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The Kashmir Conundrum

Indo– Pak Relations and United Nations Security Council

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Abstract

In the post - war world, formation of the United Nations (UN) was a significant step towards consolidating an international order focused on achieving peaceful settlement of international disputes. The UN Security Council was specifically tasked with maintenance of international peace and security. The dispute over Jammu and Kashmir brought India and Pakistan at loggerheads at the UN since the very beginning of the formal proceedings of the council and the hostility over Kashmir has been a crucial variable in determining the course of India - Pakistan relations in the UN Security Council. This paper seeks to trace the trajectory of the dispute over Kashmir at the UN and critically analyze the approach of India and Pakistan in order to understand the effect of power politics and the role of UN Security Council in settling the dispute between the two countries.

Key Words: United Nations, Jammu and Kashmir, India, Pakistan, Article 370.

Introduction

The end of the Second World War was followed by a renewed focus on forming an international organization aimed at securing international peace and preventing future wars. The United Nations was founded in 1945 as a common international platform of the states to engage with each other for peaceful resolution of international disputes. In South Asia, following the wave of decolonization, India gained independence from the British Rule in 1947, accompanied by a gruesome partition of the country leading to the formation of Pakistan. India was one of the founding members of the United Nations and under the leadership of Nehru exhibited profound belief in the ideals of internationalism and pacifism enshrined in the UN Charter. In view of the opinion expressed by the UN Legal department, Pakistan was required to apply afresh as a new state for the membership of the UN as it had come into existence as a consequence of secession from an existing founding member-state of the UN (Pakistan Horizon, 1956). Thus, following its creation, Pakistan officially joined the UN in 1947. While the newly independent states were keen to

play a meaningful role within the international fora, the conflict between India and Pakistan over the state of Jammu and Kashmir presented a volatile situation for the region. As India officially referred the matter to the UN Security Council in 1948, the dispute became a matter of international concern and acted as a test case for the UN in the space of dispute settlement. The paper argues that the dispute over Jammu and Kashmir; and the deliberations over conflict resolution in the UN Security Council presents a crucial vantage point for deciphering the complexity of India – Pakistan relations at the multilateral forums. Despite an enthusiastic response in the initial years, UN Security Council exercised minimal influence and rather acted as a platform for states to channelize their hostilities and geo – political aspirations. This paper seeks to critically examine the debates over the issue of Jammu and Kashmir at the UN Security Council and the approach of India and Pakistan to understand the turbulent course of dispute settlement and evolving stance of the two countries at the UN.

Jammu and Kashmir – Historical Perspective

The earliest signs of trouble in Jammu and Kashmir can be traced back to the period of independence from the British rule and Partition of India in 1947. India and Pakistan were formed on the basis of the *two – nation* theory, but the newly independent nations were left in a perplexing political situation with the princely states. When the British departed, the princely states were provided with an option of either merging with India or Pakistan or remaining independent. Led by Sardar Patel, the unification of the princely states with India was achieved through the '*Instrument of Accession'* – a legal provision that enabled the rulers of princely states to accede to India in the areas of defense, external affairs, and communications (Behera 2006: 8). In the absence of any fixed formula for handling of the princely states, Jammu and Kashmir, under its Hindu ruler Maharaja Hari Singh decided to remain independent. Explaining the peculiar dynamics existing in the state, Varshney (1991, 1007) highlighted how the situation in Jammu and Kashmir was different from that of other princely states – even with a Muslim majority, it had diverse areas (Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh) merged into one state, it was in close geographical proximity with Pakistan, and was witnessing a popular movement led by Sheikh Abdullah against the autocratic rule of the Maharaja.

Jammu and Kashmir attempted to remain independent for a few months, but, the constant interference of Pakistan in the bordering areas and the issue of influx of refugees kept the political landscape volatile.

However, the invasion by tribesmen from the NWFP (North – West Frontier Province) of Pakistan into Kashmir transformed the security context of the state. To counter the attack and receive military assistance from India, the Maharaja had to accede to the Indian Union. Maharaja made an urgent appeal to the Government of India, signed the Instrument of Accession, and 300 troops of the First Sikh Battalion immediately landed in Srinagar (Schofield 2000, 56). Pakistan condemned the accession and denied any official role in the invasion, but as the fighting continued, the conflict in Kashmir was set to become a matter of international concern. Describing the political history of Kashmir and the international geo – politics of the time, Rakesh Ankit (2010, 50) argued that throughout 1948, along with India and Pakistan, the British were responsible for containing the fighting in Kashmir and in 1948, with the entry of the 'infant' United Nations and the cold war politics, the regional conflict over territory transformed itself into a subject of international significance.

As far as a theoretical comprehension of the conflict is concerned, while few scholars considered Kashmir to be a geographical issue and a territorial dispute between the two neighboring countries, others postulated that the paradox of nationalism lay at the core of the issue. Varshney (1991, 999) argued – the clash between the religious nationalism furthered by Pakistan, secular nationalism symbolized by India, and the ethnic nationalism embodied in what Kashmiris view as '*Kashmiriat'* resulted in the complex problem in Kashmir. The skewed perception of the conflict in Kashmir has resulted from a narrow Hindu – Muslim centric understanding of the history and visualization of Kashmir as a zero – sum game between India and Pakistan (Behera 2006, 1). Gupta (1966, 440) also argued that the origin of the conflict between India and Pakistan over Kashmir could be traced back to the ideological differences – the tussle between the Muslim League and the Indian National Congress in absence of strict demarcation of the border acted as a tipping point that led to outbreak of violence. From an international relations perspective, with the internationalization of the conflict in Kashmir, along with other actor global powers, the United Nations emerged as a significant actor in the dispute.

United Nations Security Council and the Kashmir Conflict

Initial Stand of India and Pakistan

The violent invasion in Jammu and Kashmir and its subsequent accession with India, much to Pakistan's displeasure, led to the formation of a complex problem involving the two sovereign nations. The British government believed they had significant knowledge and influence in the sub - continent, and suggested that the involvement of the United Nations would be useful in resolving the dispute over Kashmir (Schofield 2000: 67). Britishers worked behind the curtains to push the issue at the newly formed international organization. On the advice of Lord Mountbatten, Nehru wrote to the UN Secretary General in December 1947 – "*to remove the misconception that India's Government is using the prevailing situation in Jammu and Kashmir to reap political profits, India wants to make it very clear that as soon as the raiders are driven out and normalcy is restored, the people of the state will freely decide their fate and that decision will be taken according to the universally accepted democratic means of plebiscite or referendum*" (Korbel 1954, 98). Pakistani Prime Minister, Liaqat Ali Khan, was in agreement with referring the dispute to the United Nations, but had apprehensions over the accusatory tone being used by India (Schofield 2000: 68). In January 1948, Indian Representative to the UN, P. Pillai officially introduced the matter in the UN Security Council –

> 'Under Article 35 of the Charter of the United Nations, any member may bring any situation whose continuance is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security, to the attention of the Security Council. Such a situation now exists between India and Pakistan owing to the aid which invaders, consisting of nationals of Pakistan and of tribesmen from the territory immediately adjoining Pakistan on the north – west, are drawing from Pakistan for operations against Jammu and Kashmir, a state which has acceded to the Dominion of India and is part of India… The Government of India requests the Security Council to call upon Pakistan to put an end immediately to the giving of such assistance which is an act of aggression against India… The matter is therefore one of extreme urgency and calls for immediate action by the Security Council for avoiding a breach of international peace.' (UNSC 1948, S/628).

In a letter addressed to the Secretary General concerning the situation in Jammu and Kashmir, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan denied the allegations levelled by India –

> 'The Pakistan Governemnt emphatically deny that they are giving aid and assistance to the so – called invaders or have committed any act of aggression against India. On the contrary… (it has done) all in their power to discourage the tribal movement by all means short of war… the allegations made by the Indian Governemnt that Pakistan is affording aid and assistance to the

> Azad Kashmir Forces, or that these forces have been in Pakistan territory, or that these forces are being trained by Pakistani officers, or are being supplied with arms are utterly unfounded.' (UNSC 1948, S/646)

The Security Council debated the Kashmir issue in the presence of delegates from India and Pakistan and passed a resolution for setting up of the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) to investigate the dispute and carry out any mediation needed to control the brewing animosity. In July 1948, UNCIP members reached India, followed by a visit to Pakistan in August 1948 and proposed a ceasefire resolution for the first time (Ankit 2010: 54). After several rejections by both the countries, the ceasefire was accepted by India and Pakistan and was imposed on 1st January 1949. According to the second interim report of the UNCIP, the line was to be monitored by the United Nations Military Observer Group (UNMOGIP) and after the truce had been established, the issue of accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India or Pakistan was to be decided through a democratic and impartial plebiscite (UNSC 1949, S/1196). The interim reports of UNCIP acknowledged the complexity of the Kashmir problem given the positions taken by both countries and the limited mandate of the commission that was restricted to making recommendations. In the following years, several resolutions were passed by the UN Security Council urging India and Pakistan to begin negotiations on demilitarization.

For India, the decision to refer the matter to the UN Security Council proved to be a diplomatically unsuccessful move. India considered that Pakistan had no locus standi in Kashmir after it's lawful accession. India was particularly annoyed with the course of the discussion in the council as it sidelined India's grave concern regarding evident aggression on its borders and instead provided Pakistan with a platform on equal footing. In a particularly irksome incident, Sir Zafarullah Khan, Pakistan's Foreign Minister, gave a speech lasting five hours defending Pakistan's position and criticizing the 'rule of Dogras over Kashmiris' (Schofield 2000: 68). Section of Indian intelligentsia and policymakers, including Sardar Patel, were certain that the UN was reeling under the pressure of cold war and the issue of Jammu and Kashmir was being adversely affected by the power politics at play in the council – Nehru had already rejected the bloc politics through his policy of 'Non – Alignment' and had distanced India. Even during the debates in the UN Security Council, India was perplexed by the manner in which the British delegate Philip Noel Baker supported Pakistan's position. Pakistan's survival was the 'most important consideration' for the British and in its pursual, Noel Baker disregarded India's legal and political case while arguing in

support of Pakistan's legitimate interest in Kashmir citing security grounds (Ankit 2010, 53). Much to India's displeasure, the main issue – India's original complaint against Pakistan over aggression on its border – was overshadowed by the concern over holding of a plebiscite. Dominated by the need to strengthen Pakistan, the British delegation made sure to shift the emphasis of the UN Security Council away from the Indian interests (Ankit 2010, 56). As observed by Alastair Lamb, many quarters saw the Kashmir conflict as a 'crucial experiment' in international mediation – a test for the nascent international organization where the US and Britain worked closely within the UN Security Council (Schaffer 2009, 13). Thus, India's faith in the impartiality of the proceedings and competence of the UN to mediate on the matter convulsed over time.

Pakistan's approach to the conflict at the UN was based on the argument that the accession of Jammu and Kashmir with India was illegal as the Standstill Agreement signed by the state with Pakistan in 1947 debarred it from entering any agreement. Pakistan also refused to accept the authority of the Maharaja in Kashmir and claimed that the 'Azad Kashmir' movement was indigenous and spontaneous (Schofield 2000, 72). Noel – Baker was partial towards Pakistan's stance in the UN Security Council, and it is often seen as an attempt at balancing Pakistan's resentment towards Lord Mountbatten on account of his closeness to Nehru and sidelining of Jinnah (Behera 2006, 209). On the diplomatic front, Pakistan tried to court the US and Britain in order to take advantage of the cold war hostility and garner support for its stand on the dispute at the UN. India and Pakistan began direct talks between 1953 - 1956 and attempted to engage bilaterally with minimal involvement of the UN Security Council (Vaish 2011, 62). But, driven by its global aspirations, the United States emerged as an influential factor in the region and began supplying arms to Pakistan, derailing the momentum of bilateral negotiations (Behera 2006, 216). Pakistan was not hesitant in entering treaty commitments with the US if it meant gaining Washington's political support for its claim over Kashmir (Cohen 1976, 50). After the failure of bilateral negotiations, Pakistan again brought up the issue of Kashmir to the UN Security Council multiple times, but it yielded no results as Nehru rejected any proposals pertaining to placement of peacekeeping troops in Kashmir. In the meanwhile, in the UN Security Council deliberations, India found an ally in the Soviet Union. After Pakistan's inclination towards the western alliance was evident, Moscow broke its silence in the council by identifying Kashmir as 'an inalienable part of the Republic of India' and vetoed the concerned UN resolutions at India's behest (Behera 2006, 216). UN Security Council debated on the Kashmir conflict 18 times between 1948 and 1957, but despite the support of few global powers, Pakistan could not alter the status quo in Kashmir as India refused

to accept any solution that was based on unfavorable terms (Behera 2006, 213). VK Krishna Menon's' statement at the UN clearly reflected India's position – '*This is the 104th meeting on the subject. You can hold 200 meetings. We will come here every time you ask us to, but on no condition shall trade our sovereignty*' (Gupta 1966, 349). The developments in the initial phase highlighted that the UN Security Council was embroiled in the cold war politics and reached a stalemate after showcasing moderate progression in mediating in the Kashmir dispute.

Simla Agreement and Indo – Pak Dynamics

The 1950s made it clear that the Kashmir dispute had no easy solution and with the rising cold war tensions, UN's attention towards the issue slowly withered away given the scant influence it exercised in the past. Between 1960 – 64, India and Pakistan resumed negotiations on Kashmir, however even after several rounds of engagement, India showcased strong resistance towards holding a plebiscite as Pakistan pushed for it (Vaish 2011, 64). At the UN Security Council, in the aftermath of the 1962 India – China War, China departed from its neutral stand on Kashmir and sided with Pakistan. The ongoing dispute between India and Pakistan was still a recurring feature in the council – multiple resolutions were passed in 1965 urging India and Pakistan to impose an immediate ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir during the Indo – Pak War of 1965. But the UN Security Council played a minimal role during the war as the US and Soviet Union acted as key forces of influence in the subcontinent. The period was also marked by a deeper understanding of the cold war considerations, the politics of the UN Security Council, and the corresponding impact of external actors on diplomatic negotiations. While Pakistan had been eager about involving external parties in the negotiations since the very beginning, given the unsatisfactory results of the past two decades, Indians saw the third – party involvement, including that of the UN, as counterproductive to conflict resolution.

The 1971 Indo – Pak war culminated in the 'Simla Agreement' that proved to be a major win for India and marked a major shift in the conduct of negotiations over Kashmir. Signed by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Indira Gandhi in 1972, the agreement stated that – '*the two countries are resolved to settle their differences by peaceful means through bilateral negotiations or by any other peaceful means mutually agreed upon between them'* – India and Pakistan agreed to discuss ongoing disputes including Kashmir on a bilateral basis thus putting an end to the internationalization of the conflict and direct involvement of external actors.

However, the two countries often interpret the agreement differently – while India states that the Simla Agreement abrogated the existing UN resolutions and the Line of Control should be treated as the permanent border, Pakistan disagrees with the assessment (Behera 2006, 221). The UN Security Council did address the 1971 war and passed a resolution demanding a 'durable ceasefire and cessation of hostilities until withdrawals of all armed forces to the ceasefire line in Kashmir', but its overall involvement was limited (UNSC 1971). The 1990's brought about a shift in the global context – along with the end of the cold war and demise of existing alliances, India and Pakistan successfully conducted a series of nuclear tests. The issue of Kashmir was revived once again in a 'nuclearized South Asia' as the state reeled under the pressure of rising insurgency. However, the international community was doubtful over the scope and capability of UN Security Council to intervene in the Kashmir issue any longer – UN resolutions had been 'overtaken by new realities' (Behera 2006, 222). The Simla Agreement established the bilateral nature of the dispute and any resolutions passed by the council would have been considered obsolete. As far as India's stance in the UN Security Council is concerned, it doesn't consider the Kashmir dispute to be a matter of multilateral concern and abides by the Simla Agreement. But, even after decades of no discussion on the matter, Pakistan insists on retaining the Kashmir dispute on the council's agenda.

Abrogation of Article 370 in Kashmir and the UN Security Council

In August 2019, in a monumental move the BJP led government revoked the special status of Jammu and Kashmir by scrapping Article 370 and Article 35 (A) of the Indian Constitution. Article 370 was a constitutional provision specific to Kashmir under which the union exercised control over defense, foreign affairs, and communications while other residual powers were vested in the state government (Behera 2006, 38). The provision was initially introduced as a temporary fix and was often seen as an impediment in Kashmir's full integration with the Indian Union. The sudden decision on revoking of the special status and bifurcation of the state into two union territories – J&K and Ladakh – took Pakistan by surprise and was met with visible outrage leading to snapping of bilateral ties between the two countries. Pakistan quickly mobilized the issue at the international forums and wrote to the UN Security Council. On Pakistan's behest, China requested a meeting of the council to discuss the developments in Kashmir. India – Pakistan relations and the Kashmir dispute had not been discussed in the UN Security Council since December 1971.

After the 'closed door consultation', the response of the Council members reflected the transformed ground realities – discussing Kashmir under the auspices of the UN would not only be difficult, but meritless as both the countries had already agreed to deal with the conflict bilaterally in the past (Bhattacherjee 2019). The revival of the Kashmir issue in the UN Security Council also focused the attention towards the official stand of India and Pakistan. Commending the UN meeting, Pakistan's Ambassador Maleeha Lodhi argued that '*the meeting took place… is testimony to the fact that this is an international dispute… We (Pakistan) stand ready for a peaceful settlement of the state of Jammu and Kashmir and the meeting nullifies India's claim that Kashmir is an internal matter for India'*. India's Ambassador, Syed Akbaruddin argued that India's '*national position was, and remains, that matters related to Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, are entirely an internal matter of India*' (UN News, 2019). While India considers the revocation to be a strictly internal matter, Pakistan continues to perceive the decision as a breach of the 1972 Simla Agreement. Unlike the initial years, the international community, including the US and Britain, is more likely to adopt a cautious approach towards India given the strict domestic nature of the issue (Jacob 2019).

Even though Pakistan's arguments regarding Kashmir have been consistently countered by India at the UN, it continues to drag the issue of Kashmir in the UN Security Council. In 2020, at the behest of Pakistan, China again raised the issue of J&K in the council and referred to the 'unilateral' changes brought in Kashmir as 'illegal' and 'invalid'. As a counter, India pushed for permanently removing discussions on Jammu and Kashmir under the 'outdated agenda item' from the UN Security Council matters – there were no takers for Pakistan's 'irrational exuberance'. In late 2020, Pakistan made a public dossier containing 'irrefutable proofs' of Indian sponsorship of terrorism in Pakistan and Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi called on other nations to recognize and control India's rogue actions (Aljazeera 2020). In an assertive response, India's Foreign Secretary Shringla briefed the G – 8 envoys on Pakistan's apparent hand in terrorist conspiracy and provided a dossier to few UN Security Council members accusing fighters from Pakistan of attempting an attack in the disputed Kashmir region. However, despite its attempts, Pakistan did not succeed in reviving the dispute at the UN.

Conclusion

The dispute over Jammu and Kashmir involving India and Pakistan was one of the first international disputes to be handled by the newly formed United Nations. Tracing the approach of the two countries at the UN Security Council and the response of the UN on Kashmir brings out the limitation of the United Nations in conflict resolution and mediation. At the UN Security Council, the crucial initial years were enveloped in the cold war politics – the Western bloc showcased affinity towards Pakistan's cause and overshadowed India's complaint, with Britain acting as an 'Imperial' peacemaker. The strategic aspirations of the UK and US drove their approach at the UN Security Council and turned the core issue of aggression in Kashmir after its lawful accession with India into a question of plebiscite. The UN Security Council was partially successful in the initial years in implementing a ceasefire in Kashmir, but has been just a 'token' actor in any deliberations ever since. The conflict in Kashmir has been a matter of international concern in the past, but presently, India stands firm on treating the conflict as bilateral and any domestic changes within Kashmir as its internal matter. Moreover, in the evolving global security context, the dispute in Kashmir hasn't been of direct consequence for the UN Security Council or other global actors. Especially after the revocation of Article 370, the extent of engagement of UN and other global powers in South Asia has been based on balancing the 'nuclear' neighbors cautiously. Even after two years since the abrogation, Pakistan has time and again tried to internationalize the issue of Kashmir in the UN Security Council, much to India's disapproval. But, despite the support of China at the horseshoe table, it is unlikely for the Council to engage in the bilateral dispute, especially with India seated at the table as a non – permanent member for the 2021 - 2022 term.

