Reports point out that although government health care facilities in rural and urban settings provide inexpensive treatment, a vast majority of people resort to private care owing to factors like low grade services, delay in service delivery and poor or non-attendance of health workers in public run health care set ups. Thus in view of all these, there is a pressing need to make the public sector more and more liable and amenable so as to provide hassle free and effective primary care to people. The progression towards universal health coverage in the country no doubt requires a meticulous and a well-conceived plan of action. The National Digital Health Mission is undoubtedly a visionary initiative, boosting up linkages between medical practioners with patients digitally by enabling them instantaneous access to health records (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare 2022). This will not only create a comprehensive repository of health care experts but will also stimulate organized, swift and advanced health management system in the country.

Conclusion

India is characterized by a prodigious health care system. In view of the staunch differences that exist in the realm of public-private as well as rural-urban health care facilities in the country, working towards UHC

remains on the top of any health development agenda. Though India has already set in motion some major reforms to ameliorate healthcare infrastructure, yet, much needs to be done to achieve an all-embracing and sustainable development in India's health sector. Mobilization of sufficient financial resources in health and associated sectors, development of well-trained manpower, upgradation of primary and secondary health care systems is imperative to achieve UHC and SDGs. Furthermore, effective implementation of different government policies to build a sustainable health care system requires active participation of various stakeholders including private bodies and the civil societies. A strong vigil is also needed to check the advancement of health-related SDGs. All these will finally help to culminate in an exemplary, holistic and sustainable healthcare foundation in India, capable of delivering an assured quality of health services to its vast population.

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Economic Crisis in Sri-Lanka: A Politico-Economic Perspective

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Abstract

Sri Lanka, a small island nation in South Asia, has a varied economy with strong emphasis on manufacturing, tourism, mining, and agriculture. However, the island nation is witnessing its worst economic collapse in years with unprecedented political and economic events unfolding. Consistent lockdowns due to COVID-19 pandemic paralyzed South Asian economies causing disruptions in supply chains that multiplied the economic challenges in the region. The upshot was enormous losses in trade, movement of commodities, FDI, tourism, cross-border migration, and the depletion of foreign reserves, which in turn led to shortages in the country's supply of fuel, food, medicine, cement, and other necessities. In this context the paper seeks to chart the trajectory of Sri-Lanka's recent economic crisis, examine its political and economic causes and evaluate the initiatives and way-outs taken for tackling the situation.

Keywords: *South Asia, Covid-19, Sri-Lanka, economic crisis, Disasters*

Introduction

Sri-Lanka's strategic location in the centre of the Indian Ocean has long been recognized as a significant element in endorsing greater inter-regional and investment links. Since it emerged as an independent nation in 1948, it has experienced periodic economic crises leading to a severe lack of necessities like food, medicine, cooking gas, gasoline etc. When the civil war ended in 2009, economic growth gradually picked up again. As a result, Sri Lanka's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) significantly increased in the post war period. Numerous socio-economic metrics also improved, with the unemployment rate dropping to 4 per cent in 2012 and the percentage of the population living in poverty increasing to 8.9 per cent in 2010. With the fiscal deficit continuing to decrease, macroeconomic environment's overall fiscal performance also improved, allowing for some price stability to exist. However, there was a large deterioration in the external trade balance, with widening deficit only being restrained by a rapid increase in interior remittances, which account for an average of 8 per cent of GDP and by increases in tourism-related revenue. However, when global commodity prices declined and imports surpassed exports, the economy began to deteriorate after 2013. A

counter-cyclical fiscal policy was ruled out, as the hands of the then Mahinda Rajapaksa government were tied by a US$ 2.6 billion loan obtained from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 2009**.** The new coalition government led by the United National Party (UNP) asked the IMF in 2016 for another US$ 1.5 billion loan for a three-year period from 2016 to 2019 due to the lack of improvement in growth of exports and the on-going depletion of foreign exchange reserves. The fiscal deficit had to be lowered to 3.5 per cent by 2020 following the IMF's conditionality. Other requirements included reforming tax administration and policy, reining in spending, commercialising public companies, allowing for exchange rate flexibility, boosting competitiveness, and creating a risk-free environment for foreign investment. The economic situation in Sri Lanka deteriorated as a result of these IMF conditions.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a devastating impact on Sri Lanka's revenue-generating sectors, including tourism, food and agriculture, exports of clothing and textiles, small and medium-sized enterprises, a sharp fall in the educational system, and countless other socio-economic failures. The whole economic system, including the manufacturing and agricultural sectors, suffered greatly during the lockdown. In addition, due to the weakening big-player global economy, the market for imported luxury goods from Sri Lanka, such as tea and cinnamon, has significantly shrunk. The huge expense of combating the pandemic will draw Sri Lanka's attention away from critical infrastructural and economic development. Sri Lanka is projected to endure significant unemployment, inflation and other issues as a result of the sudden economic debacle. According to a statement released by Human Rights Watch (2021), the economic crisis in Sri Lanka is driving millions of people into poverty and jeopardising their rights to health, education, and a living income. In order to create a new social security system, reduce debt; assure fair taxes and combat corruption at the highest levels of government, the Sri –Lanka should collaborate with key financial institutions and partners.

Reasons for the Current Economic Debacle

Tax Reduction

When Rajapakshe government took office in 2019, it promised to speedup economic growth. The government reduced the value-added tax by half and repealed some other levies in order to promote consumption and the economy. The tax cuts greatly strained the public finances of the already leveraged economy, creating increasing budget deficits and a loss of billions of rupees in tax revenue. Despite being aware of the 2021 revenue loss, Rajapakshe considered tax cuts as an 'investment' and did not intend to increase taxes for another five years (Lockett, 2022). IMF had already

cautioned Sri-Lanka's Central Bank to stop printing money; instead increase taxes, however, Central Bank of Sri-Lanka went ahead and printed 119.08 billion rupees on April 6, 2022, the highest amount reported on a single day for the entire year 2022 (News-Wire, 2022).

Foreign Debt

After the civil war ended in 2009, government sought to develop the country's infrastructure. Rajapaksha government received finances for large number of projects from external financers particularly China. Apparently, it looked like the country was developing, however, it was mostly done from external money leaving Sri-Lanka in huge debt to China and other financers. In the decade from 2010-2020 Sri-Lanka's foreign debt has consistently increased. Between 2006 and 2020, Sri Lanka's debt rose from USD 11.85 billion to USD 56.83 billion (Kataria, Manur & Pradhan, 2022). During Rajapakshe Government, particularly, debt has sky rocketed. It stood at $11 billion in 2005 and surpassed to $56 billion by 2020 –of which 15 per cent was held by China (IMF Country Report, March 2022). As of 2021, Sri-Lanka owes 47 per cent of its debt to International Capital Markets, 22 per cent is held by international development banks, and 10 per cent by Japan. (Wignaraja, Attanayake, 2022).

Agricultural Crises: Turn to Organic Farming

During the election campaign, Rajapakshe declared that if elected, the government would provide chemical free food, to people. After he assumed power in 2019, Rajapakshe outlined a ten-year transition period to complete organic farming (Jayasinghe, Ghoshal, 2022). The government in April, 2021 instituted a complete ban on importation and use of fertilizers and ordered farmers to go completely organic. Analysts argue that the real issue was deficient funding, not health. This sudden and drastic turn to organic farming impacted agricultural production. There was a sudden drop in tea production that alone amounted to the loss of millions of dollars. Rice production also dropped forcing the country to import rice. As the protests intensified against the soaring food prices, the government abandoned its plan to become the world's first organic-farming nation in 2021.

Easter Bombings and Covid-19

Tourism provides livelihood to over a million people in Sri-Lanka and contributes 11 per cent to the total employment (Aneja, Shridhar, Maawi 2020). The Easter bombings of 2019 negatively impacted

the Tourism sector. It fell from USD 5.61 billion in 2018 to USD 4.66 billion in 2019 and USD 1.08 billion in 2020 (World Bank, 2020). After few months Covid-19 struck which further wreaked havoc on Sri-Lanka's economy. The national debt of Sri Lanka increased throughout the pandemic, from 94 per cent of GDP in 2019 to 119 per cent of GDP in 2022. Tourism sector is the backbone of Sri-Lankan economy. The Colombo Bomb Blasts in 2019 coupled with Covid-19 reduced tourism, which earlier contributed 10 per cent to the country's GDP, from USD 8 billion in 2020 to around USD 2.31 billion in the last two years, Sri Lanka's FOREX reserves have decreased by over 70 per cent (WTO, 2021).

Politico-Economic Dimension

As the economic crises unravelled in the past couple of months, protests intensified throughout the island nation. Analysts interpret the crises in diverse ways; while some blame external factors like Covid-19 and Russia-Ukraine war; others; specifically, opposition put the blame on the government and on its different measures like tax cuts, the sudden shift to organic farming etc. Whatever the cause, this economic crisis has snowballed into a political crisis and one can't look away its political dimension. In February this year, Sri-Lankan protesters took to streets demanding resignation of the President and his government. They succeeded in their aim after a three-month long struggle, with Rajapakshe becoming the first President in the Post-independence period to be forced out of office and to flee due to a popular uprising. The crisis in Sri-Lanka is fundamentally connected to politics. Sri-Lanka's two main political parties the Centre-Left Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) and the Centre-right United National Party (UNP), compete with each other since the last 70 years, on issues mostly focused on employment, free education and raising subsidies on taxes. However, like other South Asian countries, Sri-Lanka is no stranger to dynastic politics. Since 2005, Rajapakshas have dominated the Sri-Lankan politics. They helped and successfully supressed decades-old Tamil insurgency which consolidated their grip on power. In the post-war period, Gotaba Rajapakshe gradually made his family's way into the government. After appointing Mahinda Rajapakshe as PM, his government passed a controversial amendment in 2020, allowing another brother Basil Rajapakshe to enter Parliament. It became more a familial and dynastic politics where Gotabaya was only theoretically President and his brothers were the actual actors and doers. Rajapaksha's have gradually accumulated and centralised power over the period of last 20 years. This centralisation of power led to the weakening of bureaucracy and other critical institutions like the Central Bank of Sri-Lanka. Also, since Rajapaksha came to power in 2005, corruption at the governmental increased.

Public offices have been used for personal and party gains with the government increasingly relying on patronage politics. Therefore, the protests are also a response against corruption and nepotism of the familial and dynastic politics dominating Sri-Lankan politics.

Impact of the crises

The crises have impacted every person whether rural or urban. Unemployment has become a typical occurrence in practically every home. It has also led to decrease in earnings. Fuel shortages have resulted in long queues at petrol stations. Multiple thermal power plants have been forced to close due to a severe lack of diesel, resulting in rolling power outages across the country. In the health sector, people have turned to self-medication increasing morbidity among people. The deteriorating situation would induce the native Sri Lankans to migrate to other countries like India, Maldives etc. for better opportunities and a stable environment. Sri Lanka is unable to import the goods it needs. It has also failed to make an interest payment on its foreign loans for the first time ever, harming its standing with the investors and making it more difficult t to borrow the money it requires on global markets.

The majority of Sri Lanka's economy depends on imports, including gasoline, diesel, food, sugar, lentils, paper, and pharmaceuticals. Without the ability to buy or borrow foreign currency, the Sri Lankan government is unable to import fuel and basic foods, which drives up domestic prices. Remittances from Sri Lankans who work overseas have also decreased. Because of this, the country now imports much less of the necessities than it used to. The situation turned so worse that there is a fear of rise in acute malnutrition cases from 13-20 per cent, and the cases of severally malnourished children is expected to double from 35,000 to 70,000 (Vaidyanathan, 2022). Thus, millions of people are being pushed to poverty, endangering their rights to health, education, and a living wage, according to a statement released today by Human Rights Watch (De Silva, 2022). In order to deal with the crises, Sri Lankan government needs to work with relevant financial institutions and partners to establish a new social protection system and obtain debt relief, adopt measures to ensure fair taxation, and address corruption at the highest levels of government. Since both Ukraine and Russia are significant markets for Sri Lankan tourism, the deepening of the conflict between Russia and

Ukraine will have an impact on Sri Lanka. Russians made up 15.8 per cent of all visitors to Sri Lanka this year until February 11; Ukrainians made up 8.7 per cent of all visitors. The tourism industry will be affected if there are fewer visitors from these nations as a result of the conflict. Further, the conflict between Russia and Ukraine has already increased the price of oil globally, which would make it more difficult for Sri Lanka to acquire gasoline for its daily needs. Since Russia and Ukraine are significant markets for Sri Lankan tea, the deteriorating situation due to war between the two countries may also have an effect on exports. Prior to the pandemic, Sri Lanka was heavily dependent on Chinese tourists. Sri Lanka welcomed 1,67,863 Chinese tourists in 2019. It is unclear when will China ease restrictions on peoples' mobility.

The second-largest export market for Sri Lanka is the EU. The Generalized Scheme of Preferences (GSP+) of the EU makes it easier for Sri Lankan goods to enter the EU duty-free. The EU Parliament has threatened to revisit the GSP+ programme that was granted to Sri Lanka by a vote in June 2021 if it is not happy with Sri Lanka's human rights records. It adopted a resolution and called for a repeal of Sri-Lanka's Prevention of Terrorism Act to improve its human rights records. The flow of aid from the Western nations, mainly from the EU, to deal with the economic crisis would be determined in the following days by Sri Lanka's attitude toward those measures and proposals. In January 2022, the Sri Lankan government of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa published a bill to amend the act. However, the proposed amendments leave the most often abused provisions of the law intact, and if enacted, will do little to bring the PTA into compliance with Sri Lanka's international human rights obligations. (Human Rights watch, 2022).

EU's withdrawal of the GSP+ facility from Sri Lanka will be a significant barrier to the expansion of the export sector. At the domestic level also, the government has to face the wrath of common people, opposition parties and even disappointment of some of the coalition partners because of its handling of the economic crisis, pandemic, overall governance and foreign affairs. All these factors cumulatively will pose serious challenges for Sri Lanka to overcome the current crisis. Even though the government as of now has refused to approach the IMF for assistance, it might be compelled to do the same at a later date.

Measures for combating the Economic crisis

Sri-Lanka's way of handling the crisis is being criticised by economists and the opposition parties. They contend that instead of taking a comprehensive approach to the overall economic situation, the administration is concentrating on short-term solutions in specific areas. Although it is suggested

that temporary import restrictions may have improved the trade balance by reducing spending, a continued ban on imports would also have an impact on exports since Sri Lanka's export economy is heavily reliant on the import of intermediate capital goods. Many importers have suffered as a result of the import prohibition. The growth in smuggling and unlawful trade of goods subject to import restrictions has led to price increases. The government has historically utilised selective import controls whenever there has been a decline in export revenue, from 1948 through the 1960s. However, it merely provided temporary relief and did little to help the nation's overall economic predicament. The government's decision to outlaw chemical fertilisers has also drawn harsh criticism because it will have an impact on agricultural output and potentially worsen the nation's food insecurity and shortages.

The Sri Lankan government believes that the current foreign exchange reserves crisis is the result of previous governments' policy of importing more than they collected in income over time. The country's financial woes have also been attributed to loans obtained from multilateral institutions. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has made the issue worse. As a result, cutting import spending is one of the government's top policy concerns. Other "homegrown measures" have also been started to strengthen the foreign reserves by reducing capital outflow and increasing input. To address the issue of settling import and debt, the government has approached bilateral partners for a loan, credit, and currency swap facility. Moreover, special emphasis is being paid to restoring investors faith while navigating the crisis by maintaining debt service obligations.

Import Restrictions: To curtail the outflow of foreign currency, the Sri Lankan government has prohibited the entry of high-end cars, chemical fertilisers, and food staples like turmeric. Beginning in May 2021, the Sri Lankan government will impose import restrictions on chemical fertilisers and agrochemicals (insecticides and herbicides). Although the government claims the restriction is necessary to encourage organic farming in the nation, the strategy to limit the import of chemical fertilisers was also motivated by the need to stop the flow of foreign funds. Prior to the embargo, Sri Lanka used to import fertilisers for about $400 million a year and turmeric for more than $7 million. A total of US$1.5 billion was spent on importing vehicles in 2018. (Ganesh 2021, 12).

Restrictions on forward contracts of foreign exchange: The CBSL has instructed the licenced commercial banks to refrain from entering into forward contracts of foreign exchange for a period of three months in order to prevent excessive volatility in the foreign exchange market.

Enhancing Remittance Inflow: The government has proposed a number of policy initiatives to increase remittance inflows to the nation, including: establishing a contributory pension plan for migrant workers; paying Sri Lankan rupees 2 per dollar above the standard exchange rate for foreign exchange remittances converted at authorised banks. The foreign employment market is currently largely dependent on Middle Eastern nations. To increase the number of remittances coming into the country, a Special Deposit Account programme has also been implemented.

Assistance from Bilateral Partners: The government of Sri Lanka is requesting assistance from bilateral partners in the form of loans and currency exchange facilities to address the present economic crisis. Bangladesh has extended a currency swap facility worth US$ 200 million. China extended a swap facility worth US$1.5 billion. China Development Bank also gave Sri Lanka 700 million dollars. India has already agreed to provide US$ 2.4 billion in financial assistance, which includes: (a) US$ 400 million under the SAARC currency swap agreement; (b) a two-month delay in the payment of the A.C.U. settlement of US$ 515.2 million; (c) US$ 500 million for the import of fuel from India; and (d) US$ 1 billion for the import of food, necessities, and medicine.

India has also agreed to positively contribute to enhancing Sri Lanka's energy security as part of the financial assistance package by signing an MoU to jointly develop the Trincomalee oil tank farms and by offering various forms of assistance to attract Indian tourists to strengthen Sri Lanka's tourism sector and increase Indian investments in Sri Lanka. The offer of assistance has also been accepted by Pakistan and Qatar. In order to import cement, basmati rice, and medications made in Pakistan, Pakistan has agreed to grant credit lines totalling $200 million USD. The two nations have not yet agreed on the details of the same. According to reports, the CBSL has started talking with the Qatar Central Bank about getting a swap for more than $1 billion.

Boosting investors' confidence: The government has included provisions for Special Deposit Accounts in order to increase investor confidence. Despite the lack of foreign currency, the government is committed to upholding its debt servicing obligations. The government has chosen not to ask the lender to renegotiate the debt payment, despite repeated requests from the opposition parties.

No to International Monetary Fund (IMF) Bailout: According to the government, Sri Lanka is reluctant to approach the IMF for a bailout because the conditions of the IMF's help would add to the burdens already placed on its citizens by the pandemic and the current economic crisis. The current administration also believes that the IMF programmes occasionally carried out in Sri Lanka made the

nation's economic issues worse. Although the government is certain that it can manage the situation without an IMF bailout, statements from the leaders of the ruling party imply that the government may seek technical guidance from the IMF.

Bilateral assistance from India, China and Bangladesh

The bilateral support from Bangladesh, China, and India in the form of a currency swap facility has helped Sri Lanka marginally increase its gross official reserves and made it easier to pay off debt service that was due in the month of January 2022. Dealing with the fuel shortages has also been made easier with Indian support. In order to pay for the import of food and medications, Sri Lanka primarily depends on the US$ 1 billion provided by India. The completion of ministerial level requirements is necessary for India's help to be fully realised. This month, the Sri Lankan finance minister is most likely to travel to India for similar purposes. Regarding Sri Lanka's request for a loan to pay back Chinese loans, China has not yet officially committed. The Sri Lankan ambassador to China claims that this topic is currently the subject of advanced conversations with the Chinese.

Although the current administration is optimistic, Sri Lanka cannot entirely rely on bilateral help to resolve this situation. It is important to note that although the help is enabling Sri Lanka some breathing room to manage the debt servicing and settlement of import bills with limited foreign reserves, these assistances are arriving in the form of loans. The current economic climate is anticipated to last for at least another two or three years. Sri Lanka requires financial assistance in the form of long-term, low-interest loans with a grace period that is long enough to last through the current economic climate. Many academics and opposition parties in Sri Lanka urge the government to approach the IMF as reliance solely on bilateral aid is insufficient.

Conclusion

Sri-Lanka’s current economic collapse can be traced to a variety of factors - external debt, dynastic politics, growing nepotism and corruption coupled with the inability to begin a much-needed political transition. Its roots are not only economic but political and social as well. The economic mismanagement due to different government policies that are fundamentally based in a number of political factors that include corruption, nepotism, bad governance, etc. increased the potential for crises in the long run. To prevent the crises from snowballing into an acute macroeconomic depression, a practical solution is required. It includes a promising developmental model assuring economic, political, and institutional reforms. Also, there is a severe need of establishing an

independent and accountable bureaucracy based on merit, along with a clear separation of the legislative and executive branches of the government.

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Exploring Different Ways of Sustainable Resource Management -

A Study for Dryland Areas of West Bengal

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Abstract

The paper attempts to provide a comprehensive study on the dependency on natural resources in the dryland areas of the state and also provides a guideline to achieve sustainability so far as dependency on natural resources is concerned. It focuses mainly on two natural resources: forestry and drinking water on which people in our study area are heavily dependent. The paper starts with a discussion on the profile of our study area to discuss the socio-economic features of the people residing in that area. The paper also considers some methodological issues in terms of dynamic optimization model and contingent valuation method the results of which have strong implications from the point of view of sustainable policy analysis in our study area.

Key Words: Dependency, Sustainability, Dynamic Optimization, Contingent Valuation, Willingness to Pay.

JEL Classification: C42, C61, Q20, Q23, Q25, Q51

1. Introduction:

The world's drylands are fragile ecosystems due to harsh climatic conditions and growing human pressures. Yet, they constitute some of the world's largest land reserves and provide a wide range of goods and services which are fundamental to the livelihoods of millions of people. The semi-arid and arid regions are situated in the tropical and sub-tropical parts of the world and they account for almost 30 per cent of the world's total area and around 20 per cent of the total population. According to the World Atlas of Desertification (UNEP, 1992), drylands have a ratio of average annual precipitation (P) to potential evapotranspiration (PET) of less than 0.65. In fact, according to the report of Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) in 1993, drylands are categorized into hyper arid, arid, semi-arid and dry sub humid zones not only on the basis of P/PET ratio but

also on the basis of rainfall (in mm.). Thus, when P/PET ratio is less than 0.05 and rainfall is less than 200 mm, the dryland is referred to as Hyper arid. Again, when P/PET ratio lies between 0.05 to 0.20 with rainfall less than 200 mm. in winter and 400 mm. in summer, it is considered as arid zone. The next categorization is Semi-arid zone for which P/PET ratio lies between 0.20 and 0.50 with rainfall less than 200-500 mm. in winter and less than 400-600 mm. in summer. Finally, when P/PET ratio lies between 0.50 and 0.65 with rainfall less than 500-700 mm. in winter and less than 600-800 mm. in summer, it is referred to as Dry sub humid zone. On the basis of FAO statistics, the percentage share of arid and semi-arid categories combined together are the highest among the total dryland areas of the world.

In India, arid and semi-arid zones are characterized by low to medium mean annual rainfall coupled with high coefficient of variability, large amplitude of fluctuations of temperature, strong wind regions and high potential evaporation. The average annual rainfall of these regions varies between 150 mm and 500 mm along with a coefficient of variation as high as 60 per cent to 70 per cent. The distribution of rainfall is also very erratic (Status report on hydrology of arid zones of India, 1999-2000, Prepared by National Institute of Hydrology). In India out of the total geographical area, almost one-sixth area with 12 per cent of the population belongs to drought prone areas. At present 74 districts, covering 13 states of the country have been identified as drought prone.

The dryland areas of West Bengal comprise of districts like Purulia, Bankura, West Midnapore and a part of Birbhum as per the State Plan of West Bengal. On the basis of the document regarding “State Agriculture Plan for West Bengal” (Prepared By NABARD). Entire district of Purulia and parts of three other districts can be combined together as “red laterite soil region” in West Bengal and here crop productivity is limited. FAO’s classification for categories of dryland areas is on the basis of P/PET ratio and also on the basis of rainfall (in mm.). The State Plan of West Bengal has considered FAO’s classification. Additionally, the plan has classified agro-climatic region on the basis of soil contents. These four districts are faced with more or less similar problems. Purulia, being in the arid zone, has severe water crisis but it has huge area under forestry. Other districts can be termed as semi-arid for the nature of their soil and parts of them showing features of aridity.

The dryland area of our study is also known as the *‘Jangal Mahal’* area with the feature that people residing in this region are poor and are heavily dependent on natural resources. The two major natural resources on

which people of this area are highly dependent are forestry and drinking water. Though they extract these resources for their livelihood, they have the knowledge base to sustain these resources for future. Hence, they maintain a balance between sustainable resource management and extraction of resources in the context of their dependency on natural resources. So, a study of the economic behaviour of the people residing in the dryland regions of the state becomes essential.

Though there are quite a substantial number of works on dryland are as in India, here we mention here only a few works that are relevant for our present study. One can refer to the works of Gautam and Rao (2007), Ram and Davari (2010), Bhattacharya and Gupta (2010), etc. Gautam and Rao (2007) have shown, in detail, about history of rainfed agriculture in India, starting from pre independence period. They have also discussed about the magnitude of problems of problems of rainfed agriculture, delineating of rainfed farming. Ram and Davari (2010) have considered rain water and soil as the two most important natural resources of dryland resources. They have emphasized on management practices that maximize the usefulness of limited rainwater by imposing relevant conservation measures and land uses matching with the water availability period in India. Bhattacharya and Gupta (2010) have shown the impact of integrated watershed projects in India. They have shown the impact of completed watershed projects on the livelihood of rural population who are associated with the projects. People of arid regions are forced to migrate to the urban areas to avoid the manifold problems of such areas, especially the problem of water. The authors, in their work, have addressed this reality and have recommended the amount of income that a watershed project should generate to avoid the migration.

The motivation behind the present study generates from the fact that most of the people living in the dryland areas are poor and are heavily dependent on natural resources of the area so that a study on sustainable resource management and extraction of resources is very much relevant. For example, most of the people in the area are aware about harvest of timber and non-timber forest products (NTFP) but they are also aware about the fact that forests are to be protected and conserved for their own sustainable livelihood. Our study area is also known as the *'Jangal Mahal'* area which is characterized by underdevelopment, poverty and starvation, dependence on natural resources for livelihood, lack of alternative job opportunities and last but not the list frequent political disturbance. So a comprehensive study of the area will help us to understand the

political economy of the region and also to suggest appropriate policy to uplift the conditions of the people residing in the region. There is lack of such comprehensive study in the literature and the present paper attempts to fill the lacuna.

The paper is organized in the following manner. Section 2 deals with a brief profile of the surveyed regions. Some methodological issues to capture dependency on natural resources are explained briefly in section 3. Finally, the conclusions are derived in section 4.

2. Brief profile of surveyed areas of drylands:

We have surveyed 900 households from three districts of drylands of West Bengal in the months of February-March' 2022, covering both "hilly drylands" and "non-hilly drylands". From Bankura We have surveyed in Susunia – 170 households and Sewlibona – 130 households, both are hilly in nature. From Purulia, we have surveyed in Murguma – 125 households and Baghmundi – 175 households. Here also, both regions are hilly. In West Medinipur we have surveyed in non-hilly areas of Salboni – 150 households and Bishnupur – 150 households.

During our survey, we have observed most of the area is poverty- stricken. As per our survey report the share of BPL is very high than that of APL. Out of 900 households surveyed, 667 were living below the poverty line.

Regarding religion, we have found the presence of Hindus and Muslims only. But as far as 'caste' is concerned, we have found the presence of people of all types of castes, with people from Schedule Castes having the highest share followed by Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Class. General Caste having the lowest share and the people from marginalized sections having the highest share ensures that our surveyed area is actually socially backward.

The condition of education is very poor, as we have observed that more than 61% of the respondents (or, any family member of that respondent) have not completed the level of elementary education. Next, we have focused on the availability of drinking water facilities for the households of our surveyed area. we have seen

that absolutely 100 per cent of the households do not have the facility of drinking water in their houses. They use the common tube wells or watersheds for getting water for any purpose.

Next, if we consider the term 'forest dependency', we find that almost all the people of our study area are forest dependent. Almost all the households use the non-timber forest products for their cooking purpose. One important thing that needs to be mentioned is that people of these areas are dependent on forest throughout the year. They go to forest throughout the year; maximum households go for 10 to 20 days per month. They collect fuelwood and few other things like sal leaves, honey, kendu leaves, etc., both for consumption as well as for selling in the market during poor financial condition of the family. Forest products collected mainly for selling in the market – such phenomenon is highly observed in Purulia and partly in Bankura also. People of drylands mainly collect those forest products that are being permitted to collect by the Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMC) and Forest Protection Committees (FPC). More than 95% of the respondents are dependent on forest products for getting their fuels.

We have categorized the respondents in different income groups. This division is carried out for each district separately. We have classified the entire income range in different groups like Rs. 0-2500, Rs. 2501-5000, Rs. 5001-10000, Rs. 10001-20000 and more than 20000. In all three districts, more than 60 % people earn less than Rs.5000 per month. This figure is more than 70% in Purulia and Bankura. This reflects the fact that the area is poverty-stricken. Very few earn above 10000 per month. In West Midnapore, this number is 11%, but in other two districts this figure is around 2% only.

3. Some methodological issues to capture dependency on natural resources

There are various ways on the basis of which one capture dependency on natural resources in the dryland areas. We shall briefly discuss two ways it can be captured. The first one is the dynamic optimization technique which can be used to analyze such dependency through sensitivity analysis and the second one is the use of contingent valuation method to value the natural resources on which the stakeholders are dependent. This valuation exercise has strong implications for sustainable livelihood and hence on sustainable resource management. We shall first explain the dynamic version in a descriptive manner and after that we shall provide some elements of applicability of contingent valuation method (CVM) for forestry and drinking water.

3.1 Application of dynamic optimization technique to analyze dependency on natural resources

In this paper we just want to present the outline of the model without going to the equational specification. The purpose is to examine whether (i) a change in the proportion of timber harvest obtained as NTFP or (ii) a change in the intrinsic rate of growth of forest stock or (iii) a change in the discount rate measuring the opportunity cost of forestry gives us some counter-intuitive results. The base values for sensitivity analysis are obtained through calibration (field survey and secondary sources). The structure of the model can be explained by the following points.

- *Objective :* To maximize welfare from extraction of timber and non-timber forest product(NTFP)
- *Constraint :* Net growth of forest stock
- *Enforcement:* Harvest of timber is mainly under government's control and a part of non-timber as well.
- *Property rights:* Well defined property rights and are managed through the joint forest management (JFM) system.
- *Operation:* Given the fact that the foresters are price-takers, welfare maximization of the foresters (through the JFM system) is in the form of maximization of profit.
- *Study Area :* Purulia, Bankura and West Midnapore
- *Analysis :* Done through Sensitivity Analysis after calibrating for the base values.

The main result of the study, which is contrary to the conventional wisdom, is that for the *'Jangal Mahal'* area (the dryland area of the state) an increase in the proportion of timber harvest obtained as NTFP reduces the level of welfare in the study area. Apart from this we find that a reduction in the intrinsic growth rate of forest stock reduces the level of timber cutting and also reduces the availability of NTFP. These two results show the awareness of the forest-fringe people regarding the sustainable use of forest. Finally, we have

shown that a change in the discount rate causes insignificant changes in the major study variables, emphasizing dependency as well as sustainability of forests.

3.2 Application of contingent valuation method (cvm) for valuation of natural resources

Economic value of the environment is specified in the background of three important features of environmental goods which are namely, (i) irreversibility, (ii) uncertainty and (iii) uniqueness. We can classify total economic value into two categories: (i) user value (ii) non-user value.

Monetary valuation of environmental goods has, by now, become the subject of numerous economic books and articles. The key problem driving the accelerating widespread destruction and degradation of environment is that the importance of environmental conservation and sustainable development to socio-economic development is undervalued by our society, especially in developing economies like India.

Valuation can simply be defined "as an attempt to put monetary values or to environmental goods and services or natural resources". It is a key exercise in economic analysis and its results provide important information about values of environmental goods and services. This information can be used to influence decisions about wise use and conservation of forests and other ecosystems. The basic aim of valuation is to determine people's preferences by gauging how much they are willing to pay (WTP) for given benefits or certain environmental attributes e.g., keep a forest ecosystem intact. In other words, valuation also tries to gauge how much worse off they would consider themselves to be as a result of changes in the state of the environment such as degradation of a forest.

In the dryland areas of developing countries, the conservation of environment should get more priority because in the presence of very few alternative income opportunities, people of such areas rely very heavily on environmental goods, especially on forests, for their livelihoods. Valuation of water is also another important aspect that has been neglected as far as drylands are concerned. Lack of ground water availability and recurrence of droughts hinder agricultural activities. For the same reason, scarcity of drinking water makes living more difficult for the people of drylands.

For the valuation of forest-dependency as well as problem of drinking water, we have used Contingent Valuation Method (CVM). For this purpose, we have conducted household surveys without which it is impossible to conduct CVM. In our work, single bounded dichotomous choice has been considered in closed ended referendum. Here one particular bid is shown to each respondent and the responses are in the form of either yes or no that is whether he is going to accept the bid or not. Accordingly, few statistical tests have been done to derive average willingness to pay.

The first practical application of Contingent Valuation technique was in 1963 when Davis used surveys to estimate the value hunters and tourists placed on a particular wilderness area. He compared the survey results to an estimation of value based on travel costs and found good correlation with his results. This type of Contingent Valuation (CV) exercise has several drawbacks. In response to criticisms of contingent valuation surveys, a panel of high-profile economists was convened under the auspices of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in 1990. The NOAA panel was set up in the early 1990s in the U.S., to review the CVM.

The NOAA panel tried to remedy this problem, by providing guidelines for use of the CVM. It issued a report in 1993, which has been widely cited and followed. The NOAA panel also felt, in general, that conservative estimates of value were to be preferred and one important consequence of this decision is that they recommended contingent valuation surveys measure willingness to pay to protect the good rather than willingness to accept compensation for the loss of the resource.

As a result, current contingent valuation methodology corrects the shortcomings, and current empirical testing indicates that such shortcomings have been successfully addressed. In the application of CVM, obtaining of bids is the most important section of the study. At this stage field survey is conducted, generally. A face-to-face interview by well-trained interviewers is needed for effective data collection. Individuals are asked to state their maximum willingness to pay (WTP) or minimum willingness to accept (WTA) for a proposed change in the environmental quality. To quantity the precise amount fruitfully, a number of alternative strategies are applied which are:

a) Closed ended referendum

b) Open ended referendum

Average WTP calculation for a closed ended referendum is different from that of an open-ended bid. In case of open-ended bid, since exact information about max WTP is available, the average is calculated by using either arithmetic mean or median. Since the lower bids are more likely than higher bids for environmental goods (for free-riding problem), thus median WTP < mean WTP. But in case of dichotomous choice type closed ended bidding, it is recognized that though the consumer knows his preference completely, it is not totally observable to the researchers. Hence, a Random Utility Model (RUM) is chosen to represent the choice decision where the probability of a "yes" response to a bid can be derived by applying logit estimation technique.

The purpose of using CVM is very clear. Natural resources perform several economic functions on which price cannot be assigned. Even if there are announced property rights related to ownership of the resource, the rights cannot be properly assigned to the owners. Use of CVM helps to resolve these issues. In our study we want to value forest resources and drinking water in the dryland areas of West Bengal. In our study for selection of villages we have followed stratified sampling and for selection of households we have followed partly stratified and partly random sampling. The number of respondents interviewed in the six villages, taken together from three dryland districts, namely, Bankura, Purulia and West Midnapore, is 900 and it has been seen that the response rate is 100% which is high.

For the above kind of analysis, it is important to determine the bid first and then to determine how these bids are to be shown to the respondents. The bids that we have considered are Rs.20, Rs.25, Rs.35, Rs. 40, Rs. 50 and Rs.60 (in terms of per month) to have and to conserve forestry. Here the bids are determined after discussing with the local people through pilot surveys which gave us an idea of the maximum and minimum amounts that we should put forward to the respondents as bid amounts. The next step is to identify the "valid" responses out of 900 respondents. For this we have followed a strategy in the final survey. We have categorized the respondents in three bid groups, namely, *low, medium and high*. We have applied single-bound dichotomous choice CV method. The *low* bid group implies bids of Rs.20 and Rs.25 per month for having and also to conserve drinking water. For *medium* bid group the bid amounts are Rs.35 and Rs.40 per month. For *high* bid group the bid amounts are Rs.50 and Rs.60 per month.

Our present survey reflects those 383 respondents out of 900 respondents are not willing to accept the bids and thus we will consider 517 respondents as *"willing"* respondents and 383 respondents as *"non-willing"* for our further analysis. Here 383 *"non-willing"* participants are considered as *"protest bidders"* for the conservation of forestry and for water the *"willing"* respondents are 568 and *"non-willing"* are 332.

We have considered a logit analysis to estimate Willingness to Pay (WTP) for both conservation of forests and drinking water under closed ended referendum. We have also estimated WTP for both conservation of forests and drinking water under open ended referendum.

In case of forestry under close-ended referendum we have found the mean WTP to be Rs. 32.55 per month whereas it is Rs.27.32 per month for the open-ended referendum. We can find an average of the two mean WTPs and name it as '*true WTP*, in our model. The *'true WTP'* turns out to be Rs.29.93 per month. One can say that for the sake of their own livelihood in the long run because of the presence of very few alternative income opportunities, people of drylands, despite being poverty-stricken, can bear to pay this minimal amount. This amount though appears to be low, is reasonable given the fact that most of the stakeholders in our study area lives below the poverty line.

In case of drinking water under closed-ended referendum we have found the mean WTP to be Rs. 28.83 per month whereas it is Rs.25.41 per month for the open-ended referendum. The *'true WTP'* turns out to be Rs.27.12 per month. One can say that for the sake of their own development and to get rid of the problem of drinking water, people of drylands, despite being poverty-stricken, can bear to pay this minimal amount. This amount once again though appears to be low, is reasonable given the fact that most of the stakeholders in our study area mostly lives below the poverty line. Their WTP for conserving drinking water has important policy implications from the point of development of the dryland areas of West Bengal. It shows the need of the people for drinking water residing in this area and the Government should give special emphasis on this issue.

The methodology that we have discussed here provides a guideline to the researchers and the policy makers to conduct serious study to understand dependency on natural resources in the dryland areas of the state and also to link it with sustainable resource management.

4. Conclusions

Here, an attempt has been made to integrate the major issues related to dependency on natural resources and their implications on sustainability issues in the dryland areas of the state. This comprehensive study is not actually a survey of existing works rather it provides an analysis of facts and figures along with a guideline regarding the methodological issues that can be followed to study the nature of dependency on natural resources. Our study shows that people in the drylands of West Bengal depend heavily on forestry and suffer from the lack of drinking water, owing to the poor irrigational-agricultural conditions and dryness of the weather. We have described few aspects of socio-economic conditions of the three big districts of drylands, as we have observed from our field survey. By using a dynamic model, we have shown that, contrary to the conventional wisdom, how in the *'Jangal Mahal'* area (the dryland area of the state) an increase in the proportion of timber harvest obtained as NTFP reduces the level of welfare in the region. By use of our dynamic model, we have shown the importance of forestry and hence its conservation (can be interpreted as sustainability of forestry) from the point of view of the people residing in the area. Lastly, we have shown that how the people of drylands think about conservation of forestry and drinking water and also the use of these two resources through Contingent Valuation Technique. Thus, we have captured the overall natural resource scenario of drylands of West Bengal and also, we have emphasized on people's perception in their (natural resources) protection and sustainable use. Our study suggests some values for the conservation of resources in terms of their WTP. These figures are really useful for policy analysis to achieve sustainable resource management of natural resources in our study area.

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Participatory Governance is a Way to Sustainable Development

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Abstract

Governance is the term used to describe the official and informal interactions between the government, individuals, groups, and organisations. Equity, the environmental protection, and economic progress must be prioritised in sustainable development initiatives. Due to their enormous control over land use, planning, and policy creation, local governments are becoming more involved in furthering environmental sustainability initiatives. They can also save energy, cut back on greenhouse gas emissions, and protect environmentally sensitive areas. They have a big influence on decision-making because of how they affect development, which includes creating goals, coming up with alternate strategies, and being in charge of running and managing local projects. Local governments are also naturally multi-sectoral, capable of combining a variety of sectoral issues into a single established policy, and closest to and responsible to the general population. This research paper aims to analyse the importance of local governance in the achievement of sustainable development.

Keywords: Sustainable Development, Participatory Governance, Participatory Development, Alternative Development.

Introduction

The term 'Governance' is used to describe the official and informal interactions between the government, individuals, groups, and organisations (Hawkins and Wang 2012, 8). Local governments have enormous control over energy usage, greenhouse gas emissions, and the preservation of environmentally sensitive regions, and thanks to their extensive planning and policy-making authority and land-use control authority. Such governments have significant influence on growth and participate actively in procedures for making decisions, including defining objectives and creating potential course of action. In addition, they are in charge of overseeing and managing regional initiatives (Hawkins and Wang 2012, 9).

Even though the terms 'government' and 'governance' are used interchangeably, there exist differences. As an institution the government is made up of a variety of internal

connections, positions, rights, duties, and activities. People allocated defined responsibilities, tasks, and places within an organised system which make up an 'institution'. Therefore, a government that prioritises development is one which has created internal connections that enable the achievement of defined developmental objectives. Whereas governance is more broadly refers to the environment in which government operates, and to the interactions between government and external parties. A system of governance describes how a government interacts with its constituents, the general public, service users, and non-state entities. So, a development-oriented system of governance is an institutional setting in which the government forges kinds of connections with external stakeholders that motivate them to start and maintain developmental initiatives (Atkinson 2002, 2).

Due to its multi-sectoral nature, ability to incorporate numerous sectoral concerns into a single formulated policy, programme, or initiative, and proximity to the population, local governments are important for a number of reasons. Council members are required to focus on the needs and interests of specific neighbourhoods under the ward system of representation, which is in contrast to the proportional representation system used at the provincial and federal levels. Because councils are elected bodies, a councillor who consistently fails to serve the public interest may be ousted from office at the end of his or her term. This increases their accountability to the needs of the underprivileged (Atkinson 2002, 3). Furthermore, genuine development demands ongoing interaction with beneficiaries and communities, whether through the training of leaders, the improvement of institutional capability, public involvement in project planning or execution, and frequently, conflict resolution. Simply said, it makes more sense to set up such development operations at a level of government where the staff is made up of individuals who are physically accessible to residents and who, preferably, reside in the neighbourhood (Atkinson 2002, 3).

Production patterns have been changed as a result of the Covid problem. Poor nations are building more regional value chains to disperse risk, decrease vulnerability, increase resilience, and promote industrial growth. By discovering and maintaining horizontal and vertical links, the regional pacts can ensure that small firms collaborate to reduce transaction costs and gain from economies of scale (Fortunto 2020, 23). Decentralized production and marketing are frequently needed to foster local resilience and economic recovery in place of overly centralised organisations (Moolakkattu and Chathukulam 2022, 1).

More decentralisation must be pushed for on the basis of the subsidiarity concept. Concerns concerning local government finance, weaknesses in the health mandate given to local governments, and the degree to which they can handle health matters independently have been brought to light by COVID-19. Even when local governments handle pandemics, it is more important to maintain services and safeguard people's livelihoods. When it comes to addressing the humanitarian aspect of the epidemic, the role of city governments may be the most obvious. Due to their proximity to the populace, local governments will have a stronger chance of influencing their constituents' behaviour, which will be crucial during a pandemic (Moolakkattu and Chathukulam 2022, 1).

The societal process of sustainable development is difficult. A trade-off must be made when social, economic, and environmental goals cannot all be achieved at the same time. For new behavioural patterns to support sustainable development, institutional and individual roles and responsibilities must alter. These difficulties call for novel ways to decision-making and action. The investigation of social, economic, and environmental components and their linkages requires a multidisciplinary approach; coordination between the many authorities and interests is also necessary (Bass, Clayton and Pretty 1995). Therefore, local governance is a better option to achieve sustainable development goals.

Sustainable Development: A Theoretical Analysis

The definition of sustainability is to uphold and preserve anything such that it lasts without ceasing, diminishing, surrendering, fading, or changing (Gove 1961). The term ‘sustainable development’ was originally used by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature in 1969; however, it only became widely used after the World Commission on Environment and Development's 1987 report was published (WCED). The Brundtland Report, often known as this study, described sustainable development as ‘development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’ (WCED 1987, 8). Through the prism of a number of international conferences, it is possible to partially comprehend the origins of sustainable development in global governance. The first three of these were the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002, the UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in 1972, and the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Each of these conferences made a contribution to the multi-stakeholder, intergovernmental setting of the

policy stage for the interaction of the economy, environment, and society. The fundamental tenet of sustainable development is that human action and decision-making must incorporate social and environmental concerns. The conclusions of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit (UNCED) and the 2002 Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development highlight the significance of the right to knowledge and participation for attaining sustainable development. Due to its emphasis on intergenerational equity and links to respect for the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, democracy is the only political system capable of adequately upholding the principles of participatory decision-making as associated with sustainable development (Ward 2012, 41-42).

In acknowledgment of the success of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in decreasing poverty and the need to complete the mission of eradicating poverty, the UN adopted the ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It includes: No poverty, Zero hunger, ensure good health and well-being , quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, decent work and economic growth, achieve sustainable industry, innovation and infrastructure, reduced inequalities, sustainable cities and communities, responsible consumption and production, climate action to compact climate change, save life below water, save life on land , ensure peace, justice and strong institutions and strengthening partnership for achieving sustainable development goals (UN The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2021).

The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2021 describes some substantial effects in numerous sectors that are already obvious as the epidemic; Covid-19 continues to spread. For the first time in more than 20 years, the rate of extreme poverty increased globally, and in 2020, 119 to 124 million people were returned to extreme poverty. A generational disaster in education is possible because an extra 101 million youngsters no longer meet the minimal reading competency standard, which might undo two decades of educational progress. Domestic violence against women has grown, child marriage is predicted to increase after having declined recently, and unpaid and underpaid care labour is increasingly and disproportionately resting on the shoulders of women and girls, hurting possibilities for education and employment (Guterres 2021,2). Despite the worldwide economic slump, the concentrations of the main greenhouse gases are still rising. The climate catastrophe has come

and is having an impact all across the world as the average global temperature has risen by around 1.2°C over pre-industrial levels. The epidemic has also resulted in huge increases in debt distress and sharp declines in foreign direct investment and commerce, particularly for developing nations (Guterres 2021, 2).

At this juncture, in order to achieve sustainable development, significant changes in production and consumption patterns will be necessary. These changes frequently come at a substantial cost to the same people that have up until now benefited from ecologically unsustainable production and consumption. Additionally, it is claimed by the criticism of capitalism that the very design of the system is what drives these unsustainable purchasing decisions. Due to the need of the capitalist production system on ever-increasing profits and ever-increasing economic development, citizens are trained to spend more, frivolously consume, and never be satisfied. Capitalism secures the poverty of many in order to maximise the profits of a select few since the same system also requires a pool of underpaid workers who can be counted on to work for a minimal pay (Lele 2013,314). It must be acknowledged that a comprehensive definition of sustainable development encompasses not only long-term viability but also environmental justice and quality of life across generations. Additionally, a comprehensive definition of well-being will need to go beyond only independence from oppressive material squalor, bad health, illiteracy, and other factors outlined in Amartya Sen's concept of 'development as freedom'. Additionally, it has to give people a place where they may enjoy nature for what it is worth and how it lifts them up (Lele 2013, 316).

In this setting, the key assumptions of modernization and dependence are under scrutiny. Modernization theorists view a number of factors as indicators of development, including social mobility, urbanisation, literacy, the breakdown of married families, free enterprise, and cultural secularisation (Kumar 1984,1082-83). The dependency paradigm, which emerged from a criticism of modernization, proposes a new application of Marxist theorising on imperialism and the development notion it symbolises. The colonizer's residence and the colony, in accordance with the latter, have historically been connected in a 'centre-periphery' fashion. The geographic 'centre' and 'periphery' serve as the foundation for the division of labour, skill, and knowledge on a global scale. Due to the fact that the center's wealth causes the periphery's poverty, the latter cannot escape it without altering the system as it has been for a long time (Kumar 1984, 1082-83; Wejnert 2005).

A critique of modernization's impacts led to the emergence of the 'alternative development' concept. It focuses on the substance of development—both its processes and results—and has just recently become a topic of heated dispute. These alternative theories are qualitative and 'spiritual' approaches to social development, allowing 'deprived' people to engage in it in order to regain their 'capacity', to use Amartya Sen's term (Ishii 2001,310). Schumacher's idea that 'small is beautiful' is the philosophical foundation of this paradigm. According to this paradigm, a person is the basic unit of the developmental process. Since man is little, Schumacher's statement that 'man is small, and, therefore, small is beautiful' is accurate (Schumarcher 1973). Gandhi placed a strong focus on the independence and self-reliance of local villages and small-scale manufacturing. Both of them contend that physiocentric planning aiming at the development of suitable technology, institutional changes in favour of people's participation in decision-making, and increasing community independence are the answers to development issues (Kumar1984, 1083; Ishii 2001, 297-312). Gandhi expressed numerous serious concerns about the unbridled use of contemporary science and technology. He also contended that both capitalism and socialist models taken from the West would be detrimental to India's growth and that the country could only advance on the basis of its own traditions (Naik 1983,352). The foundation of Gandhian development is a moral and ethical view of socioeconomic and political progress. According to his theory, truth and nonviolence are essential elements that shape human behaviour and judgement. He emphasises comprehensive economic decentralisation, with the village managing all economic authority and activities and functioning as a self-governing and self-sufficient development unit. Gandhi's theory of economic growth is grounded on humanity and the whole, balanced development of body, mind, and soul (Tiwari 2020,348).