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India-Bangladesh Defence Cooperation: Assessing Drivers and Challenges

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Abstract

While India and Bangladesh share historical past of security cooperation since 1971 Bangladesh Liberation war, events followed the independence could not preserve the close bilateral defence relations between the two countries. With divergent ideologies, political constellations and diverse threat perception, the states could not strengthen their defence cooperation. However, in the recent years, the countries have gained momentum and synergized their commitments to revive defence cooperation. In this regard, the objective of the paper is to understand the drivers that enhanced the process of defence and security cooperation between the states. In addition, it assesses the challenges that might affect the current developments in the defence sector.

Keywords: India-Bangladesh, Neighbourhood, defence cooperation

Since the inception of Bangladesh in 1971, India has had a profound interest in maintaining friendly relations with the country. India was the first country to recognize Bangladesh as an independent state post its independence from Pakistan. India's role in the liberation war of Bangladesh was vital and could not be overlooked. The relations are rooted in their shared historical, geographical, social and cultural affinities. Soon after the independence of Bangladesh, the countries entered into 'The Treaty of Friendship, cooperation and peace' based on "peaceful co-existence, mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, non-interference in internal affairs and safeguarding peace, stability and security of respective countries" (Ministry of External Affairs 1972). However, series of events dampened the cordial relations between the two countries. Despite having issues like land and water sharing dispute, certain sections of people in the society perceived India as the major threat to national security. Since the domestic dynamics of any country does not remain same, its implications on its foreign and defence policies also keep altering. The same could be observed in the bilateral relations of India and Bangladesh, wherein the multitude of factors have strengthened and weakened the neighbourly ties. Nonetheless, in the last few years, the states have significantly made improvements in advancing their relations. Cooperation in numerous areas of diplomacy, economics, defence and security has deepened their trust towards each other.

Of significant is the defence cooperation between the two countries, where they have made significant progress over the years. The evolving security concerns like extremism and terrorism, illegal migration, maritime security threat, climate change and Covid-19 pandemic have led to the building up of mutual trust between the countries. This has been facilitated by regular military exercises, training and capacity building exercises, exchange of visits between armed forces, leaders of the states, and providing humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR). Defence cooperation can be defined as "any arrangement between two or more nations where their armed forces work together to achieve mutual aims and objectives" (Dutta 2009). Defence policies and cooperation is the strategic tool to further the objectives of national security based on the perception of current and likely future threats. It involves training and enhancing defence capabilities, strengthening military equipment and technologies in order to prevent conflicts mutually. India's defence ties with Bangladesh could be traced back to 1971, when the Indian army helped Bangladesh in its liberation war from Pakistan. Despite this fact, because of the contending attitude, the two countries didn't have any formal mechanism to cooperate in the area of defence, prior to the visit of the Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to India in 2017 (Bhattacharjee 2018). However, over time, to strengthen the defence cooperation, the countries have signed number of agreements and Memorandum of understanding (MoU). Ahead of the recent visit of PM Narendra Modi to Dhaka in March 2021, the foreign secretary of India, Harsh V Shringla, briefed the media, stating that "Security and Defence is an important part of our cooperation with Bangladesh. It is a regular practice for chiefs of our armed forces to visit Bangladesh and vice versa. India will continue to add more depth and momentum to this aspect of our bilateral relationship" (Ministry of External Affairs 2021). Hence, it remains to be seen and understand that how the current strategic policies and dynamics of both the countries shape the future of their defence cooperation.

From the above context, the paper analyses the bilateral relations of India and Bangladesh in the area of defence and security. It seeks to provide a past and current framework of the developments in the defence relations of the two states. A brief look into the factors behind the postponement of defence cooperation is analysed. In addition, it explores the drivers that have strengthened the defence ties between both the countries. The manner in which the countries have overcome their speculations regarding agreements; make us optimistic about what the future holds for defence cooperation between India and Bangladesh. Further, it assesses the challenges that might alter the current dynamics and hinder the defence cooperation between them.

India-Bangladesh defence Cooperation: An Analysis

While defence agenda was the foundational stone of India and Bangladesh relations, even then the countries did not have any formal defence mechanism until recently. Over a very long time, a number of factors added resentment and mistrust between states to continue their defence traditional ties. It is imperative to briefly look at some of these factors to better understand India-Bangladesh relations. After the war got over, Indian army was alleged of acquiring arms and ammunition left behind by the Pakistan forces and rumours binged that the arms and goods were transported to India (Hossain 1981). This filled Bangladeshi people with fear and suspicion about India's intentions. Moreover, the 1972 treaty, instead of bolstering relations between the two states, did the reverse. It was highly criticized by Bangladeshis stating it as a hegemonic domination of India over Bangladesh and felt undermined by this treaty. Later, the military regime in 1975 aggravated the situation further, as domestic policies of Bangladesh, formed under this regime, distanced the nation from India till 1990. Other fundamental issues that acted as blockages in stable relations were water sharing dispute, land boundary demarcations, illegal informal trade, accusation of border killings and maritime border disputes. However, with the 2008 Bangladesh elections and Sheikh Hasina's win, the relations between the countries restored. The changed attitude of Bangladesh's leadership towards India came amid good momentum and marked the reviving of Indo-Bangladesh security partnership. The changing strategic attitude of both the countries advanced the long awaited defence cooperation between them. Hence, there is a need to look at the developments undertaken in the defence cooperation sector, particularly after initial strained relations.

Military-to-Military Cooperation between Bangladesh and Indian Armed Forces "encompasses exchange of high and medium level visits, availing of training courses in each other's training institutions, witnessing of designated exercises by military observers from both sides, exchange of War Veterans, UNPKO, sharing experience in disaster management, sports and adventure activities." (Ministry of Defence 2011). The visit to India of Bangladeshi Army Chief General Moeen U Ahmed in 2008 was a game-changer, reviving the political and defence relationship of the countries (Reuters Staff 2008). Thereafter, subsequent exchange visits of both Army chiefs and joint exercises have fostered Indo-Bangladesh military cooperation.

Reflecting the priority for peace and stability of the respective country and the region, the two countries on the occasion of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's 2017 visit to India signed a number of agreements and MoUs in the realms of defence and security. The four MoUs representing defence cooperation included: the framework for defence cooperation, MoU between Defence Services Staff College, Wellington (nilgiris) Tamilnadu and Dhaka's Defence Services Command and Staff College, to enhance cooperation

in the field of national interest and strategic studies, the MoU between National Defence College Mirpur and India's Defence College, New Delhi for enhancing cooperation in the arena of National security and development studies. Fourth MoU was for extending Defence line of credit of USD 500 million to purchase defence equipment from India (Ministry of External Affairs 2017). These agreements indicated the willingness and commitment of both the states to work together in a sector of defence.

Mutual condemnation of terrorism and other security concerns have manifested the countries to enhance bilateral defence ties. As part of building and enhancing defence relations, Sampriti is a joint military exercise between the Armies of India and Bangladesh to not only counter-terrorism but also promote trustworthy friendly bilateral relations between the two states. The latest ninth Sampriti exercise took place at Umroi, Meghalaya, India from February 3- February 16, 2020 (Ministry of Defence 2020). The exercise conducted Command Post Exercise (CPX) and Field Training Exercise (FTX), where FTX military exercise involved getting familiar with each other's armed tactical drills and operational structures for strengthening security. To be accompanied with the personnel from both the sides focussing on counter terrorism operations in a controlled and stipulated environment (Ministry of Defence 2020).

Border management is another very crucial aspect that has added impetus of mutually creating a secure environment. In pursuance of harnessing defence relations, the development in the field took place during Prime Minister Hasina's 2019 visit to India. Both the leaders acknowledged the importance of effectively managing borders to ensure a secure, stable and crime free border. The Coordinated Border Management Plan (CBMP) has been a significant step in ensuring greater sense of security in the area. India and Bangladesh shares 4096.7 kilometre of border, which is the longest land boundary India shares with any of its neighbours (Ministry of Home Affairs 2021). Indeed, it opens up avenues for rampant smuggling and illegal cross border activities. Both the Prime Ministers in 2010 agreed to have a CBPM, the aim of which was to underscore effective coordination and maintaining peace between Border Guarding Forces (Border Security Force (BSF) and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB)), for preventing trans-border activities and crime (High Commission of India 2011). In addition, to further boost cooperation, a MoU was signed in 2015 to prevent human trafficking, counter smuggling and circulation of fake currency notes (Ministry of Home Affairs 2020). To curtail security threats, both the states have come forward and undertaken policies to achieve harmony and peace. In the recent June 2021 virtual three day Inspector General (IG) level Border Co-ordination Conference between the personnel of BSF and BGB, the two forces interacted to further strengthen and exercise border management activities (The Statesman 2021). The importance to resolve

pending issues at the Border with coordinated patrolling and sharing of intelligence were addressed for preventing border killings and ensuring crime free border.

For facilitating seamless and secured border movement, the Integrated Border Check Posts (ICPs) have been set up to improve smooth trade and connectivity and to closely monitor unlawful activities. Security has always been the key concern for both the countries and hence the cooperation in the defence realm remains crucial for both. The importance of maritime safety remains highlighted by both the leaders and taking a step ahead achieving this goal, another MoU was signed on providing Coastal Surveillance Radar System in Bangladesh, during Hasina's 2019 visit to India (Ministry of External Affairs 2019). This initiative would not only help in curbing terrorism threats via seas but also would increase cooperation in defence via secure maritime neighbourhood.

Indian Prime Minister Modi's first foreign visit after global pandemic to Bangladesh signifies an enhanced bond and evolved bilateral relations that the two countries share. The visit of PM modi was to attend the Golden Jubilee of the Independence of Bangladesh, the Birth Centenary of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and 50 years of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Bangladesh. In a two day-visit from 26 to 27 March 2021, both the Prime Ministers expressed satisfaction over the current developments on defence cooperation and emphasised regular exchange of training and capacity building measures. Both sides ensured commitments towards bringing down border deaths of civilians to zero along with completing the pending projects across the border (Prime Minister's Office 2021).

Hence, the aforementioned initiatives and MoUs cement defence cooperation and add up to "the golden chapter" of friendship, as described by PM Modi while addressing the bilateral relations of India and Bangladesh. This indicates that the past narrative of perceiving India as a threat has been shifted towards it being a trustworthy neighbour. Analysis of the bilateral relations of the two states suggests that primacy is not only given to enhancing relations in defence and security sector but also to pave the way for stable relations in the future. Unlike past, India and Bangladesh, at present share a cordial relationship which has not only helped in the security framework but also in the national interest of the two countries. Having mentioned this, the next section deals with the drivers that have led to enhanced defence cooperation.

Drivers of Cooperation

Given the positive defence and security cooperation at present, it is important to analyse the reasons that actually heightened both the states to mutually cooperate:

First and foremost driving factor for heightening Indo-Bangladesh defence cooperation has been the ardent efforts and political commitments of both the countries to overcome their mistrust. The first step in this regard was taken immediately after 2008 elections when PM Hasina came to power and addressed India's prolonged security concern in north-east region, which India claimed that because of the sharing border between north-east and Bangladesh, insurgent and terrorist groups enjoyed safe haven in Bangladesh to launch terrorist operations against India (Bhattacharjee 2018). In addition, the regular military exercises and numerous high-level visits from armed forces of the two countries stimulated trust and mutual understanding of each other's perspective. Bangladesh remains a crucial part of India's 'Neighbourhood First' Policy and there has been a consistent thrust by India to resolve differences and ensure peaceful environment in neighbourhood. In 2014, the landmark resolution of the maritime boundary dispute followed by the land boundary demarcation upswing the friendly and trustworthy feeling among the states. These initiatives dispel earlier discontent and improved cooperation in defence and related sectors.

Second driving factor in defence cooperation is the proactive commitment of both the states towards countering violent extremism and terrorism. Terrorist threats do not confine to national boundaries and hence security remains priority for both. Countering this menace has generated bilateral cooperation in many capability enhancement programmes. In 2010, both the countries came to an agreement on Combating International Terrorism, Organized Crime and Illicit Drug Trafficking, to mutually fight against terrorism in all its form and manifestation (Ministry of External Affairs 2010). Sheikh Hasina's government is committed to a zero-tolerance policy against terrorism and have taken stringent actions against home-grown terrorist groups like Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB). Given the plethora of cross-border terrorism threats, the countries have shown commitment to monitor terror activities across the border and maintain peace in South Asia. As both countries have been victims of terrorism, they understand the need to work together effectively to meet the growing challenge of terrorism. Also, with the expansion of Islamic State and Al-Qaeda in the region, the threats arising from terrorism would require collaborative and cooperative actions to maintain security of the countries and beyond.

Additionally, common maritime threats have clearly established security cooperation between India and Bangladesh. Since both the countries share maritime boundary in the Indian Ocean, the need for maritime

safety built cooperation for mutual benefit. Multilateral regional initiatives like the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) have been a prominent factor in advancing Indo-Bangladesh security relations. Transnational maritime issues of piracy, terrorism, illegal trade and trafficking, along with threats emerging from environmental calamities have strengthened security framework to mutually mitigate the challenges. On the occasion of the sixth meeting of the India-Bangladesh Joint Consultative Commission (JCC), virtually held on September 29, 2020, both the countries assured cooperation under IORA and ensured maritime safety in the Indian Ocean Region (Ministry of External Affairs 2020). Hence, security imperatives trigger both the states towards defence cooperation.

Fourthly, economic cooperation and connectivity have become a gateway for countries to develop trustworthy ties which in turn have led to cooperation on security framework. Bangladesh remains an integral part of India's Look east policy (Act east Policy in 2014). Enhanced connectivity between the countries is an answer to the development of the stable and friendly relations between India and Bangladesh. The recent 'Maitri Setu' bridge is a step taken ahead towards this strategic goal that would not only result in greater partnership between the states but also open new avenues and opportunities for India's landlocked northeastern states. The 1.9 kilometre bridge, built across the Feni River would be the fastest land route to connect Northeast to Chittagong port of Bangladesh (Ministry of External Affairs 2021). It may be said that both the countries have mirrored the same opinion that weak security arrangements would sabotage the economic development and also agree that the well-being of its respective population cannot be achieved without a peaceful and stable region.

Lastly, Bangladesh's proximity with China has always been a major concern for India and its geo-political and geo-strategic interests. Bangladesh and China signed "Guard Cooperation Agreement" in 2002 and since then, they have been deepening their defence ties. Under the agreement, China has provided the country with a significant number of arms and weapons made in China (Kamruzzaman 2021). Ever since, Bangladesh bought two submarines from China, the defence cooperation has been strengthened. Military cooperation between Bangladesh-China has obvious ramifications for India as China's increasing presence in the Indian sub-continent is perceived as a threat to the security of India; also it might impact Indo-Bangladesh friendly relations that would further present a challenge to connect to the Northeast region of India. To counter China as a defence partner, India and Bangladesh signed defence cooperation agreement in 2017, which involves purchasing defence equipment from India along with other joint military training exercises etc. It is also believed that since India covers Bangladesh from three sides, to counter India's

domination, it is in the strategic interest of the country to be friends with China. However, at present, it appears that Bangladesh wishes to have balanced defence relations with both China and India. With several developments and timely implementation of its defence initiatives with Bangladesh, India might in future counter-balance China's hegemony in the field.

The Challenges

A wide range of challenges could hinder continuous cooperation between the two countries. One of the main challenges lurking over the bilateral defence relations is the increased presence of China in the country. China is the largest supplier of military hardware to Bangladesh and this poses a threat to security collaboration between India and Bangladesh. China has already surpassed India as Bangladesh's biggest trading partner and further several infrastructural projects under China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) boost the relations between the two. From India's view, the rise in connectivity of both countries is a growing concern as it might reduce Bangladesh's interest in India. For India, China appears to be a geopolitical competitor in South Asia. Hence, India needs to gear up more confidence-building measures along with speedy delivery of the promises made to Bangladesh.

Water sharing is another challenge between India and Bangladesh. The unresolved Teesta water dispute has been a detrimental factor in cordial relations of the two countries. The River flows through the Indian state of Sikkim and West Bengal to enter Bangladesh. For a long time, Bangladesh has been demanding a greater share of the River's water but as jurisdiction over water supply remains with a state, the current Chief Minister of West Bengal does not seem to agree on the terms. This has severe implications on both the countries. From India's side, if the relations get worsened, it would adversely impact India's connectivity initiatives taken in pursuance of its own northeast region. From Bangladesh's side, it has been observed that "political parties particularly Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI) and Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) use this dispute as a trump card to uphold their vested regime interests in case of Bangladesh–India relations" (Kashem and Islam 2016). This would anyway not be favourable for India-Bangladesh relations as India has always shown keen interest and comfort with Awami League's regime. The tensions have further aggravated with China lending almost $1 billion to Bangladesh for a comprehensive management and restoration project on the Teesta (Chowdhury 2020).

Additional challenges such as illegal migration, trade facilitation, border management and treating respective religious minority populations continue to threaten the bilateral relations. These tensions escalated with the Indian government's Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) in 2019. Consequently,

these actions made Bangladesh people uneasy as they feared the influx of illegal migration of Indian Muslim population into Bangladesh. This resulted in the development of anti-India sentiment in the country (Bhatnagar 2021). Hence, to sustain friendly and stable relations, both the countries would have to vigorously take actions against the above mentioned issues.

Conclusion

Given the complex security challenges in India and Bangladesh, it becomes imperative for both the states to foster their defence and security cooperation. The bilateral ties between India and Bangladesh are anchored in multifaceted areas of trade, connectivity, security, defence, and more largely in cultural, historical and linguistic ties. It could be stated that the outstanding current bilateral relations have only been possible by addressing each other's security concerns and working together in the same. Defence cooperation remains an important tool in bridging the foreign relations of any country and in the case of India and Bangladesh, defence diplomacy has been a cornerstone of their relations. A number of measures and agreements have been undertaken to further strengthen the ties. But since the foreign relations of any country are constantly changing, further sustaining the cordial defence relations would depend on political commitments and strategic partnership of the states. India must take advantage of its historical, people-to-people cultural ties with Bangladesh, to have robust and comprehensive relations with the country. Because of the geographical location of Bangladesh, it remains vital for India's security to preserve friendly relations with the country. Therefore, both parties should collectively work on the issues that would overcome their remaining mistrust and hesitations and would result in peaceful coexistence.

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Indian Women's International Thought: Re-examining South Asian Intellectual History

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Introduction

This paper problematizes the absence of the women in the predominant international relations intellectual history discourse through a recollection of the life and experiences of pioneer women envoys of independent India. The women who were the flag bearers of what India aspired to be and its vision of a peaceful 'one world' to the international community (Manu Bhagavan, 2012). Though part of the list of impressive personalities who represented India abroad, they continue to be missing from the popular narratives of 'India and the world'. This paper, through an archival study, calls for the need to look back and to bring to the forefront the missing voices of Indian women envoys. In the course, it dwells upon these women as negotiators who took their years of experience as nationalist leaders into the international fora to become able negotiators and diplomats.

The two main subjects of inquiry here are Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit and Hansa Mehta. Pandit was the first female diplomat of independent India; not only did she enjoy a luminary career, serving in the 'great power' countries successively (USSR, USA and UK) but was also the first woman to become the President of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in 1953. Mehta, on the other hand, was an activist, educationist and a freedom fighter who actively engaged herself in the debate on women's rights within India and contributed substantially to the formulation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in late 1940's as the Indian Delegate to the United Nations Human Rights Commission (UNHRC).

This paper studies the archives and secondary literature using a feminist informed inquiry to ask, 'why are these women absent from the mainstream narratives of Indian foreign policy; India's role in the United Nations and the chronicles of Indian International thought'?'. This inquiry is used as a hook to ask the larger disciplinary question about the absence of study of women as practitioners of IR, a domain left underexplored since long. Thus, this paper works towards starting conversations about the silences that characterize the inquiries of IR, leaving behind the contributions of its female participants. The aim is to

initiate an interest in the archives to locate the histories of women and bring them to the forefront as the discipline grows.

Silences and Absence: The Missing Women of the International

Citing Mary Ann Evans in his forward to Devika Jain's work on the intellectual history of women in the United Nations Amartya Sen writes, "*The happiest women, like the happiest nations, have no history*" (Devaki Jain, 2005). A decade having passed since this book was published, it's time to ask again whether happy or not, where are the women in history? A thought that brings back the seminal question, 'Where are the women?' (Cynthia Enloe, 1989).

Women have participated in international politics since time immemorial. As reflected in the growth of feminist IR, with the efforts of varied feminist writings, the visibility of women has increased in the disciplinary inquiries of International Relations (Rebecca Adami, 2015: 56-66; Karin Aggastem and Ann E. Towns, 2018; Enloe, 1989; J.Ann Tickner, 1999) .However, the risk of marginalization of their narratives persists as one embarks on the discovery of women's voices. Jain writes on the UN Intellectual History Project about the history of 'women, development and UN'. She makes a poignant point in the course of her study. It is the need to differentiate female histories from histories of institutions and not allow the later to engulf what the former has to offer. Sure, the two tangents eventually intersect in the course of theoretical inquiries. But what is argued is to look at the female actors of international relations independent of the institutional narratives. Thus, to locate women practitioners of IR in the processes of the international as women. To study them as individuals on their own merit and examine what they brought and continue to bring to the table. The question of whose story gets to be narrated also persists. More often than not the visibility has been accorded to elite women. This paper too speaks of the lives of women from elite backgrounds who then went on to wield positions of authority. However, the larger attempt here is to tell stories thus far untold and broaden the scope of international intellectual thought as we know it.

Pandit and Mehta are just two of the many remarkable women who represented newly independent India abroad. There exist other names as well, for e.g., Begum Shareefah Hamid Ali, Renuka Ray, Lakshmi Menon, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, to name a few. These women enjoyed social-cultural-political and

economic capital that in a common-sense comprehension would allow anyone to be remembered. However, when the history of India's interactions with the world was written they continued as secondary characters in the storytelling of Indian foreign policy. For e.g., the negligible attention paid to Pandit in the mainstream Indian foreign policy writings. For a career as illustrious as hers in the era of cold war, in most texts she is reduced to merely being the sister of Nehru and her appointment as an Indian envoy is often brushed aside without sufficient inquiry into the role she played therein.

This brings us to the other problem with the existing disciplinary texts that do highlight the contributions of women as political representatives/diplomats in IR. While there is a general concern about the omission of women from the historical analysis of international relations, the main point of contention is also the relegation of the women of the global south to the margins. A large body of the existing literature in this terrain constitutes of western scholarships (Helen McCarthy, 2014; Nancy E. McGlen and Meredith R. Sarkees, 1997; McGlen and Sarkees, 1993; Iver B. Neumann, 2012; Towns and Niklasson, 2017: 521-540). While there exists a gendered omission of women from the larger academic inquiry in the discipline, there is also a North- South/ West & non-West tangent to this discourse. A tangent that is also reflective of the predominance of the global north over the discipline of IR. A domination that determines what questions attain relevance. Thus, prodding us to insist upon broadening the horizons of the scope of inquiry in the discipline of IR.

Stemming from and working towards addressing the above mentioned anxieties of IR, this paper walks the reader through the annals of the Indian foreign policy archives to excavate the contributions of Pandit and Mehta as the first official female representatives of independent India to the post war world by undertaking an archival study of the role of women in international politics to address the lacunae in the existing disciplinary discourse on the role played by the women of color in international politics.

First Women Envoys: Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit and Hansa Mehta

Pandit and Mehta spoke to the post war world loud and clear to bring attention to the plight of those colonized and the urgency to establish an equal and just 'new world'. At the UN, they drew the world's attention to the newly independent countries of the Global South and the aspirations of their citizens. They spoke in the international forum with great conviction. It is this memorable presence of these women and

many others like them as Indian envoys to the world that remains to be explored by the works on Indian Foreign Policy.

The historiography of the Indian freedom struggle acquaints one with many strong women nationalist leaders. However, what warrants scrutiny is the position of these women in the aftermath of Indian independence. The puzzle then is, what place was accorded to women who were active political participants in the freedom struggle in independent India?

Domestically, the answer can be found in the terrains of Indian politics. The Indian Constituent Assembly had female participants making substantial contributions to the debates on vision for an independent India. These included figures like Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Dakshayani Velayudhan, Pandit, Mehta, Renuka Ray, to name a few. Women as ministers in provincial governments and in the Indian Parliament were raising questions of relevance and joining hands for an equal status in an independent India. Internationally, Mehta and Pandit were two of the prominent Indian voices.

The First Female Diplomat: Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit

In 1946 the South African Government passed 'The Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act'. The legislation was given the colloquial nomenclature of the 'Ghetto Act' by those who were to be subjected to its provisions as it was designed to push the non-white Indian population of Natal out of the white localities by curtailing the rights of property ownership of the Indian subjects. Thus, pushing them into 'ghettos. The act divided Natal into two geographical zones, Controlled and Uncontrolled. The former was the area occupied by white residents, prohibiting Indians from acquiring property in these areas once the legislation came into force. They could lease land from the white peoples but could not use it for residential purposes and the use of the property had to be solely for the purpose of trade activities (T. Hansen, 2012).

The passage of the legislation in South Africa under the government of Field Marshal Jan Smuts created much furor both in South Africa and in India. The Natal Indian Congress strongly condemned and rejected the act and also approached the Indian government and the UN (South African History Online, 2 June 1946). The leadership of the Indian National Movement repudiated the 'openly racist and discriminatory legislation' and censured this move of the South African government. Thus, giving the issue prominence.

It was the strong reaction from the Indian political quarters that was also partly responsible for the Government of India to condemn the act and to also withdraw its High Commissioner to South Africa. Amongst the Congress leaders the severest criticism of the act came from Gandhi himself. In March 1946, he met an Indian delegation from South Africa in Pune and gave assurance of unconditional support of the Indian National Congress to the Indian diaspora in Natal. He also committed that the violation of the very basic human rights of the people of Natal would be taken up by India at the UN inaugural session that was to convene soon. Meanwhile, serving as a minister in the Provincial government of the United Provinces, little did Pandit know that Gandhi was committing to a task that would be delivered by her shortly.

Pandit was no alien to the international audience. In 1944, she had embarked upon a journey to the United States, to become the Indian voice at the conference at Virginia, Hot Springs, which was to discuss the fate of the post-war world. While the British strongly opposed the idea of Pandit travelling to the US for this purpose, her passage to the conference had been arranged by the personal intervention of the Roosevelts. What also made her presence more profound was that Gandhi trusted her articulation to sway the world (Vijayalakshmi Pandit, 1979; Bhagavan 2010). At Virginia, everyone saw the first glimpse of this passive resistor as an international envoy. Pandit spoke of what ought to be the new world order, she stated the 'broad goals for the new world order' that was to espouse equality, humanity and a peaceful march towards the future (Bhagavan, 2010). What followed was the San Francisco Conference where the UN charter was to be discussed and here too Pandit spearheaded the unofficial India delegation to ensure that the imperial propaganda does not white wash the problems of the colonized. So enthralling was her presence in San Francisco that it had the official British delegation keeping a close eye on her. She not only made a strong case for India's independence but also gained considerable fan following for her great oratorical skills. It was this success in 1944-45 that appears to have strengthened Gandhi's insistence on Pandit being chosen as the head of the first official Indian delegation to the UN in 1946. The South Africa question was one that concerned Gandhi closely and he held it in utmost importance that it be discussed at the UN in the most dignified and effective manner and he entrusted Pandit with this task (Bhagavan, 2010; Pandit, 1979).

Pandit reminisces in September 1946,

'Sir Girija met me at the airport and told me the reason for my being summoned. Lord Wavell and Gandhiji had decided to send a delegation to the first General Assembly of the United Nations, due to meet later in

the month, and I was to be appointed the leader… Bhai…explained that …the Government had decided to send a strong delegation to the UN as this would be the first from an "about to be independent India". Gandhiji particularly wanted me to lead the delegation' (Pandit, 1979: 205-206).

When an 'under-confident' and surprised Pandit met Gandhi in Delhi, he explained to her 'that it was his wish that India should inscribe an item on the UN agenda protesting against discrimination against people of Indian origin in South Africa'. He expressed his confidence in her following his principles while fighting for justice. He said that, 'The UN was not a debating society where a good speech or a *bon mot* was all that was needed. He envisaged the UN as a place in which friendships between nations were cemented, where discussions and debates were kept on the highest level, and truth and ethics were the guidelines' (Pandit, 1979: 206). Gandhi insisted upon Pandit being the one to oppose his long-time sparring partner from South Africa, Field Marshal Smuts, at the UN General assembly. He also viewed the UN as a platform that provided an opportunity for India to find friends who would think alike and work together towards building a more humane and ethical world. A world view that Pandit too believed in. As one skims through her writings it becomes evident that the Gandhian ideals found inroads to her thought process. She often wrote about the immense strength she drew from him in the darkest hours.

Pandit's appearance at the UN in 1946 is important as it was the first independent Indian delegation to the UN. Broadly, one may argue that this encounter also set the tone for India's involvement in the UDHR discourse.

The Preamble of the UN Charter was arrived at in 1945 at the San Francisco conference. It read, amongst other things,

"We the Peoples of the United Nations determined:

- To reaffirm faith in the fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of human persons, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small;
- To promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom." (United Nations Charter: Preamble, Purposes and Principles, 26 June, 1945).

The South African legislation viewed in light of these guiding principles to the UN was an evident breach. Inspired by the principles of universal humanitarian values, the Indian delegation at the UNGA raised the

South African case as a 'clear example of discrimination on the basis of race and culture' (Hansen, 2012). Gandhi himself was of the opinion that the 'Ghetto Act' not only was reflective of imperialist tendencies but was also a blatant violation of human dignity and hence, it was imperative for it to be repealed and India had to be the flag bearer for its case; an instruction carried to task by Pandit and her colleagues.

Pandit held personal faith in the cause of human dignity and the struggle against imperialism (Pandit, 30 June 1945, Nehru papers, NMML). This added zeal to her expression that moved many in the General Assembly as they heard her argue against Smut's government in her inaugural speech (Pandit, 25 October, 1946). The delegation had already submitted a report to the UN on the issue giving a detailed account of the racial discrimination, disenfranchisement and the denial of basic rights that the people of Indian origin were being subjected to in South Africa (Bhagavan, 2012). The South African defense to the Indian opposition was rooted in the invocation of sovereignty. The delegation of South Africa argued that the law being discussed was a domestic issue which should not be allowed to be brought to an international platform like the UN. In its defense, it even went to the extent of calling the UN 'a body dominated by colored people' (Bhagavan, 2012; Hansen, 2012). The debate in the UNGA required strategic confrontation so as to ensure that the issue is not lost in rhetoric. It was on 25 October 1946 that Pandit spoke at the inaugural session of the UNGA and stirred a debate on imperialism and racism on one hand and universal human rights on the other. She spoke, while acknowledging that India was still to establish its position in the world assembly, that, 'India stands for the independence of all colonial and dependent peoples and their full right to determination'(Pandit, 25 October, 1946). Her speech iterated independent India's commitment to 'human freedom' and the indivisibility of peace and freedom to achieve a smooth conduct amongst countries in the post war world. On South Africa she spoke,

'We claim no privileged position over other peoples, but we do claim equal and honorable treatment for our people wherever they may go and we cannot accept any discrimination against them' (Pandit, 25 October, 1946).

She questioned the South African government and called on the UN to 'implement in proactive the principles and basis of civilized life which has been embodied in the Charter to address the treatment of Indians in South Africa which was a signatory to the UN Charter'. In this debate between the West and the non-West, Pandit was not the sole actor but she was an important one. She argued, forcefully indeed,

'The issue is one where we have appealed to the world public opinion and to the tribunal-the United Nations. We could do no better, and we could do no less. The way this Assembly treats and disposes this issue is open to the gaze not only of those gathered here but to the millions in the world-the progressive peoples of all countries, more particularly the non-European peoples of the world-who, let it not be forgotten, are an overwhelming section of human race…The sufferings, the frustrations, the violation of human dignity and challenge to world peace, freedom and security that Empire represents must be one of the prime concerns of this parliament of the world's people. Millions look at us to resist and end imperialism in all its forms, even as they rely upon us to crush the last vestiges of fascism and nazism' (Pandit, 25 October, 1946).

Thus, she brought in the concern of morality in the negotiations that were being undertaken. She stressed that the world was watching those who were speaking from the elevated platform of the UN. Her words invoked a sense of responsibility of the powerful towards the powerless. By doing so, not only did Pandit invoke the imperative attendance to the moral stance of the new world order, but she also touched upon and probably opened the avenue for future debates on the issue of human rights for all, a terrain on which the Indian contribution was accelerated by the words and actions of Hansa Mehta.

Making Human Rights Inclusive: Hansa Mehta at the UNHRC

Having made its mark at the inaugural session of the UN, the next step for India was to work comprehensively towards the goals it envisioned for itself and the world. With the invocation of human dignity and the universal human rights for all at the first session in 1946, a beginning had been set. Bhagavan writes,

'Human rights had been the crowbar with which the steel gate of state sovereignty had been pried open, if only just. Expanding and codifying human rights was the next logical step…The Human Rights Commission would meet in three separate sessions over the next two years, first in early 1947, again in late 1947, and finally in mid 1948. The product of their efforts, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights would be released shortly after the last session, in late 1948' (Bhagavan, 2012:82).

And so, it was released, after prolonged debates and discussions on 10th December 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) announced thirty categorical rights and freedoms to all peoples by the very virtue of their human existence. While the document mandates commendation, it is the dialogues that transpired behind the closed doors of the UN that bring forth various perspectives on rights and liberties and the distinction between the perceptions of the West and the non-West. An apt example here would be the insistence of Mehta and some other women delegates on changing the proposed vocabulary of the text of the declaration that read "all men". It was Mehta who insisted that the phrase forwarded by Eleanor Roosevelt, the chairperson of the Human Rights Commission, was narrow in scope and would inevitably leave a considerable section of people outside purview of the declaration due to its literal interpretation in many parts of the world. They proposed that instead it should be read as 'all men and women', a proposition that was eventually incorporated in the draft (Adami, 2015; Jain, 2005).

Mehta, the second subject of this study, a Gandhian educationist and women's rights activist was a formidable figure in the Indian women's struggle for equal opportunity and rights. During her long political career, she also served as the President of the All-India Women's Conference (AIWC) from 1946-47, right before she headed to the UN. Mehta was also a member of the Indian Constituent Assembly and contributed to the debates therein. Going through her private papers, one is overwhelmed with the stature she held within the community of women activists and politicians and the meticulousness with which she studied every step towards the realization of her values rooted in Gandhian principles. Evidence to this stands to be the words of Janet Robb, Chairman of the Department of International Relations, New York City Branch, A.A.U.W (American Association of University Women) in the report titled, *'The Work of the Commission on the Status of Women'*, published on the sixth anniversary of the UN. In the text dated October 20 1950, Robb wrote,

'Hansa Mehta of India has been a member of the Commission on Human Rights from its early days. Slight, delicate and with a very low voice, Mrs. Mehta is one of the most effective speakers on the Commission. Not weighted usually with a single superfluous word, her speeches have extraordinary impact and are highly charged spiritually' (Human Rights Commission Report: 27 January to 10 February 1947, Hansa Mehta Papers, NMML).

Reflective of Mehta's belief in rights of all humans was her concern with the implementation of the UDHR. The declaration had been announced but the implementation of the document was tricky as there was no unanimous agreement by all states on the extent to which the international organization should be allowed to intervene in what transpired within the territorial boundaries of the respective countries. The argument often invoked was one of sovereign status of the state and the sanctity of this Westphalian feature. The official brief given to Mehta while being informed of her appointment as the India representative to the Commission on Human Rights of the Economic and Social Council of the UN expressed the necessity for the HRC to address the subject of human rights 'in its broadest aspects and not consider particular cases'. It insisted upon India taking a firm stand on 'equality of opportunity for all peoples and races' (Mehta, 1947, Hansa Mehta Papers, NMML).

These instructions aligned with Mehta's own ideals and her characteristic enthusiasm and precision. She minced no words to express her frustration with mere words and lack of swift action finds expression in the reports on the HRC sessions that she wrote to the Government of India.

She writes back home in the *'Human Rights Commission Report: 27 January to 10 February 1947',*

'... The impression I received…was that members evaded the main issues and they talked round and round about the subject without coming to any definite point' (Mehta, 24 February, 1927, Hansa Mehta Papers, NMML) .

Further, in the course of discussions on the International Bill of Rights during the first session of the Commission, it was Mehta who had objected to Roosevelt's proposal of passing the resolution as a general declaration. She had objected on the grounds that, 'mere declaration would not be satisfactory and would be meaningless unless the resolution was obligatory on the states members, which it would not be if there were no sanctions behind it'. Mehta, therefore, brought to the table the urgency to deal with the implementation of the declaration without which it would have been rendered a toothless pronouncement. To her, there were two facets to the problem that required adequate attention by the Commission, i.e., of supervision and enforcement, respectively. She laid out to the members that, 'a machinery had to be created which would supervise observance of human rights and decide whether there is a violation of such rights

in any particular case. And where a violation has taken place, the offending party has to be brought to book'. Mehta also strongly argued in her speech dated 27 January 1947 that the necessity of having clear definitions and employing precise and legal language ascertaining what entails discrimination. This, she said was of utmost consequence as 'the proposed bill of human rights will be meaningless if a proper and unequivocal definition of the relationships which ought to subsist inter se the individual, the community, the state and international organization, is not attempted by this commission and eventually by the United Nations Organization' (Mehta, 27 January, 1927, Hansa Mehta Papers, NMML).

In agreement with the Australian delegate, she insisted upon focusing on provisions that were implementable. The international bill, she said, should be an expression of faith and also a program of action to be carried out (Mehta, 3 December, 1947, Hansa Mehta Papers, NMML). Hence, words should not be divorced from action. Mehta insisted upon making the declaration potent and, along with others, to put in place a competent body that would have no conflict of interest while trying the countries breaching the covenant.

Another insistence made during the UNHRC debates that outlines Mehta's commitment to universal human rights is her advocacy of the right of individuals to approach the Commission. This was a contentious topic at the commission. Most powerful members were of the opinion that such a provision would open floodgates of petitions against states and would thus make the act of implementation redundant as ascertaining the authenticity of the complaint would be a task. Additionally, which complaints would fall within the purview of the UN and which would also be a thin line to walk on. In response to the apprehensions, addressing Chairman Roosevelt, Mehta spoke during the Fifth Session of the HRC,

'Madame Chairman- I take the floor once again, because I feel that this is a very important question, and on the decision of the question we will raise the hopes or frustrate the hopes of millions in this world. If we allow only States to enter complaints, it is quite possible… that the States may not complain against each other for fear of making it a political question and also for fear of retaliation from another State. After all, each state, I believe, has a skeleton in its cupboard and would be afraid to complain against the other for fear of being complained against, and therefore, if you allow only States to complain, it is quite possible that there may be no other agency to take up the cause of aggrieved humanity. I therefore feel that we must devise machinery which must be able to accept complaints from individuals or groups of individuals. We

have to devise a machinery to fit in this principle and not reject the principle because we feel that we cannot devise such a machinery. I feel that if we want to go cautiously, the proposals that the Working Group have made, namely, that we have the Committee first, to receive complaints from all these individuals, groups of individuals, or associations…. I feel very strongly on this point, and feel that if you reject this principle, you will be doing a great deal of harm to the cause of humanity. (Human Rights Commission Report Fifth Session/ Speech by Hansa Mehta/ 6 June 1949) (Mehta, 6 June, 1949, Hansa Mehta papers, NMML) .

Thus, Mehta contributed actively into ensuring that the UDHR doesn't remain a mere piece of paper with no impact on ground realities.

Conclusion

The purpose of carving out these negotiations from the chronicles of history is essentially to emphasize upon the silences that characterize the texts of IR as they do not account powerful international thought of women like Pandit and Mehta. The missing pieces of the puzzle are two faceted, to say the least. One is the absence of accounts of the individual achievements of representatives of the global south in international politics. The other facet demands due attention to the disciplinary erasure of the contribution of these women in the making of the world that we all have come to live in. Pandit and Mehta spoke in the UN and impacted the way the world thought about human rights and about dignity and freedom of all human beings. They stood tall and refused to be treated differently. It is thus imperative that we go back and carve out the stories of these women and weave them into narratives of IR and international history, most importantly in the study of South Asian intellectual history and international thought. Women were a part of international politics and continue to be so. However, they remain marginalized in the accounts of international relations and foreign policy analysis. It is thus important to raise concern to accord them much deserved space in the history of world affairs. Thus, this paper, using the examples of Pandit and Mehta prods the disciplinary inquiry to continue to ask, where are the women? And, to not stop short of asking till every woman of the international is accounted for.

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Gazing at the Male Bodies: Objectification and Male Sexuality in Indian Advertisements

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Abstract

Indian advertisements have been one of the tools of media to reinforce certain gender stereotypes and roles. Along with products, they sell choices, identity, lifestyle and ideal physical appearance of especially women. With globalisation and also cultural progressions in Indian society, there is a growing trend in advertisements to feature men and their bodies to sell the products. The huge market for fairness creams targeting women earlier, now targets men too. The advertising lens is focused on men's bodies too, to sell products.