The concept of sustainable development serves as the cornerstone of the Gandhian development paradigm. Gandhi was a fierce opponent of the contemporary industrial civilization since it had a negative impact on both people and the environment. It just encourages a materialistic desire for money and the self-centered pursuit of earthly pleasures. Gandhiji saw modern civilization as 'Satanic'. A fundamental aspect of contemporary civilization is the unending variety of desires. Gandhi urged people to reduce their demands and consumption as a consequence, lessening environmental stress by removing toxic waste (Dayananda 2017, 42-43). In his book Small is Beautiful, Schumarcher beautifully quoted

Gandhi that, 'Earth provides enough to satisfy- every man's need, but not for every man's greed' is valid in this context (Schumacher 1973, 19).

Gandhi's viewpoint is similar to that of John Rawls, who asserted that government should work toward preserving circumstances and achieving objectives that benefit all people equally (Rawls 1971). The following two tenets serve as the foundation for Rawls' theory of justice. The most complete collection of fundamental rights that are consistent with a matching set of liberties for others should be available to everyone on an equal basis. Second, social and economic disparities need to be set up so that they are connected to positions and offices that are available to everyone and that are legitimately expected to benefit everyone. Although income and wealth distribution need not be equal, everyone must benefit from it (Rawls 1971).

The alternative development method thus presented a wide range of developmental alternatives. Some of the crucial elements in this more recent paradigm are information dissemination equity, economic benefits, and other considerations; however, the precise mix would differ by nation. This new emphasis on development led to an understanding that the poor in rural and urban areas should be the primary target of development activities, and that, more generally, closing socioeconomic disparities through advancing the lagging sectors was a significant objective in many nations. Decentralization of some of these tasks to the village level typically occurs in conjunction with people's participation in self-development planning and implementation. The main characteristic of this is self-reliance and independence in development with an emphasis on the potential of local resources (Sharma and Shika 2016,3-4). The concept of redistribution with growth, or distributive justice, was strongly advocated (Sundharam 1997, 100-01; Mehta 1999, 15). This perspective on development sees it as a process of increasing people's liberties, or the reduction of a person's deprivation (Sen 1999).

This suggests that the effectiveness of all development programmes is determined by how they affect people's lives as well as incomes and other outcomes. Therefore, advancement requires strong governance, which calls for more institutional involvement, a decentralised power dynamic, and freedom from discrimination, adherence to human rights, and people-centered economic and social policies (UNDP 2002; Eapen 2006). Overall, development may be defined as a process that enhances the welfare of people.

The idea of empowered participatory governance, put forth by Fung and Wright, is appropriate in this situation; it is a method of institutional reform that extols the virtues of participation, deliberation, and empowerment by enabling the general public to effectively participate in and influence laws that have a direct impact on their lives. As a result, there are now more chances and chances for people participation to improve democracy and create a new development culture that will serve as a counterbalance to economic globalisation (Fung and Wright 2003).

Participatory Governance for Achieving Sustainable Development

The development of participatory governance is credited in public policy literature to the paradigm shift from 'government' to 'governance', as criticisms of the shortcomings of representative political systems of the government shifted the focus to the standard of democratic practises within such institutions (Heinelt 2018). Participatory institutions are relatively new developments in democratic governance that primarily come from the global south. Examples include the most well-known participatory city budgeting case in Porto Alegre, Brazil, village governance in Kerala, India, as well as innovations like citizen's juries in the United Kingdom and new forums like ward committees in the local government in South Africa, at least in theory if not in practise (Piper and Deacon 2009). The neighbourhood, town, rural, or urban community has been recast as potential development agents since these places are where groups of people routinely interact socially. Areas, especially tough places (the rural, the disadvantaged, the marginalised), are characterised as such because communities may be strengthened, created, rebuilt, and encouraged to assist themselves (Eversole 2011).

According to the theory of participatory democracy, which was initially put forward in the writings of Rousseau, J.S. Mill, and G.D.H. Cole, participation gives the general public power over issues like agenda, decision-making, and implementation (Wolfe 1985). Robert Putnam's examination of the requirements for developing a strong, responsive, and effective representative institutional framework contributed to the spread of the idea that participation is a means of efficiency. According to this system of things, the two main requirements for establishing good government are people's involvement in public affairs and a civic culture in which participants are related through horizontal relations of reciprocity and trust rather than vertical relations of authority and dependency (Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti 1993). Even when they disagree on important issues, members of a civic community are generally helpful,

respectful, and trustworthy to one another, which contributes to the effectiveness and stability of democratic government by both internally instilling cooperative, solidarity, and public-spirited habits in the members and externally enhancing interest articulation and aggregation (Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti 1993). According to Putnam, they together comprise social capital, which comprises facets of social organisation like trust, norms, and networks that may increase society performance by permitting coordinated actions (Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti 1993). It was emphasised that social ties are significant for a number of reasons, including the fact that they encourage individuals to participate in political discussions and make it possible for groups to conduct collective action with the intention of interacting with the government. Participation not only influences public opinion, but it also creates informed, democratically aware individuals who are mindful of their right to participate in politics. More crucially, by limiting elected officials' power, participatory organisations may be able to keep them accountable (Chandhoke 2012).

The second prerequisite takes into account participation as voice, equity, and empowerment and expresses a desire for advancing the democratic process by recognising and including previously marginalised groups in society (Puri 2004).

In order to counter the exercise of power, Bizikova et. al. (2014) argued that participation helps to support the democratic rationale for the intrinsic social desirability of equity of access, empowerment of process, and equality of outcome. It also provides access to practical knowledge and experience, helps people learn about new problem perceptions, and helps people identify new difficult questions (Bizikova et.al. 2014).

Participation is crucially important in any analysis of progress in larger human dimensions, and vice versa. In contrast, because it is restricted to electoral participation alone and excludes any meaningful role in decision-making, even at the local level, public participation in contemporary representative democracies is severely confined. This results in an extreme lack of trust in people as well as unequal access to resources like food, healthcare, and education. Participation is expected to reverse this tendency by distributing power from the few to the many, fostering conflicting forms of authority, releasing the population's creative potential, particularly that of the poor, and giving them the freedom to make the most important decisions in their own lives. As a result, people have the chance to link participation with self-reliance and collaborate to better their own lives as well as the lives of others. Through the

actions of government representatives and citizen participants, participatory institutions have the power to promote democracy by extending rights and benefits to individuals who were previously excluded (Wampler 2008). According to Smith, this has a positive effect on enhancing public awareness and promoting the emergence of grassroots political leadership. Participation in such institutions is meant to enhance political awareness and civic responsibility. People acquire new abilities more quickly when they are required to take responsibility for the decisions made by local authorities. Through involvement in local governance, people acquire the ability to prioritise and choose among leaders. They learn about keeping government leaders accountable. Such education should ultimately benefit the central government as more talented politicians rise through the ranks (Smith 1985).

Here is where decentralisation is first prominently mentioned in conversations about democracy and development. Decentralization is viewed as the movement of power from a central authority to lower levels in a geographical hierarchy when it comes to governance. Three components make up decentralisation: delegation, which aims to give independent or partially autonomous development agencies managerial authority; de-concentration, which involves moving administrative responsibilities from the federal to local levels of government; and devolution, which involves giving local levels of government more authority and responsibility (Cheema and Rondinelli 2007). Devolution among these three creates the strongest connection between dtyemocracy, public involvement, and citizen empowerment.

Conclusion

Prior discussions of sustainable development centred on safeguarding natural resources for use now and in the future. As a result, it was described as development that satisfies the requirements of the current generation without jeopardising the capacity of future generations to satisfy their own needs. The modern concept of sustainable development emphasises that it is a continuous process of meeting social, economic, and environmental requirements, with economic growth being careful to protect the ecological and social systems that are essential to communities and societies. Neither the spatial needs of the economy and society nor the needs of ecological preservation are given precedence in the process of sustainable development, which requires striking a balance between human-made assets (physical capital), natural capital, social capital, and human capital (Mahzouni 2008). Here local governance is identified as the better option to ensure sustainable development by keeping

a delicate balance. However, institutional and structural decentralisation alone cannot ensure democracy and sustainable development at the local level. Instead, we needed fiscal decentralisation (both vertical and horizontal), a proactive response from the government backed by political will, engaged public participation, and the emergence of a participatory political culture. Together, these factors reinforce and support sustainable development, which eliminates all forms of deprivation and environmental hazards.

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Politics and the Simultaneous Disintegration and Production of Journalism: Towards a Genealogy of News as An Economically Viable Product

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the changing notions of political journalism in the post-liberalisation era in India and attempt to explore the shifting relationship between the political sphere and the public sphere as increasingly journalistic practice becomes a political practice. To understand the broader changes in the Indian media landscape, this paper studies the Indian news media at this critical juncture, when political accountability and the functioning of journalism witness a considerable change. Scant scholarly attention has been paid to critical studies on journalism in India and addressing that gap, this paper argues that the political intervention in journalism in the post-liberalisation period in India calls for a rethinking of the issues of truth, objectivity, events and pubic documentation of experiences or information related to politics. Drawing from several instances, this paper seeks to show how, in the neoliberal period politics has become a destructive and creative act in relation to journalistic practices, as it grounds the simultaneous disintegration and production of journalism.

Keywords: Journalism, political economy, neoliberalism, paid news, political journalism.

Introduction

'A weekly political and commercial paper, open to all parties but influenced by none'— that is how the first newspaper in India, titled *Bengal Gazette or The Calcutta General Advertiser*, described itself in 1780. Popularly known as 'Hicky's Gazette' referring to expatriate Irishman, James Augustus Hicky, who described himself as 'the first and the late printer to the Honourable Company', started India's first newspaper. I do not intend to discuss the colonial journalistic practices in detail here, rather I aim to underline the candid declaration of the intrinsic relationship of politics and journalism in India from its very inception. Most of the studies on colonial journalism in India or more specifically Kolkata dwell on historical and biographical material but ignore the political implications of it. However, there is a shift in journalism scholarship that deals with the post-emergency or more precisely post-liberalisation period, which is predominantly centred on Indian politics and its implications. However, what is important to remember is that this first instance of journalism and news publication was marked with a political quandary as historian A. H. Watson (1929, 169) commented, 'Newspapers were naturally born to trouble'. This remains true in the prevailing political conditions of India as well as in those early days. It is perhaps stating the obvious that the first paper was not impartial in publishing and selecting news for its pages and that had a direct connection with Hicky's personal relationship with high-ranking administrative and political authorities. Hence, the nexus between politics and journalism in India was evidently shaped by socio-historical conditions.

The following section of the paper offers a brief overview of how discourses related to journalism and politics overlap and underline the factors that endorsed the emergence of journalism as a politically and socially influencing factor. The next section focuses on the changing notion of political journalism in the post-liberalisation period in India and how it reflects the broader changes in the idea of politics and news media in general. The subsequent section explores how news is positioned as an economically viable product within the neoliberal imperative. The succeeding section, drawing from several instances of paid journalism seeks to argue that political action openly and deliberately *constitutes* the 'events' as objective reportage and results in the simultaneous disintegration and production of journalism.

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The Overlapping of Journalism and Political Discourse

Before going further into the complex relationship of journalism and Indian politics in the post-1990s, it is necessary to briefly mention the discourse of journalism and how it overlaps with political discourse. The emergence of journalism as a politically and socially influencing factor was contingent on the establishment of its commercial status. The most noteworthy development within this process was the steady consolidation of a style of publication intended to influence the propertied and influential classes. This was linked to the growing profitability which enabled these newspapers to become independent of political control. Their journalism was often hailed as a Fourth Estate, although this was neither a consistent nor an absolutely clear set of practices (Conboy 2004). The effort to establish a Fourth Estate was, however, a vital contribution to the discursive formation of journalism. In the mid-nineteenth century, newspapers in particular were already too reliant on advertising and economic stability for the need to genuinely consider defying the political institutions; nonetheless, journalism as the Fourth Estate was able to provide a fundamental rhetorical conduit between the interests of the newspapers and those of the newly enfranchised British middle classes. 'Both sets of activities, middle-class involvement in politics and the establishment of profitable and independent newspapers, claimed legitimacy through this connection and through it forged the dominant discourse of journalism' (Conboy 2004, 109). Hence the term 'Fourth Estate' itself encapsulates a double articulation of institutionalized political and journalistic practices that depend a great deal on a specific set of ideologies concerning its function as the Fourth Estate.

The factors that contributed to the shift of the way politics hitherto influenced journalism and vice versa emerged from the intersection of complex political, economic, and cultural changes. These transformations commenced approximately in the mid-1980s with a series of economic liberalisation policies and led up to globalization in the early 1990s. 'The difference between the two, however, is based on the emphasis on marketing India in the early 1990s' as Rupal Oza explains, 'as an important global destination for foreign investment versus the domestic

liberalisation policies of the 1970s and 1980s that set the precedent for the changes initiated in 1991' (Oza 2001, 1071).

Major political and economic changes were taking place already before the 1990s, as per the policy shift from investment in infrastructure development to an emphasis on consumer durables. The economic reforms initiated in the early 1990s were anticipated by a series of factors manifested most particularly in the depletion of foreign exchange reserves (Jalan 1991). Recommended by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, India started aggressive measures to invite foreign direct investment. After the economic logic established in the 1980s, that of the middle class and consumer durables, the economic policies of the 1990s renewed their emphasis on India's consumer base, projecting it as a 'land of opportunity' (Rajagopal 2001, 61).

In addition to these impressive shifts in the political economy, urban topography and cultural politics also witnessed a transformation. One of the most extraordinary changes witnessed in cultural politics was the privatization of television. From three state-run channels available in metropolitan areas in 1987, within less than a decade approximately forty international and domestic satellite and cable channels, such as CNN, BBC, Zee, and STARTV, made their presence felt. Within 1998 India witnessed the launch of the private twenty-four-hour news channels and more than three hundred satellite channels were on the air by 2007. Of these, hundred and six broadcast news in fourteen languages and as many as fifty-four of these were twenty-four-hour news channels in eleven languages. However, these data do not include international and local cable networks that also telecast news daily (Mehta 2008). The print media including daily newspapers and magazines sectors also witnessed a sea change with steep competition from various segments and the proliferation of multinational media brands with perceptible signs of an opening economy. A steady increase in the vernacular press and specialized magazine publication has also had its lineage in the immediate post-liberalisation period.

But what is the nature of the change in the ambience of political reporting in India? As a veteran journalist and scholar Harish Khare notes; the political correspondent and the political leaders belonged to the same world; most of them came from the same cultural and intellectual class and

milieu. Political correspondents and editors like Chalapathi Rau, Prem Bhatia, Pran Chopra, S. Nihal Singh, Ajit Bhattacharjea, George Verghese, G.K. Reddy, Sudharan Bhatia or Inder Malhotra came 'mostly from the upper castes and classes, as did leaders, whether they belonged to the Congress, Communist or Swatantra parties. Urbane, educated, literate, sophisticated, they inhabited the same mental world' (Khare 2007, 40). Since the late 1960s partisanship seemed to creep in and the earlier civility began to fade away as ideology replaced national sentiment. Two things happened at this juncture; first, there was a change in the country's political chemistry and second, a new section of entrepreneurs demanded the attention of political reporters even if that came through illegitimate means. The Emergency (1975-1977) further deteriorated the earlier cozy relationship between the political reporter and the political leader and increasingly became to be considered unhealthy, and inimical to the media's democratic pretensions. This further snowballed into an antagonistic relationship between the government and the media. Moreover, the political reporter had to share the limelight with the crime reporter, the state, diplomat and defence correspondent (Khare 2007, 45). In the post-1990s period, already politics and journalism both were being influenced by the open market, economic liberalisation process that made democracy synonymous with liberalization, privatization and deregulation. The 'transactional' relations promoted by the open market policies turn citizens into consumers who are exposed to a wider and more resourceful communication network. Such a network, however, is constructed and administered with the consideration of maximization of profit (Sinha 1999). It becomes evident that the market, with its professed thesis of limited liability, would ensure the survival of the fittest without explaining the process by which some acquire 'fitness' and others are destined to remain 'unfit'. The consequences of this process of 'fitting' the political news in post-1991 India, change the fundamental notions of news, events and journalistic practice. In the following sections, I shall deal with the changing notion of political journalism in the post-liberalisation period in India and how it reflects the broader changes in the idea of politics and news media in general.

Changing Notion of Political Journalism: Readership, Local Politics and The Neoliberal Market

Here I must hasten to add that as I wish to concur with the scholars (Kohli 1994; Sinha 1999; Toor 2000) that although the arguments may seem to believe that liberalisation in India initiated in post-1990s, and that preceding this period India was a somewhat socialist leaning country and was not. even slightly, incorporated into the expanding capitalist system— nothing can be less accurate than that. Nehruvian 'socialism' was no more than import-substitution pursued within the format of a welfare state. Liberalisation in India essentially began tentatively under Rajiv Gandhi's moderate tenure in the late 1980s but proceeded only cautiously due to criticism and active resistance from various quarters (Kohli 1994).

Nevertheless, it is still necessary to underline 1991–92 as a definite watershed rather than a point on a continuum because it is at this time that an unambiguous shift in rhetoric occurs and liberalisation emerges as the only way out of a fiscal and monetary predicament of the Indian state. Hence, arguably India has been a chiefly capitalist social formation since 1947 and has effectively been a keen participant in the global economy all along. Hence, I wish to contend that the post-1990s witnessed a new conjuncture of economic, social, cultural and of course political life in India that negotiated in a complex and dialectical way to a global process of late capitalism.

Although according to survey report, India is experiencing an unprecedented boom in news media but interestingly, there has been a steady decline in the readership of political news over the years. Niche international titles are flocking to India and, not to be outdone, local publication houses are launching targeted special interest titles to cash in on the advertiser's liking for suitable editorial environments for their brands (RISJ 2013).

Here it is also important to look at the attributes of the contemporary Indian media audience as the citizens of a liberalized, globalized, 'modern' nation-state. As the cover story of a leading English language magazine proclaims, 'Swelling, upwardly mobile audiences, drawn by the strong urge to acquire the trappings of good taste, are streaming into art galleries and concert halls' (Outlook 1997, 57). And who are these people with 'trappings of good taste'? Rather expectedly they are the 'burgeoning Indian middle class that has the cash to shower on activities that serve to separate them from the hoi polloi' (Outlook 1997, 58). In fact, if I may mention in passing that in postcolonial India the overwhelming influence of English language on journalism, in particular,

and socio-cultural scenario, in general, is proven by the fact the most circulated English-language broadsheet daily in the world is *The Times of India*.

Thus, journalism and news content must modify and to a certain extent must be 'manufactured' to suit the reader's economy of desire. Many critics believe that a convergence process is underway, in which various 'populist' preoccupations - by definition vulgar, frivolous, and 'downmarket' in style and (lack of) content - may be blamed for obscuring the previously admirable standards of 'excellent' reporting. Many of these opponents argue that this method would inevitably result in 'bite-size McNugget journalism,' as BBC's Andrew Marr's used the phrase, and would result in a 'dumbing down' effect. Some argue that it is becoming so intense that journalism's traditional social obligations are becoming more antiquated in a world of 'reality-based' infotainment (Allan 1999, 202). This shift has far-reaching ramifications for public information and democracy. Bob Franklin, a veteran news-media scholar, coined the term 'Newszak' to describe news as a product developed and 'processed' for a certain market and presented in increasingly homogeneous 'snippets' that impose only minor demands on the viewer (Franklin 199, 4).

Taking into account all these aspects, in neoliberal India where does political journalism stand then? First, it has an importance in the local public sphere; as local politics is almost always a lucrative issue for the news media in a multiparty polity like India. Second, elements and individuals from different spheres (entertainment, sports, even fashion) are increasingly being integrated into political discourse to make it more suitable for a wide cross-section of audiences or readers. And third, non-political discussions and issues like sports and entertainment are increasingly being treated as serious political issues or as pseudo-events in Indian news media. Notably, this is what, the increasingly cosmopolitan young urban professional class in India finds appealing— an active participant in the creation of a new aesthete.

Political reportage in post-1991 India witnessed three crucial political-economic developments. First, the paradigmatic shift in the economic policy as I have discussed earlier considerably changed the persona of the political reporter; who is now deemed to be the politician's conspirator, 'he too needed to be devalued and de-legitimized' (Khare 2007, 46). The second aspect is the

emergence of Hindutva politics, in the pre-and post-Babri Masjid demolition years, along with economic dissatisfaction, and India's growing crisis of governability (Kohli1991; Bannerjee 2012). And finally, the 24-hour news channels, the round the clock format called for an unmitigated transformation of the content and form of political reporting and more significantly the notion of the political reporter as well. The majority of newspapers shifted towards more interpretative reporting than conventionally structured political reporting. But what is more important, I believe, is the nexus between the political parties and news-media organizations became blatant enough to make the financial inducement for favourable news stories a common matter as an extension of the 'transactional' relations promoted by the market and progressive corporatization. This is an aspect that has a direct insinuation of the post-1991 political and ostensibly economic conditions.

News As an Economically Viable Product

P.V. Narasimha Rao's government in the 1990s with Manmohan Singh as the finance minister ushered in economic liberalization. The economy somewhat improved from the unparalleled payments crisis and fiscal indiscipline, however, the stock market boom, subsequent to the revival also gave rise to some of the worst and biggest financial scams with political involvement in India after independence. And such direct intervention of politics percolated almost in every sphere and in no time naturalized itself. As a corollary to this, in 2009 what is being witnessed is a naturalization of political intervention in the 'manufacturing' of news reports. As the editor-in-chief of a leading magazine publication candidly confesses, 'Sections of the media are now for "sale". For a price, you can buy news on the front page . . . Indeed, the system is getting fast institutionalised, with TV channels and newspapers approaching politicians, especially during elections, with a "package" which, interestingly, is negotiable. It is an offer difficult to refuse' (Mehta 2009, 24).

The discourse of news values or newsworthiness and its implementation within institutionalised practices, especially in the post-liberalisation period remains problematic. There is a substantial number of studies on 'news values,' (Bell 1995; Dayan and Katz 1992; Zelizer 1992) most of

which are based on a seminal study on the construction of foreign news in the Scandinavian press undertaken in the mid-1960s by Galtung and Ruge (1981). When relying selectively on these attempts to identify the informal and mostly implicit principles or standards of newsworthiness, the following elements may be considered significant: conflict, relevance, timeliness, simplicity, personalization, unexpectedness, continuity, negativity, and so on. Then, news stories may be described in ideological terms to illustrate how these news values help to rule in some sorts of occurrences as 'newsworthy' while ruling out others. Certain 'principles of organisation' or 'frames' control these dynamics of inclusion and exclusion, serving to impose order on the chaotic occurrences of the social world, transforming them into a series of interesting topics. The precise manner in which a specific news item is 'framed' by the journalist professing to provide an 'objective' or 'balanced' report, therefore, takes on different ideological importance (Allan 2002, 75). This ethnomethodological concept of 'frame' may be expanded to argue for an examination of how journalists' everyday routines seek to naturalise the social reality in line with specific discursive standards. He claims that news frames make the world outside firsthand knowledge appear natural; they are 'principles of choosing, accent, and delivery made up of small implicit beliefs about what exists, what occurs, and what counts.' (Gitlin 2003, 6).

When a news story adopts a particular frame, ideally, its principles of selection and rejection make sure that only 'information' content, which is considered to be legitimate, and suitable within the conceptual structure of newsworthiness, is to appear in the account. As Gitlin (2003, 28) explains, 'some of this framing, can be attributed to traditional assumptions in news treatment: news concerns the event, not the underlying condition; the person, not the group; conflict, not consensus; the fact that 'advances the story', not the one that explains it.'

But what I wish to emphasize here is in what way news becomes a product? First, to *manufacture* news as a product that caters to a wide cross-section of targeted readers that constitute a specific set of *consumers*; and second, the *buying and selling* of news (or the news-media-space) for a political purpose— an act that presupposes news as an *economically viable product*. Although, the former point has very serious implications, but in this paper, I specifically engage with the latter.

Disintegration and Production of Journalism

As per the Press Council of India report on paid news, Haryana Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda who allegedly paid money to get positive coverage during the assembly elections in 2009, pointedly comments, 'The journalists are not at fault here because fact-finding journalism has now become a commercialized activity with the present owners having turned newspapers into a business proposition' (As cited in MLR 2011, 180).

But if one alleges the newspapers, then they engage in a diatribe with the politicians. A high-ranking management executive from *Punjab Kesri* (readership 1.04 crore) honestly discloses that the newspaper made anywhere between Rs.10 crore and Rs.12 crore during the assembly election season. 'We had to go in for selling editorial space,' he says, 'because of tremendous pressure from politicians. We were also being pushed by the so-called national English dailies who had their packages and were mopping up revenue. We could not have missed out on the opportunity' (As cited in Media Syndicate 2010).