In this background, this paper analyses the visual composition and explores the overt and covert themes operating in such advertisements. The audience perceptionon the portrayal of the 'male body' and objectification of men to sell the consumer products to the customers are unraveled. The paper also tries to theorise the redefinition social construction masculinities in current times.

Introduction

Advertisements are about giving information to the public regarding a product, brand or service. Advertisers use various techniques for effective communication. The combinations of texts, images, colors and captions are the key ingredients used in an ad by the advertisers, to gain the attention of the people. Images are central ingredient and occupies maximum space in both print and visual advertisements. As the images speak more effectively than words, they become the key element and occupies maximum space in both print and visual advertisements. A 'beautiful picture' with suitable caption can communicate very delicate emotions and subtly persuade the viewer to become the consumer

of the product or service. The advertisements also function as an image building practice, which supports a public relations team.

The advertisement industry in particular, and glamour industry in general employs women of particular age, colour and appearance to sell their products to customers. In most of the ads female sexuality or female body is objectified and shown to attract or grab the attention of the (male) viewers whether the product is used by women or not, for products like shaving cream, bikes, etc. The female sexuality is a selling point used by the advertisers to sell the product.

Indian culture is predominantly patriarchal in nature, it caters to male needs and desires primarily. Advertisers target men, as they are the decision makers and have the purchasing power. Objectification of female body, women as objects of desire and how this affects the status of women in the society or vice versa has been a continuous topic of debate and research in society and in academic, feminist discourses.
In recent years, there is a growing trend of departure from the traditional depiction of 'male models' in the advertisements. We arealso witnessing 'objectification of male, to sell certain products to the prospective consumers. A little attention has been given to the portrayal of male nudity and male sexuality in films, advertisements in Indian context. This paper analysed the selected advertisements, the visual composition and explores the overt and covert themes operating in the advertisements. The audience perceptions on the portrayal of the 'male body' and objectification of men to market the consumer products to the customers.

Theoretical Framework

As a foundation of this research it is important to understand the role of images in advertising. Paul Messaris (1997), talks about iconicity of the images used in advertising. The iconicity means the image which represents the reality and also extracts many numbers of emotional responses from the viewers (Messaris, 1997). This has moved from earlier dominant thought that "what advertisements do to people?" to "what people do with the advertisements?" (Lannon & Cooper, 1983). The role of images and meaning depends on the interpretation of the audience. The Reader-Response theory developed by Scott, Fish and Iser says that reader interprets image based on his/her gender, state of social and physical

conditions, ethnicity and other socially derived knowledge, rather than what the image signifies(Elliot & Elliot, 2005).

In this paper, the focus of research is the images of objectified male bodies in the advertisements to sell the products. There is a vast body of research done on the objectification of female body particularly. Objectification refers to act of reducing a person or living being to an object or a thing. It is an act of dehumanizing, and reduces people to things and commodities (Tunis, 2007).

Nussbaum clarifies that treating things as objects is not objectification, but the process of making into a thing, and treating as a thing, something that is not really a thing is objectification. Nussbaum and others discussed the variations and types of objectifications based on the context – sexual desire, social hierarchies and slavery.

'Objectification theory says that individual living in sexually objectified culture internalizes the repeated images and messages that they are subjected to constant gaze and are objects of someone else's pleasure and they start emulating the messages and the information (Martins, Tiggeman, & Kirkbride, 2007). A gaze turns a subject into object. The object of gaze is no longer other person but a person to be possessed or disposed of (Culbertson, 1998). There is increasing pressure on men to become metrosexual and the body concerns are affecting both the genders (Weinberg & Williams, 2010).
Deane Rohlinger (2002) study on increased use of male images cautions on the commodification of Gay Liberation Movement. He states the use of image is twofold; First, the cultural change that has contributed to proliferation of sexual images is the Gay Liberation Movement. Second, he conducted a quantitative analysis of sexual depiction of men and its implication, i.e., objectification. In link to the gay liberation movement, these images are empowering but it is taking the same path as feminism, that is, commodification.

Methodology and Research questions

This paper incorporates a multi-method approach, visual analysis of elements in advertisements, Focus Group Discussions from young demographic respondents and compares (cross tabulates) them with two

time periods (2010 and 2020) for in-depth understanding of the growing phenomenon of male objectification.

Focus group discussions produce concentrated amounts of data on precisely the topic of interest and gives access to reports on a wide range of topics. As the nature of this research is of exploratory nature, less structured focus group is preferred. We created a internally homogenous groups; like in the current research three focus groups were conducted: 2 FGDs with male participants, 2 FGDs with female participants and 3 FGD with mixed participants. These groups helped capture a wide range of potentially distinct perspectives. The participants were under the age of 18-25, college going students with diverse backgrounds and FGD groups contained minimum 5-8 participants in the session.

The current paper relies on the previous research conducted in 2010 and analyses the advertisements of the present time and correlates the advertisements of two time periods and explains the persistent themes in the male objectified advertisements. This approach strengthens the research work, as it revisits the research area for a better understanding of the area.

Visual analysis

This section will discuss the broad themes of the advertisements -the covert and overt themes, through analysis of the advertisements. A total of seventeen print ads from two film magazines, one women's magazine, one men's magazine and one lifestyle magazine from October – December months of year 2010 are selected. A total of three TV ads which were aired on TV from October –December 2010 are selected.

In these ads, men are displaying their bodies in sexually suggestive ways accompanied by texts that possess covert sexual meanings. Most of the advertisements read with its copy tries to counter the status quo of repressed Indian culture, especially the sexualities.

The advertisements featuring more nudity with deliberate camera angles hiding the genitals, invites viewers to take part in *Scopophilia* and voyeuristic pleasures. These advertisements are products of men's

products like shower gels, soaps and neutral products as bathroom fittings. The gaze is direct to the viewers in half-nude images of men (shirtless). Though most of the gaze is cold and detached, it engages the viewer in sexually suggestive ways in the way the man leans and stands towering over everything. Homoeroticism is denied by either the cold gaze or averting gaze to other men, unless the men are playful in the ads. Only few men in advertisements are sexually ambiguous, where the reader can write any sexuality onto the bodies.

The male bodies with provocative nudity or more nudity employ the cold gaze, as the nudity leaves the men vulnerable to homoerotic gaze. The heteronormative masculinities cannot risk to be subjected to homoerotic gaze which feminises the subject. Masculinity is constructed in difference to femininity, it is a social process that differentiates and protects the status quo of patriarchal masculinities. The new metrosexual masculinities dictate that men should be active and strong enough to do all sort of masculine activities, and attention is automatically diverted towards the man. The manliness of strong masculinity now is transferred onto the muscular or chiselled bodies of men.

Most of the bodies are hard and muscular, they construct an idealised body with washboard abs. The bodies and the background in most of the ads both the print and TV ads have racial and spatial "unspecificity". The backgrounds are either blurred, unknown and cannot be located or foreign locations. Most of the men in the ads except for the Indian Bollywood celebrities are of European descent. Not so muscular bodies in the advertisements are men at play with playful gaze, they have feminine traits of lean and relatively soft bodies emoting sexual ambiguity. The absence of any male body in advertisements that is chubbier and with fat is stark. The ads sell not just products but a lifestyle and a body to aspire to achieve. Any other bodies do not fit the lifestyle, and denies the existence of different bodies in reality.

Audience Response and Perceptions

This section discusses the themes emerged during the focus group discussions (FGD). The response and perceptions of the participants towards the advertisements are discussed here. Each FGD lasted for more than an hour to two hours. The groups were very much involved in the discussion. As most of participants were from urban backgrounds, they were exposed to similar advertisements and could relate to the

advertisements. The response was consistent and similar in almost all the groups. The response towards the images was largely positive except when the nudity or the advertisement is irrelevant and doesn't make sense. Men showed overt homophobia towards male nudity and sensuality. They observed that these advertisements are targeted towards urban and young population and sell certain lifestyle or practices.

Axe effect has cropped up in all the discussions before the advertisements are shown. The respondents felt that there are advertisements objectifying male models but they are lesser in degree and number compared to advertisements which have women objectified. The response to the ads with women is that they are really offensive, and it demeans and objectifies women. Though men agree to this point, they don't use loaded terms as 'offensive', 'objectifying' or 'demeaning' but used terms like 'stupid', 'dumb' and 'silly'. The responses of men and women to female bodies were same and there was more positive response from the men.Women are used to seeing men half-naked in their homes and public too.
Men responded to male objectification negatively and women responded neutrally to it. All the male respondents self-identified as heterosexual, and also unfamiliar to the objectification of men. Hence they outrightly rejected the objectified male bodies and displayed visible homophobia when discussing about those bodies. Both men and women feel that the ads are trying to sell an ideal body image and a masculinity construct.

The male respondents identified the growing self-objectification in them, as they desire to achieve a muscular body. The bodies in the advertisements do motivate them to join the gym but they are unhappy with depiction of idealised male bodies and only handsome men. They expressed a desire to see diverse bodies and faces of men. Whereas women appreciated the men in the ads and mentioned that if there is objectification in advertisements it is good to see perfect bodies and faces. They expressed desire for a partner that looks like the men in the advertisements. Both heterosexual men and women desire to see beautiful people of the opposite sex on display. But the desire for representation of diverse women with diverse bodies and appearances is not strong among women respondents due to long term socialisation and reinforcement of beauty standards through images in media and public perceptions. The women also

see it as an expression or window for their desire, as the female desire is repressed and invisible through social mores.

Men and women agreed that these ads caught their attention and made them look at the product too. Women agreed that the association of the bodies and lifestyle with the product is strong and that they might suggest this product to their partners. The advertisements with extreme and irrelevant nudity and with copy that doesn't match the products are rejected. Men displayed more stereotypes about gender performance and roles than women. For example, associating chocolate with women, voyeuristic gaze and denying existence of sexual desires in women. The views on ads targeting homosexual men and thus recognising the shift in societal and cultural attitudes towards homosexuality is divided. As some agree it clearly demotes an acceptance of homosexuality and others disagreeing that India is not there yet socially and culturally.

The role of celebrity was discussed at length and how for the masses most of the ads are not appealing unless there is a recognisable celebrity (Bollywood actors or recognised sportsmen). They observed that some of the Bollywood celebrities are in vests and their nudity doesn't matter as their face brings the brand value. Everyone agreed that the advertisements with Bollywood or sports celebrities is more effective than any other model or even the creativity of the advertisement.

Revisiting Male Bodies

The study revisits the research area after a decade, to analyze the current trends in advertising and the objectification of male and the unravel the underlying themes in the TVCs.
Starting on the note that Bollywood and Sports celebrities have greater effect on viewers from previous research in the year 2011, we have selected Television Channel Advertisements (TVC ads) released from the years 2018 to 2021. We have selected 10 TVC ads featuring Bollywood celebrities and one sports celebrity, and 3 TVC ads featuring models.

The advertisements featuring male nudity are consistent with the results observed in the research conducted on advertisements previously. The ambiguity of sexuality of male models is still prevalent in

the advertisements inviting the viewer to write their desires on to the bodies of men. The heterosexuality is assumed in Coca-Cola advert featuring Bollywood actor Ranbir Kapoor. There are instances of sexual references to Phallus, the way women fondle the coca cola bottle and pass it from one to the other while gazing at him. Despite the heterosexual gaze in the ad, the sexuality of Ranbir Kapoor in this ad can be anything as viewer intends it to be. In other advertisements, the heterosexuality is established with the presence of female partner (Saint Gobain and Boroplus Soap ad) or the man's sexuality is established in the advertisement (Lux Cozi) where he is seen actively desiring a woman. The upper body of men, especially torso has come into sharp focus in objectification of male bodies. It has become the equivalent of the fetishization of midriffs of women and great "navel gazing" phenomena unique to Indian culture.
Out of the 13 advertisements, male model is relevant to the product 7 times but the nudity of the man to the context and product of ad is irrelevant and somewhat irrelevant 6 and 4 times respectively. Unlike the advertisements in the decade, the extent of nudity has increased in advertisements, both relevant and gratuitous nudity. The gaze is varied across the ads, and it is not cold and averted like earlier but equally distributed. The playful gaze and attitude have increase since the past decade but the active attitude and the body which is active remained consistent. Though the overt and covert references to sex or sensuality have decreased, objectification of male bodies has seen a significant increase.

The research results applicable to advertisements in contemporary times are consumption of lifestyle and normalizing a body ideal for men. The repeated circulation of muscular men will result in self-objectification and cause body image issues in men. We will discuss the insidious tactics of normalization of idealized male body in the advertisements and also, the aggressive ways the media has introduced objectification of male bodies as well into the mainstream. The use of celebrities'idealized bodies in products where nudity is unnecessary. Example: In Aquawhite advertisement which advertises toothbrushes for kids, Bollywood actor Tiger Shroff appears shirtless. Children as young as 4 years old are exposed to a body type that is marketed as desirable. And also, Navratna talcum powder shows a shirtless muscular Varun Dhawan, a Bollywood actor using powder on his body. There is another ad of the same product with the same actor without nudity, which conveys the same message.

The other ways of aggressive marketing of only two types of body which are mesomorphic (overtly muscular) and ectomorphic (thin but muscular) is done using celebrities. Here, it works in two complementary levels. One: the offscreen persona of celebrities are used to market the bodies. Second, the marketing campaigns are not just for the products but also the celebrities. The brands like Royal Stag and Phillips use the personal success stories of celebrities to market their products and as well as the celebrities' relatability to the viewer. In the same way, Hrithik Roshan uses his HRX brand to promote his products and his brand name. The advertisement objectifies his workout routines, behind the scenes footage of his shoot and the results of the action which is his body. The advertisement keeps upselling the body and the active lifestyle associating it to using HRX sports goods.

The new and upcoming actor Tiger Shroff has become famous for his athletic skills and martial arts, and a body that is mesomorphic. The social media app Helo uses Tiger Shroff to further his brand by advertising him as an idol for fitness world, and inviting the audience to learn from the actor himself to achieve the body. In the same way, the celebrated Indian cricket team captain Virat Kohli featured in One8 innerwear ad. The ad brings in his offscreen and on-field persona and perception of him being 'hotheaded', 'arrogant' and 'temperamental' which is transformed into his turn of the phrase, "I was restless to perform…..now restless is my comfort". While the camera pans onto all his body parts clad in only underwear. Celebrities are not just selling products anymore but an idea of themselves, accessible bodies through consumption of identities and following a certain lifestyle.

Irrespective of the objectified subject's obliviousness or awareness, the viewers read the attention on the bodies. The bodies though objectified are not passive, they are active bodies – bodies that work out. Like the bodies mentioned above and also, another Bollywood actor Ranveer Singh's advertisement marketing MBig Muscle nutrition where the product is not shown but only Ranveer Singh's body while he exercises aggressively. The bodies are also playful, like another Bollywood actor Varun Dhawan in Lux Cozi where he is trying avoid attention from undesirable women until a woman he desires comes onto the screen and beats him at his game. Also, another new popular actor Ayushman Khurana is playful and humorous with is partner. Despite the denial of homoeroticism in the construction and performance of the male bodies by being in control or by averting gaze or engaging in playful, friendly gaze, or engaging in

violence (featuring Bollywood actor Vicky Kaushal in Wild stone ad), the objectification of the bodies is rampant and pervasive which attempts to appeal to all desires and sexualities. An exception to the nudity featured in all advertisements listed is the Saint Gobain ad which shows a chubby man showering in abandon and unabashedly unashamed of his body.

The controversy the Lux Cozi ad with Varun Dhawan created was for its obscenity and "sleaze" as perceived by some sections of the audience. This controversy and the response to it reveals some issues and troubling patriarchal ideologies entrenched in our society. To understand it, the ad needs to be discussed in detail. There are ads filled with more nudity and sexual innuendoes aired on televisions and other media. The issue arises from not the nudity and the overt sexual nature of the advertisement but depiction of consensual and enthusiastic female desire towards a man. The gaze at a man is present in the Coca-cola ad too, but the gaze and fetishisation is confined to the arms and torso.

In Lux-Cozi ad, the man dressed only in a towel drying his clothes on the roof top is gazed with desire at by married woman drying her papads, by a young woman (by media industry beauty standards is "average looking") and gazed with disgust by the young woman's mother. He uses his other towel to cause an exaggerated wind gust that disrupts their gaze. A beautiful and desirable woman walks on to the other roof top which catches his attention, as he is contemplating to use the towel. She takes out a Men's Lux Cozi underwear to mimic the same effect of wind gust that causes his towel to drop on the floor. All the women look at his "nakedness", that is not shown on the camera, and are thrilled at the sight of it. But later it is revealed, that his genitals are covered with the underwear. This action of women, married women, unmarried young women's overt interest and sexual excitement with the phallus is problematic for the audience. Women are fetishized, their bodies used as fungible objects, powerless in media and especially in advertisements, but women who explicitly display their desires towards men who are not their husbands causes moral outrage. Sexuality of women is one of the many things that is controlled to wield the power of patriarchal masculinity. This ad while dictating the ideal masculinity also depicts the desirable women – beautiful and sexually progressive but reluctant to reciprocate the sexual advances of a handsome man. These ads show that though there is an attempt to break out of the stereotypes of

masculinity and sexualities, the ads and content design maintains the status quo and unable to resist the Indian readings of the advertisements and ideologies of Indian socio-cultural mores.

Conclusion

Advertisements while selling products, services, they sell dreams, and dreams of certain lifestyle. The brands and products are now associated with aspirations that include an upward mobility towards a lifestyle and identity that is strongly associated with certain bodies.

The advertisers are using specific themes of sexuality, lifestyle and male body to sell these products, the objectification of male bodies is just the cover to gain the attention. Advertisers in this process have been constructing the male sexuality and ideal body image by enforcing the stereotypesof masculinity (Alexander, 2003; Thompson, 2000).As the focus is more on sexuality, lifestyle, and male body, the advertisements negate the objective.These advertisements are covertly trying to define and construct ideal body image according to the global market standards.

A wide range of products have flooded in the market for the male consumers to achieve fair skin, waxed bodies, hair and personal grooming products. Now they are remotely delivered to the small towns and villages through e-commerce platforms and gig-economy models, thanks to globalisation. The previously unrecognisable locations and some specific western urban settings a decade earlier shifted to locations and set designs that evoke identification and a vague geographical sense of location. Those include villages, rooftops and streets of a lower middle class communities. The advertisements which were targeted toward urban population and metrosexual men a decade earlier have now reached to more segments of population. The self-objectification of men to look certain way is visible in the social media apps where men as young as 15-17years colour their hair, wear clothes that mimic new trends and high value brands, and expose their bodies.

We have noted in our previous research that male objectification with direct gaze at camera and other men will make men more vulnerable than a female image (Culbertson, 1998; Neale, 1983). The revisit to

the male bodies and their objectification reveals that men though engage in a gaze directly towards the camera and other men, they do not let go of control and full invitation for the reader to read into them. Men are propped with certain barriers of action (active lifestyle), humour, violent bodies,and invite the viewer's gaze but take back the control by their actions or direct objectifying gaze towards the viewer or other women in the advertisements.

The achievement of *Homosociality* (Culbertson, 1998) between men without conditions seems an unachievable. As the risk of homoeroticism looms larger, especially for celebrities. With the advent of social media, the celebrities from film industry, sports and other areas have become brands in themselves. The off-screen personas of celebrities are available for public consumption which advertisers utilised for their advantage. The value of celebrities' brands in the advertisements are promoted, covertly signalling the viewers to achieve the bodies that the actors possess (celebrities have dedicated coaches for exercises, nutrition and daily regimen) is accessible by consumption of their products.

Some forms of nudity are empowering, and consensual invitation to gaze at a body is liberating. But advertisers are commodifying the male bodies for profit and in the process subliminally convey an ideal type of body that is muscular and chiselled. Socio-cultural and political movement for women's rights and LGBTQIA+ rights are being repurposed to suit their needs to market their products and brands. The ideologies and causes are turned into consumable lifestyles and identities with association to purchasing brands and products and as a by-product manufacturing insecurities around bodies and identities.

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Women Vendors of Manipur

Premmi Wahengbam

Abstract

Manipur in the present north-eastern part of India exhibits an all-women market in the South Asia. In its heartland stands the Khwairamband market which acts as a melting pot of different varieties of trade and commerce, by women from different socio-economic backgrounds and territories. The market is a symbolic representation of cultural intermingling, mutual respect, religious tolerance and unity. The Khwairamband is an epitome of women controlling the market. Outwardly it seems highly emancipating for women coming out of their domestic household and actively engaging in day-to-day business transactions. But they are still bound by patriarchy and other social obligations. Tradition and culture obliged them to the double burden of going to market for earning and at the same time catering to the gendered role of tradition. The paper attempts to study the social position of women vendors. Random street vendors are interrogated in the Khwairamband market, the findings of which indicate varying complexities of balancing market-life and family-life along with many compromises and sacrifices.

Keywords: women market, Khwairamband market, patriarchy, trade and commerce, gendered role.

Introduction

The valiant and hardworking nature of women in Manipur is well known. No social and political movements are complete without their due participation. The presence of an all-women market called the Khwairamband market in the heart of Imphal valley is highly significant. These women dominated the public sphere and started earning at a time when they were considered more natural to be within the closed walls of her home. But on closer examination, we realise that her voice is rarely at par with man. The paper attempts to study whether street vendors of the women market are truly liberated from the constraints of patriarchy and other social obligations. Or are they struck in between tradition and modernity, taking double burden of going to market for supporting family at the same time coming back home and be a slave to tradition. This often one-sided emancipation of women is taken up by looking at how these women vendors in the Khwairamband market experiences and we try to see what measures would help facilitate to make her voice, and 'women's voice' in general to be heard.

Historical position of women in Manipur

Manipuri women played a key role in the traditional Indian society. They are praised for their downright courage and independence. In primitive period, Manipuri society was considered as matriarchal and women held a very high social status sometimes even accorded as the head of the family. But, the advent of Hinduism had pushed women into subordination which was later legalised (Bimola 1988).They used to enjoy greater visibility and mobility and held a high status in pre-Hindu period. In the 1700s there was even a separate court for women where issues relating to women and family were resolved and handled only by women in courtship (Tineshowri 2013). Colonial accounts on Manipur are replete with the hard working natures of Manipuri women. Captain E.W. Dun remarked that women of the state were very industrious. Most of the work of the country except the heaviest, is performed by them. It would be difficult to find a more industrious woman in India than the Manipuri women (Dun 1957). Ethel Grimwood who lived in the state during the 1890s pointed out that Manipuris do not shut up their women, as is the custom in most parts of India, and they are much more enlightened and intelligent in consequence (Grimwood1975). T.C. Hodson opined that women in Manipur held a high and free position and managed all the internal trade and exchange of the produce of the country (Hodson2016). He also put forward the tradition of the country to have bazaars at convenient spots by the road side dominated by women from the early wee hours (Hodson2016). One of the largest and most important of these bazaars is the above mentioned Khwairamband bazaar.

Historical origin of the Market

There exists different views regarding the origin of market in Manipur. According to folk tradition, 'keithel', a local word meaning 'market' came into existence since the prehistoric times when there was contact between man and Gods. It is believed to have been established for the welfare and prosperity of mankind by eight Goddesses namely PukshiKhomgbi, ThingpaLoikhombi, Angaibi, Thong Ngaibi, KotingLeima, Thareima, YuchengLeima, and Cheng/Lan Leima (Imoba1996). Other scholars claimed that twenty five Goddesses actually started the market. This market tradition was continued by Nongda Lairen Pakhangba who reigned Manipur from 33 C.E. onwards (Nabachandra1999). Markets form an important part of the economic activity in Manipur and were manned by women. The kings played a key role in the market's establishment, maintenance and expansion (Jyotimoy2015).Hodson gives credit to

King Mongyamba for its establishment in about 1580 C.E. (Hodson2016).But during the reign of Maharaja Kiyamba (1467-1508 C.E.), an incident of changing market place took place. The rule of Chalamba (1558 C.E.) further witnessed the pulling of stone in the keithel.The market was further developed in 1614 C.E. during the reign of King Khagemba (1597-1652 C.E.) between the King's palace and the confluence of the *Nambul* and *Naga* rivers. His son Khunjaoba dredged the bed of the *Nambul*river from the *Chinga* Hills up to the present site of Khwairamband Bazaar in 1665 C.E.(Somananda2002). He further improved the market squares by 1666 C.E. making Khwairamband one of the largest market in Manipur. The market survived many natural calamities and war. It was further developed by succeeding rulers. Apart from its usual economic importance, the market was also a prime hub for other socio-political activities. It also served as a platform for punishing criminals. Important royal announcements were also made in the marketplace.

The Khwairamband market is the melting pot of different varieties of trade and commerce, by women from different socio-economic backgrounds and territories. Almost every commodity ranging from vegetables, fruits, fish, other food items, clothing, household items, handicraft products, ornaments and luxury items are available in the market. The market starts from early in the morning till late in the evening. It always remains busy with women handling the businesses independently. It is also a symbolic representation of cultural intermingling, mutual respect, religious tolerance and unity. For instance,*Yen yonfam*(chicken market) constituted a part of the Khwairamband market is run solely by the *Meitei Pangans*('Pangan' is a local word for Muslims). There is also a *HaoKeithel*wherein primary vendors from the hilly areas sold their producein bulk on whole sale basis (Somananda 2002). Market vendors are broadly divided into two categories. Primary vendors who sell their goods grown in their locality or homestead in bulk and secondary vendors/*lalonbi* who collect the goods in early morning from primary vendors and sell them at a higher price in the market. They used to walk long distances to the market from home. Now they commute by rickshaw, auto-rickshaw, and even buses (Prasain et.al 2014).

In the early days, the market women sat in the open. By the 1940s the better part of the market consisted of raised plinth covered by corrugated iron roofs, but a large number of women also sat in the open air outside these sheds. Most of them who sat in the open were non-license holders and faced many problems of eviction.The arrangements of the selling items were in a row and some *shageis*(lineages) earlier monopolised the selling of certain items. For instance, the selling of *Hawai Kang Tak* (Matter Dal) was monopolised by *Angom* lineage; Iron implementation by*Thangjam* lineage and; Jewellery by

Tourangbam, *Kangabam* and *Keisam*lineages (Somananda 2002). At present such practice of hierarchical monopolisation or restrictions in the markets are done away with.

Women and the Market

The Khwairamband is an epitome of women controlling the market. This predominance of women is generally attributed to its menfolk being constantly engaged either in war or in labour which demanded physical prowess. For some part of the year, adult male were required to join the *Lanmee* (soldier) compulsorily and for that they were away from home for most part for *HuyenLallong* (a martial art for defensive and offensive techniques of war practiced in Manipur) and horse-riding (Somananda2002).Early Manipur society was divided into many clans headed by a Chief and was strengthened by his people. The chief in return provided protection and helped in securing fertile lands for agriculture, often by fighting with other neighbouring clansmen. The meitei chiefs enlisted all able-bodied men as soldiers under their command. As soon as conflicts with other neighbouring groups ensued, they fought back for the occupation of land and expansion of their settlements (Bhattacharjee 2003). Naturally, it compelled the women to look after family and finances right from an early period. They had to fill in the gaps of their men's role in the family. So female labour expanded from their domestic sphere of cooking, weaving and looking after the household to the public space of market and participated in the buying and selling of commodities. Now, it has become a tradition for the women to run the markets of Manipur. It is recorded that men were not allowed to attend the market.R. Brown mentioned in his book *A Statistical Account of Manipur* that except the outsiders no males were allowed to enter the market (Somananda 2002).They were even barred from purchasing articles for domestic consumption. However, at present,there is no restriction of entering the market by men. We see men returning from their morning walks with vegetables in hand. Or most of the time, they go shopping with their family.

Market women had also played a crucial role in socio-economic scenario of the state. Historically, it had shaken the autocrats and colonisers by standing for what is right, and not for what is being given. In 1862 C.E., women rejected the attempt for introduction of copper coins in the state by the then political agent.(Somananda 2002).The Women agitation of 1904 and 1939 C.E. against British colonialismpainted the glory of what women could do in trying times in a place of existing patriarchy and gender bias.

A case study on the market women at Khwairamband reveals some of the problems faced by them. Majority of them came from economically poor environment. The high rate of municipality taxes (general tax and road tax) and lack of finances which led them to borrow from moneylenders at a high rate of interest are some major problems faced by them (Prasain, et.al 2014).Other than this, these working women are not freed from traditional gendered roles. They toil hard in the market and had to go back home to the constraints of patriarchy and other social obligations. These women whose voice represented power in most socio-political movements areoften silencedinside the domestic walls. Below are four selected interviews of random street vegetable vendors in the Khwairamband market.

SubhadhiniAthokpam(name included after due permission), aged 52 years (SubhadhiniAthokpam, pers. comm.).

For her, lack of financial security had driven her into the market twenty five years ago. By then she had two sons and a daughter. Earlier her family had solely depended on the daily earnings of her husband who was engaged in woodwork and carpentry. His earnings were bare minimum and had no provision for savings for dry season. But when he got sick, suddenly food became dry. She had to search for daily work. First, she got a work in the brickfield as a masonry labourer. After subtracting the to-and-fro journey fare from the brickfield till her rented house, she could save only a rupee or two. This was back in the 1990s. As this was not substantiating her family, she began to sell vegetables in her locality from door to door. It involved constant movement with a heavy basket filled with vegetable items to be sold around all for a meagre profit. This finally pushed her into the Khwairamband market and started selling vegetables. Gradually, she learnt the market policies and is now a well-established vegetable vendor. She said her husband is a very supportive person. He helps in the kitchen, assists her in cleaning and washing clothes. Her earning from market makes her financially independent and she feels happy about it. It enabled her to spend some extra on her friends and family without having to beg from others. Her income adds to her family and even though studied till the fifth class, she values the importance of education and therefore educated her three children in private schools. But as she was mostly away from home she felt her children grew up all by themselves. When there is a strike or blockade of national highways, it becomes difficult to earn. She said she could do what she is doing only because of her husband who assists in her household chores. Or else, it would have been a very hazy journey of managing both market and home.

KhomdomThokchom, 50 years, vegetable vendor (KhomdomThokchom, pers. comm.).

Her family used to have a grocery shop by the roadside which got demolished by the state Government without proper compensation for road expansion purposes. After that, she and her husband shifted to a rented room in Imphal to look for any odd jobs. They first landed in handicraft cottage industry and started making morah.(alocal word for a bamboo stool used for sitting) Even after toiling hard day and night, they could not earn much. Her sister who is also a vegetable vendor in the Khwairmaband introduced her into the market. Now she sells seasonal vegetables and fruits and manages her family well. Her husband is supportive and he now gets small contract work from time to time. Most of the household work is done by her two daughters and she has no worries of coming home late in the evening from market. She has little school education but has strong opinions about gender equality. She has a progressive outlook and said that not all men are bad and as partners both men and women should share in the household work-load.

Bideshori Devi, 57 years, vegetable vendor (Bideshori Devi, pers. comm.).

Initially, lack of financial situation pushed her into the market. Her husband is an alcoholic and without an earning. She tried to come back home early because she had to bear the household responsibilities all alone. She had to do double labour both at work and at home. Though she managed it somehow, looking back, she hope if man and woman could share equal burden her past would had been much easier. Now her two daughters are grown up and assists in household work. She finds it hard to manage a living from the earning of the market.

ManitonAthokpam, 35 years, vegetable vendor (ManitonAthokpam, pers. comm.).

She studied till tenth standard in a Government school in her locality. In her youth, she helped her father in their farm. She got married and has four daughters. Her husband always wanted a son. After her third child, her husband began to have affairs with other women since he believed she could not bear a male child. On her conceiving her fourth child, he forced her to get an ultrasound and the sex of the child determined. Fearing that he will leave her, if it was again a girl, she said it is a boy. But on giving birth, and seeing a girl was born again, he cut his ties with her. She was left helpless, a young mother, who just gave birth to a child had to work on sewing machines and to sell clothes inorder to feed herself and the rest of her small children. Most of the times, they went to bed hungry. Her voice was completely silenced in her husband's house. She mustered up the courage and left all her children at her husband's place and went to her parent's home. She thought at that time never to look back again. Later she took her newly born with her and she was introduced into the market by one of her distant relative so as to help start build

a new family. Sometimes, she makes a little money and at other times at loss, but altogether, she could sustain a living for herself and her young daughter. Her ill-fated marriage and need for finances made her journey into the market.

Conclusion

From the above interviews, it is clear that most of market women are middle-aged, and market provided a mode of sustenance. The interviews that I had summarised above had two sides. One where her voice was listened, heard and respected, and the other where it was quieted. Subjugation of women is rooted in patriarchy and is sanctified by custom and reinforced by the state (Gangte 2013).Generally her voice is side-lined and silenced when it comes to decision making and policy formulation, be it within the private walls or in the public domain. Recognition of her real voice is essential. After observations, it is seen that education is an important tool to alter social differentiation. The need of the hour is to have a gender neutral curriculum and syllabus right from the primary level so as to uproot the evils of patriarchy from the grass-root level.Majority of our women are still bound by the shackles of conservative tradition which gives them lower status than men. Unless an attitudinal change occurs, the position of women is bound to be inferior (Gangte2013).

Media is a crucial medium to propagate class and gender ideology. From films and television to magazines, newspaper, radio and even internet, the portrayal of women is stereotypical and distorted. Messages about male superiority and female inferiority are repeated and insisted constantly; violence against women is rampant, especially in films (Bhasin1993).Such sexist and one-sided messages have to be done away with. The content of music, films, and other forms of performing arts needs gender sensitization. Immoral contents like the naturalization of man slapping women to shut up, or man beating her wife brutally for speaking up her mind all needs to be checked (Shilaramani 2019).Also, the modern era calls for the breaking of the stereotypically conditioned gendered roles. For instance, women are not always born as nurturers, as givers. Women are not born as fragile, meant for cooking, cleaning and doing all the household chores. If children are raised in such societal misgivings, they would surely consider the gendered role as natural (Thomas 2019).

It is a high time for women to liberate themselves from the clutches of the old, traditional and oppressive customs of the society. Women's role needs to be redefined again and again (Gangte 2013). Women empowerment is not possible unless women come out and help to self-empower themselves.By doing such, we will be doing some justice to the women vendors in the market and also to all womenwho have contributed considerably in the public sphere and private space. The early traditional value system needs to be broken down in order to bring more women into the public sphere.

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Changing Character of Associational Lives in Three Neighbourhoods in the City of Kolkata

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Abstract

This paper demonstrates how nature and form of voluntary associations change depending on their specific location and individual histories of emergence in the urban scenario of the city of Kolkata. For this purpose three neighbourhoods were chosen in the city in the north, south and north-eastern locations. They represent three separate moments of emergence in the urban historiographical context of Kolkata city. Through a description of the inner constitution and workings of two clubs in each of the three neighbourhoods under study, this paper argues that these voluntary associations provide important social networks within the locality and also act as an in-between space with the home on the one hand and the anonymous city on the other hand.

Keywords: urban politics, Kolkata, neighbourhood, Trinamool Congress, refugee.

Introduction

Clubs are not a new phenomenon within male associational life in Kolkata city. They serve as a prime site in expression of identity amidst mostly unemployed youth in a neighbourhood (Gooptu 2007). But studies concerning clubs in academic and literary circles have focussed on their exclusivity and particular privilege. This is true of the colonial history of clubs in the city of Kolkata which has received serious intervention in academic literature. Focussing on particularly women's clubs, Benjamin Cohen has demonstrated how the networks of sociability were expressed in women's clubs in the colonial period cutting across the coloniser and colonised divisions (Cohen 2009). However not such a level of attention

can be witnessed in the studies of clubs in postcolonial Kolkata. A distinct history of political influence over clubs in postcolonial Kolkata can be drawn from Gooptu's study (Gooptu, 2007).

In the 1960s, most of these clubs in the city were originally body-building groups of Hindu Mahasabha origins (Gooptu 2007). Left Front government too maintained such strong links in these neighbourhood organisations. Anthropological studies in the mill districts of the city have revealed that the concept of physical prowess in these local clubs has eroded since the 1970s with increased literacy rates in these areas. Many have commented that the Left Front after coming into power has pacified the effect of these organisations by replacing them with local neighbourhood units, common to all neighbourhoods (Gooptu 2007).

This paper contributes to the study of clubs in postcolonial Kolkata under the present administration of the Trinamool Congress (AITC). For this purpose, this study has identified two clubs in each of the three locations chosen in the city of Kolkata. There are historical, locational and contextual reasons for choosing these specific three locations for the study. In the north (Shyambazar), at the south (Jadavpur) and in the north eastern, Salt Lake (the planned township) regions in the city have been chosen which correspond to particular developments in the urban historiographical context of the city of Kolkata. While the neighbourhoods in the north like Shyambazar bear a distinct colonial history of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the neighbourhood in the south in Jadavpur emerged after the Partition of the subcontinent and the huge influx of refugees from East Bengal and the north eastern part of the city, Salt Lake relate to the politics of the real estate market as part of planned development of the city. Secondly, since neighbourhoods in Kolkata have been are segregated on the basis of class and ethnicity, this study has chosen neighbourhoods depending on these variables. The neighbourhood in the north, Shyambazar consists of different classes and different ethnicity of population; the neighbourhood in the south, Jadavpur comprises similar ethnicity and different classes of population and the neighbourhood in the north eastern part of the city Salt Lake consists of similar class but different ethnicity of population. Fieldwork in this research was conducted from July 2019 till July 2021.

Neighbourhood organisations in Shyambazar:

The neighbourhood under study in the northern part of the city falls under Ward Number 12 of the Kolkata Municipal Corporation, the area around Deshbandhu Park which carries considerable significance in Kolkata's political history. It also serves as the interjection between Raja Dinendra Street

and Circular Road on both sides. The neighbourhood has grown around the park and the park serves as a place of everyday leisure and recreation for most of the people of the neighbourhood cutting across class and ethnic differences. The two organisations, selected to study the neighbourhood are the youth organisation formed under the *bratachari* movement, similar to Boy Scouts which has diversified into a wider club, the 'Nabamitali', 'Shawb Peyechhir Ashor' and another club called 'Uttorer Adda' which have come into being recently and have incorporated a wider audience in the selected neighbourhood.

The Nabamitali is situated inside the Deshbandhu Park with attached grounds and rooms for meetings and an office. This organisation has a distinctive history. There were three organisations that were formed in the 1940s in the city that had the sole purpose of contributing to the development of self-image of the youth. A leading Bengali daily Anandabazar Patrika had a section for children called 'Anandamela' whose editor was Bimal Ghosh under the pseudonym, 'Moumachhi'. He formed the organisation Manimala in 1940 for the purpose of physical, mental and intellectual development of the youth. After three years in 1943, Sukanta Bhattacharyya created Kishorbahini influenced by communist ideals and aimed at the training the youth to, not be carried away by wealth and greed around the world. Two years later, writer, Akhil Neogi, editor of the daily Jugantar's children's section under the pseudonym Shwapan Buro similarly formed another organisation 'Shawb Peyechhir Ashor' which properly came into being with several branches around the city in 1948.

This organisation argues that they attend to the needs of each and every individual and also help in the development of a confident self-image of children. They include and involve the parents of these children and also other male residents of the neighbourhood who want to contribute and engage in their activities. Many erstwhile Congress supporters have later changed their affiliation to the Trinamool Congress which comprises the majority in the neighbourhood presently. The CPI(M) supporters also belong in this organisation and have been involved in their activities. Unlike other neighbourhood youth clubs in working class areas various political ideologies exist in this organisation.

The reason for choosing this particular organisation in the Shyambazar neighbourhood is because in contrast to the traditional clubs, this organisation involves a lot of older residents of the neighbourhood. As the locality has moved away from traditional values and now inhabits a diverse ethnic and class of population, this organisation works towards the development of children from this multi-ethnic and diverse background to contribute to the society in the future. Many of the children throughout their youth and older age remain associated with this organisation for generations. Everyday at around 5 to 6 pm as one enters the park and walks through towards this club will find males from the ages 40 to 60 years of

age deliberating on major events of the day and policies of this organisation. During the Congress rule the organisation had benefitted significantly. The Left Front Government had helped them create a library which can be seen as one enters the ground. It is a small room where the organisation stores important books both vernacular and English for the members and children to read. The AITC (All India Trinamool Congress) government have given them the grounds and established a playing space for children in the area. Since the organisation does not believe in one singular political ideology, several political parties have benefitted them throughout the years.