Similarly, in Maharashtra, the leading English daily *The Hindu* reported recently that chief minister, Ashok Chavan declared he had spent Rs.11,379 on advertising. In another instance, Parcha Kodanda Rama Rao of the Loksatta Party was openly informed by Eenadu, the leading Telugu newspaper with a ninety-lakh readership, that if he paid up like other candidates in the fray, he would get his share of space. 'I was worried that readers were perhaps not even aware that I was contesting and so-called a reporter and paid Rs.50,000. I was promptly rewarded with three half-page colour features on three consecutive days highlighting my worth as a politician and predicting my strong prospects of winning the election' (Raman 2009, 28). Congress MP Sandeep Dikshit in an interview declared that recently a reporter negotiated the price of Rs.2.5 lakh for an hour of live coverage. 'The channel even said they would arrange the crowds.' The MP also revealed that a leading Hindi daily made an offer for positive coverage of his campaign, and 'packages for print and TV for a three-day coverage varied between Rs.12 and Rs.20 lakh' (Raman 2009, 30).

However, the situation is created, perhaps expectedly, by the news-media editorial policies within the shifting perspective of market-oriented editorial practice in post-liberalisation India. The political economy of media exposure makes it difficult for politicians to completely ignore the reciprocal relationship between politics and news. For example, the *Times of India* entirely overlooked the political campaign of BJP MP Lalji Tandon in Lucknow; later he was informed by the newspaper officials that 'he had to pay up' (Raman 2009, 34). Nevertheless, is this a phenomenon involving only the English newspapers, since corporatization as a watershed in post-1991 India made the news media houses depend on their turnovers and the purchasing power of their readers, but the language or vernacular news media simply overwhelms the English ones in its sheer reach and circulation, hence it is an ideal medium for political communication. As a celebrated columnist, Neelabh Mishra comments, 'During the elections, the language media saw an opportunity to lessen the gap in corporate earnings vis-a-vis the English media by their political clout. Political leaders, too, sought to pander to the language media much more than the English media during the elections. The crude hurry inherent in this phenomenon caused more din' (Mishra 2009, 38).

It is redundant to increase the number of examples rather the point is that in the post-liberalisation period politics has become a destructive and creative act— the simultaneous disintegration and production of journalism. None of the other media contents, in the post-liberalisation period, be it films, television programs or even books are such direct production of political intervention.

The present scenario in Indian political journalism lays bare the constructed-ness of news reports and the possibility of political action to openly and consciously *constitute* the 'events' as objective reportage. But then, how can we explain the mass popularity of certain openly politically-biased or partisan news publications? I wish to suggest that it is 'reflective judgment'— as Immanuel Kant explains in his *The Critique of Judgement* (1790) — that invests in the continuing loyalty and popularity of such politically prejudiced journalism. It is the reader's or viewer's judgment, which is regarded as a capacity for reflecting on a given representation *according to a principle*. However, journalism becomes a productive act as it can never be defined exclusively by the

present. As its very nature and structure underpin; the present event (which may or may not be ostensibly political) is subject to a political future and evidently may emerge from a political past. Hence it is important to recognize that there is nothing inherent in an event that makes it political at the same time there is nothing inherent in journalistic practice that makes it non-political. This is a paradoxical position that reminds us of Walter Benjamin's reflections *On the Concept of History* (1940) — the temporality of factual truth, which is implicated in relations of domination, past and present.

Conclusion

The political intervention in journalism in the post-liberalisation period in India calls for a rethinking of the issues of truth, objectivity, events and pubic documentation of experiences or information related to politics. Politics becomes a disintegrating and productive force as events and information 'assemble' through an institutionalized documentation and dissemination process. This political understanding of journalism is problematic in relation to the objectifying trajectory of journalistic practice.

Where then the answer lies in this post-liberalisation era in India? Is it possible or rather desirable to counter it based on the hegemonic conceptual structure of journalism? Hence, for a more involved reader, what is important is not a politically neutralizing narrative of events in news media, but rather an engagement with the logic and 'ideology' (to use a nuanced term) of the incorporation or exclusion which may be translated in journalistic jargon as framing. The heterogeneity of such practices as I have illustrated earlier reclaims the journalistic practice from the hegemonic, dogmatic, homogenizing pretensions of truth and objectivity. That is not to say that such categories must be forgotten altogether rather the multiplicity of them questions the political, social and economically situated act of judgment.

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National Politics and the Working of Federal Dynamic in India

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Abstract

Constitution makers envisioned that federal polity in India would work under the overwhelming nature of national level politics. Nevertheless, the actual capability of center to exercise disproportionate influence is contingent upon the party system and leadership prevailing at any given time. This is borne by over the time working of federalism in India. Working under one party dominant system for prolonged periods, federal polity in India has mostly experienced variable degrees of centralization rather than any trend towards democratic decentralization. Federalism emerged strong only when Congress System was replaced by multi-party system and coalition politics from the late 1980's. Despite having strong presence of regional parties, coalition politics at national level, however, didn't succeed in institutionalizing any significant change in the existing federal structure. The re-emergence of one-party dominant system under Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) from 2014 has again precluded any movement towards decentralization at both institutional and political level. The paper briefly analyses the trajectory of federal polity relative to the nature of national politics in India. The paper further argues that though centralised federal polity is not natural to BJP, the logic internal to national politics under one party dominant system coupled with the ideological stance of "one nation" has gradually overtaken its best bet with cooperative federal polity.

Key Words: Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP), Congress System, Federalism, National Politics.

Introduction

Alongside providing adequate constitutional protection to the strong and united state in India, the constitution makers envisioned federalism as central to good and effective governance in its plural social set up. However, India's federal institutions place relatively weak checks on the power of political party that attains absolute majority in the national parliament (Aiyar and Tillin 2020).

Thus, the nature of Indian federalism is largely determined by the type of political leadership, ideology and party system operating at the national level. The constitution makers envisioned the predominant role of national level politics largely because of its presumed role as custodian of the systematic modern transformation of India. It was bestowed with powers to secure the best possible defense, diplomatic engagement with world and was also thought as ultimately being responsible for securing modern welfare state for its citizens in general[i]. National level politics was also seen as somewhat above the more parochial considerations; the latter having the negative tendency of dissipating the political energy that can accrue from strong national politics. Furthermore, in actual practice, the colonial legacy also didn't help democratic decentralization to take deep roots in India. The state shaped by the exigencies of colonial interests did not give away much space for power sharing to emerge as legitimate model of governance in India. The most daunted resistance to local self-government has, thus, emerged from within the state structures. The politics that grew in the aftermath of independence was surrounded with halo of sacredness. It was dominated more by the enthusiasm for rapid transformation of India under more or less centralized state rather than any thought for decentralization. The national leadership took upon itself the burden of fostering the conditions which can facilitate the quick transformation of different sectors of society. The one-party dominant system under Congress was equally not favorable for any consensus on power sharing to emerge. Federal polity in India has, thus, witnessed different degrees of centralization rather than any steady trend towards decentralization. The real opportunity for exploring the benefits of decentralized polity emerged only after the breakdown of Congress System. This breakdown was both the effect and cause of many other political changes. The implementation of universal adult franchise and election after election mobilization for vote brought to fore the opportunity and necessity for exploring alternative discourse of mobilization. These alternate discourses also produced new political groups and their leadership. The mobilization around caste, development, region and religion led to emergence of multifarious political groups. This trend towards fragmentation of vote, political allegiances and consequently, parties emerged more prominently at the state level first. The first debacle of Congress system was in 1967 when it lost power to regional parties in nine states and its strength in lower house of parliament was also reduced. At national level, these newly emerged political groups came together against Congress System during the period of emergency imposed by Indira

Gandhi in 1975. The Janata Party became the nodal point of these disparate political interests operating at both national and state level. Though Congress made a comeback in 1980's, it was largely because of the failure of newly emerged opposition groups. The emergence of regional party based national coalition politics from 1989 created the opportunity structure to force an institutional change towards more of a decentralized polity. However, since these coalitions were formed around the core support of national parties like Congress and BJP, which didn't compromise their nationalistic agenda, these coalitions could not foster any significant change in the institutional basis of federal polity. This process of political fragmentation only helped Bhartiya Janata Party (erstwhile Bhartiya Jan Sangh) which could provide a full-term non-Congress government from 1999-2004. Earlier, all such non-congress political formations had been fragile and unable to generate enough confidence among people. BJP has projected itself as a much stronger candidate for protection of National Interest based not on the façade of consensus that informed Congress System but rather on the absence of it. Its politics has, though, not been able to forge any ground up social consensus in India other than imposing a different discourse on polity. Nevertheless, BJP came to occupy the current dominant position only after passing through a history of resistance to Congress System and its own changing stance on federation in India. Though its ideological stance of a more unified state apparently aligns it more towards centralization, yet this is not its natural position on federal polity in India. Its political experience shaped its orientation towards federal polity. Since its inception it has changed from the position of unified state (*Akhand Bharat*) to co-operative federalism from 1980's and now after 2014 election victory it is moving towards an amalgam of both these in the form of National Federalism. For national federalism cooperative federalism is merely a signifier of collective governance (Ghosh 2020). National federalism is closer to a unitary system where federating units are seen more as governance units than any politically autonomous units. National level politics is the space where the major political decisions regarding different sectors of socio-economic policy are taken and states as governing units are expected to cooperate in achieving desired outcomes. The paper aims to trace the trajectory of federal polity relative to the changing nature of national politics in India. After a brief sketch of constitutional scheme of federalism, it is noted that federal polity in India has witnessed three main phases-Centralized Federalism under Congress System (1947-1989), Political Federalism under Multi-Party System and Coalition Politics (1989-2014) and

National Federalism under Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) from 2014. The national federalism effects a blend between unitary state and co-operative federalism. Finally, it is noted that strength of federal governance in India is ultimately contingent upon the capability of political leadership to observe constraints on their power despite having good reasons not to do it.

Constitutional Scheme of Federalism

Though the usual classification of Indian federalism as "atypical" assumes as if there is some golden standard of federal polity, federalism in India can be best understood as a scheme of governance rather than an attempt at providing basis of unity among autonomous political units. Though after the announcement of Independence by British, Indian political leadership had to work hard to make Princely States accept equal position with that of the British provinces[ii], the overwhelming nature of already consolidated British India provided the strong geographical and political base for carving a unitary-type state with federal features. Any compromise towards weak center, as conceived in the Cabinet Mission, was eliminated by the political circumstances that accrued after the partition of India. Though many members of the Constituent Assembly protested the provision of strong Centre, the overwhelming consensus for strong center ensured that centralized federalism became the constitutional scheme. The federation in India was carved along the lines of Canadian experience where federal structure was more of a top-down imposition rather than the voluntary association of American type (Basu et al. 2001). This approach can be understood as one where all conceivable governance powers in a sovereign state are recalled for distribution between different levels of governance. This is different from the situation where sovereign independent units come together to create a federal authority and surrender some of their powers for the purpose of common management of affairs like defense and international relations. The federal provisions in Indian Constitution are, thus, mostly of the nature of planning governance in a geographically vast and culturally diverse country. The governance powers have been delegated to the regional governments through a scheme of division of powers which, however, reserves the fundamental role for the government at the Union Level. While introducing federal provisions in the Constituent Assembly, Ambedkar stressed that Indian federalism avoids the rigidity and legality of federal constitutions in general by providing for a longer Concurrent and Union Lists[iii]. All this was done to secure the predominant role of the Union Government in

modern transformation and protect its initiatives from encountering any hindrance from the exclusionary jurisdiction of the states. As late as 1977, Supreme Court upheld the notion of Centralized federalism when Chief Justice Hameedullah Beg speaking for the Court said on 6th May, 1977:

"In a sense, the Indian Union is federal. But the extent of federalism in it is largely watered-down by the needs of progress and development of country which has to be nationally integrated, politically and economically coordinated and socially, intellectually and spiritually uplifted. In such a system, the states cannot stand in the way of legitimate and comprehensively planned development of the country in the manner directed by the Central Government"

Nevertheless, the constitutional scheme still left much in the domain of the regional governance while also facilitating their cooperation in carrying out the policies made by the Union Government. The constitution bound both Union and States to the federation denying them any option to exit from it. Independent Judiciary, as an important federal institution, has also played its role in holding federating entities accountable for the constitutional mandate. Though the Constitution showed its preference for strong Union by reserving residuary powers for the Centre, states were conceived as primary nodes of governance. Union Government ultimately relies on the state government machinery for fulfilling its policy initiatives. Apart from the constitutional scheme, the actual dynamics of federal polity are largely determined by the type of party system and political leadership that is governing at the National Level. The constitution makers believed that emergency provisions of the constitution particularly the imposition of President's Rule in states (Article 356) would be rarely put to use but it became one the major provisions abused by the powers that be. Its incidence fell only after the Supreme Court laid down checks on this power and forced a reluctance on the political leadership to use it so frequently. Nevertheless, it didn't completely stop the misuse of this provision by the governments at the center. Furthermore, the political expediencies also determine the use of federal powers vis-à-vis states. Union government can easily redraw the boundaries of federal units and transform their nature thus. Though Union government has used this extraordinary power only in response to the dire political needs rather than attempting any schematic change, its more ambitious use cannot be completely ruled out. More recently, this power was put to use in the case of Jammu and Kashmir where its federal status was changed from statehood to union territory and it was also divided into two Union

territories. This has been the most daring use of this power by the Union Government in the post-Independent India where in for the first time the area falling outside the normal scheme of federal division between Union and States was increased. The power to initiate the amendment to Constitution belongs solely to the parliament and has been used to foster a more centralized governance in India. The transfer of subjects of legislation from state list to concurrent list[iv], expanding the scope of Union List, creating pan India governance models in the form of General Sales Tax (GST) and local self-government has been made possible by this amendment power of the Union government.

Congress System and Federalism (1947-1989)

The pioneering trends in Indian federalism were shaped by the peculiar party structure that emerged in post-Independent India. Early on the trajectory of federalism was largely determined by the evolution of Congress System itself. The dominant nature of Congress System equally subsumed the incipient forces of decentralization in the form of regionalization (denationalization) of party system. Thus, the gradual breakdown of this system itself paved the way for emergence of stronger political federalism from 1989 till 2014 when national governments were formed on the basis of coalition with regional parties. This resulted in de facto trend towards cooperative federalism. Nevertheless, federal polity working under the overwhelming leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi was marked by greater concentration of power. “The Center established its early predominance through a number of measures. One was the Planning Commission, Jawaharlal Nehru's vehicle for getting the states to adopt the strategy of planning led by the public sector in order to ensure rapid national development. Another was the location of basic industries in the public sector, mostly under central control. A third measure was centralization of power to regulate the development of private industries through licensing and control. This was followed by nationalization of insurance, aviation and, in 1969, acquisition of what was called the "commanding heights of the economy" through nationalization of major commercial banks”(Bagchi 2003). The era of Nehru was particularly marked by performative idea of “consensual model” which even precluded academic scholarship from examining the conflictual aspects of Indian polity including the strain in the center-state relations (Dua 1979). During

Nehru's tenure as Prime Minister, Congress remains dominant party winning the General Elections of 1952, 1957 and 1962 at both Central Level and in most of states. The unified party structure forced a culture of acquiesce and it became difficult for state level leadership to assert regional identity. The party high command controlled the intra-party disputes and didn't allow the inter-governmental disputes to emerge as the constitutional or legal issues. Though constitution makers had visualized a limited role for Article 356 and expected its use in highly exceptional circumstances[v], its misuse for partisan interests became fashionable very early on in Indian polity(Dua 1979; Rajashekara 1987). Its first use in Punjab, only in the second year of coming into effect of the Constitution, was caused by intra-party dispute within the Congress. The use of Presidents Rule in a situation where central government felt that state government has lost "confidence of the people" became fashionable from 1959 when a Communist Party government was removed from power in Kerala. The same logic was used by Janata Party when it dismissed nine Congress state governments through a single proclamation on April, 30 1977. In fact, Presidents Rule became the serious subject of scholarship only after this unprecedented act of Janata party (Dua 1979). Sarkaria Commission on centre-state relations (1988) identified 26 cases where Presidents Rule was not inevitable. The first Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) report on Centre-state relations noted that introduction of planning led to further increase in the dependence of states on central resources by widening the gap between needs and resources. It further noted that "nearly three-fifths of the plan expenditure incurred by the states in the first three plans was directly financed by the Centre and almost the whole of the rest indirectly through Finance Commission grants and shared taxes"(Commission 1968, 17). The devolution through planning commission was made under Article 280 as discretionary grant bypassing the constitutional mechanism of devolution through Finance Commission. This led to further centralization even when the constitutional scheme of federal relations was kept intact by the Government.

Political Federalism (1989-2014)

Congress System began to decline from the 4th General Elections of 1967. The strength of the party was reduced by margin of 80 seats in Lower House of Parliament and it lost power in 9 states the population of which constituted 3/5th of the population of India(Palmer 1967). The one-party dominant system finally came to end when congress lost power in 1989 elections and it heralded

an era of minority and coalition governments. In this election, Congress party's plurality was reduced to under 40% which no longer converted into majority of seats (Sridharan 2008). From 1989 till 2014, it were the coalition governments that ruled at the centre. These coalitions were built with a significant support from regional parties and state-level leadership also came to exercise tremendous influence at national level. The vote share of regional parties in national elections increased to 45% during 1990's from around 20-30% between 1950 and 1980 (Ziegfeld 2012). The coalition nature of governments forced a consensual model of centre-state relations. The intra-party accommodation of the Congress era was replaced by inter-party accommodation of diversity via the route of broad-based coalition governments (Adeney and Bhattacharyya 2018). The first classic case of this trend was United Front Government formed after 1996 national elections and comprising of 14 regional parties. It was headed by H. D. Devegowda who was himself a regional leader. The regional leaders played a significant role in running the affairs; from the choice of ministers to other major policy decisions. The Common Minimum Programme of this coalition government promised more role for the states in the development planning, subjecting centrally sponsored schemes (CSS) to more state control and bringing changes in Article 356 to prevent its misuse (Khan 2003). Nevertheless, this phase could not alter the institutional basis of federalism in India. The national parties Indian National Congress (INC) and Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP), which from within or without formed the real core of these coalitions, were supportive of reforms in the centre-state relations so long as they do not radically alter the constitutional scheme of federal polity. Thus, despite many political trends towards consensual politics, it could not sustain the real momentum of institutional decentralisation. Also, the regional parties that became part of these national coalitions followed their partisan interests rather than evolving any code for strengthening power sharing between centre and states. As the coalition politics matured from late 1990's under BJP led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and Congress led United Progressive Alliance UPA (I & II), any movement towards structural changes in federal polity was further arrested.

Promise of Cooperative Federalism meets with the rise of BJP as Dominant Party

The gradual rise of BJP into a majority party has contributed towards its eclectic experience on federalism in India. Though ideologically it is attuned to more of a unified state undergirded by the idea of "one nation" (Aiyar and Tillin 2020), its long political trajectory coupled with its fairly good experience of governing a federal polity has also aligned it towards promoting the cause of federalism as well. In the area of center-state relations, its political stance of strong state is undercut by its support for free market economy (Sharma and Swenden 2018). The latter may push governments to allow flexibility in the working of overall governance set-up so that each component contributes towards facilitating more investment and growth. The promotion of free market also requires that much of the regulatory norms are relaxed so that various stakeholders don't feel hesitant to take initiatives for boosting economy. Though Center being responsible for overall fiscal health of economy, it equally uses its financial regulatory powers to subject states to fiscal discipline. The experience of running coalition governments from 1998-2004 early on helped BJP to accommodate its coalition partners while remaining on guard regarding its ideological content (Singh 2013; Ogden 2012). Thus, BJP was successful in entrenching itself both as an alternative discourse and party. Its critique of Congress secularism as mere appeasement and its projection of itself as the true saviour of majority community attained a more legitimate public space with its coming into power (Ogden 2012). However, its economic policies were naturally aligned with the neo-liberal trend initiated by Congress during early 1990's (ibid, 2012). It is with this initial mixed baggage that BJP came to power in 2014 though with a majority of its own. This majority was further reinforced during its re-election in 2019. This time around BJP is also led by the leadership with no holds barred approach towards execution of its political programmes. In absence of the factors that prevailed in the post-Congress period like minority governments, coalition constraints, dependence on regional parties etc., the capability of BJP even to overdo things has seen a manifold increase. In fact, it took BJP only few initial years to bring its hardcore political agenda to the forefront of its overall governance agenda. This in turn effected a gradual change from merely cooperative to national federalism. The cooperative federalism was pursued through policies like increased devolution to states after acceptance of 14th Finance Commission award, disbanding of Planning Commission and its replacement with a more state centric body of NITI Ayog, introduction of new indirect tax regime of GST which promised more gains to the states in terms of their tax revenue collection (Aiyar and Tillin 2020). Though these

path-dependent decentralizing features, which picked up from the start of liberalization of economy itself, might continue as part of its neo-liberal economic agenda, however, its centralizing political agenda does ensure a competition regarding credit claiming for centrally sponsored schemes and discretionary grants. The gradual increase in welfare schemes to balance the impact of the neo-liberal market economy has enhanced the role of Central government as it is the major sponsor of these schemes. Indian election studies have observed trends in voting behavior from clientelism (discretionary disbursement of benefits to party supporters) to post-clientelism or support for effective delivery of programmatic policies, nevertheless, the credit claiming in case of Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) welfare schemes has from 2014 onwards markedly shifted towards centre (Deshpande, Tillin, and Kailash 2019). In its second term, starting from the year 2019, BJP also took certain decisive steps in terms of implementation of its long-term hard core political agenda like cancelling special federal status of Jammu and Kashmir, implementing contentious policy of granting citizenship on non-secular basis (CAA) (Chandrachud 2020; Bhat 2019) and going ahead with the identification of "doubtful citizens" (NPR). All these steps generated a lot of contention and divided the political groups and civil society in their assessment of these policies. The centralising trend is conspicuous here in so far as these policies aim to cement a much more uniform political community. The federal nature of society and polity is, on the other hand, viewed merely as an instrument of governance rather than the primary means of fostering unity.

Conclusion

The paper aimed to trace the changing nature of federal polity and its dependence on overwhelming influence of the national politics. Although later is itself subject to the type of party system and leadership prevailing at a particular time, the provision of parliamentary democracy based on simple plurality ensures that central government mostly has enough political capability to exert its constitutional and political writ. This coupled with prolonged periods of one-party dominant system has led to more of a centralisation than any sustained movement towards vertical political power sharing. The return of BJP as a majority party after post-Congress phase has again centralised the federal polity despite the reiteration of cooperative federalism. Its unitary political agenda does not remain a standalone phenomenon and has over the time affected its economic and administrative policy as well.

Notes and References:

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[i] As Chairman of Union Powers Committee in Constituent Assembly, Jawaharlal Nehru made it clear that in the aftermath of partition of India "it would be injurious to the interests of the country to provide for a weak central authority which would be incapable of ensuring peace, of coordinating vital matters of common concern and of speaking effectively for the whole country in the international sphere" (CAD, Vol. V, 20 August 1947)

[ii] The territory during British Colonial period was mainly divided between British India (further constituted of British Provinces and Chief Commissioner Provinces) and Princely States. While as former was directly controlled by British the latter was controlled by Princes under the overall supremacy of British.

[iii] Constituent Assembly Debates, Volume VII, November 4, 1948, https://www.constitutionofindia.net/constitution_assembly_debates/volume/7/1948-11-04

[iv] 42nd Amendment transferred 5 subjects from List II (State List) to List III (Concurrent List). A committee constituted by 15th Finance Commission has recommended transferring Public Health to Concurrent List. Same is the case with Water.

[v] Ambedkar while assuring members of Constituent assembly about the possible misuse of this emergency provision said that this Article "will never be brought into operation" and will remain "as a dead letter" except in grave emergency situations.

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Globalisation: A Frankenstein's Monster?

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Abstract

The world economy has been experiencing a crisis for quite some time and it has been multi-dimensional. Globalization was perceived as a solution to realize the economic growth and development of nations across the world. With this purpose, after World War II, the world powers institutionalized globalization through multilateral financial and economic institutions. However, in the recent period, there have been some negative effects of globalization on the same nations and power centres that were the preachers and proponents of globalization. One such institution is the WTO, the cornerstone of the multilateral trading system. The WTO has seen its stature diminishing slowly and now faces an uncertain future, partly due to the rising protectionist trade policies and interventionist economic practices. There have been symptoms of declining cross-border trade and investment flows consistently for the past several years. Currently, the world is dealing with Brexit, and nationalist-populist advocates such as France's Marie le Pen, the USA's Donald Trump, Nigel Farage of Great Britain, Hungarian Viktor Oban, Austria's Norbert Hofer and many others. Political parties and leaders are losing general elections if they speak out in favour of globalization even in the U.S., which has set the ideological agenda of the global capitalist economy since the Second World War. The question is whether the same power centres can steer this new ideological shift and transmit it to the rest of the world, as was done in the past through Bretton Woods Institutions and other means. While addressing the 73rd session of the General Assembly at the United Nations in New York on 25th September 2018, the U.S. President said, "We reject globalism and embrace the doctrine of patriotism" Trump took 'America First' to the United Nations. Interestingly there is any cue of a shift in that policy from the Biden administration. All these developments persuade us to think that the much-hyped globalization wave has been fading with its contradictions and inherent discrimination and the world is entering into a post-globalization phase. The present paper attempts to analyze this hypothesized post-globalization transition from a historical perspective considering the fickle fashions in the theoretical developments in economics since the industrial developments in the West. It is found

that the various schools of economics and macroeconomic theories were developed to suit the transitional stages of development of the western powers which seems to be irrelevant in the eastern, especially Indian, context.

Keywords: - Globalization, Institutional Economy, Post-Globalization, Patriotism, Colonialism

Introduction

Industrial Revolution has made Modern economics an Anglo-Saxon subject (Schumpeter, 1964). All the major schools of thought in modern economics were developed in the specific contexts of economic requirements and stages of economic development of the present-day developed western powers and are often unfit for Asian-African countries due to their socio-economic specificity. The schools of thought like Mercantilism, Physiocracy, Classical Economics, Keynesianism, Monetarism, Supply Side Economics, etc emerged due to policy directions and existing economic requirements of the western powers and are nation-specific. The dominant socio-economic and political philosophy of colonization which started with the Industrial Revolution has been instrumental in restructuring and reshaping the last few centuries. The Industrial Revolution started in England about the time when the East India Company gained its first foothold in India as an imperial power. The Industrial Revolution compartmentalized the economies of the world into developing and developed. Before that, almost all countries of the world were developing at the same pace with even some European countries lagging behind certain traditional powers like India (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2013). The British and Indian peoples had roughly similar per capita income levels before industrialization (Ray, 2005). Within a short span of 125 years, by 1900, India's level of income slips to only one-hundredth of the U.K (Ray, 2005). The Industrial Revolution in Britain should not be treated as a mere economic phenomenon powered by technical knowledge. On the other, it was the result of colonization and subjugation (Banerjee, 2013). There were even treaties for the spheres of influence among European imperial powers and Great Britain became a predominant colonial country having possession of an area nearly a hundred times its land area (Dutt, 1906). The economy of such a huge colonial empire with total control over

territory and populace has not been properly analyzed by the Anglo-Saxon School of Economic thought. It is argued that in post-World War II, institutionalized globalization is nothing but the extension of colonization. The history of colonization can be traced from the 18th century and linked to the present phase of institutionalized globalization. The two world wars were the result of competition for world economic resources to cater to the industries of these hegemonies, required for the continuation of the Industrial Revolution in the west and to reiterate the supremacy of Anglo-Saxon establishments. Colonialism is essentially an economic phenomenon and has outlived its formal political end. So it is argued that the present institutionalized globalization and the turn of the world into the post-globalization phase needs a detailed examination with historical insights.

The present paper is divided into four parts. In the first part, an attempt has been made to trace the historical developments of globalization since the industrialization in the west. The second part is a very brief concept of globalization stretching its meaning and significance from the Industrialization Revolution to the present-day fading of the institutionalized globalization orchestrated by the western powers. The next part presents the concept and practices of the hypothesized post-globalization by various countries of the world. This part attempts to analyze whether the same power centres that steered the ideological shift in the past through Bretton Woods Institutions and other means are capable of this proposed new transition to the post-globalization world. The last part presents the international issues strengthening the view of post-globalization. This part narrates critical issues shaping the post-globalization world order.

Historical Developments of Globalization since Mercantilism.

It seems that the present emerging trend of the world attempting to exit from globalization seems to be consistent with the practice since industrialization in the west. The western powers were changing their ideological leniency from mercantilism to colonialism, then to Keynesianism and for a short period again back to the old classical economics of product and market flexibility in the late 1980s. This fourth part of the paper briefly narrates this shift and the economic and political contexts that suggest the inevitability of the shift. William Pitt who was the Prime Minister of Britain captured the whole land of Canada from the hands of the French in 1760. Robert Clive won

the battle of Plassey in 1757 and Eyre Coote crushed the French power in India in 1761. France was defeated in Europe, Asia and America. William Pitt's family background in colonial trade must have made him realize the potential of colonialism. The most successful East India family was unquestionably that of Pitt (Ray, 2005) The Industrial Revolution was not the result of the policy of classical economics or laissez-faire, but a policy of active state capitalism through the colonization of distant markets for raw materials and finished products. They never followed any of the classical macroeconomic principles. When Britain started following a policy of free trade based on absolute cost and comparative cost doctrine, then the US policy was restrictive, Viz, free internal trade and restricted foreign trade.

However, the Keynesian Revolution succeeded the Industrial Revolution and this Ad-hoc theory of countering the Industrial depression in Britain during the thirties, just before World War II, became the all-encompassing theory of development. I.G Patel writes about his experience in Cambridge in the mid-forties, "It is surprising that 'development', that is the Wealth of Nations, which was the soul and substance of classical economics found little mention in the classroom then" (Patel, 2002) It is interesting to note that the British economists of the 19th century consistently avoided a historical approach to economics, as that would have exposed the British Industrial Revolution in its true colours. Any debate on this direction was stopped as encouraging obscurantism and anti-progress by the new managers of the economy armed with their one-dimensional Anglo-American economic theories. British Industrial Revolution was nothing more or less than the exploitation of the economies of the colonies and the large-scale displacement of the British peasantry, who had to be accommodated in the newly acquired colonies. Industrialization in the national context, relevant to India, was hardly studied and the trend was to superimpose theories developed in a different context, which had already become outdated in the Indian context. One dangerous practice was that the solution to the global economic crisis and depression in advanced capitalism sought to be applied to the economic development of newly independent countries. Dennis Robertson at the outset of his Cambridge Lectures, delivered between 1945-46 to 1956-57, warns undergraduate students about the controversial nature of Keynes's General Theory and to supplement its reading with critical writings on the same.

It is perceived many scholars that laws of economics are relative and valid for particular situations in the economic history of a nation. But to the British economists, the economic forces generated by the Industrial Revolution in that country were universal and economic laws were accordingly formulated. What is good for Britain became good for the entire world irrespective of the socio-economic differences. This view of the dominant British economists sidelined scholars such as Arnold Toynbee and that too without a historical method to understand why one-half of the land in the United Kingdom is owned by 2512 persons (Toynbee, 1969) Trying to universalize economic laws has been one of the greatest disservices to the science of economics. The attempt by third-world countries to formulate their economic development plans based on these laws has created serious imbalances in their economy and has kept them perpetually indebted, leading to the erosion of their economic policy independence. Economic theories are relevant to particular situations and periods and have to be viewed in the context of the economic events of the time. Economic theories influence the policies of the time, as well as influenced by the same.

The economic experiences of a particular country need not be universalized. Mercantilists wrote for the situation of their time, as much as Keynes did. They did not offer a permanent policy for trade and were well aware of the fact that their argument did not apply in the long run, not to speak of a state of long-run equilibrium. It is obvious whether it is a theory of protectionism, propounded by the mercantilist economists of the 17th and 18th centuries or the theory of laissez-faire as propounded by British Economists in the 19th century, these theories were the products of their times and circumstances, and were designed to serve the 'wealth of nation' through the 'interest of the nation'. The limitation of the market was sought to be conquered by military domination and policy of trade barriers through protective duties, and domination of trade routes by the British Navy. Rules of the market change according to the requirement of the dominant players.

Keynes was the guiding deity of the post-war economic scenario. The origin of the Marshall plan for the development of post-World War II, Europe was based on the Keynesian concept of 'pump priming'. Deficit financing is one of the most inequitable means of raising resources. Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman were suddenly discovered after the Keynesian prescriptions have run their full course of destabilizing the world economy in general and the economies of developing

countries in particular in the 1970s (Hayek, 1988). Hayek does not believe in state policy and believes in the absoluteness of the market, quite forgetting that modern capitalism is a product of state power and not of the free market (Wapshott, 2012). According to Hayek's logic, capital is the origin of labour, not vice versa. It lacks economic logic and smacks of imperialism of the highest order. But he received the official patronage of Margaret Thatcher as much as Friedman received Ronald Reagan's. According to Friedman-Hayek's concept, knowledge is divisible and one cannot have full knowledge of what is happening and what happened (Friedman & Schwartz, 1970). Friedman believed in a currency system without any state control. Friedman's study of the U.S monetary statistics, along with Anna J Schwartz for the period 1867-1960, is an attempt to compare the incomparable. The monetary systems during this period were incomparably different, ranging from a closed economy with a gold standard to paper currency in an international system.

Globalization – A Critical Relook

Globalization became an accepted phenomenon as the dominant philosophy over the past three centuries in varying forms with the industrialization of the West. This statement is rooted in the view that globalization is a new variant form of colonization. After World War II, globalization and free trade were strengthened by establishing international institutions such as IMF, World Bank and GATT, and later WTO. So this institutionalized globalization became irresistible like winds and waves. But dishonouring the gold exchange regime and the interests of the U.S. in the Uruguay Round negotiations, dysfunctioning of the WTO, regional trade blocks, etc. started creating disinterest among the once proponents and advocates of globalization. Globalization has many dimensions including political, economic and even national security. With free trade and globalization, with the international division of labour in a unipolar world after the disintegration of the former USSR, the US became the dominant world power along with its close ally Britain. Professor Kaushik Basu, former Chief Economic Advisor and the Senior Vice President of the World Bank has said working against globalization is like preventing waves and tides, attempting to stop sunrise" (Basu, 2015). It is said that the first wave of globalization started during or after, or even before industrialization in Europe. But a little bit of confusion during the great depression, beggar-thy-neighbour policy and competitive devaluation etc. The second wave followed after the

end of world war II, which was rule-based and institutions-centred, monitored by institutions, such as GATT, IMF, IBRD, NATO, OECD, European Economic Community etc. The dollar became the international vehicle currency. The third wave of globalisation started after the end of the cold war and the collapse of the USSR in the 1990s. The 1990s was a period in the world economy that perceived a new vigour and strength in the free-market economy and replaced GATT with WTO. The world witnessed a privatization wave and an intensive international flow of goods, capital and technology.

Post Globalization - Meaning and Context.

It may be temporary or short-lived, but indications are there in the direction of reconfirming a post-globalization phenomenon. Currently, the world is dealing with Brexit, and nationalist-populist sentiments producing leaders such as France's Marie le Pen, the USA's Donald Trump, Nigel Farage of Great Britain, Hungarian Viktor Oban, Austria's Norbert Hofer and many others. Political parties and leaders even lose general elections if they speak loudly favouring globalization even in the U.S., which has set the ideological agenda of the global capitalist economy since World WarII. The question is whether the same power centres can steer this new ideological shift and transmit it to the rest of the world, as was done in the past through Bretton Woods Institutions and other means. It aroused two vital questions, viz, Will states reclaim control over their markets? How will it impact multilateral institutions, nation-states, non-state actors and individuals across an uneven world?

The world economy now seems to have entered a new era of "Post Globalisation", because of arise in the unemployment of natives and a surge in migration flows that caused income and wealth inequality. According to World Bank and OECD national accounts data (2017), global flows of trade in goods and services measured as a share of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has been on a steady rise until 2008, when they reached their upper limit at about 61 per cent of GDP and have remained sluggish, having fallen further to 56 per cent in 2016. The decline in real trade growth since 2012 has been remarkable, especially when set against the historical relationship between growth in trade and global economic activities.

Finance and Capital Markets

The emergence of information technology, or ICT, in banking and financial markets, along with the liberalization of financial and capital accounts that allows foreign investors into more countries, unleashed a huge wave of foreign capital movements starting in the 1980s. But this trend is slowly disappearing. Decreasing transborder capital inflows show that today globalization is in retreat. Having reached their peak at 12.4 per cent of GDP in 2007, that is, before the onset of the global financial crisis, global cross-border capital flows have been following a steady downward trend, to 4.3 per cent in 2016. Indeed, the flow of new cross-border investment has been declining relative to GDP, which shows that globalization might be slowing down.

An Increased Role for Regional Poles

The rise of powerful trading regions is visible all over the world. This new multi-polarity leads to new relationships of interdependence between nations, widening their common interests and creating new regional trading blocs around the world's major superpowers. PostGlobalization has the potential to affect the existing global governance system comprising institutions, rules and alliances which have underpinned global prosperity since World War II. One such institution is WTO, the cornerstone of the multilateral trading system. The WTO has seen its stature diminish lately and now faces an uncertain future; partly also as a result of rising protectionist trade policies and interventionist economic practices.

Persistent Economic Divergence in Europe

The European Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) was expected to foster greater macroeconomic convergence based on nominal and fiscal indicators of harmonization, which are inflation, long-term interest rates, exchange rate stability, fiscal deficit, and government debt to GDP ratio. However, in the euro area, the sovereign debt crisis has exposed trends of economic divergence. There remain divergences concerning GDP per capita, unemployment rates and current account balances. Donald Trump has pledged to reject multilateral trade deals and negotiate new bilateral deals to promote American industry, protect American workers, and raise American wages. Some political events were strengthening the phenomenon of post-globalization. Firstly, there were violent protests in Seattle during the WTO meeting in December 1999. After

these powerful protests from organizations from across the globe, each pushing their interests continued till the last WTO Ministerial Conference in Nairobi, Kenya. Secondly, Britain rejected the European Union. The move from a single market to a single currency, a single banking system, a single budget and eventually a single political entity--that dream of the European Union is now over. Thirdly, during the close race to become the Democratic Party candidate, Senator Bernie Sanders attacked Hillary Clinton for her support of free trade. Donald Trump openly proposed tilting the terms of trade in favour of American industry. "Americanism, not globalism, shall be our creed". Fourthly, following the victory in the first round of the presidential election in France, Marine Le Pen warned "the main thing at stake in this election is the rampant globalization that is endangering our civilization".While addressing the 73rd session of the General Assembly at the United Nations in New York on 25th September 2018, the U.S. President said, "We reject globalism and embrace the doctrine of patriotism." Trump took 'America First' to the United Nations. A radical shift from this stand is not expected from the Biden administration too. The world after World war II moved from bipolar to uni-polar and then to multi-polar after the 2008 global financial crisis. Globalisation which was driven by the Anglo-Saxon dictums 'wealth of nation and interest of the nation' turned into a Frankenstein monster for its proponents itself at the dawn of the 21st century.

Conclusion

To the British economists, the economic forces generated by the Industrial Revolution in that country were universal and economic laws were accordingly formulated. What was good for Britain was good for the entire world, irrespective of differences in socio-economic conditions. But great personalities like Arnold Toynbee argued against this dominant view and advocated the need for region-specific models of development. His dream of this way of study never materialized because of his premature death and lack of followers. Adam Smith advocated free trade at a time when British manufacturing industries, particularly the textile mills had increased their capacity through various practical innovations. Trying to universalize economic laws has been one of the greatest disservices done to the science of economics. The attempt by third-world countries to formulate their development plans based on these economic laws has created serious imbalances

in their economy and has kept them perpetually indebted, leading to the erosion of their economic independence. When the United Kingdom was following free trade, the U.S. policy was free internal trade and regulated foreign trade. The U.S. formed the views and theory suited to their interest and it was naturally opposed to the U.K.Schumpeter finds that the English free traders argued from their respective national standpoints and advocated policies that suited some group's interests better than others. Globalisation was a compromise but eventually, it also turned into a Frankenstein monster for Anglo-Saxon countries when comes to 'wealth of nation and interest of the nation'.

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Shaping of a *Meira Paibi* discourse: Interest, identity and agency

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Abstract: *This article aims to highlight some of the on-going undertakings of the Meira Paibi and civil society bodies, to generate public discourses about the issues that confront the collective along with pressing on the inevitability for a movement such as that of the Meira Paibis in the prevailing context. Such discourses are an important component that contributes to the overall solidification and sustenance and the movement of the Meira Paibis. Based on the observation of their public meetings and functions, this article aims to identity some of the predominant trends that crystallises the 'interest', 'agency' and 'identity' of the movement of the Meira Paibis.*

Keywords: *Meira Paibi, women's movement, women's interest, motherhood*

Introduction

Meira Paibis, women holding bamboo torches, appeared in popular psyche when any unjustifiable and deplorable acts of security forces come to public notice; when any ruthless military combing operation happens in the locality; and when sexual violence against women by security and military forces surfaces. They also appear when an illicit affair of the neighbour got caught; when 'immoral' activities of youths need policing; and when desperate parents seek the price of honour for their eloped daughters. People asked where the *Meira Paibis* are, when one sees a person being dragged out of his house by the military and security personals; when news of suspicious killing comes in; and when a person is reported missing without a trace after having picked up by the military. 'It must be the doings of *Meira Paibis*', people exclaim, when a house is reportedly burnt down just to punish a person for a condemnable crime he committed; and when young boys and girls are beaten and humiliated in public for privately engaging in 'immoral' acts. They also surface, when a MLA seek some local people's mobilisation where he can address and campaign for his upcoming election. The civil society organisations consider these women as the most viable constituency for any massive mobilisation, when their encounters with the state need to be further substantiated by ethical and emotional weight. So these are all but not all. *Meira Paibis* at one point or the other were

engaged with these acts, big or small, and that was one reason why, the popular psyche reacts to the name '*Meira Paibi*' in the ways mentioned above.

The *Meira Paibis* (women torch bearers) is a form of collective mobilisation of women in Manipur that emerged in response to a condition borne out of a context of contradiction and conflict between the Indian state and several movements for self-determination. *Meira Paibi* have an action-oriented connotation, a woman who holds a *meira* (bamboo torch) to ward off unwanted forces – forces that induce condemnable acts of arrests and killing of innocent people, enforced disappearances of young and old, indiscriminate retaliation on civilian population for actions committed by armed insurgents, ruthless use of women's bodies to discipline, punish and defeat 'adversarial' population, sexual offences committed on women both inside and outside counter insurgency operations, etc. Throughout the 1980s, the women's force became a phenomenon against the above mentioned repressive activities of the military which was rampantly spreading in the name of counter-insurgency operations. They started patrolling the locality streets, with *meiras* in their hands, to stop any wanton arrests and torture of civilians by surprise security raids in the name of fishing for insurgents. These women came to be increasingly known as the *Meira Paibis*, through their activities of assuming the 'protective role', of patrolling the streets, and the 'adversarial role' of confronting the security forces in cases of death and disappearances of innocent persons. A consistent and sustained movement emerged with the formation of organisations in the name of *Meira Paibis* at the state level since the 1980s and became a more organised force that relentlessly fought against larger issues of rights violation and common issues of the collective.

This article aims to highlight some of the on-going undertakings of the civil society and *Meira Paibi* bodies, to generate public discourses about the issues that confront the collective along with pressing on the inevitability for a movement such as that of the *Meira Paibis* in the prevailing context. Such discourses are an important component that contributes to the overall solidification and sustenance and the movement of the *Meira Paibis*. Based on the observation of their public meetings and functions, this article aims to identity some of the predominant trends that crystallises the 'interest', 'agency' and 'identity' of the movement of the *Meira Paibis*.

Articulation of interest, identity and agency

AFSPA and anti-colonial discourse:

Meira Paibi gi Numit (Meira Paibi Day) and *Meira Paibi Houdokhiba Numit* (Meira Paibi foundation day) are two important commemoration, observed every year with fervour by *Meira Paibi* organisations- Poirei Leimarol Meira Paibi Apunba Manipur, and All Manipur Women's Social Reformation and Development Samaj (Nupi Samaj) respectively. In addition, foundation days of all *Meira Paibi* organisations are celebrated. These occasions are graced by leaders of *Meira Paibi* organisations and resource persons from different fields of expertise. The meetings and functions are attended by members of various civil society bodies and *Meira Paibis* from different districts and locality. Apart from the invitees who graced the occasion, leaders from across organisations are invited to address the meeting. Speeches are ascriptive, pedagogical and stimulating, and are seamlessly blended together, generating a composite discourse that dominates the public sphere.

The retelling and reinvigoration of important historical trajectories compose a significant part of such *Meira Paibi* functions along with making efforts to comprehend the socio-political and economic ills that the collective have been imperilled with. On 26 November 2015, in a public meeting celebrating the 24th birth anniversary of the *Meira Paibi* organisation All Manipur Tammi-Chingmi Apunba Nupi Lup, Ph. Sakhi Leima, of the All Manipur Kanba Ima Lup (a Meira Paibi organisation) spoke, '*eikhoigee ningtamba mangkhre, eikhoigee chin punshanle, eikhoigee khut punshalle, eihkoigee khongsu punshallaga leiri*….' (…our freedom is lost, our lips are tight, our hands are tight, and our legs are also tight…) An analogy, she always draws in most of the public meetings she addresses, depicting one's sense of vulnerability and dependence, the population is subjected to. Thokchom Ramani, of Nupi Samaj, while addressing the gathering on the 38th Foundation Day of the same organisation on June 26, 2014, reiterated that it was the '*thamoi sokpa*' (resentment) of the ways in which the people were treated by the state, which led their mobilisation to take shape.

The main part of the discourse is to highlight a state of vulnerability to a form of rule that is prevalent in Manipur, which has created a conflict situation that poses a challenge to the overall existence of the collective as a political and social entity. Speaking on the occasion of *Meira Paibi* Day, held on May 28, 2014, Mani Khuman, of All Manipur United Clubs Organisation Manipur asserted that all the problems that the people face today is due to '*lei-ngak-lon*', i.e., nature of rule. It is labelled as irresponsive, oppressive and insensitive to the aspiration of the people. Such a nature of governance is held responsible for the economic degeneration, social

degradation and vulnerability of human life. The movement of the *Meira Paibi*s is projected as a fight against all such menace.

The public meeting celebrating the 24th foundation day of the All Manipur Tammi-Chingmi Apunba Nupi Lup, mentioned above also had several other speakers who emphasised on the 'forced merger' of Manipur to India and the consequent India's nature of rule as the root of all problems. For instance, the President of another *Meira Paibi* organisation Nonchup Imphal Meira Paibi Apunba Lup (NIMPAL), Gyaneshsori spoke, 'We have been merged forcefully…now mother Manipur is in chains…it time to break these chains'. A strong sense of deprivation of rights and liberties is expressed in these meetings. Longjam Memchoubi, of Poirei Leimarol Meira Paibi Apunba Manipur, also expressed similar understanding of the troubled history and resultant present. According to her, when independence is lost, it is natural that people will fight for the lost independence. The British colonial masters have left long back but the colonial nature of oppression still remains, she lamented (12 December *Ningshing Chephong* [Memorial Publication], 2011). Understanding of political status and the ability to make historical claims have also taken firm groundings among some of the *Meira Paibi* leaders, if not all. Similar opinions was expressed by Ph. Shakhi of All Manipur Kanba Ima Lup, '*ning-kha tamba haibase mee-oi kudinge pandamni … eikoigi leijaramba ning-kha tamba do hanjanjage haibane'* (Freedom is what every individual aspire…what we seek is the restoration of the independence we had) (personal communication with the author, September 11, 2014).

The anti-colonial discourse forms a very important part of the overall civil society space. Detailed information about how they are calling the state 'colonial' is expressed mostly by resource persons who are invited to speak on these occasions. Giving a detailed history about the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, Prof. Arambam, said 'when India got independence and when many states were merged to India, many colonial laws were adopted by the new Indian state, and imposed to the newly merged states like Manipur'(12 December *Ningshing Chephong* [Memorial Publication], 2011). AFSP ordinance 1942 was one, which later was imposed in Manipur, as the AFSPA without much debate and scrutiny (12 December *Ningshing Chephong* [Memorial Publication], 2011). The perceived 'unproblematic' rationale of the state which prompted the use of colonial laws on selective areas and population, resulting to situations of 'exceptions' becoming the 'normal', indicates a specific characteristic of the state. State as an institution is inherently oppressive, but the degree of oppression differs according

to the different categorisations of its 'citizens'. Even though one observes a decline in the human rights violation under AFSPA in recent years, the impact is still felt by the people as decades of millitarisation has deeply penetrated in the social lives and psyche of the population. The society is not free from the impacts of AFSPA as the Act is still in force in the state, asserted Longjam Memchoubi of Poirei Leimarol, speaking on the occasion of 24th *Meira Paibi* Day, May 28, 2022, and *Meira Paibi* movement will continue until the Act is removed (*Chronicle News Service* 28 May 2022).

Questioning the AFSPA placed within a historical context of the 'merger' is coupled with reiteration of the ramifications of such a juncture on the overall social and political scenario. Speaking in a public meeting themed 'Manipur-India Conflict and Public Participation in Resolution of the Conflict', organised by a *Meira Paibi* organisation called Konthoujam Makha Apunba Meira Paibi Lup, Y. Nabachandra, of United Committee Manipur (UCM) asserted that the 'Merger Agreement' is the root cause of Manipur-India conflict, which is further acclimatised by the use of military to suppress the conflict situation (*Sangai Express* 2 April 2001). Similar public meetings were held to disseminate knowledge about the merger, the conditions under which it was done, the legal loopholes, in addition to elaborate accounts of the political status of the people before and after the merger. 'The National Convention on the Merger Agreement', is one such example which was organized by the People's Democratic Movement at G.M. Hall, Imphal, from 28-9 October 1993. The convention declared the merger agreement as 'lacking constitutional validity' and termed it as an act of 'annexation'.