This club teaches children a variety of activities outside the boundaries of formal education like song, dance, theatre, mime and a host of other extra-curricular activities. Apart from that several sporting activities like football, volleyball, badminton etc. along with indoor games are taught inside this club. Most importantly the members of this club recall their use of wall magazines where these children write and draw. In the years that I had visited this club, several such wall magazines with particular themes were hung in the boundaries of this club. The club members pointed out that this aims to help the children enhance their general writing abilities. Most of the funds for these events and activities are paid through the monthly contributions the members pay for obtaining membership. They argue that the most successful and popular phase of the club was from the beginning of the 80s till about 2007. At this time the membership grew and along with it more funds were generated and several events were organised.

However they argued that the situation changed in the post-liberalisation period as parents became more focussed towards specific goals of career development and subsequently paid less attention to such club based activities within their neighbourhood space. Moreover, since the 1990s the members of this club suggest that a significant section of their members started coming from a diverse class and ethnic background, while earlier it was dominated by middle class Bengali residents. The structure of this club's organisation is like any other with Presidents, Secretaries and Treasurers along with a literary segment, sports segment and an IT (Information Technology) sector associated with the club.

The 'Uttorer Adda' is also a registered club in the neighbourhood but has of date not received any governmental funding. When I interviewed them in 2019 they had 35 members and in 2021 they have 45 members. These are people who not only participate in various events but also donate money and maintain the membership structure. This is the main source of funding but apart from that they also avail for sponsorship from private companies for the various events they organise. They are like a regular club but are significant because they involve a sizeable section of middle class population of the locality which is rare in clubs in other neighbourhoods in working class areas. It is common in a city of Kolkata for

middle classes of population to disengage themselves from everyday political matters of the neighbourhood but in Shyambazar, various young men in their 30s and early 40s decided to form this club to make use of the time they spend together in *addas* in the neighbourhood. They have their own room on the Radhakanta Street beside Deshbandhu Park where major meetings and deliberations of the club takes place. For these young men and women, this club provides a space away from home and work where they can contribute towards the betterment of the community they live in by encouraging artistic endeavours

One of the main festivals of the neighbourhood is the Kali Puja. On 2017, during Kali Puja, these young men decided to organise something else when clubs were hanging up signs to prevent noise pollution in the neighbourhood. They organised a 'Phanush Utsab" (Lantern Festival) in 2017 among the people of the neighbourhood inside the park, which was a huge success. Several people from nearby *paras* (neighbourhood) of north Kolkata joined the celebration. It is from here that the club began its activity in the locality. Most of the members of the club are supporters of AITC but some CPI(M) supporters are also part of the club.

They encourage young artists in the neighbourhood to draw on the walls of the old houses and also canvases and display them afterwards. The Lantern Festival they organised were continued in 2018. These events were organised under a banner which incorporated the Marwari Association. This was inspired the event at Benaras which is an international festival there. Even during rituals of collective worship like Saraswati Puja, this club organised a major events of covering 5000 square feet in the locality of Shyambazar.

These events continue for three to four days and street-art is an important aspect highlighted in the activities of this club. But even after their completion for months several Kolkata photographers have captured these paintings. It must be also mentioned here that along with these events this club also organises social welfare activities to donate clothes, money and food to destitute children. They distinguish themselves for the common image of a local club room where unemployed youth play indoor games in the city.

Clubs in a refugee neighbourhood: Jadavpur.

Clubs in colonies around Jadavpur are steeped in their history of migration. Shahid Nagar was a colony that was formed in between the Jadavpur and Dhakuria colonies bears a distinctive history, which is closely related to the formation of the two clubs, namely the Dhakuria Yubatirtha and the Shahid Smriti

Shangha. They are situated in ward number 1 and ward number 5 respectively within the Shahid Nagar colony which has its own constitution since inception. Most of the members of the clubs are males who had participated in the refugee movement for legalisation of their rights for a significant period of time. The reason for choosing these two clubs is that although they have the same historical origins, they are distinctive in their own way. The neighbourhood has same ethnicity of Bengali speaking population but of different classes and mostly of leftist political beliefs. This was true of both these clubs at least in the initial stages.

The Dhakuria Yuvatirtha Club was formed in 1974 when the Congress government was in power but as the President mentions, the party seldom had any influence and was mostly dominated by the communist parties. After the Left Front government had come to power the government wanted to give lease deeds to residents in these colonies which were resisted by the RSP (Revolutionary Socialist Party. This club played an important part in the movement demanding freehold deeds. But at this point of time, Samir Mukhuti, the President of Yuvatirtha said that the founding members did not wish to expand the membership of the club and kept it limited to themselves only. It was when his generation took matters in their hands that they decided to expand their membership on March every year. At present they have 150 steady club members.

The DhakuriaYuvatirtha Club functions like any other local social club in the city through its continued engagement in social welfare and social work related activities in the neighbourhood. They have a two storeyed small building just by the side of the main road. The bottom floor has a large room for the club and an attached small office and the upper floor is rented out for marriage and other social events to the residents of the neighborhood of Jadavpur in general. This provides the club with a steady flow of cash apart from the fund they generate on subscription. Most of the members of the club belong to lower middle class and middle class families in the neighbourhood but the club reaches out to help a large section of working class families. They organise regular blood donation drives and provide healthcare facilities to the destitute and the older sections of population who live alone in the neighbourhood.

The club forms an essential component in providing social cohesiveness within the community of migrants. The club has a significant number of young members but they are not part of the decision-making body at the core. Most of the members of the club are communist party supporters and Bengali speaking. This club has benefitted from the Left Front government when they have provided them with certain amenities to encourage activities in the clubs. Since 2012, the Mamata Banerjee government has

provided funding to local clubs in the amount of 2 lakhs the first year and one lakh for the consecutive four years. 7500 clubs around the city had benefitted from this along with this club.

The next club under the study is the ShahidSmritiShangha which is a club whose history corresponds to the history of the Shahid Nagar colony itself and was formed in 1951. The present President of the club, Shyamal recalls what his grandfathers and father had told him about these migrant areas. He recalls that when the plots of land were not recognized by the government, in order to keep their land, the local youth resisted. It was this local youth who thought that there had to be some unity within the colony which was the second highest colony in the Jadavpur region after Bijoygarh. At that time the clubs provided an army resisting the police. This club played a major role as it was the only club in the neighbourhood back then.

He clearly recalls the time in the late 70s and 80s when the Left Front government made arrangements for lease-hold deeds, as mentioned before. In contrast to the unanimous decision of the colony recounted by Samir Mukhuti of DhakuriaYuvatirtha, Shyamal argued that two sets of opinion emerged in this club at that time. The club then played an important part in the mediation of the dispute through various deliberations. He says that during the time when the Left Front was in power, these clubs had turned into marriage halls which provided them with a steady income which was the sole purpose of the clubs. This was the situation till 2011 according to him when all the records and documents of the clubs were controlled by the Party. Shyamal suggests that during 90s due to what he calls '*dadagiri'* (elder brother) of the CPI(M) they refrained from club activities and later joined after 2011 when the AITC government was formed in the state.

As one enters Shahid Nagar, there is a small lane that leads to the grounds of this club with a large building and is attached to a children's park. This club has a library and a gym along with it and members can avail their facilities. Since for a long period of time this was the only club in the locality, this institution has a large support base. When residents of the community faces any distress, this club comes forward to help them and that has been the case since its inception in 1951. The neighbouring community at the colony provided the library inside the club with books. The funding provided by the present government and otherwise collected through the large marriage hall in the club building has made the institution more prominent in the locality which is visible when one enters the small lane through ward number 1 of Shahid Nagar.

This is one of the largest clubs in the colony. Almost all the youth in the locality especially in ward numbers 1 till 5 of Shahid Nagar are members of the club. Their participation however varies. There is a

steady number of youth associated with the club on a regular basis and can be seen sitting in chairs outside the club building. The club works specifically towards the social welfare of the old and the destitute. They have close ties to the entire community at Shahid Nagar, where they reach out whenever residents are in need for assistance. They also arrange ambulances and other services for the people who maintain their allegiance to the club for better access to resources. Similarly they also rent out rooms on their building for social events to the neighbours and both of these help them generate a steady source of revenue.

Although historically this club shares a mutual history of displacement with the entire neighborhood, nevertheless while Yuvatirtha has a more leftist political orientation, this club has changed its leadership in the post 2011 situation. Subsequently presence of AITC can be felt also in these refugee neighbourhoods which were traditionally a left bastion. Throughout the year they organise multiple events for children and youth and also organise special programmes during the festivals for the poor in the locality. At these times the club coordinates with other organisations which are both governmental and non-governmental in nature. The members of Shahid Smriti Shangha argue that after 2012, the policy of the Mamata Banerjee government to donate funds for the development of neighbourhood clubs has benefitted them and encouraged them to expand their activities. The membership fees of the club is rupees 60 per year and anyone who wishes to pay that can become a members of this club which has also expanded its membership in the recent decades and has also included new residents in the neighbourhood. This club functions like a social club in the city with both indoor and outdoor games, television and a large space for sports and recreation. This club has received several accolades.

Resident Welfare Associations in Salt Lake

The Salt Lake township is a high-end neighbourhood compared to other neighbourhoods in the city of Kolkata and houses some of the most important political and business elites of the city. The neighbourhood is mainly comprised of upper income households. Some of the residents mentioned that there are certain small clubs in the township but of lesser significance and influence. Due to dominance of elites in the locality, associational life in this area is mostly centred around resident welfare associations. The two associations have considerable influence over the locality are: the Bidhannagar (Salt Lake) Welfare association and the AE Shamaj Kalyan Bhavan. There are influential professionals, doctors, lawyers and businessmen who have considerable influence over the entire neighbourhood. They maintain close ties to each other on neighbourhood development and other issues. They introduced the present

author to Kumar Shankar Sadhu, the Secretary of the Bidhannagar (Salt Lake) Welfare Association (BWA).

Kumar Shankar Sadhu recounted that from 1967 onwards plots were distributed in Salt Lake. But he recalled that for a long period of time in the late 70s some residents of Salt Lake realised that there was no unity among them and they hardly knew each other. He also said that at that time each block had a few residents and it was a common saying that Salt Lake residents do not open their doors for their neighbours or others. At Durga Puja, these residents used to see each other and decided that they would form an association and BWA was formed. It was the only welfare organisation in the area and were called upon on all matters of the neighbourhood. The association had an office and a building but that became slowly non-existent by the time I started my study. Now the members of this association meet with each other and in the office only at special occasions. Nevertheless it is the oldest and the most important association covering the whole township.

As Kumar Shankar Sadhu suggests, initially this planned city was under the South Dum Dum Municipality and later came under the Public Works (Metropolitan Development) Department which was renamed the Urban Development Department in 1991. It had one administrator looking into matters in the locality. A lack of suitable governance strategies of the government led prominent individuals in the neighbourhood to form this association to look into the interests of the community in the area. Therefore this association has a much longer history than the other welfare associations that have emerged in metropolitan centres like Delhi and Ahmedabad in the 1990s as an attempt to decentralize administration in urban areas.

Due to the non-presence of a municipal administration, the BWA had maintained strong linkage between the residents of the neighbourhood and government who at different times opted for different policies regarding the administration of Bidhannagar. The members of the association argue that this organisation has representatives from all the 54 wards in the neighbourhood presently and they report to the association about major events that affect their livelihood. The relevance of this organisation is more felt at times when it had conducted several cases against the authorities to meet their demands.

The association like other resident welfare associations around the country had to maintain close ties with governmental agencies and other civic agencies when they attempted to address the day to day problems

of the neighbourhood. Another aspect where this association played an important role was of neighbourhood security. It has been argued by several residents of Salt Lake that I spoke with that the people of the locality had been subject of petty thefts both inside their houses and outside on the streets especially in the evening. This association worked towards neighbourhood safety and security and the residents argue that in the recent decades such threats have been minimised sufficiently. Presently Salt Lake is regarded as a relatively safe neighbourhood when it comes to petty criminal activities. The association has also worked for cleaning of roads, maintaining street lights at night and also community parks and community halls.

What is important to note about this association is that the participatory framework that it had created enabled middle class and upper middle class citizens of the neighbourhood to actively involve themselves in the maintenance and delivery of services. But it must be remembered that this kind of activism is only possible in cases where such associations have enough funds and can make substantial claims to the higher authorities. The class character of these resident welfare associations is important to note as it, enables them to form a collaborative space for change in between the state and civil society. These efforts of the organisation have led to further development of the neighbourhood as a clean, 'sanitised' space with policing of the public space. The association makes substantial contribution to the festivals like Durga Puja and events in the neighbourhood through their representatives.

The second association is constituted by the residents of AE Block in the neighbourhood, called the AE Samaj Kalyan Bhavan. Most of the residents of the Block are members of this association. This is one of the most prominent associations in the neighbourhood presently and incorporates almost all residents of the AE Block.

This is a larger organisation of the Block which has several other clubs like the women's club and the youth club within it and they jointly organise events and programmes. This association thinks of themselves as a club in Salt Lake with upper middle class and middle class citizens of the Block who want to see themselves united on issues pertaining to their neighbourhood. Apart from looking into daily matters that affect their own neighbourhood space, they also organise blood donation camps like any other club in the city. The members of this club argue that while the youth wing started as a way to create a space for young children within the neighbourhood away from their parents who were members of the AE Samaj Kalyan Bhavan, it has taken up much larger and major roles within the organisation.

While all blocks in the township have their own committees, the AE Samaj Kalyan Bhavan is one of the largest resident welfare organisation of the Block and the neighbourhood of Salt Lake as a whole. The members argued that the association tries to put forward a participatory model where they deliberate of major issues affecting their locality. The association plays a significant role in dispute mediation. Both councillors and members of AITC and BJP (BharatiyaJanata Party) have close ties to the organisation. Like any other club in the city, this association also has members from a diverse political background but as has been mentioned earlier more than being interested in daily political affairs, the middle class citizens of the organisation are more concerned about water, drainage, electricity, crime in the neighbourhood. Tapash Sengupta, the President of the association argues that there are citizens from diverse ethnic backgrounds within the association and it looks into their interests too by organising specific events for the non-Bengali speaking community within the locality. Another aspect of the organisation's work is social welfare of the poor which is important to note as Salt Lake is a neighbourhood unlike other neighbourhoods in the city with practically no informal settlements or housing for the poor. The AE ShamajKalyanBhavan organises events like the clubs in other neighbourhoods of the city for the informal workers and urban poor employed within the boundaries of Salt Lake.

Due to lack of employment opportunities within the city many of the youth of the neighbourhood have moved to other states and now the big houses of the neighbourhood houses older residents who are completely dependent on the domestic labour from the above mentioned settlements. The AE Samaj Kalyan Bhavan works to the betterment of these communities by organising several events and raising money for the urban poor. Generally during the Durga Puja, the association organises a large event for four days and through several stalls and shops raise surplus money for the organisation. This money along with the subscription of the organisation is the main source of funding which is often passed on for the needs of the urban poor employed within the locality. However there are limits to such middle class activism. There has been a wide attention paid to resident welfare associations in metropolitan centres that draw on the class character of these associations. However as it has been seen in the case of the AE Samaj Kalyan Bhavan, such middle class associations also extend their work to social welfare of the urban poor.

Though both of these associations hold periodic elections for their office bearers, there are a few takers for this position, the reason why many of the old bearers retain their position. Most of them are members of the elite society and there are almost none or some female representatives. Even if they hold important

positions, most of the decisions regarding these associations are taken up by the old office bearers. Most of the upper middle class citizens and members of the association rely on private infrastructural projects for the betterment of their community. Therefore the above mentioned studies that have characterized such middle class associations as providing service delivery is partially true as the urban poor are exclusively rooted out from these measures. However it must be remembered that although resident welfare associations have been successful in local service delivery they have not been successful in addressing bigger issues and legislative changes.

Conclusion

From the above account, it is clear that the character of associational life in separate locations of the city of Kolkata vary along with their changing dynamics of patron-client networks within neighbourhoods and their individual histories. The inner constitution of the clubs reveal that these associations provide an in-between space with the home on one hand and the anonymous city on the other hand. Although study of voluntary associations is relatively new in urban studies, a closer look at these associations and the networks they create contribute to capturing the heterogeneity or urban population in Kolkata.

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Rape in Contemporary India: Analysing the Socio-Political Constructions

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Abstract:

The article seeks to focus on rape as a form of sexual assault in contemporary India and analyse the response of the state and its institutions to the crime. It also attempts to highlight how recent waves of polarisation and communalisation have used rape as a weapon to attain their desired political goals.

Keywords: Rape, sexual assault, patriarchal state, laws

Introduction

During the last few years India has witnessed some gruesome incidents of sexual violence against women. Whether one takes into account the alleged rape and murder of a minor Dalit girl in Delhi in August 2021 or the most recent rape and murder of a women in a Mumbai suburb, incidents like these are vivid reflections of the kind of society we reside in. It also speaks a lot about the response of the state machinery to such crimes. The discourse on sexual violence and rape of women in India received a lot of attention in recent times, particularly with increasing number of such cases coming to light. One comes across a plethora of explanations, some viewing it to be a consequence of strong patriarchal forces operating in the society, while others place it within the larger dynamics of caste, class and religion. Such crimes against women have the general effect of shattering and shaking the conscience of the nation and the people living in it. More specifically however, these expose the ambivalence and at times futile efforts of the state institutions to arrest the same. The paper attempts to unfold the facts by revisiting certain defining moments in the history of rape as a form of sexual violence in India which had propelled strong public protests at national and international levels, moved feminists to action and also saw a response of the

state through the enactment/amendment of laws and policies. Through such an exploration an attempt is also made to understand the multiple patriarchies and communal elements deeply entrenched in the social fabrics which act as ideological barriers to social reforms while also at times leading to communalisation and politicisation of the heinous crime.

Rape as Sexual Violence: Revisiting the Literature

Rape as a form of sexual violence is understood within the larger framework of gender based violence or what is commonly known as Violence against Women (VAW). According to the United Nations,such forms of gender based violenceare rooted in and perpetuated by gender inequalities. It is defined as 'any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life'(UN 1993). A complex phenomenon as it is, rape as one form of gender based violence has been analysed from diverse perspectives. Psychoanalytical theories of the 20th century have considered rape to be an act of sex rather than an act of violence (Donat and D'Emilio 1992). Therefore the causes were primarily attributed to blaming poor parenting, castration anxiety, repressed homosexual inclinations, lack of social skills and being sexually starved or sexually insatiable (Bryden and Grier 2011). During this period rape was also seen as a 'victim precipitated crime' (Amir 1971) holding it to be primarily a sexually motivated crime. The emergence of second wave feminism brought new perspectives into research on rape. Sexual violence, within feminist thought, has been associated with the denial of women's personhood or subject position and rape became a dominant feminist issue since the 1970's with the emerging focus on sexuality and control over the body (Sielke 2002). Although feminist perspectives regarding the characterisation and nature of rape differ, most agree that it is not a specific singular crime but an expression of systematic misogyny and masculine dominance (Cahill 2001). It was Susan Brownmiller'sgroundbreaking work on rape which shattered long held myths and beliefs around rape and established it more as a political act (Brownmiller 1993). Therefore such violence which accompanies power is committed to prove or feel a sense of power maintained as an instrument of coercion (Krishnaraj 2007).

However, viewing it as an act which demonstrates a convergence of male sexuality and violence, Catherine Mackinnon opines that 'rape is not less sexual for being violent (Mackinnon 1989). She further says 'to the extent that coercion has become integral to male sexuality, rape may even be sexual to the degree that, and because, it is violent' (Mackinnon 1989). From such formulations and with the radical feminist position that 'the personal is political' rape came to be seen as a systemic practice in patriarchal cultures which 'excused male violence' (Donat and D'Emilio 1992). Indian feminists have grappled with issues of sexuality and sexual violence and diverse debates on the issue revolve around "whether women should be seen as sexual agents or as victims; whether sexuality should be mystified as something more real than other elements of one's life; when gender should be prioritised and when other identities such as caste or community; and whether 'women' are the subject of feminist politics or the queer body" (Menon 2019).