The colonial nature of rule is not only held responsible for the deprivations and repressions of innocent population but also for the manipulation of the conflict situation by 'instigating' another dimension of contestation on the horizontal axis. Indian state plays 'divide and rule' politics, they blamed, and create misunderstanding among different ethnic groups. The assertion of different identity politics which at most times have overlapping claims on territory and resources, are seen as another tactic of managing dissent and adversarial forces by the state.

The movement of the *Meira Paibi* not only evolved from within this anti-colonial discourse, but *Meira Paibi* organisations and their movement revolve around fighting these colonial manifestations of the state forces. However it is not to conclude that their interest lies only in fighting state violence and oppression of civilians, but it is to project that this was the prime concern with which their movement flagged off and continues to be the prime objective of their

mobilisation. They also incorporate within its fold other issues of the collective, like the issue of the Inner Line Permit system, territorial integrity, questions of morality, culture and tradition, crime against women, problem of alcohol and drug addiction, etc., in short, issues that relates to preservation of domesticity and nation of Manipur. Their interest lies in fighting and addressing any issues of the collective and achieving an equal and free society free from oppression.

Glorifying women's power: *Nupi Lal* (Women's War) Memorial Celebrations

Prof. Arambam, speaking on one '12 December' memorial event, 'we are not gearing up for a third *Nupi Lal* but the third *Nupi Lal* had already started in 1980…and they are still fighting the war till today' (12 December *Ningshing Chephong*, 2011). This was in reference to the on-going women's movement in the name of *Meira Paibi* against state atrocities and oppression committed under the auspices of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, 1958. '12 December' is a day when the people of Manipur, collectively celebrate the courage of women, by remembering the *Nupi Lal* (women's war) fought against the British colonial rule. These women uprisings (1904 and 1939) were mainly targeted at colonial policies, which they thought were discriminatory and unjust. They sustained various injuries in the hands of the police forces who, in a bid to repress their movement, used force and brutality. These women have been revered and glorified in these memorial functions, their strengths and vigour emphasised. The *Meira Paibis* venerate these historical junctures as ground-works for any future women's uprising.

According to Dhanabir Laishram, scholar and public speaker, the people of Manipur are yet to enjoy any taste of democracy (*The Sangai Express* 12 Dec. 2010.). A link is drawn between the colonial rule of British and the present systemic repression and violence that maimed the state. Urgency of the women to follow the footsteps of the heavenly abode '*Imas*' (mothers) in countering the alleged 'oppression' of the Indian state, is reiterated every year and every meeting. The 'democratic' Indian state, and its system of ruling a peripheral border-state like Manipur, is again discussed with an emphasis on the imposition of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act. The manifestation of the 'colonial' features in the imposition of 'extraordinary' laws like the AFSPA, which empower the military to 'use force to the extent of causing death', is coupled with economic instability and decay, and the increasing fault-lines between the different ethnic communities.

However, there is an issue of contestation regarding the *Nupi Lal* memorial observation, in terms of its nomenclature. *Meira Paibi* organisation like Nupi Samaj along with Macha Leima (a women's organisation) pushed for a '*Nupigi Nuimit*' (Women's Day), while Poirei Leimarol Meira Paibi Apunba, and its associating organisations prefer '*Nupi Lal* Memorial Day'. Until 2010, these two groups hosted the occasion under these two different names at different locations and capacities. The state government also hosts the occasion, remembering the brave women, by declaring it a state holiday. Kh. Ibetombi, claimed that the women's organisation Macha Leima was instrumental not only in organising the *Nupigi Numit* since 1973 but also in pushing the government to formally recognise the contribution made by women in the anti-colonial struggle. However, the organisation chose to make the event a celebration of all women's courage, rather than just a memory of the *Nupi Lal* (personal communication with the author, April 16, 2015). Speaking at the *Nupigi Numit* held in 2010, she explained the significance of naming the event '*Nupigi Numit*', and according to her, such a move gives a universal appeal to all the women of Manipur, who have contributed and shed their bloods at various junctures, including the *Nupi Lal*. It was also to link the contemporary struggles of women, rather than just going back to the past, they wanted to transform the temporal fixity, and make it inclusive and representative of all women's struggles. Endorsing this stand, Phanjoubam Sakhi of AMKIL opined that naming of the event as '*Nupigi Numit*' had facilitated the celebration of all women's courage. *Nupi Lal* Memorial Day exclusively imply to only those who fought in the *Nupi Lal*. It should be made inclusive and dynamic enough to inculcate all those who have sacrificed themselves at different junctures, for the cause of the nation (personal communication with the author, September 11, 2014). On 12 December 2010, the Poirei Leimarol Meira Paibi Apunba Manipur organised the 71st '*Nupi Lal* Memorial Day'. The event was marked by a mass rally, which was aimed at invoking the strength and valour of historic women of the *Nupi Lal*, and to inspire and motivate the women. The participants held banners which read, 'Emancipate Women', 'Liberate oppressed Manipuri women', 'Abolish anti-people regime', 'Repeal AFSPA', etc (*The Sangai Express* 12 Dec. 2010). However, in a move to unify such differences of opinions, in 2011 and 2012, there was a combined effort to host the event under the name of '12 December *Ningshing Numit*' (12 December Memorial Day), but from 2013 the event took off as '*Nupi Lal Ningshing Numit*' (Women's War Memorial Day), after having reached some understanding among the contending groups. Despite the contestation over the naming of the *Nupi Lal* memorial Day,

both the rationales projected by different *Meira Paibis* groups have one thing in common, i.e. glorification of women's power with the intention to carry the same glorified might of women and employ it in all struggles of the nation. The valour displayed by women of the past continues to be celebrated to inject moral courage into the new women of today. Such celebration also comes with public speeches reiterating the 'strength' of the 'illiterate' women of the past, as compared to the 'educated' women of today. Manipur now has educated and knowledgeable women, unlike before, but their courage is lost, they lamented. The women of the past, despite the absence of any formal knowledge and learning, successfully managed to mobilise politically and courageously. Appeal is always made to the women to make a more active and meaningful involvement in the fight for a dignified life for the collective. Appeals are also made to keep up their reproductive and nurturing role alongside their courageous proactive engagements. R.K. Ranendrajit, former journalist, pressed on the roles of courageous mothers in these critical times. In between the struggles for livelihood and survival, he emphasised, the most important task is to produce leaders with broad wisdom and knowledge, who are capable of awakening the masses, lead the people's movement and guide the future generations (73rd *12 December Ningshing Chephong* [memorial publication], 2012). Much of the agency for leading and engaging with social issues is derived from the fact that, beside women being the reproducers and nurturers of the society, they have been in the forefront fighting unjust forces of colonialism in the past. It is time and again projected that they and only they have the unfettered courage to stand against massive forces. Such courage not only needs to be revived and preserved but also is a source of women's agency which is required to be employed at critical junctures.

Idiom of Motherhood

Meira Paibis are respectfully addressed as *Ima* (mother) by all. *Meira Paibis* addressed as *Ima* is a very powerful social legitimacy that is given to them. Ibotombi Khuman, a senior social worker asserted, 'this is the respect they have gained over the years and the identity that they need to upheld' (personal communication with the author, May 4, 2014). By resorting to the mother identity by the *Meira Paibis*, and the designation of the same by the civil society members and the general public to these women, certain fixation of identity for the movement is generated and solidified.

'*Meira Paibi Houdokhiba Numit*' (Meira Paibi foundation day) is celebrated on December 29 by Nupi Samaj. Speaking on this occasion in 2020, Thokchom Ramani reiterated that the movement of the *Meira Paibis* was born when the lives of innocent men, women and children were threatened by security forces under the auspices of the Armed Special Powers Act, 1958. The movement was born on December 29, 1980, she recalled, when women started holding *meiras* (torches) to guard their localities at night (*The Sangai Express* 29 Dec. 2020). Women took up *meira* (torch) in their hands assuming the role of the mother protector of their family, sons and daughters. The very origin of this movement is attributed to a day which is significant for the fact that on this very day women collectively succeeded in securing the life of an innocent person, Lourembam Ibomcha, from the security forces. This same day is also marked as *Pari Kanba Numit* (day when a son was saved) when women folks saved a son from a potential unfortunate and uncertain fate.

In all the speeches made, the underlying principle that drove these women into taking up the political role of fighting for collective rights is that of motherhood. Motherhood as an identity is not only used to mobilise the women but also draw legitimacy from the society. In a society, which claims that women have been respected and revered throughout history by projecting women as significant part of the civilisation, the level of legitimacy endowed to women as mother is remarkably immense. The mother identity that the *Meira Paibi* uses is not only that of the mother-child biological relationship but they took a step further to claim themselves as mothers of all classes, rich and poor, insurgents and state official, victims of torture, etc. This is further upheld by their 'age' based membership and leadership practice that the movement spontaneously adopts. *Meira Paibi* bore the iconic mother figure, a woman who had attained a certain age and standing, when she can socially command the authority of being a mother.

They also adopt the notion of their movement being guided by the 'mother' force. This 'mother' force is attributed to women who have fought the *Nupi Lal* and to the late leaders who pioneered the movement of the *Meira Paibis*. Commemorating the leaders, who have a pivotal role in the strengthening of the movement, serves as another important ritual of the movement of *Meira Paibis*. Athokpam Momon, Pebam Chaobi, and Hijam Kombi are the three most important (*Ima*) mother figures who continue to invigorate the mobilisation of women. They are idealised and given the very significant position of a 'Mother guide', who had taken the movement to new heights. The need to follow the path which had been carved out by the *Imas* (mothers) is

continuously emphasised. Speaking on the 6th death anniversary of *Ima* Kombi which was held on February 1, 2010, R.K. Landhoni, of Poirei Leimarol Meira Paibi Apunba Manipur, stressed on the need to go beyond the commitment of merely paying floral tributes to the departed soul. *Ima* Kombi, who had dedicated her life to the cause of building up a society free from oppression will be honoured, she asserted, only when the path shown by her is followed by all (*The Sangai Express* 1 Feb. 2010). *Ima* Momon and *Ima* Chaobi are also fondly revered as brave and incisive. Their fight against injustices, their valour and their motherly benevolence is ritually exalted.

Strengthening of the politics of motherhood is reflected in all the engagements of the *Meira Paibis*. The status and identity automatically assumes a responsibility to mobilise, integrate and intensify people's resistance against any force deemed 'unjust'. The women's force in the name of the *Meira Paibi* and the projection of these women as *Imas* should be seen as an effective strategy considering the potency of the idiom in the political space and in enacting political activities.

Conclusion

The *Meira Paibis*, as an organisation and movement has been a proactive force in the socio-political context of Manipur. Public meetings and functions are a crucial part of the *Meira Paibi* organisations and through these events, the organisations routinely exercise mobilisation of people, exert their relevance, rejuvenate their authority of acting as vanguard of the society. This article was an attempt to highlight some of the ways in which such meetings and functions firstly serves as a forum where the women reiterate the reason and need for their collective mobilisation. Secondly, it continues as spaces for dissemination of information and ideas about issues and problems of the collective, thus in the process crystallising *Meira Paibis*' overall outlook and orientation. The issues which calls for their attention and the overall objective and interest of the movement is seen to be shaped in such a manner that women's interest here evolved out of a situation of necessity where women becomes the social force to fight unjust forces and issues of the collective, Third, such forums generate motivation and inspiration for women, through glorification of women's courage, projection of the 'mother protector', instilling a sense of agency among women by reminding them of the role they played and the role they are supposed to continue playing, upholding the image of the glorified mother protector.

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Patna in Urban History: A Bibliographical Survey and Hindu -Muslims Relations

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Abstract

The present paper attempts to examine the position of Patna vis-`a-vis other Indian cities in the existing India's urban studies literature. The paper makes a survey of literature on Patna and argues that Patna has not been yet studied in terms of being an urban centre in 20th century. The paper also examines the relationship between the two major communities-the Hindus and Muslims dwelling the landscape of Patna since centuries which too escaped the attention of professional historians and researchers while studying the different aspects of the Patna city. Additionally an attempt has also been made through this paper to humbly disagree with Ashutosh Varshney who argued in 'Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India', (2002), that communal violence is an urban phenomenon as Patna shows quite contrary picture of Varshney's thesis. The paper has been also, for the sake of convenience, divided into Part I and Part II.

Key Words: Urban, Patna, City, Bihar, Hindu-Muslim.

Introduction

Patna, the capital city of Bihar, also hitherto known as Pataliputra and Azimabad, enjoys a rare historical distinction of a continued existence for over 2000 years and is, therefore, one of the most ancient cities of India. Unlike the cities, such as, Calcutta, Madras, Bombay, which emerged after colonization (Gillion 1969, 2), Patna on the other hand enjoys a rare historical tradition for having been in existence since long before British colonised India. It was (and is) the capital, centre of administration, bustling centre of trade and commerce, centre of culture and learning of Bihar.

It is pertinent to mention here that scholarly and popular discussions of cities tend to concentrate on the largest exemplars such as Bombay Calcutta, Bangalore, Delhi, Ahmadabad and to neglect the smaller cities where most urban population live (Boyk 2015, 1). The same pointed was raised by a noted art historian Rebecca M. Brown that "Our understanding of the

colonial city in South Asia arises out of seventeenth-through twentieth-century descriptions of primarily Madras (now known as Chennai), Calcutta, and Bombay (now called Mumbai), the East India Company's presidency cities " (Brown 2003, 151). Therefore, the historical city like Patna was neglected in the existing literature on the urban history of India.

This historical city has passed many vicissitudes, but it has phoenix-like risen again and again from its ashes (Mukherjee 2009, 241). It was revived in mid-16th by Sher Shah Suri by transferring his capital from Bihar Sharif to Patna in 1541. After Sher Shah's exit, it again lost its political, if not commercial, importance until the beginning of 18th century when it was again brought to the limelight by Aurangzeb's grandson son Azim us Shan in 1704 when it was renamed as Azimabad and turned into a hub of commercial and cultural activities. In the colonial period, Patna was one of the greatest emporia of opium and indigo trade, with long and extensive trading connections, for European merchants.

Part I

Bibliographical Survey of Patna

There are some works which refer to Pataliputra and Patna as a part of wider studies of urbanization in the ancient period, the growth of trade and commerce in the medieval period or the development in cultural or literary fields in the 18th and early 19th centuries. However, this propensity did not continue and thereby much more ground remained grossly unexplored particularly the growth of urbanization in the 20th century.

There is no dearth of sources to trace the urbanization of Patna but astonishingly no work has been brought out to uncover the neglected city. The first serious attempt was made by a noted historian of Bihar and Patna Surendra Gopal by writing *Patna in the 19th century -a social cultural profile* in 1982. Gopal tried successfully to delineate Patna's socio-economic and cultural profile in the nineteenth century. In the beginning, he attempts to show the westward expansion of the city during the nineteenth century on account of certain administrative and technological forces such as courts, educational and cultural institutions and the introduction of railways (Gopal 1982, 1-30). The author also highlights some interesting facts about the city. He showed how different communities such as Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Europeans, lived together in the city and established cordial relations amongst themselves which was not the case in most of the Indian cities. However, this book has certain limitations. The most important

development which took place in the last quarter of 19th century was the beginning of Urdu-Hindi controversy which surfaced in 1880 has escaped the attention of Gopal, among many other things.

It was in 1988 when again Patna received some more attention when *Patna through the Ages: Glimpses of history, society and economy* was published, edited by a noted historian Qeyamuddin Ahmad. The book, however, deals more with the ancient and early modern period (mostly 19th century) except a few chapters on 20th century Patna such as Quit India Movement (1942) which too ignores many significant works particularly in Urdu language such as the role of madrasas, perception and activities of Bihar Provincial Branch of CPI during World War II and Quit India Movement.

The Muslim Elite by Ali Ashraf (1982) is also a significant work on the formation of Muslim elite in Bihar. He showed how the Muslim elite of Bihar were engaged in social formation, community identity and mainstream politics of the country. Interestingly, Ashraf finds out that more than two-third of the elite belonged to the upper caste Muslims in Bihar. This slim book, at the end, also provides brief biographical accounts on some eminent Bihar Muslims, most of which hailed either from Patna or nearby villages and towns. Therefore, this book also helps in understanding the different contours of Bihar Muslims including, of course, Patna which produced a band of dedicated nationalist Muslim leaders.

Arvind N. Das (1992), through his well-researched work with a provocative title-*The Republic of Bihar* acquaints us with the Bihar's glorious past as a hub of India's political history, bustling center of trade, learning and the birthplace of great historical figures such as Buddha, Ashoka etc. Within this well-articulated discussion, the author also takes us through the factors that led to the fall of such a wealthy state it once was by many factors such as casteism nurtured by both British and Biharis, economic exploitation by the 'Brutish' Raj, as Shashi Tharoor puts it, regional imbalance etc. The author devoted a separate chapter on Patna entitled as "Bihar's Urban Jungle" wherein he takes into consideration three white-collar occupations- Medicine as a growing commercial unit in Patna, civil engineering and political power brokerage perpetuated by miserable living conditions of the majority of the people and greediness of the public work agencies and contractors and most importantly by casteism. Through this mechanism, many complex institutions were (are) simplified. It was through this political power brokerage, electoral democracy, for instance, became a pleasant give and take, peppered

occasionally with the simple device of booth- capturing. Das, thus, concluded " Indeed Patna itself provides a revealing illumination of the urban jungle that is flourishing in Bihar today" (Das 1992, 40).

The book entitled *Patna: A Monumental History* (2010), edited by Vivek Kumar Singh, is also of great importance while studying Patna's history in diverse perspectives. The book chronicles the monuments modern Patna possesses which help us to understand the richness of the city in terms of architectural past, art and culture. Patna's every monument carries a beautiful photograph and follows its brief history. It is, in fact, the first pictographic study of modern Patna.. However, despite being helpful in many ways, the books lacks critical analysis of the monuments such as Anjuman Islamia Hall of Patna (1885) which was more an abode of communal harmony and centre of anti-colonial activities than a mere place for wedding activities. The historical importance of the ground called as Gandhi Maidan in the heart of city is also missing in the book. Nevertheless the book deserves due attention to enhance the understanding of modern Patna.

It was in 2021 that Rajiv Soni, Chartered Accountant (CA) turned writer, wrote *Patna: Facts, Frames and Frozen Memories* which, to my limited knowledge, is the only second visual representation of the Patna city. The author seems to have immensely benefited from *Patna: A Monumental History*, as mentioned above. The overall presentation of Patna through images and coloures followed by history in lucid language by Rajiv deserves to earn an epithet of a 'Visual Ode'. The work eloquently explained historical, cultural, educational and religious institutions as landmarks in the history of Patna city.

A new brave intervention to the existing literature on Bihar came to the surface in the form of *Muslim Politics in Bihar*: *Changing Contours* by Mohammad Sajjad in 2014. The work is considered as a breakthrough in many ways as it exploded many myths which had dominated the popular mind. It highlights Bihar Muslim resistance to the Two-Nation theory and counters the 'Isolation Syndrome' faced by Muslim communities after Independence. The book also provides many facets of Patna's socio-political and educational life of 20th century.

Despite the fact that urban history in recent times attracted a great deal of attention of professional historians in India, still Patna escaped their attention to trace the development of urbanization of twentieth century. Recently in 2012, an impressive work came out entitled *Muslim in Indian Cities-Trajectories of Marginalization,* edited by Christophe Jafferlot and

Laurent Gayer). The book explains at length the abysmal situation of Muslims in Indian cities. The significant point the book makes is the process of ghettoization of Muslims due to violence and also debunks the myth of Muslim homogeneity. The book takes into the account Muslims in eleven cities including Mumbai, Lucknow, Aligarh, Ahmadabad, Delhi, and others. The most glaring omission, however, one finds in the book is the missing of almost whole of eastern India except one city- Odisha's capital Cuttack. Thus, astonishingly, Patna city, which is one of the oldest in the country, even largest city after Calcutta in eastern India, and has had a continuous history of last six centuries, remain grossly ignored.

English Novels on Patna

Additionally, in recent past, some novels were written in English which capture the different contours of Patna city life. These include Vikram Seths *A Suitable Boy* (1993), Siddhartha Chowdhury's *Patna Roughcut*, (2005), *A Matter of Rats: A Short Biography of Patna* (2013) by Amitava Kumar, and the latest one being Abdullah Khan's *Patna Blues* (2018). But due the brevity of space, only the last two mentioned have been reviewed to signify their importance in portraying some interesting aspects of Patna's life.

Amitava Kumar's biography of Patna, *'A Matter of Rats'* is a fascinating account of Patna witnessing sluggish development and decadence. In Kumar's work , 'Rats' are a universe unto their own, creating a parallel, subaltern underworld- 'the first inhabitants of Patna that symbolize decay and chaos the city represents. In the Patna that Kumar knows, rats bring down a stack in library, emerge from bathroom bowls, steal grandma's dentures, puncture ultrasonic machines in hospitals and even drink liquor from the illegal bottles recovered by the local police. In all this mischief, the rats tell us what Patna stands for: a city of colossal failures and hopelessness, of exalted notions about the civilization that it once was and a present that questions decades of social engineering-in essence, a city which much has changed without changing much. In nutshell, Kumar gives a significant description of the Patna city and the conditions of the people living there such as the Musahar community.

Then comes the turn of *Patna Blues* of Abdullah Khan in 2018. This Abdullah's debut novel encompasses many stories of aspirations, romance, heartbreak and stagnation. Through Arif Khan, the protagonist and a young IAS aspirant from Patna conflicted by his infatuation for a married Hindu Woman Sumitra who is much older than him, Abdullah tried to establish a larger

narrative about Bihar Muslim identity, and dreams that can prove fatal. To put it more simple and short, one can say that the novel carries many truths about the travails of the people of minority community struggling to establish themselves against seemingly endless odds such as growing majoritarian communalism, growing marginalization of Urdu, corruption and rapid rise of employment in the state and capital. Thus, the novel provides a brilliant description of many facets of Patna and Bihar of 1990s and afterwards.

Urdu Works and Patna

There are also several works in Urdu which provide the glimpses of economy, polity, culture and society of Bihar, and Patna in particular. Use of Urdu sources to reconstruct the history of Patna remained largely neglected part of the existing literature and research.

The first significant work which gives a significant amount of information on the history of 19th Patna is *Naqsh-e-Paedar* written by a Ali Mohammad Shad 'Azimabadi' (1846-1927), a noted figure in the world of Urdu poetry. Shad was actually commissioned by the then Commissioner of Patna Charles Metcalf to write this book to be presented the Prince of Wales who visited the city in 1876. Due to some reasons, it could not, however, be published on time and it finally appeared in print only in 1924. The second volume of its two volumes, provides a detailed account of the Patna city in the latter half of the 19th century based on his personal observations and the information obtained from his senior contemporaries. In this part of work, Shad also mentions important monuments, religious sites, eminent personages, crafts, festivals, Mohallas and settlements, literary and cultural activities of the Patna city.

Another significant work, although largely unknown, is a biographical compendium/ tazkira entitled *Yadgar-e-Rozgar (A Memorial of Livelihoods/ A Monument to an Age*) by a local inhabitant Syed Badrul Hasan in 1931. The book of over 1300 pages documents the life stories of more than 600 families of the Patna city. The most significant part of the book is it tell us about many traditions, customs, old ways of living and their gradual disappearance from the city by the rising colonial modernity in 1920s and 1930s. He bewailed over the 'anglicization' of the living of Patna people after the formation of New Capital Area in 1912 when most the Muslim middle class began to live in Bankipur region and the New Capital Area than in the eastern part of the Patna called as Patna city. More significantly, the author says that both the Muslims and Hindus used to have cordial relationship and there were not communal clashes between them, as were happening in other parts of Bihar and India.

Syed Badruddin Ahmad, one of the local inhabitants of Patna, in his Urdu memoir *Haqeeqat Bhi Kahani Bhi: Azimabad Ki Tahzeebi Daastaan* provides a vivid description of the composite living, popularized as the *Ganga-Jamuni Tehzeeb* as a legacy of our ancestors for which both communities contributed equally (Ahmad 1988, 5). The author takes the case of Azimabad (modern Patna) where people of both communities were living a life of unity and brotherhood. This work has separate sections on the joint festivals, fairs, devotional circuits, *tawaifs*, and the Hindu-Muslim literati who lived in a Ganga Jamni way.

It must be, however, noted here that since the last decade some efforts were made to retrieve this forgotten city of Patna. In 1915, Australia born author David Sol Boyk did his PhD in the University of California, Berkeley on Patna with an fascinating title '*Provincial Urbanity: Intellectuals and Public Life in Patna, 1880-1930*' and Sheema Fatima also in the recent past in 2020 also worked on Patna on the theme '*The Urban Conundrum: A Spatial History of Patna',* wherein she critically demonstrated what state and city politics did to the urban governance of the Patna city.