Social Construction of Rape in India

Particular moments during the social reform phase in the 19th century have adequately highlighted the deep-seated patriarchal elements in India's social framework. In fact the entire programme of social reforms targeting particular practices which harmed women's lives and status were strangely silent on gender issues and never questioned the 'why' and 'how' of the social evils harming women. Some of the conservative elements had strongly objected to the Age of Consent Bill 1891, which was introduced to increase the age of consent of girls to 12 years, on the ground that it would reduce the years of procreation for a girl (M. P. Singh 1997). Such a patriarchal content was also witnessed during the nationalist struggle which 'resolved' the women's question by clearly separating the public and private domains, claiming that the country was sovereign in the latter. In post colonial India, multiple patriarchies associated with class, caste, religion and gender contribute to multiple forms and patterns of oppression and exploitation. Thus male authority is operationalised through caste, class, religious identities, sexual preference and gender identities and over time these practices became so widespread that patriarchy, far from being an ideology and practice, came to be viewed as an analytical category in itself(Geetha 2009). On a number of occasions

such exhibition of patriarchal power has manifested in forms of sexual assault, the most brutal of them being rape. Every act of sexual violence having a tremendous bearing on a woman's life is undeniably a result of the gender based conditioning inherent in a patriarchal society. Sexual assault in the nature of rape too emerges as an expression of the power dynamics in the social fabric that seek to control, subjugate and dominate women.

Women in India have been victims of sexual violence owing to their caste, community and class positions, the same factors also making it difficult for women to seek judicial remedy (Gangoli 2011). It was also found that 'women have been the victims of patriarchal sexual practices through exploitation by landlords during caste riots, in marital rape, in state policies concerning reproduction, and of course, through wife battering' (Krishnaraj 2007). A paradox of honour becomes evident in some caste based communities when women who are otherwise erected as the bearers of culture are brutally killed or abused in the name of protection of the same honour. V Geetha, while highlighting instances of violence against Dalit women has also elaborated upon the caste-gender nexus and how it contributes to making women a double victim in such circumstances (Geetha 2002). Rape has also been used as an instrument to subjugate and humiliate particular communities and conflict of communal forces has resulted in sexual violence against women with the objective of destroying the social fabric, creating institutional terror and psychologically demoralising the community by forging suspicion and hatred (Khanna 2008). In India women have often been used as soft targets for community and religious conflicts, individual cases of revenge or they have been butchered by conservative elements in the name of preservation of family honour. Involvement of minors as perpetrators of the crime exposes a culture of violence prevalent in the subcontinent.

The Indian Constitution and the laws

The Constitution of India not only grants formal equality to women but also empowers the State to adopt measures in favour of women to effectively challenge the socio economic, educational and political disadvantages faced by them. Most specifically the Fundamental Rights, ensure equality before the law and equal protection of law (Article 14); prohibits

discrimination against any citizen on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth (Article 15), and guarantees equality of opportunity to all citizens in matters relating to employment (Article 16). The Fundamental Duties of every citizen specified in Article 51A of the Constitution include the duties 'to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women' in clause (e), and the foremost duty 'to abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals' in clause (a).

Various crimes have been identified under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) with the objective to protect women's dignity and status. Rape was introduced in the IPC as a clearly defined offence in 1860. Section 375 of the IPC states that a man is said to commit the offence of rape if he has sexual intercourse with a woman in the following circumstances-against the victim's will; without the victim's consent; with her consent, when her consent has been obtained by putting her or any person known to her in fear of death or harm; with her consent, when the man knows that he is not her husband; with her consent, when at the time of giving such consent she was intoxicated, or suffering from unsoundness of mind and unable to understand the nature and consequences of that to which she has given consent; with or without her consent when she is under sixteen years of age. Sex with or without her consent, when she is under eighteen years is considered rape. However, under the exception, sexual intercourse or sexual acts by a man with his wife, the wife not being under fifteen years of age, is not rape (Indian Penal Code). Needless to say that in keeping with these provisions and the need of the times, the State has also enacted a set of groundbreaking legislations in this direction some of which are the Criminal Law Amendments of 2013, Prevention of Sexual Harassment at the Workplace Act, 2013, The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2006, Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986, etc. With respect to crime against minors, the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2018 was passed which, for the first time, put death penalty as a possible punishment for rape of a girl under twelve years. A new section was also incorporated in the IPC to specifically deal with rape of a girl below sixteenyears (Singh 2019).

These provisions and new initiatives have, however, not achieved the desired results and one can see the wanton violation of women's rights in the country. This is because laws do not operate in a vacuum and are inflected by the patriarchal structure of society which reads and constructs crimes in ways which are inimical to women or other marginalised groups. Most

of the legal reforms are couched in a patriarchal framework of understanding lives and experiences of women. The state institutions like the police or the judiciary too interpret crimes against women within presupposed notions of women's behaviour, a necessary outcome in essentially patriarchal societies.

Defining moments in history of rape in India

For a better understanding of how rape as a form of sexual violence is used we need to go back to particular moments in the history of rape of women in India which bear testimony to the unfolding of a crisis of gender security in the country. Highlighting a few cases should not in any way convey the message that these were more important than the rest. What marks these cases from others is the brutality of the crime, the intensity of protests which galvanised the entire country, the debates, the diverse discourses on the issue of rape and the changes in the form of legal reforms.

The Mathura rape case

One of the first cases which set the stage for the gradual development of anti-rape laws in the country was the Mathura rape case, an incident of custodial rape of a young, tribal girl who was raped inside the Desai Ganj Police station in the year 1972. Mathura stood at the intersection of vulnerability being a female, a Dalit, a minor and an orphan living in abject poverty. She worked as a domestic worker in the house of a woman called Nushi which brought her into close association with Nushi's nephew Ashok, who showed interest in marrying Mathura. However, Mathura's brother did not agree to the alliance and lodged a complaint against Ashok and his family that his sister was being kidnapped by them. Following preliminary investigation in the police station the rest of the members were allowed to go back home. Only Mathura was asked to stay back. What followed was her rape by two policemen leading to furious protests by her family and the villagers who even threatened to burn the police station. Mathura's case shook the conscience of the nation

particularly after the Supreme Court acquitted the policemen accused of the crime. However the protests and the furore which shamed the highest court of the land for the kind of insensitivity it demonstrated forced the government to change its anti-rape law.

The Bhanwari Devi case

In 1992, the gang-rape of a low caste woman in a village called Bhateri in Rajasthan exposed the ugly face of caste and gender hierarchy in India. The Bhanwari Devi rape case, as it came to be known, was instrumental in giving shape to the first ever act against sexual harassment in India. In the tradition bound society of Rajasthan, Bhanwari Devi, worked for the Rajasthan Governments Women's Development Programme with the tasks of spreading awareness about hygiene, family planning and the necessity of educating girls, along with campaigning against female foeticide, infanticide, dowry and child marriages. In the summer of 1992, Bhanwari, a child bride herself, belonging to the low caste kumhars, went out to stop the child marriage of a nine month old girl and reported the wedding to the police, inviting the ire of the high caste Gujjar caste to which the girl belonged. After a period of lobbying against her amongst men of their own community, five Gujjar men attacked her while she was walking through the fields along with her husband. As if to teach her a lesson for acting against the established caste norms, they started beating her husband, sexually harassed Bhanwari and gang raped her in front of him. However, Bhanwari, undaunted by the taboo and social stigma against rape at that time, chose not to be silent and reported the incident. She faced humiliation at the police station and her FIR could only be filed many days later under pressure from local women's groups. Socially ostracised, accused of lying and with her integrity under attack, Bhanwari launched an unrelenting fight which led to the introduction of an important legislation securing the rights of working women in the country.

The Nirbhaya case

The impact of the changes cannot be overestimated as India remained a country with high incidence of rape, and two decades from Mathura another horrifying incident of rape, this time more brutal than any other, moved the entire country to an unknown state of helplessness and anger. This time, a young paramedic and her friend, who were returning home from a movie at night, became the victim. The couple boarded a bus in which there were six other 'unsuspecting' male occupants. Few minutes into the ride, the bus changed its route and a drunken man started molesting the girl. When her male friend tried to interfere, he was hit with an iron rod and fell unconscious. Thereafter the girl was subjected to a brutal gang rape, the parallels of which are difficult to draw from known history of sexual assault in India. She later succumbed to her injuries at a hospital outside the country. Nirbhaya, (meaning 'the fearless') as the girl was referred to, found empowerment in her death but counter to the voices of protest against the incident were also some voices which aimed to police the behaviour of women in general and blamed the entire episode on the kind of dress the girl was wearing, the time of the night that she went out and the fact that she was with a man at the dead of the night. It is these frustrating discourses which have given a free passage to the law breakers and a rough road to women in the country to seek empowerment.

Voices from the margins

In addition to these extraordinary moments, rape incidents in the most recent past had again stirred the society, the state and the women's movement. Once again it is a realisation of the fact that laws are not enough to guarantee security. An alarming trend in the country has been the rise of cases of child rape. In fact, two highly publicised cases in the current year have been incidences of rape of minors. Latest data from the NCRB shows a sharp rise of 82 percent in cases of rape against children compared to 2015. One of the two cases located in Kashmir has its origin in community clashes between the Gujjar Bakarwals who are primarily Muslims and the Dogra Hindus in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The Bakarwals are a

nomadic community coming to the Kashmir valley every winter. There has been a continuousconflict between the two communities for the scarce land and resources. The motive of the crime, which was committed in January 2018, was to drive out the Bakarwals from the area and the object of the crime was an eight year old minor child who was kidnapped and gang raped and then killed in an attempt to intimidate, terrorise and compel the Bakarwals to vacate the area. The age, sex and the membership in a marginalised community made the child vulnerable and prone to victimisation. What is more terrifying is the way large groups of people came out to protect the accused in the crime lending it an undeniable religious colour. This has been discussed in a later part of the article. Coming to light around the same time the Unnao rape case presented a case of a girl who was determined not to accept the sexual assault upon her silently. The incident came into limelight after the minor girl accused rape by a BJP MLA in 2017 attempted to commit suicide outside the residence of the UP Chief Minister on Sunday after her 55-year-old father was thrashed allegedly by BJP lawmaker's brother. He died the next day, reportedly due to the injuries he had sustained. This incident created a nationwide protest with various civil society groups demanding justice for the minor.

Inadequate, insensitive and incongruous state actions

Acts in the nature of rape in the country had always led to widespread public debates and stirred the consciousness of the nation. However, deeper scrutiny reveals that public institutions in India have demonstrated high levels of insensitivity while dealing with these issues. In the Mathura rape case (Tuka Ram and Another vs. State Of Maharashtra, 15 September, 1978) the court acquitted the accused (after they were initially convicted by a decision of the Bombay High Court) on the ground that the available circumstances could not establish that the girl had been subjected to or was under any fear or compulsion such as would justify an inference of any 'passive submission'. The verdict further stated that the 'alleged intercourse was a peaceful affair, and that the story of a stiff resistance having been put up by the girl is all false'. The insensitivity of the judges could not have been better reflected and the girls promiscuity better established when they reiterated the statement of the

Session Judge that Mathura was 'habituated to sexual intercourse' and therefore her consent was voluntary. The allegation of promiscuity and the way 'consent' was interpreted by the highest judiciary led to widespread protests which forced the parliament to enact the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1983 which amended Section 114(A) of the Indian Evidence Act, which stated that if the victim does not consent to sexual intercourse then the Court would presume that she did not consent (Indian Evidence Act, 1872). Amendments were also affected to Section 376 of the IPC making custodial rape a punishable offence and shifted the burden of proof from the victim to the offender, once sexual intercourse is established (Section 376, Indian Penal Code, 1860). Even with these amendments, rape laws reflected patriarchal tendencies either in the provisions or in the implementation. Nivedita Menon highlights three aspects of the patriarchal tendencies in the rape laws - first, recognition only of penis penetration as rape was intended to protect legitimate procreative sexuality; second, a patriarchal use of the rape law to protect legitimate procreative heterosexuality was evident as a large number of cases were of parents of daughters filing charges of abduction and rape in cases of consenting adult couples. The third patriarchal aspect is that consensual sex given 'on the false promise of marriage' constitutes rape. In this case judges have invoked the image of the 'good woman' while delivering judgements against the complainant which in itself is a sexist and patriarchal invocation (Menon, 2019). In certain other cases of the last decade, the Supreme court, while taking due cognizance of the 'intersectionality perspective' has set aside convictions under The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989. Judgements like these go a long way to erase statistics related to caste based violence and strengthen the dominant and powerful communities to perpetrate similar crimes in the future (Kothari 2021).

A prejudiced, superficial and myopic interpretation of what constituted rape in the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1983 led to a re-examinations of its provisions in the aftermath of the 'Nirbhaya rape case' committed in Delhi. Here, the situation demanded a broader approach on the issue of rape and other sexual crimes considering the brutal way in which the girl was gang raped and killed. The Justice Verma Committee(JVC), set up to enquire into the different kinds of sexual crimes committed in the country, review the criminal laws and suggest amendments,collated the suggestions which came from various activists, lawyers, NGOs and other persons representing the 'civil society'. The report of the committee

suggesting for the deletion of the marital rape exemption, specifying perpetrators under normal circumstances as men and victims as gender plural and advocating trial of armed personnel under civilian law had an evidently transformative potential (Baxi 2013). However not many of these were reflected in the actual act which came in the form of the Criminal law (Amendment) Act, 2013**.** The amendment broadened the definition of rape under IPC to include acts in addition to vaginal penetration including oral sex as well as the insertion of an object or any other body part into a woman's vagina, urethra or anus. It also clarified that penetration means "penetration to any extent" and lack of physical resistance is immaterial for constituting an offence. The amendments also included a clause on 'consent' where consent now needs to be unequivocal and clearly communicated and lack of physical resistance isn't assumed as consent. Inclusion of a new section 376A states that anyone committing the offence of sexual assault which inflicts an injury causing the death of the person or causes the person to be in a persistent vegetative state, shall be punished with rigorous imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than twenty years, but which may extended to imprisonment for life or with death. The issue of 'gang rape' has been addressed by the incorporation of a provision that persons involved, regardless of their gender, shall be punished with rigorous imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than twenty years, but which may extend to life and shall pay compensation to the victim reasonable enough to meet the medical expenses and rehabilitation of the victim. Ensuring adequate gender security through these amendments is attempted by including areas not criminalised before. However there is considerable doubt regarding the actual impact as it seems obvious on several accounts that the government shudders at the thought of bringing far reaching structural changes. The failure to criminalise marital rape shows how the rigidity of the traditions and male dominance in marriage are sought to be maintained. Further according to scholars like Nivedita Menon, in a largely misogynist society, the act which establishes the gender neutrality of the perpetrator 'would only further make women the target of the law rather than offering them protection' (Menon 2013). The gender neutral character of the perpetrator to a large extent waters down the gravity of women's sexual assault.

The exclusions under the act has particular implications for women of Northeast India particularly in the states of Nagaland, Assam, Manipur (excluding seven assembly constituencies of Imphal), parts of Arunachal Pradesh and the state of Jammu and Kashmir

where the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act allows soldiers to act with absolute impunity. One should remember that these states are the conflict affected states where women, children and other vulnerable populations are prone to all forms of sexual assault. The central government turning a blind eye to these ghastly acts of sexual abuse on the pretext of maintenance of law and order show shows the real intentions of the state machinery.

Rape of Minors

In the aftermath of the Kathua incident, following strong protests by civil society groups and women's organisations, the Cabinet approved an ordinance amending the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO), 2012 Act to introduce a new provision of death penalty to those convicted of raping children up to 12 years of age. Although it is hailed as a landmark decision by some circles, the said ordinance is somehow inconsistent with the inherently patriarchal nature of Indian Society. The recently released NCRB statistics show that while rape cases have reported an increase of 12.4 percent over the year 2015, 94.6 percent of these cases are committed by offenders known to the victims and in 9.9 percent of the cases the offenders were grandfathers, fathers, brother, son, close family members or relatives. In a country which sacrifices girls to preserve family honour and where men still receive social sanction to 'control' the women, the efficacy of the said amendment is questionable. It would, on the other hand, lead to more hushing up of such issues. Given the fact that a majority of such crimes in India are committed by close family members, the rate of reporting the crime is bound to decline.

Vishakha guidelines and the Sexual Harassment Act

In a land where two gruesome rape cases were necessary to shake up the state from its deep slumber moving it to enact amendments and bring changes in the rape laws which still seem inadequate with gender biased provisions, legal protection for the safety of working women were conspicuous by its absence for a long time. In the Bhanwari Devi rape case, what

appeared to be the most shocking of the developments, in addition to the humiliation, social ostracism, indifference by the law enforcing agencies and a lifetime of stigma, was the way the case progressed from the time of filing the FIR to the time the verdict was delivered at the district and sessions court in Jaipur acquitting all the five accused. The intent of denying her justice was evident in the delay of the medical examination, which was conducted more so to confirm the age of the victim and not rape. The caste and gender bias which informs judicial pronouncements was evident in this case too when the reasons for acquittal were listed as- "the village head cannot rape; men of different castes cannot participate in gang rape; elder men of 60-70 years cannot rape; a man cannot rape in front of a relative; a member of the higher caste cannot rape a lower caste women because of reasons of purity and Bhanwari Devi's husband couldn't have quietly watched his wife being raped"(Pandey 2017). Eventually the Supreme Court acting upon a PIL filed by a collective of four women's groups called Vishakha delivered the historic Vishakha judgement setting forth clear guidelines for the enactment of a law on sexual harassment in the country.

Politicisation and communalisation of rape in India

The increasing frequency of sexual assaults upon women and the large scale public outcry which follow, having almost a national consensus have led to a situation where every incident of rape despite causing far reaching changes in the legal dimensions, has also been taken up opportunities to reap harvest along communal lines or engage in a dirty mud-slinging campaign by members of opposing political camps, people's representatives and identity based groups. In the case of Kathua, the problem which originated as a community clash and fight for scarce land between the Gujjar Bakarwals who were mainly Muslim and the Hindus of the area took a communal turn with the formation of the right wing Hindu Ekta Manch to endorse the violence and protest the alleged targeting of Hindus during the investigation (Roychoudhury 2018)going even to the extent of waving the national flag in support of their demands. It seemed that what became more important than the gang rape and murder of the child was the fact that the victim was a Muslim and the accused were Hindus. As if the barbarity of the crime was not enough to ensure a fair trial, the hatred surrounding the

incident and the hostile environment in Jammu and Kashmir in its aftermath, led the Supreme Court to transfer the criminal trial to another state. Though the order has been hailed by those fighting for justice, it reflects the sheer failure of the state to maintain law and order and ensure a free environment necessary for fair and speedy trial.

Responses from the political circles were also interesting. Way back in 2013, the Prime Ministerial candidate Narendra Modi was reported to have invoked the memories of the Delhi gang-rape of 2012 in his election campaigns where he asked the electorate to give a thought to it when they go to vote (Kaushika 2013). The ruling Congress was at the time also criticised for its mishandling of the entire incident including the lapse of law and order which had led to the crime. The same party, now placed in the opposition, grips the 'Kathua moment' in a failed attempt to make amends for their earlier lapses and tries to exhibits their 'sensitivity' by going on midnight candlelight vigils. Tokenism of this nature is to be found everywhere in India whenever and wherever women's issues arise. The head of the Government's delayed response to Kathua is also an example of this fact particularly when assessed in relation to the lofty schemes of his government, be it the Beti Bachao Beti padhao movement or the Ujjawala scheme for trafficked women.

Politicisation and communalisation of crimes like rape not only shifts the focus from the actual crime to petty political issues but also poses the danger that more women may become victims of this strategy in future for the political clout that it generates. Profiling of the accused on the basis of caste, religion or ethnicity simply results in downplaying the seriousness of the crime.

Concluding observations

Inconsistencies exist between the constitutional provisions pledging gender equality and what the state actually does by churning out gender insensitive laws and policies that reinforce patriarchal privileges. The actions of the state and its institutions fall short of an adequate response. The attitude of the judicial system also is far from satisfactory. India's half hearted response to criminal acts of violence against women bolsters every dominant and oppressive

force which has been or would be involved in grievous offences against women. The state can be seen to show a paternalistic attitude rather than a genuine concern with gender equality and justice, systematically erasing the crime or the criminal as the recent trend shows will not earn dividends for anyone. The cultural subjection of womenin a community where rape is taken as a symbolic act, a power play to demean the community upon whose women it is inflicted has to be challenged from within communities. The state institutions and the policy makersmust realise that incidents like rape will not stop until they strike it where it hurts the most-patriarchal elements need not be maintained and sustained but must be targeted. In addition to state policies, political parties should incorporate promises and pragmatic policies for gender justice in its entire dimension in their manifestoes. Needless to say that there is still much to be done in this regard

A patriarchal society with an over-presence of sectarian and communal forces can never deliver justice to women. Apart from strengthening procedural measures like speedy trials, sensitisation of the judiciary and the police, societal factors which stigmatise the victim or the survivor needs to be changed so that rape is not seen as an action which can devalue the status of a woman or degrade the honour of her community. The mystification around rape and sexuality should be transformed with measures like rehabilitation and reacceptance of the woman into their families. It is only with socio-cultural reforms in these directions would render state action in the formed of reformed laws meaningful. Laws are inflected by social beliefs and practices and vice versa. Thus a concerted community effort coupled with adequate and timely state action towards gender equality and justice can make change truly visible.