Some Hindi Works on Patna

There are some Hindi works which along with Urdu ones are considered more penetrating studies on the city. These too are specific works on the city. First one is *Patna: Khoya Hua Shahr* (Hindi) by Arun Singh in 2019. Arun Singh, no doubt, traces the history of greatness of Pataliputra in ancient times and its rise and fall up to 20th century when it remained more predominantly a centre of trade and cultural activities. But this book lacks critical analysis and remained mostly a repetition of facts without any further interpretation. The second one is *Zero Mile, Patna* by Sanjay Kundan in 2021 which is verily an essential addition to the writings on the Patna city in Hindi. The book's format is structured similarly, with small writings on people, places, festivals, functions, and incidents. It sketches out in simple details about the everyday city of Patna in the 1970s and 1980s, primarily through the common person's life, through the author himself. But the author seems to have been least interested on the political developments Patna was witnessing in the last quarter of 20th century such as JP movement and the rise of competitive communalism in 1980s and subsequent communal riots in different towns of Bihar including Patna.

Part II

How did Patna remain citadel of communal harmony in the heydays of communal politics in colonial Bihar?

The brief survey of the communal history of Bihar since 1917 when a major riot broke out in Shahabad, and subsequently up to 1946, itself reveals an important point that no such big communal riot broke out in the urban space of Patna itself till 1946 when it witnessed its unfortunate mark on its glorious past. Quite evidently, the city felt the repercussions of the riots which were taking place in different parts of Bihar in 1920s and 1930s. It also stands true that a few minor clashes did take place by the expansion of communal organizations such as Hindu Mahasabha, Arya Samaj and later on Muslim League in Patna but fortunately did not turn into big communal riots before the riots of 1946. Now the question arises that what were the factors that contributed for maintaining the relative communal harmony in the city? This question warrants some sort of socio-political scrutiny. Many sources including some untapped Urdu accounts deliberate on the composite culture which was built up in Patna since centuries by both communities together.

Syed Badruddin Ahmad (1901-1983) in his Urdu memoir provides a vivid description of the composite living, popularized as the *Ganga-Jamuni Tehzeeb* as a legacy of our ancestors for which both communities contributed equally. The author takes the case of Azimabad (modern Patna) where people of both communities were living a life of unity and brotherhood. Festivals like Eid, Holi, Muharram and Dusshera were celebrated and solemnized by both communities in unison. Hindus used to visit and respect Sufi shrines and vice versa (Ahmad 1988, 5). This legacy was carried forward in spite of communal venom engulfing the surrounding Umland and the rise of communal parties such as the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha in late colonial period. This hearty-cooperation, on the whole, between the Hindus and the Muslims in Bihar was no recent thing after all, but is rooted in the historic traditions of the people (Sinha 1944, 36).

The Patna based historian, Prof. Imtiaz Ahmad (1988), citing the Urdu account of Syed Badrul Hasan entitled *Yadgar-e-Rozgar* (1931) also points out the same existing accommodative culture of Patna that there were cordial relations between Hindus and Muslims and their mutual participation in ceremonies and functions. He also notes that the individual conflicts between the two communities never assumed communal colour in the Patna's history (Imtiaz 1988, 170-171). However, this all got into oblivion when the riots of 1946 broke out.

Surendra Gopal (1926-2022), one of the noted historians on Bihar and Patna, took the notice of the fact that the main reason for Patna being a citadel of communal harmony was actually 'the outcome of higher degree of interdependence and mutual trust that had developed as a result of centuries of residence side by side (Gopal 2017, 105). This could be corroborated by the fact that Islam impacted almost on the all ways of life of Hindus such as customs, dress, food habits and veneration of Sufi shrines and vice versa. It may not be perhaps inappropriate to say that the Hindus formed the major part of the processions like Moharram even till late 1930s when the virus of communalism had not deterred the Hindus from participating in them (Rai 1971, 191). Raman Gupta, another inhabitant of Patna, too clearly says that it must be admitted that religious fanaticisms were never expressed by any Muslims in Patna at any time in the past on account of which no communal riots ever flared up here (Gupta 2009, 11).

However, one must not overlook the influence of a group of committed patriot cum-nationalist leaders in Bihar from both communities who worked hard to maintain the tradition of communal harmony. The first decade of 20th century was a 'formative phase' in the making of Bihar as a separate identity for Biharis from the erstwhile Bengal presidency in response to the legitimate demands of the local people (Datta 1958, 15). Until then, as eloquently defined by S. Sinha, "Bihar had been an appendage, rather a neglected appendage of Bengal; situated a long way from the seat of the provincial government at Calcutta " (Sinha 1944, 1). It was finally in 1911-12 that Bihar was separated with Patna as its capital.

The Bihar educated class was fully devoted to the Bihar cause and did not take part actively in the movement against the partition of Bengal to avoid the wrath of the government as the British would have ignored the main demands of these educated Biharis. They collectively showed the loyalty to the British and hailed the government move (Raheem 1998, 113). This was a major reason that in Bihar both the Hindus and the Muslims remained united for their common goal cutting across the barriers of religion, caste, region, etc. It was this 'regional patriotism' (Basu 1977, 286) which largely determined the future politics in Patna and the rest of Bihar.

The leaders who emerged as the main architects of this modern Bihar were produced by both the communities. These include Sachidananda Sinha (1871-1950), Mahesh Narayan (1850-1907), Anugrah Narayen Sinha (1887-1957), Harbans Sahay, Ganesh Dutta Singh (1868-1943), Syed Md. Sharfuddin (1856-1921), Mazharul Haque (1866-1930), Syed Ali Imam

(1869-1932), Syed Hasan Imam (1871-1933). The role of Muslim stalwarts was admitted by Sachchidananda Sinha himself that, " They were leading Beharee Muslims who played a prominent and honorable part as their Hindu compatriots had done before " (Sinha 1944, 24).

It is also true that Hindu-Muslim relations in Patna were overshadowed by the Bihar-Bengal controversy for many decades which remained there at least up to 1930s as Bengalis in the beginning were most educated section in Bihar and hence captured most of the government services in Bihar which begun to be challenged first by Muslim educated class and Kayasthas like Sachchidananda Sinha, among many others. Though Bengal community contributed in many ways like in education in Patna, but they remained most isolated community in Patna as because of their superiority complex , they were never accepted by the people of Patna. It was always considered as a parasitic community in Patna, exploiting the resources of Bihar and Patna people. This whole situation was eloquently captured by Das that after the creation of separate province of Bihar and Orissa from erstwhile Bengal in 1912 with Patn as its capital:

> Sufficient number of Bihari (or for that matter, Oriya) clerks were not available and the staff of the disbanded Dacca was transferred almost en masse to Patna, thus, artificially creating a Bengali middle and lower-middle class in Bihar. This, in turn, was to create anti-Bengali sentiments in the emergent Bihari petty-bourgeoisie….The adoption of the nom de plume ' Ghosh-Bose-Banerjee-Chatterjee' …. is but one of the many innocuous expressions of the anti-Bengali feeling. (Das 1992, 30)

The same pointed was later noticed by scholar David Boyk, unlike Das who did not cite any source for his assertation, that "Far from evicting Bengalis from white-collar jobs, though, the new capital attracted them in far greater numbers than before. The main reason for the arrival of so many Bengalis was that they were needed to fill all the government jobs that had been created with the new province. As even the *Beharee* acknowledged, at the time of the separation there were not enough Bihari and Oriya government employees to fill all the needed positions" (Boyk 2015, 166-167).

It is also interesting to note that Muslim League's branch of Bihar (based in Patna) unlike in other parts of India, was dominated by those Muslim leaders who were also active supports of the Indian National Congress. These include Justice Sharfuddin, Sir Ali Imam, Maulana Mazharul Haq, and Nawab Sarfaraz Hussain, etc. They even persuaded and showed the way to both the political organizations to work unitedly (Raheem 1998, 129). Md. Muzaffar Imam's

work, also argues that until 1930 the Muslim League was not popular in Bihar as almost all activities of the Muslims were centered around the Congress. (Imam 1987, 31). In fact, he says "there was no difference between the League and the Congress". (Imam 1987, 34). This point was also earlier highlighted about Bihar Muslim nationalist leaders by Matiur Rehman, the distinguished historian on the Muslim League, that:

> Their common membership of the League and the Congress had created a new situation in the Muslim Politics in Bihar and had facilitated the eventual understanding between the two organizations after 1912. (Rehman 1985, 79).

The Muslims of Bihar, and Patna in particular, therefore, took an active part not only against colonialism but also contested the communal forces. However, the League got revived from 1937 in different parts of India including Bihar. Yet, Its divisive policies were contested by majority of the Patna and Bihar people.

Conclusion

Thus, the aforesaid discussion reveals a significant point that the patriot-cum nationalist leaders from both the Hindus and the Muslims of Bihar, and Patna in particular made every possible effort to retain the legacy of communal harmony for which the province once stood famous for. Thus, the view of Ashutosh Varshney that communal violence is predominantly an urban phenomenon does not find application in the political culture of Patna as showed by its people in both late colonial and post-independence period. Therefore, Patna-ites must be lauded for maintaining this tradition of communal harmony or secular polity which in the words of M. Hasan " is the sole guarantor of our survival as a community and the nation." (Hasan 2003, 478). Therefore, my main argument remains that was not only the 'separation movement from Bengal' in the first decade of the 20th century dominated by the saga of Hindu-Muslim which largely determined their relations in future times; it was also the Patna's vibrant cultural past and syncretic culture which largely helped in maintaining cordial relations between the Hindus and Muslims of Patna.

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Perspective Section

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Ensuring rural employment through revamping the business methods of palm jaggery farmers'

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Abstract

This paper discusses the results of a study aimed at understanding the emergence of palm jaggery products in terms of cottage industries in rural India. It is also examining the socio-economic profile of the climbers and makers for shifting from an agriculture-based occupation to other employment. Where, palm neera (Borassus flabellifer) can be converted into jaggery as sweet. This is superior to sugar cane jaggery, it gives mineral salts too. For making jaggery in such a way that it cannot be manufactured in the factory through machineries; It is produced in the cottages. It is clear that most of the information is derived from original sources and that palm cultivation has played a major role in poverty alleviation throughout the nation. It is hoped this paper will revive interest in palm jaggery and value-added products shared by research knowledge then naturally, palm trees and climbers are receiving priority as indicators of sustainable farming systems. According to the research problem, four variables have been used to analyze for the palm jaggery workers in Salem rural. Further, this study followed a descriptive method and used 113 samples for the collection of the data. The findings of this study revealed that the present approach by co-operative society was not worked sufficiently for the development of farmers and found that e-market spaces are a great influence on their business platform.

Keywords: Palm Jaggery, Farmers, Rural employment, e-marketplace, Climbers

Introduction

The importance of the cottage industries has always been an integral part of economic growth; the Government of India continues to provide protection to the cottage and small-scale sector, through reforms. In this context, many of the traditional cottage units have been developed by funding facilities, technology upgrades, and various assistance programs. Unfortunately, a few cottage industries like *palm jaggery* are still struggling to wake up. There are several reasons for focusing

on this sector; at first, it makes a significant use for the preparation of *ayurvedic* medicines, and natural sweeteners for food items (Madhava *et al.,* 2015). *Palm jaggery* also folds a considerable amount of ferrous salts (iron) during its process, as it is prepared in iron vessels. This iron is also good for health, particularly for those who are anemic and lack iron. Secondly, it makes household income for women and men for those who have traditional lives in rural. Further, compared to land-based agriculture, they tend to generate good income and are relatively fewer resources; these activities support a proportionately larger section of the unskilled labour force and produce a larger number of agriculture units.

In 1956, the TNPFMF (Tamil Nadu Palmgur and Fibre Marketing Federation) started to market palm products and made efforts to provide technical guidance to the co-operative societies for strengthening the industry by setting up technical and financial assistance for farmers. Accordingly, *palm jaggery* making was encouraged as an alternate source of employment for the displaced tappers who, earlier, used to make a country liquor (toddy) by fermenting *neera* (sweet sap from palms), and about 1,600 Palm Co-operative Societies were registered in Tamil Nadu alone. Though, much research has not been conducted on the development of value-added products on *palm trees* namely, edible and non-edible items. Keeping all this in view the present study was conducted to prepare *palm jaggery's* market opportunities and co-operatives functions.

Problem of Study

Today, *palm jaggery* makers and climbers have become less or disappeared because they cannot earn enough amounts from *palm* tree-related businesses. Hence, *palm* trees are cut and used for various purposes by rural people. For now, the young generation is leaving the *palm* tree farming business and looking for other kinds of standard incomes, traditionally, some few or specific communities were doing this high physic-involved job. The changes in socio-economic and environmental trends including bulging labour forces, migration, and deforestation cause growth. Whereas, few populations were dependent and involving that work but they also faced various problems in their business process. Therefore, this research addresses their socio-economic status, factors affecting their production, and e-commerce opportunities for retaining them on farms.

Objectives of the study

1. To understand the socio-economic status of those involved in *palm jaggery's* farm.

2. To explore the contribution of primary palm co-operative society for the production.
3. To examine the farmers' awareness of value-added products, and e-market space.

Hypothesis

a. There are no statistically significant differences in the satisfaction levels of contribution by PPCoS for facilitate production among experiences in the field

b. There are no statistically significant differences in the perception of value-added products and e-market space among age group

Methodology

According to the research objectives, a descriptive method and regression analysis were applied to examine the role of primary palm co-operative societies in *Salem (Tamil Nadu)* rural areas for production and their welfare schemes. The qualitative and quantitative approaches were used to reach the research objectives. The sample size (Krejcie and Morgan, 1970) for this study was made of 113 participants out of 160 members of the *primary palm co-operative society, Salem Rural,* chosen by systematic sampling technique. The primary data were collected by questionnaire cum schedule which consists of socio-economic factors, production facilities, knowledge of value-added products, and e-market space knowledge. Further, secondary data were collected from previous research studies, and reports of the co-operative society.

Literature Review

The *palm jaggery* industry mainly belongs to traditional artisans who know the art of climbing tall trees and have made this hazardous work their main occupation for livelihood. Mostly they are poor and belong to the weaker sections of society. The data on the total workforce engaged in the *palm jaggery* industry is not available due to the widely dispersed nature of activities. Even in the statistical publication, nowhere this occupation is mentioned state-wise. This is a seasonal industry providing employment on an average of 150 days a year (K D Kamble, 2003**)**. The information on moisture absorption isotherms of *palm jaggery* is not sufficient and data on the thermal properties of granular or powdered *palmyrah* is scanty reported that to meet the global needs of sweeteners, the technology to produce *palm gur* into massive, well promoted and commercial product is remote. Since, the availability of *palm gur* is season bound and the demand is usually more than its production, its price is comparatively much higher than *gur* made from sugarcane sources (Rao

& Das SK, 2008). When a business operates in a competitive market, but from the same suppliers as its competitors and works the same way, it creates the same value as everyone else. Small businesses have an especially hard time attracting sales in such an environment. To be successful, a business has to create added value for a potential customer. Ideally, a business looks at its situation and its potential customers and innovates to add corresponding extra value to what it offers (Nyein Htet Aye, 2020)

As most of the studies address the general issues of the *palm jaggery* industry, empirical studies on *palm jaggery* in a business format have to be encouraged. This study examines the gap in discussing the issues and growth of this sector, especially the social status of farmers and e-market knowledge.

The production process of Palm Jaggery

The *palm jaggery* is processed from the unfermented *plamyra* tree sap called *neera*. It has an intense, earthy taste or evocative of chocolates in its taste. The *palm jaggery* obtained after processing is darker and richer in colour. It is slightly salty to taste, and due to its cooling effects over a human body, it is of high value. It does not have the bone meal content which is used for whitening processed sugar. *Palm jaggery* is quite popular in Southern states of Tamil Nadu (called Karuppati vellam or Pana vellam), Karnataka (Thatti bella, Olebella) and other states has different names. The preparation processes are, initially sap was collected in slacked lime treated earthen pots by tappers. The cleared sap after lime sedimentation and filtration is transferred into the boiling galvanised iron pan on a traditional furnace. During boiling a white scum arises to the surface which is skimmed off and a few caster beans are crushed and put into allay frothing. After 5 min, boiling was stopped and the pan is taken off the furnace and allowed for settling of lime. Then clear brown syrup was again poured into a boiling pan, then clarified to sap's getting crystalline jaggery to get more clear syrup for shape. Jaggery can be made in both solid blocks as well as in semi-liquid forms. While boiling, brownish foams come at the top which are continuously removed to get the brown color of jaggery. The consistency of juice becomes thick and then it is poured into small to medium-sized iron or aluminum cans where blocks of jaggery are formed after cooling. All types of sugar come in blocks or pastes of solidified concentrated sugar syrup heated to 200 °C. Traditionally, the syrup is made by boiling raw palm sap in a large

shallow round-bottom vessel. The manufacturing process involves all the basic operations of a sugar factory except chemical addition.

Role of Primary Palm Co-operative Society (PPCoS)

The last few decades were significant for the development of *palm jaggery* production. Initially, the importance was on development and promotional activities which aimed at covering more farmers and upgrading their skill and efficiency in their operations. The PPCoS were set up with a view to transferring the improved process and techniques involved to grass root level. Then, efforts were made to strengthen the research activities in order to minimise the basic problems pertaining to the preservation of *neera* and storage and packing of jaggery ensuring better shelf life and quality of edible *palm* products. Recently a very efficient furnace having a multiple pan system has been evolved at Gandhigram Rural Institute, Tamil Nadu. For enhancing efficiency and reducing risk to farmers in climbing trees, methods like aerial ropeways and bamboo ways have been introduced in the field and as a result, 40 percent efficiency has increased. The PPCoS has concentrated on non-edible *palm* products of the industry. It has very good markets due to its uniqueness. Apart from the contribution by PPCoS, as enumerated above, other measures such as a license for production help to GI, marketing opportunities, training programs for all levels, funds subsidies, and introduction of new schemes and products have been taken up from time to time with a view to increasing productivity.

Data Analysis

A total of 113 completed and usable questionnaires were received, yielding the majority age group of respondents ranging from 41 to 60 years. As palm climbing is a hazardous occupation, young and old age groups are not able to do this work. There are 84 percent were male and 16 percent were female, which shows that male worked climbing *palm trees* and women carried toddy sap, and prepared jaggery. According to data, 33 per cent of respondents have no educational background, 32 per cent of farmers have a primary level and 22 per cent of farmers have a middle education level and 13 per cent of them have a higher secondary school level. Their marital status, as the majority of respondents, were married and interestingly couples were involved the jaggery production. Further results showed that the majority of households are within 4-6 people in size; this is followed by house with 1 to 3 people. There were also households above 6 people in size.

They could be understood to mean that the typical household size of farmers in this study is larger than five people. It could be noted that, other family members were also helping with their production, such as procuring the sap to the cottage, boiling it, and packing jaggery. As data shows, most of the farmers have traditionally followed the work as they have 20 years of experience in the field.

From the economic factors, 43 per cent of the respondents earn below 2 lakhs per annum from their production of *palm jaggery*. It shows that, they have issues in the production cum selling of the products. Further, it could be the reason for they looking for other sources of income through livestock/other farms as 37 per cent of the respondents from the sample have their own land (74 per cent). Most of the respondents have their own house probably on their farming land, and this is helping them with their *palm jaggery* production and related works. The data shows that, most of the farmers own 1 to 30 palm trees, and even they can also go for taking rental palm trees from other owners which are sufficient for their production. They can pay upto Rs.250 to Rs.400 based on the producibility of the *palm tree*.

According to data, the majority of the respondents were selling their products to intermediator/brokers followed by a co-operative society in their village. To understand that, farmers were easily approached and convinced to procure their items by offering advance amounts usually accepted for their initial expenses of production. This is a major issue for them not able to get the right price for products. When the satisfaction of respondents on the selling price of *palm jaggery* was asked 27 per cent of respondents accept the price and 73per cent of them expected a higher price. And then respondents were asked that "does willing to change job?" 62 per cent of respondents have thought about switching over to the job, even though the remaining samples took care of themselves by doing collective work. Unfortunately, many of them do have not medical insurance facilities, and some of them already got injured while climbing the tree and had minor accidents during climbing/jaggery preparation work. It also noted that, most of the respondents work alongside MGNREGA and other farm activities during the time of off-season.

Facilitate to Production

When the satisfaction of respondents on facilitating production by PPCoS employed five point *likert scale* (1-Highly dissatisfied to 5-Highly satisfied) the overall weighted average mean of the variables is low 2.3. According to data, the farmers have no positive perception of the contribution

of PPCoS that increasing their production of jaggery and other facilitates which is essential to the improvement of farms. They are taken measurements for enriching palm jaggery products but are not sufficient for improving the lives of farmers. PPCoS are lacking to provide training programmes and integrated production unit. As a result, PPCoS has to reform its existing system and to implementation of assisting finance, providing raw materials, and organizing all farmers into a single pipeline for production cum efficient practices. It is not the traditional way, but it is important that palm farmers are more concerned about efficient production systems.

Value-added products and E-market space knowledge

The perception of respondents on value-added products and e-market space knowledge for their products employed five point *likert scale* (1-Highly disagree to 5-Highly agree) the overall weighted average mean of the variables is 3.1. Farmers have no sufficient knowledge of the value-added products of a palm tree and e-commerce opportunities for their products. PPCoS also provides various training programs and conduct awareness campaign for value-added products in *palm jaggery* and non-edible products but whereas, but very few of them were interested to produce non-edible items. Farmers are more interested to manufacture only *palm jaggery* this might be an opportunity for others who are not involved in climbing and making jaggery. As a result, farmers have to adopt the latest marketplaces for their products, to update competitiveness such as quality, product extensions, private labels, and online business models. On other hand, PPCoS has to provide a separate online platform for their farmers, offer new equipment on a free/subsidy basis and motivate them into non-edible products which are a major source of income throughout the year.

Hypothesis Results

From the SPSS, using the ANOVA to identify the significant differences among experienced farmers for satisfaction level about PPCoS, their mean rank for below 10 years (n=32) is 272.58 and 324.34 for 10-20 years (n=60) and 188.94 for above 20 years (n=1) with Chi-square as 24.541, df 2 and the level of significance is 0.21 at 95 per cent confidence interval. Thus the results of the test show no significant difference in the experience of farmers toward the satisfaction of performance by PPCoS for their production facilities. Hence, even a person new to the field could understand the role of PPCoS in their business. Further, in the age group of farmers tested with the perception of value-added products and e-market space opportunities, the level of significance is

0.000 at 95 per cent confidence level. Thus, the results of the test show a significant difference in the age group of farmers toward the knowledge level of value-added products of palm jaggery, non-edible items, and e-market space for their sales. Hence, the young age group is familiar with e-commerce portals and expected to build their business through online sales, extending their business to making non-edible items which is easy to market overseas.

Suggestion

Development of cottage industries is the best way to trickle social and economic problems in a rural areas, especially traditional occupations in rural. Therefore, many stakeholders and social entrepreneurs required the growth of the *palm jaggery* industry. In order to strengthen PPCoS policies and reform methodologies in jaggery production required to farmers. There are only value-added products that can produce new markets and knowing new selling points has increased financial gain. The initiative of online platforms will provide more opportunities among farmers for small businesses in the region.

- Need PPCoS reform its policy action toward palm jaggery's production and marketing.
- Need to improve social organization into a corporate business through federal innovation, and skills training programs.
- Establish a palm tree products research and development center at regional-wise institutions, which promotes conducting awareness campaigns for farmers, consumers, and an exhibition center for traders.
- Make business partnerships with the state apex body of dairy products manufacturers such as *Aavin* and other agencies. To open the selling point for edible and non-edible products at the district level.
- Address the issues of marketing by creating online platforms for procurement, training, and trading.
- Maintain the ecosystem of agriculture by farming palm trees in rural, semi-urban, and even urban areas.
- Ensure farming of palm trees is one of the major academic and training programmes of all agriculture-based institutions.
- Address the economic issues through engaging in funding facilities at all levels of business.

Conclusion

To keep in view the nature and importance of the palm jaggery industry where poor technical ability, and marketing opportunities are mostly engaged. This industry needs to be the key factor for rural welfare for which necessary policy support may be given for its development. In consideration of the progress of technical developments in various compasses of this industry and the existence of yet untapped vast potential for value-added products of this industry on a wider scale that offers employment. This research will be basic for further studies. Farmers and traders will get an awareness of which cottage industries can improve rural livelihood, the social and economic development of the region through this study. Finally, this traditional knowledge-based occupation deserves to be promoted and fortified.

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Commentary Section

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'Feeders of Nation' Seized by a Species: Locust vis-a-vis Farming in K. V. Dominic's "Salute to Farmers!"

K. Ramya Kalaivani and Raichel M. Sylus

Abstract

Farming is one of the most essential occupations which help for the survival of people. Apart from physical, economic, social, technological and political factors, climatic factors play a major role in influencing the production of crops. Light, water, rainfall, relative humidity, wind and temperature are some of the climatic factors that affect farming. Farmers suffer a series of such problems in yielding crops. K.V. Dominic is an Indian poet whose writings mainly focus on contemporary environmental problems. "Salute to Farmers!" is one such poem that portrays the plight of the farmers. It is about the pleasure and painful side of farming. This paper deals with the problems faced by the farmers as a result of climatic change. It is also an attempt to find out the reason for the locust attack and to explore the impact of locusts on farming.

Key Words: agriculture, climatic change, environment, farming, locust attack

Introduction

K. V. Dominic is a contemporary Indian poet from Kerala. He is also a short story writer, an editor and a critic. Apart from having concern for nature, his poems have a variety of themes. He never fails to condemn injustice which he sees in society. He conveys his emotions through his words, as it is one of the best forms to express one's inner feelings. "Salute to Farmers!" is the first poem in his collection, *Contemporary Concerns and Beyond* (2016). As the title suggests, this collection deals with major contemporary issues such as environmental degradation, social injustice, existential crisis and globalisation.

"Salute to Farmers!" is a poem of 35 lines that picturises various issues faced by the farmers. Dominic calls farming the 'noblest of all'. He says that farmers 'dig out' the land using equipment like spades, harrows, and ploughs. He mentions them as 'innocent human beings' as they are unaware that they are beckoned to grab the treasures of Mother Earth. Even though farmers hunt the resources, they do it in a gentle manner. However, the poet mentions that the 'mafia sons' suck the blood of earth.

Farmers' Routine

Dominic picturises the beauty of farming and explains the routine of farmers. They wake up early, take care of plants and trees as their children, find happiness in the plant's growth, and shed tears of joy while noticing the crops that are ready to harvest. However, they also become sad when their plants die due to bad weather. He says, 'Their eyes are drowned in tears / when they find beloved plants / withered or dead by bad weather' (Dominic 2016, 9).

Agriculture is the major occupation in most of the rural areas in India. In "India GDP From Agriculture", *Trading Economics* has reported that India's agricultural sector contributes to 14 per cent of the country's economy among 42 per cent of total employment. Also, GDP from agriculture has decreased to 5306.26 INR billion in the beginning of 2020 from 6098.83 INR billion in 2019. Despite agriculture being the major occupation, farmers still face many problems in yielding crops.

Farmers' suicide

The suicide of farmers is still prevalent in many areas across the country. Dominic (2016) in "Salute to Farmers!" mentions, 'Numbers of their suicides / increase year after year' (10). Vandana Shiva (2010) in "Making Peace with the Earth" says, 'The farmers suffer twice over. Costly seeds and costly chemicals push them into debt trap, and debt pushes them to suicide. 200,000 farmers have committed suicide in India since 1997. . . . The names were different, the faces were different, but the tragedy was one, the avoidable tragedy of poisoning farmer's fields and farmers lives for profit' (8-9). She suggests several ideas to be implemented in farming. She mentions, "Bt-cotton technology has failed to control pests or secure farmers lives and livelihoods. It is time to replace GM technology with ecological farming. It is time to stop farmers' suicides" (10).

Backbone in Trouble

Dominic's poem urges the readers to ponder over the fact that they are the backbone of the nation and still they suffer. Many factors such as physical, economic, social, technological, political and climatic factors influence farming. Dominic gives the traces of climatic factors and political factors which impact the yield of crops. He mentions, 'Always praying for the mercy of God / Risking drought and flood / they have only tales of tears' (Dominic 2016, 9).

Impact of Climate on Farming

Light, water, rainfall, relative humidity, wind and temperature are some of the climatic factors that impact farming. The brightness and the duration of the sunlight received by plants impact the growth and development of the plant. Wind also plays a significant role in the yielding of crops. Strong wind paves the way for water loss and reduces the flow of CO_2 diffusion in plants. Hence, strong wind may result in poor growth and yield of crops.

Role of Temperature

Due to the change in temperature, the growth of crops is affected. Temperature is vital in determining photosynthesis, transpiration, respiration, seed germination, and protein synthesis. Every crop has a certain level of favourable temperature to live. In places where the temperature is high, plants mature at a faster rate. However, extremely high temperatures can limit the growth rate of plants. It also denatures proteins and enzymes. On the other hand, if the temperature goes below the freezing point, the cell walls of plants are ruptured.

Role of Natural Disasters

Apart from these factors, 'drought and flood' as mentioned by Dominic, are the major natural disasters that affect farming. The availability of water determines the growth of the crop. Even though the amount of water requirement depends on the nature of the crop, the intensity of water can increase the yield of crops, or it can turn vice-versa. There is a link between rainfall and the locust attack in India, which occurred in May 2020.

Cressman (2015) in "Desert Locust" states, 'The desert locusts are considered to be the most dangerous species of all migratory pest species in the world due to its ability to reproduce rapidly, migrate long distances, and devastate crops' (87). Locusts affect the environment and ecological development and threaten people's livelihood and food security. It has become a new alarming threat to the farmers. Hence, it is essential to understand its interactions with the environment.

Change in Species Distribution

Every organism is a part of another organism's environment. Environment and organism are invariably interlinked. Even a trivial environmental change affects all the species that belong to that environment. Environmental change disrupts the survival of native species. The loss of a native species affects the survival of other organisms. Introducing non-native species into an environment can sometimes threaten other organisms and distort the ecological cycle. Hence, the change in species distribution devastates the ecological interactions within the environment. On the whole, it affects the

livelihood of people. One such example is the locust attack in 2020 in India, as *BBC News* rightly captioned, 'India combats locust attack amid Covid-19 pandemic' (Biswas 2020).

Indian Ocean Dipole

The locust attack's root cause is the phenomenon called Indian Ocean Dipole. P.N. Vinayachandran, P. A. Francis, and S.A. Rao (2009) in "Indian Ocean Dipole: Processes and impacts" mention that,

> During certain years, the eastern Indian Ocean becomes unusually cold, anomalous winds blow from east to west along the equator, . . . At the same time, western Indian Ocean becomes warmer and enhances atmospheric convection. This . . . thermocline take part actively is known as the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD). (569)

That is, water gets warmer on its west and cooler on the east. As a result, warmer waters in the western Indian Ocean have given heavy rains over East Africa and Arabian Peninsula. This temperature rise is due to global warming which has amplified the dipole and has warmed the western Indian Ocean.

Heavy rainfall on the western side has created the possibility of vegetation in arid areas. This has become a favourable condition for locusts to breed. In 2020, locusts entered the northern parts of India from March to May, as the pre-monsoon rainfall exceeded the expected level in North India. They outburst drastically during the monsoon rainfall in June and July. This has damaged several lakhs of food grains and has affected the economy.

In India, locusts usually enter some areas of Rajasthan and prevail for a certain period. After breeding, they move towards Pakistan. However, climatic change has made locusts travel from Rajasthan to Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and even some parts of Tamil Nadu. Hence, it attacked the crops and stunted their growth. On the whole, climatic factors such as light, rainfall, wind, and temperature are interlinked and influence the ecology and evolution of species.

Impact of Politics on Farming

In addition to the several climatic factors, in "Salute to Farmers!" Dominic has also touched upon the political factor which affects the farmer's life. He asserts:

> Outcome of their sweat
>
> looted by the mafias
>
> and they starve and cultivate
>
> to feed the nation's parasites (Dominic 2016, 10)

Land mafias occupy the land for construction and builders, leaving no place for farming. Chauhan (2019) in "Review of K. V. Dominic's *Contemporary Concerns and Beyond*" rightly says, "Moreover, their [farmers] effort is never paid due cognition. Unsurprisingly the question arises – why are our farmers not happy?" (331). Farmers are in such a state that they must face natural disasters and man-made disturbances. Even a minor imbalance in the environment not only disrupts nature but also affects every individual.

Adaptation Strategies in Agriculture

Akinnagbe and Irohibe (2015) in "Agricultural Adaptation Strategies to Climate Change Impacts in Africa: A Review" suggest some ways to implement agricultural adaptation strategies to the impact of climate change. They imply the objectives for the adaptation strategies as 'Adaptation has three possible objectives: to reduce exposure to the risk of damage; to develop the capacity to cope with unavoidable damages; and to take advantage of new opportunities' (408). They have also suggested some practical solutions as follows:

> . . . training programmes for local government officials, dedicated research activities and post-graduate courses; and the initiation of specific institutional frameworks for climate change. . .. improving and strengthening human capital, through education, outreach, and extension services, . . . increases the collective capacity to adapt. (415)

In 2020, farmers across India trooped into the national capital and protested against three new laws passed by the Parliament of India in September. Despite the changing weather and the deadly second wave of the novel COVID-19, they were firm in their decision and continued their protest for more than a year. Their protest was shrouded in violence. Hannah Ellis Peterson (2021) in *The Guardian* reports, 'Last year (2020) farmers marching into the capital were met with water cannon and teargas, and were charged at by police with wooden batons. In another protest in February, farmers broke through police barricades and entered into the centre of Delhi, where many broke into the historic monument the Red Fort. One farmer died after his tractor overturned'. The protest, which lasted more than a year, came to an end with the decision of the Indian government to repeal the laws on 19th November 2021. On 29th November 2021, both houses of parliament passed the Farm Laws Repeal Bill. Adapting such laws and strategies will increase the turnover in agriculture and benefit the farmers.

Conclusion

Dominic's ecopoetry dismantles the myth of human supremacy and makes the readers think about the human-nature relationship. His poetry enhances ecological thinking as it picturises reality. "Salute to Farmers!" makes the readers understand the struggles faced by the farmers and their importance in society. The poet ends in such a way that the poem has become a tribute to all the farmers. He says, "Let's salute our farmers for they / are the backbone of our nation" (10). Despite being the backbone, farmers face a lot of obstacles. It is the prime time to save the 'Feeders of Nation'. Organisms and the environment are interconnected. Each organism plays a significant role in influencing the environment. Similarly, climate influences the growth of every organism. Activities against nature harm the environment and disrupt the ecological cycle. This, in turn, affects every individual. Farmers not only turn out to be the scapegoat of natural calamities, but also become prey to them.

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Aspects of Religious Dogmatism: A Re-reading of the movie *Lakshmi Chele*

- Sreerupa Saha *

We can define "dogmatism" as the philosophical attitude of those who maintain that some propositions are not merely probable, or practically certain, but unconditionally true, provided only when we agree on the meaning of their terms and are able to understand them. Religion is, in itself, a desirable thing, but no one dogma can be regarded as essential to it. Religion is clearly a state of mind. It is also clear that it is not exclusively the acceptance of certain propositions as true. It seems therefore that it may best be described as an emotion resting on a conviction of a harmony between ourselves and the universe at large. The phrase 'a true religion' is scarcely accurate, since religion is not a system of propositions, but an emotion. Yet that emotion is the result of an intellectual process. No man is justified in a religious attitude except as the result of metaphysical study. We need for religion to be able to regard the universe as good on the whole, and it does not appear that we could do this except on the basis of a general theory as to the ultimate nature of reality. On this context this paper tries to give a narrative and interplay of religious dogmatism that exist in the Bengali movie *Lakshmi Chele*.

Key words: Lakshmi Chele, dogmatism, religion, emotion.

Introduction:

Religion and Dogmatism an overview

It should not be completely impossible to comprehend religion's nature, that is, what it is to all men and has always been. Religion is arguably the most fundamentally meaningful fact in human existence. The first thing that strikes us about it is that it both has a permanent and a transient character: the feeling seems to remain constant even if the object is constantly changing. We must mention any distinctions that are obvious for historical or scientific reasons. Each type of religious organisation is referred to as a religion and each variation as a sect or denomination. There are many ways to define religion. The definition offered by Prof. Tiele, "The fundamental substance of religion is found in the religiosity or religious frame of mind," may be one of the least informative of contemporary formulations. One is reminded of the well-known description of an archdeacon as ‘a person who fulfils archidiaconal functions’ by the phrase ‘the sum of all those phenomena which are commonly considered religious in contradistinction to ethical, aesthetical, political, and others.’ However, the majority of the definitions appear to fall within two categories: i.) Those who define religion as a belief in one

or more superhuman, invisible, or supernatural beings. ii.) Those who see religion as an attitude toward the cosmos, a devotion to a moral standard, or a sense of the appropriateness of things.(Shrubsole 1907, 410) It may be referred to as the ethical view because it does not necessarily reject elements that are 'ethical, aesthetical, and political.'

Strangely enough, Tiele adds the ethical component as a defining aspect of all higher faiths. It is present in one of the lowest forms of religion. Religion is a state in the second class; it is a belief or opinion in the first. Religion in the first leads to "following God's will" or "pleasing God" or influencing God; in the second, it leads to doing the right thing. In the first, man sees his own likeness against a backdrop of the supernatural; holding this notion to be true is viewed as a sort of religion. (Shrubsole 1907, 410)

Definitions of dogma and religious dogma include 'those whose acceptance or rejection by anyone would modify his religious opinion' and 'any notion which has a metaphysical importance.' Dr. McTaggart examines three dogmas that have been more or less intimately associated with religion in his book *Some Dogmas of Religion*, they are A Personal God, Free Will, and Human Immortality. Regarding the determination of the will, it appears to be a purely factual issue that science should be able to address; if not already resolved, it is likely on track to be so. If this and the other two dogmas are examined, it can be said that none of them have a strong enough foundation in probability. Dr. McTaggart believes that the final theory still has some life in it, although he acknowledges that "there is no justification for a positive belief that immortality is true." (Mctaggart 2007)

Changes have been viewed as an evolutionary process, although theological concepts rather than religion have evolved. Man is shown as transitioning from magic to some type of monotheism before resting there after experiencing animism and polytheism. The earlier kinds are reportedly only considered useful or true in relation to a final mode of cognition. So, perhaps for a hundred thousand years, man has chased after illusions. Every religious idea has served the purpose of evolving into another. However, it appears that process is still ongoing as evidenced by the fact that even writers on the issue hold a variety of opinions. Religion occurs naturally. It is the global spirit that is animating everyone of us. In this particular instance, we do not refer to it as a religious act since we qualify it with a more specific term, but it appears to have religious roots given that the nobler option is chosen and there is also the intelligent perception of an aggregate to which the person belongs. This, however, is merely a simple expression of the religious drive; its more complex forms manifest in a continual stream of deeds, either chosen after careful consideration or arising organically from character.

Despite its humble origins in a primordial impulse, religion only becomes clearly articulate when it reaches an emotion and a desire that include the individual's place in the larger scheme and, as a result, involve claims with metaphysical importance. Dogma might be considered "essential to religion" in this sense. However, that obviously does not imply theological dogma. This has a known origin. It appears to have resulted from the application of imagination to a set of incompletely known facts, producing a moving image or an ever-changing phantasmagoria in response to the advancement of experience and changes in society; however, despite having greatly influenced the forms of religious activity, it neither constitutes religion nor its core ideas. Although they have all entered the realm of religion, mythology, magic, theology, and even politics have not produced religion and don't seem to be essential to it.

Prayers made to the goddess of smallpox or the demon of plague is not very peaceful. It is more common to pray to a bad deity than a good one. The problems of the next world have been added to those of this one, and the fact that we no longer believe it is really our only solace. However, it does not provide us peaceful possession of anything, not even this earth. Religion free from theological dogma should enable us to put an end to many of the evils in life that we have caused and to accept them with composure. In this regard, we can even learn from the primitives, whose initiation rituals, which involve fasting and excruciating physical agony, seem to be geared to teach young people how to endure suffering with fortitude or indifference. And the joy that results from a sense of harmony with the universe still stands as the positive aspect of religion. It's also important to keep in mind that dogma frequently vanishes just when it's needed the most. Even if a drug is helpful, it is useless if we are out of it. In all progressive communities, excess ceremony and dogma eventually seems to elicit a response: Jesus, Micah, and Isaiah all voiced protests in Palestine; Buddha did the same in India. The old dogmatic theology has been transformed or lost in modern philosophy. After undergoing a number of transformations, the concept of God has finally turned into an abstraction, a metaphor, or a memory. Fewer, less demanding, and ultimately less horrible gods now exist.

One of the most important contemporary developments is the rise of agnosticism, which is quickly gaining popular among writers. Agnosticism isn't a religion; rather, it's an attitude toward dogmatic theological affirmation. However, an agnostic doesn't necessarily have to be atheist and frequently isn't. Indeed, insofar as a person is agnostic, he or she should be more receptive to religion; his or her spiritual vision will be clearer, and he or she will be better able to realise the possibilities of religion; for one who is no longer motivated by fear of punishment or hope of reward, a higher order of action is possible.

Theological dogma has long been regarded as essential to morals and as the removal of which would result in the dissolution of society as a whole. This is pretty strange considering that morality has been declared a sin at the same time. The truth is that morality predated theology. Even after the illusions have vanished, reality has not changed. Religion is what's left, and it's the most powerful and stunning thing there is, as here realised. "Believing in something good is a necessary component of religion, and religion itself is a positive thing." Yes, religion is more than just the practice of it. We scarcely need to bother asking ourselves if we believe in it. Whether we believe in the air we breathe is up to us. It still sustains our existence, but when we have a thorough understanding of it, we can make the most of it. (Shrubsole 1907, 421)

Theology in and of itself is not anything that religion can disagree with and can function either way. Religion has always been felt and recognised even in the worst situations, just as Hercules is Hercules even when wearing rags. The love of the highest will always lead a person to something greater than themselves, or at the very least to something that is good, lovely, and true.

'Dogmatism involves a belief in a doctrine, which provides system to all beliefs and so demonstrates each belief to be immovable.' Dogmatism is hence the unquestioning, selective, and irrational persistence of an opinion. It is an unfounded and largely immutable conviction. Dogmatism, in Rokeach's opinion, is narrow-mindedness. Dogmatism, according to him, is a very tight system of beliefs or disbeliefs about reality that is based on a core set of convictions about absolute authority and that, in turn, serves as a foundation for intolerance or conditional tolerance of others.(Dwarak 2013, 87)

When someone authoritatively states their perspective and shows no tolerance for other people's viewpoints, they are said to be dogmatic. 'A proclamation by someone who does not articulate his premises or present any proof, but depends upon "prestige" (authority) to ensure acceptance of his beliefs without scrutiny,' according to Mander, is what he refers to as a dogma. Dogmatism is predicated on the belief that "I am right and everyone else is wrong," from a psychological standpoint. A dogmatist rarely, if ever, acknowledges when he is mistaken. However, this assurance regarding one's own opinions is unwarranted. Such a person is distinguished by an extreme degree of tenacity in his adherence to his beliefs and principles. (Dwarak 2013, 87) Dogmatism is not always just an individual trait; it may also be a group trait. A dogmatic assertion could be handed down orally from one person to the next. It might be a component of a specific group of people's traditional beliefs or social legacy. Social order is directly threatened by dogmatism. It is a polarising and disruptive force that causes social instability. It can manifest as an obsessive devotion to one's own idea, belief, or concept and change into a

multitude of social ills as sectarianism, fundamentalism, fanaticism, intolerance, conflicts, and religious militancy. One could consider the history of religion to be the history of persecution brought on by dogmatism.

Fanaticism is dogmatism's most severe form. It appears when one's adherence to a belief system, a feeling of exclusivity, hostility, and dread are at their height. Fanaticism must necessarily have elements of hatred, destructiveness, and militancy. In the spiritual realm, fanaticism encourages ignorance and limits knowledge. Fanaticism is an excessive form of attachment that results from a lack of human intelligence. William Nicholls stated that "Fanaticism may possibly be the trait of those who believe their religious or religio-political goals excuse the employment of otherwise illegal tactics." (Dwarak 2013, 91) These tactics—slander, murder, and suicide murder—are used against other organisations that the leaders of the fanatical group have designated as their opponents. On a psychological level, it appears that their intense devotion to their religious object, whether it is a deity or something else entirely, drives them to detest people who are seen as being in opposition to their own reality. Therefore, hatred is at the core of fanaticism.

From the above concepts and belief let us now re-read the Bengali movie *Lakshmi Chele* and give a narration of religious dogmatism and the socio-political aura.

Lakshmi Chele - the movie:

As the title of the movie depicts Lakshmi there is a spontaneous feeling that it should be related with a girl but there lies the twist when lakshmi chele is named after a boy. Here the director of the movie actually has given the two central characters equal significance. Lakshmi is supposed to be the girl, little lokkhi, the miracle child with four arms became the ‘god child’- reincarnation of Ma Lokkhi in a village that is situated far away from the modernized enlightened city of Kolkata. The village was inhabited by dalits. Lokkhi’s ancesters suffered much racism, injustice and humiliation before the birth of this little girl. Rajat Narayan Roy, the high caste landlord of the village and the moral guardian of these villagers saw this opportunity i.e. the birth of the child as a means to make money and also to popularize the village. Three junior doctors named Amir Hussain, Shibnath and Gayatri saw through the deceit of superstition and blind faith identify the clinical condition of Lokkhi. The baby was born with a rare condition where a conjoined twin did not fully form. In pursuing the treatment of Lokkhi, Amir and his friends took extraordinary steps. They later realized that superstition and blind faith could not be remedied.

Kaushik Ganguly the director tries to bring out the condition and a reality check of our society in 21st century where the world moved from telescope to drone, but the actual picture – our girl children, caste system and the

religious dogmas in today's world remains unchanged. He was moved by the true story of Lakshmi Tatma- a baby born with eight limbs in Bihar in 2005. *Lakshmi Chele* is a realistic fiction that fills the eyes with tears. He captures the life and struggle of marginal people of rural Bengal. Never does it appeared to be out of place, or imposed. Their poverty, their festivals, worship, blind faith in destiny, their compromises with the upper caste and the rest of the world – everything looks so real that it transcends the borders of Bengal and also becomes a reflection of India's social life at the margins.

Lokkhi in the film who actually was the trump card for the landlord of the village and an avenue through which he could win the propaganda of elections was taken for treatment by the junior doctors and there this fellow saw this act as an act of disrespect that was done to the religion when he realized that one of the doctor is Muslim. The film was so portrayed that Amir Hussain was the main initiator to pursue the treatment of Lokkhi and he was beaten to that extent that in his later life he was crippled. The whole story was so planned that the film was named after Amir Hussain – he was the Lokkhi chele (good boy) the dedication, courage and the will that was reflected in the process of treating the girl child to normal was beyond imagination. There lies two aspects -one, a Muslim destroying the thought process of the Hindus second, the belief of god (spirituality) intertwined with politics were shattered. So some bigotry of religion that existed in the village was somehow disrupted. Humanity, science and technology were shown as the light through which Lokkhi was cured. But in a remote village there was no humanity when people were engulfed in superstition. So even in this era of post modernism stringent religious beliefs still lies ahead of science and technology, as because a bright young fellow who had a great future ahead was forced to lead a life entwined to wheelchair.

Evaluation:

Depending on how strongly someone holds onto an idea or a conviction, dogmatism can have a wide range of negative impacts on both an individual and society. At both the individual and societal levels, dogmatism takes the form of intellectual narrow-mindedness, an inability to accept novel concepts, the rejection of one's own and others' right to free thought, clannishness, and authoritarianism. Increased involvement with ideas and beliefs leads to extremism and intolerance, which in turn leads to militancy and secession, wars, and conflicts.

Religion (spirituality) and dogmatism are incompatible concepts. Dogmatism is based on opinions, while religion is based on everlasting truths. Religious universalism stands in stark contrast to dogmatic isolation and

compartmentalization. While dogmatism breeds societal estrangement and exclusive identities, religion promotes a sense of unity and oneness among all living things. Dogmatism develops when the intellect is neglected and spirituality suffers as a result. As a result, mechanical ritual, blind belief, superstition, and dogma have replaced the living knowledge of the scriptures and the truths contained within.

A liberal approach to spiritual and secular education must be promoted in order to combat dogmatism. The emphasis in educational institutions has to change from increasing intelligence to developing intelligence. A person with a liberal education can use their intelligence to succeed and find inner peace in both the material and spiritual worlds. A person with a high level of intelligence cannot give in to rigidity and closed-mindedness. The acute mind knows that "those who rise beyond ego interests and pursue the transcendent Self within are the truly religious and spiritual." They persistently pursue the Self through religion, religious books, and religious rituals. Keep their impartiality and tolerance of all religions without succumbing to fanatical attachment to one in particular.

In the movie *Laskhmi Chele,* religious dogmatism was seen as lack of proper education within the Dalits and the other villagers. They were unaware of the world around. They were confined to the small world of the village they live in. Livelihood to them was to search for food and clothing, their basic necessities. Education for them was luxury and they were too rigid to understand any new development and change. For this restricted thought the landlord of the village took advantage and used their miserable situation and the miracle child as weapon to politicize the entire social structure. The prey to this strong dogmatism and closed mindedness was a bright chele (boy) who on humanitarian ground helped the special child to attain normal life.

Dogmatism and its different forms will continue to show its colours until the supreme Self within rise above personal desires. People are yet to come out of such practices. The movie itself tried to highlight the fact and gave a reality check to the backwardness that still prevails in our social structure and the extermination is a bit difficult.

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