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Sense of Place and Sense of Space: An Exploration into the Lives of Urban Elderly

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Abstract

The discourses of aging are being encountered with newer gadgets in ICT (Information and communication Technology) armamentarium to equip self-dependent elderly consumers to reasonably face one-stop demand on daily basis. As a consequence, there appears to have trade off ensuing between virtual and the physical space. Within the gerontological perspective, the vagaries of ageing and the relevance of ICT for the ageing population remains a key concern. The introduction of the latter in the daily chore is not only believed to be improving QoL (Quality of Life) but also reducing the level of loneliness.

The present qualitative semi-structured interview-based study is a gerontechnological[1] work to investigate the social, mental, economic and elderly-specific perception of quasi-ICT-savvy urban upper-middle class elderly; living in urban location of Ballygunge-Gariahat jurisdiction of Kolkata corporation; recruiting 10 elderly participants via snowball sampling approach along with case study as well as narratives method as a mode of data collection. The paper finally analyses the overarching findings on the differential usage of ICT gadgets in daily chores, enable the elderly to feel secured as opposed to apprehension if it is not accessed due to temporary physical limitations and psychological distress.

Key words: information and communications technology, elderly, warm expert, loneliness, physicalplace, Virtual space, QoL

Introduction

Loneliness and social isolation (Savikko 2008) have emerged as a growing concern for elderly population worldwide, becoming a major point of discussion in Lund Declaration (Svedin

[1] Gerontechnology, is the interdisciplinary study of gerontology and technology, has existed since 1989 (Graafmans & Brouwers, 1989).

2009). Elderly population will take a share of 22% of the world population (World Population Ageing 2007), estimating 894 million in 2010 to 2.43 billion in 2050 (UNDP 2010). Older population suffering from loneliness are highly prone to depression (Iliffe et al., 2007; Dorfman et al., 1995). Loneliness or social isolation per se, encounters with the subjective feeling of less or no contact with the outside 'world' of kins, neighbours, and other community members (Cornwell and Waite 2009) against the 'objective absence', may be exacerbated by the retirement, immovability, loss of near and dear ones (Cornwell and Waite 2009) and loss of interaction even with the social service providers (Wenger and Burholt 2004).

The elderly people are often expected to act or remain within their own 'age in place' (Feilo & Warren, 2002) by being obliged to have recourse to medical, social, and mental care throughout the rest of their lifetime. As a consequence, urban elderly who live in apartments and their negotiations in response to digital medium harness the ground for understanding the space of ICT.

ICT has brought about a new paradigm (Nugent et al., 2005; Roe, 2007) of psychological need-based autonomy both at cognitive and physical levels (Augusto & Nugent, 2006; Helal et al., 2005) to the elderly (Nugent 2007). Having considered all of these, the occurrence of a significant shift from 'ICT visions' to 'ICT solutions' has opened up new vistas to make heterogeneous uses of ICT as the best possible tool to enhance the QoL, attributed to recovery of self-esteem, self-caring, spontaneous participatory activities such as, leisure and recreation of the elderly people (Nugent 2007) embedded in the sense of place.

Despite the multifaceted functions pertinent to the deployment of ICT, the technical know-how of the end users about the electronic gadgets, are sometimes unmet, envisages the importance of 'warm expert' (WEs). The WE was originally introduced by Maria Bakardjieva (2005), addresses to the person, who is supposed to be ICT savvy (for instance, younger family member), who often helps his grandparents to adopt technology for handling digital devices within the permissible limits (Olsson and Viscovi2018). Hänninen and colleagues (2020), has cited evidence about the older adults who were born in the early 1940's are less interested to tap the benefits of ICT. Here the WEs plays the role of empowering the elderly, where the new found 'digital space' introduces them to a series of avenues often curbing their sufferings.

The trend of gaining more self-esteem is a positive indication towards more inclination to ICT use compared to past experience is reported (Khvorostianov2016; Van deursen and Van Dijk 2015).The main objective of this paper is to qualitatively assess the state-of-affair of the 'eldercare' digitized service in urban Kolkata against the backdrop of the multiple possibilities of ICT.

Methods

The Semi-Structure Interview (SSI) method is adopted with the purpose of identifying ICT use among10 older adults (belonging to upper-middle class family) in Ballygunge – Gariahat area under the jurisdiction of Kolkata Corporation. As a qualitative research method, SSI draws from the conventional methodological practices to conduct one-to-one interview in qualitative study. This attribute addresses each interview along with observations; extending interviews to other members of the family to ascertain the cause of the problem and the possibility of executing ICT driven virtual interview through cell or skype, subject to the unavailability of family members (Hänninen et al., 2020).

While analysing the data, attention has been given to the array of ICT assistance, what elderly participants in the given study area require for their own convenience. Based on this information, the data is assessed that elucidate why ICT support along with the volunteering service from family members often echo the intervention of warm expert?

From the point of view of the ethics, this study is based on the informed consent received from the respective informants of the participants. All informants are informed well in advance about the objective of the study. Further, to ensure anonymity of the research participants, pseudonyms have been given.

Materials

The research material emphasizes perspective of older adults that why they require the ICT assistance. Their statement is featured in the analysis through the close observations including interviews, which sometimes turn into an informal dialogue in the presence of the informants.

The interview is mainly restricted to ICT assisted intra-family interaction. The study was conducted between June 2019 and September 2019.

Among the 10 participants, there are 6 persons that are males of 72 to 80 years of age. Herein two elderly persons (male) stayed with their wives and children. Three of the elderly male used to stay with their wives alone in their homes with additional help. Their children stay abroad. One of these elderly male individuals was a widower, stay alone with domestic-help and his sister. The rest four comprise elderly females population whose age varies from 68-75 years. Herein, three of them are widow, wherein two of them used to stay with her children.One of them used to stay alone with additional helps. Often she goes to abroad to visit her son. Finally, the fourth elderly female is married and stays with her husband only.

SSI also offers a space for informants to peruse the different functions of ICT use; which are likely to be applied amongst the elderly for gaining more hassle-free life. Nevertheless, the series of interpretations evolve from the SSI, encounters with certain biases, because the human perception in the version of ethnographic fieldwork happens to be the reflection of the 'seeing is believing' is always subjective (Geertz 1973).

Results

The heterogeneous uses of ITC: Sense of place

Using ICT devices and other gadgets for tackling day-to-day problems, virtually open up the new vistas of 'digital society' (Taipale 2019), what Nimrod 2016 terms it as 'online community', which are supposed to provide sheer benefits to all ICT users irrespective of age, gender and economic background (Taipale 2019). By virtue of the heterogeneous relationship between elderly and ICT, the present data exhibit that some elderly people are competent enough to operate the cell and the desk/lap top, while others only restrict themselves in viewing, surfing television channels. The former group also shows their interest to learn more to increase their skills for their own benefit with support from 'warm expert'. The rest of the subjects, venture into knowledge industry through channel surfing from news to different sections of the natural world. These TV viewers are not involved in learning the advanced usage of ICT compared to others, who used to enjoy skyping, video chat apps, and social networking sites.

Disinterest in these subjects, and their possible (Schreurs et al., 2017) distrust on technology are intertwined; however, it has not been explored in the present study.

On the contrary, lack of knowledge ICT use, enhances the incompetency that affects the day-to-day life. For example, Ola and Uber on-call taxi, can only be availed from the smart- and android phones; not available in simple and conventional cell. Hence, ICTs have emerged as a great support for elderly in the domain of their daily lives, keeping in regular contacts with others, including doctors on call, procuring essential commodities, enjoying safety (Hänninen et al., 2020) against the backdrop of the sense of place. Jyoti Prakash aged 74, is a widowerand lives with his sister is quite familiar with the versatile uses of ICT including WhatsApp, YouTube, social networks, e-mail, browsers, listening to music, watching films, reading or listening to e-books, computer games, Skype (Ivankina et al., 2017):

> *[…]' I connect with my relatives and friends through mobile phone. Nowadays, no one has time to visit my home. Everyone is busy with his or her own lives. Hence, I resort to WhatsApp or Face book to connect with people. I can see their photos too. Sometimes I chat with them too.'*

Jyoti Prakash's self-reliant attitude enables him to learn more features for not only the benefits of his own personal gain particularly to get rid of the loneliness: precursor of the depression but also for others' altruistic purpose.

For regular users, ICT and its allied systems have become an integral part of their daily schedule (Wilska and Kuoppamaki 2017), as Manashi, aged 70, elucidates it:

> *[…] 'My son stays in Australia. I love to talk with him, my grandson and granddaughter. I chat with them regularly. Initially, it was quite difficult for me to chat with them virtually. But I was compelled to learn it, since it was only solution to see them and talk with them. Sometimes, I can understand that they feel bored while chatting with me, in spite of that I initiate this chat, since a glimpse of my son and his family makes me happy and energised.'*

Regular conversation through Skype used to be her staple to derive a sense of togetherness. Manashi also keeps contact with her acquaintances mostly through her mobile phone, and sometimes through emails to update her about the current affairs. She avails 'continuous support' (Sourbati 2009) from the next-door neighbour in warm expert's disguise to cope with other functions of ICT, which is unknown to Manashi. Manashi's reasonable competence of handling ICT devices, keeps her 'digitally' engaged in her daily chores, thereby simplify such routine works without taking any burden of learning additional applications of the digital technology. Greater the engagement in the 'digital world', the wider the possibility to keep Manashi cheerful; may be the surest way to thwart the loneliness. Much in congruence to the present narrative, Choi and Lee (2021) highlights that communication technology can also help in establishing a sense of connectivity among the elderly. However, little bit of learning with the altruistic support as per the demand of the situation may add more skills for independent handling the technological logjam, if at all arises.

In the context of the '*continuous support*', the young kin members, who occasionally pay visit to the elderly's apartment, next-door neighbour or on-call digital experts, informally assist elderly people to make them acquaintance with the need-based ICT use.

> *Tarun, aged 76, finds it problematic to memorise all the instructions he is received and therefore needs to handle mobile phone to get it confirmed from the senders. Tarun's spouse, kin, and sometimes friend , act as ITC use supporters to remind Tarun to execute specific task; related to the intake of the dose dependent medicine, e-payment of electric bill, videoconferencing and so forth. Both Tarun and his spouse have cellphone each, but reminding Tarun, becomes almost a daily schedule to be duly carried out through Tarun's cell. Such combined continuous supported use, belongs to the wider category of the digital technology use of the senior citizen, featuring the relevance of the importance of supporter in terms of warm experts.*

In extension to the context of '*continuous support*', there is a possibility of the presence of sociality and 'doing things together' (Hänninen et al., 2020) embedded in the feelings of sense of place, as Amritangshu, aged 80, virtually demonstrates about his family life with their children:

'When I was often touring outside India during my service life, Skype technologies are alien to me. After the inception of this particular ITC device in 2003, we used to Skype regularly with my son and daughter. Sometimes, when our relative comes to visit us, we all Skype together with their sons also. Both my wife and I found it is quite useful, which I never dreamt of during my service life. By virtue of AMC (annual maintenance contact), I always used to keep in contact with service contractor to ensure the smooth running of the Skype and desktop[…].'

Amritangshu's narratives foreshadow the relevance of 'doing things together'. Itenvisages two factors in this context. One is the socio-cultural aspects of ICT use, where elderly like Amritangshu is glued to 'warm experts' like young family members, neighbours, relatives. Learning new things, improving skills, or, as in Amritangshu's case, getting access to use other effective applications to make videoconferencing smooth and without technical interruption (Nordlund et al., 2019).Nevertheless, mutual learning is best possible way to increase the expertise on digital technology.

Occurrence of proxy use (Dolničar et al., 2018) in everyday ICT driven chores, happens to be a common phenomenon, where work of elderly is to be duly executed on behalf of him. For instance, Angan, aged 72, demonstrates proxy use in his family:

'My son, Chandan used to make electronic on-line payments such as electric, cable, and phone bills on behalf of me, my other son, Tapan, who is a government service holder used to do daily bazaar, which he handovers to my daughter-in-law for cooking. Chandan is a software engineer who bought me a smartphone. He acted as a warm expert to teach me to handle the phone. Although, Chandan regularly updates me about this phone, but I am comfortable to restrict myself to make and receive call. All purchases of medicine, groceries, phone and electric bills are made through this phone by Chandan, on behalf of me [. . .].'

Sometimes, proxy use can emerge out as digital *piggybacking*. The present data showed that the spouse of Anganis Facebook savvy. Angan does neither know anything about it, nor is engaged in any social media (Ureta 2008). Angan has a habit of making queries to his

relatives and always used to send messages to his spouse, where the latter acts as a proxy between Angan and his relatives (Selwyn 2006). In the bargain, spouse also acts as a warm expert for Angan.

Uma Shankar on the other hand stays with his wife, who is six years younger to him. However, she has been facing various sorts of physical ailments and is completely dependent on medication. Uma Shankar and his wife Ramola has two sons who are situated abroad. They often visit their children but never want to settle down there. While conversing with them, they have informed that they have three maids who look after their household chores. For Uma Shankar and his wife, technology served to be an important landmark in their otherwise mundane life. Uma Shankar relies on online services and loves to talk with his grandson of five years through 'Whatsapp video chat'.

> *'Uma Shankar narrates…. 'Previously I was completely dependent on my maids or neighbours or relatives for medicines, groceries etc. presently I buy Ramola's medicine with the help of online service (Sastha Sundor). At the same time, we often buy our regular household goods from Big Basket.com. I can also send gifts to my sons and his family through online services. I explore the world of Internet in a vivid way, although…. Sometimes it becomes difficult for me to grasp. Nevertheless, it keeps me engaged for some time; however, it can never remove the everlasting boredom, which we elderly face nowadays [. . .].'*

Watching soap operas in television seems to be the one more example of '*continuous support*', becomes a most important entertainment media amongst elderly people across the sub-continent. Elderly people aged 70 to 105 years (Horgas, Wilms, & Baltes, 1998) used to keep television viewing on the priority list (Li and Parkins 2007;Strain, Grabusic, Searle, & Dunn, 2002) and is the central part of elderly's everyday life (Mundorf & Brownell, 1990). Most of the respondents of the present study cling to this 'wisdom box' for three to four hours at a stretch (Grajczyk and Zöllner 1998), as Sunima, aged 68, narrates her experience of viewing television with her husband:

> *'I and my husband stay alone in our home. My son stays at Pune. Nowadays, in 'apartment culture,' everyone is busy in their respective lives. No one has time to*

interact with us. Due to health, I don't go out often. Hence, television acts as a major source of entertainment. I love to see serials [. . .].'

Ranjan, aged 75, elucidates her similar experience about his response on watching television program in different tone:

'I love to spend most of my time to listening news, it interests me. I love to collect-to-collect information. At night form 10: 30 to 12: 30, I am completely engrossed in various news channels. I start with Akash Aath, heading to ABP Ananda, thereupon NDTV News and then to BBC, Alzazeera and Russia TV. This completes my day….. I get news about the world and it makes me feel informed and aware about the world, which I think is necessary at the current period of time [. . .].'

Television has brought about a unique opportunity for elderly people to enjoy through surfing different channels with an added advantage (Korzenny and Neuendorf 1980) to keep away from the loneliness. As Tapati, aged 72, narrates her experience of viewing television with her sons:

'I am early riser and retire to bed by 10.30 p.m. I spent my whole morning in prayer room, where I regularly worship my personal deity. Though I do not cook, but supervise and give necessary advice to salaried cook for breakfast and lunch. As my both son and daughter-in-law go to office, I have my own lunch by 12.00 p.m. I enjoyed tête-à-tête with my son and his wife during dinnertime. I spent noon up to early afternoon watching BBC, Discovery, Nat geo, Animal Planet, BBC Earth, and National Geographic channels. Every day, I introduce myself with the beauty of the natural world. I generally leave TV to my son in the evening, and I go to my personal deity for completing daily rituals. I am physically OK, butam on medication to normalise my blood pressure. My son regularly keeps vigil about my health condition. I never ever have a time to be lonely due to my busy schedule, which probably precludes me from common suffering like depression […]'.

Gerontological implications in Tapati's assertive statement echoes Nguyen and others' findings on one of the categories of American elderly is "I turn the TV on … and I'm OK", which Nguyen and his team interpret the usefulness of television by being a 'lifeline' and a 'window

to the outside world' in tackling the depression by elderly themselves (2008), thereby enhancing QoL (Nguyen et al., 2008). In sociological context, TV is an ideal tool to decrease loneliness (Grajczyk and Zöllner 1998; Li and 2007).

Watching television (TV) is ubiquitous in contemporary human society. It is a major source of engagement that allows the elderly population to spend good amount of leisure by providing them a medium of 'infotainment'. Elderly TV viewers used to get much benefit of escaping from depression, use this as a curbing device for anxiety (Potts & Sanchez, 1994), loneliness and more importantly a vehicle for health education (Connell & Crawford, 1988; Thomas, Daly, Perryman, & Stockton, 2000) to transmit the messages about depression and treatment (Paykel, Hart, & Priest, 1998).

Availing ICTs with comparative newness to comply the 'doing things together': Sense of space

The present study puts more insights on the spectrum of roles of warm experts in the mode of 'continuous support', 'co-use', or 'proxy use' but not 'no longer use'. There are two distinct constructs that have emerged from the study. One is the person's specific ICT use and second one is the availing category specific use may be attributed to co-use or proxy use. These two constructs are complementary to each other. Interestingly, some participants feel their ever presence in each category of use despite having competency to reasonably handle ICT devices.

Concerning independently using ICTs, it does not seem plausible that these elderly people need no assistance for learning any longer. Because of the ever-changing roleof digital technology, ICTs do not warrant the autonomy. Hence, availing assistance in warm expert's term is a part and parcel of all ICT users to prompt the response against everyday demand of the situation (Taipale 2019). Therefore, retrieving the idea of "doing things together" as suggested by Hänninen et al (2020) from the elderly's *sense of space* might handle the hither-to complexities evolving from the differential ICT uses irrespective of age, experiences, and places of residence.

This attitude facilitates smooth handling of new handsets, Window 9 or 11, Android sets having multi-functioned features and its wider applications with comparative newness through continued learning and application from either experienced persons or on-line instructions are a formidable strategy.Based on the inductive data, it reveals that there is an inverse relation between the increasing complexity of ICT use and problems in tackling that has become a challenge for all elderly people across the globe; could be 'a source of exclusion' (Wilska and Kuoppamäki, 2017).

The foregone cases of elderly persons such as, Jyoti Prakash, Manashi, Tarun, Amritangshu, Angan, Ananya, Uma Shankar, Sunima,Ranjan, Tapati, belong to three categories of 'co-use', 'proxy use', and 'no longer in use'. In relation with the co-use, these ten elderly persons are involved with ICT use with or without the assistance of warm experts. More the freedom of use, greater the requirement of the support is not the case with proxy use. Here, the support invariably acts on behalf of the person, who is temporality disabled. In case of no longer in use category, warm experts almost turn into caregivers in all respects depending on the level of illness.

These elderly persons may have a possibility of moving from the 'active independent use' to 'no longer use' due to age-related impairments or illness (Peng et al., 2018) that can disable the digital skills to few of them. Nevertheless, this transition is not a case of permanent condition by virtue of the support from the warm experts along with co-use and proxy use of ICT to fulfil the void in daily chores to otherwise ensure 'digital life' – ICT use continuum.

Conclusion

The paper reveals that elderly persons in Kolkata receive digital as well as mental support from the warm expert. The elderly population is gradually learning the heterogeneous use of ICT. The use of ICT is increasing among elderly, where ICT use often makes their daily tasks easy. Critical observations from the present study is the revelation of the positive effect of ICT use on curbing the loneliness that leads to significantly lowering depression, continuity

of social networks to keep connected with the outside world across the spatio-temporal boundaries via digital link, and above all building the self-esteem.

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The New Woman and Cuisine in Colonial Bengal

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The colonial period saw many changes in Bengali society. Women's lives were particularly affected by these changes. Most of these changes were initiated by the Western educated male members of the Bengali middle class. But often, the course and impact of these changes were manipulated by the women themselves. The changes that took place in the lives of women generated tensions in society. The minute details of domestic matters became topics of debate and discussion in magazines, particularly in women's magazines. Cooking, as it was supposed to be practised by women, became one of the main issues to be discussed. The New Woman (*Nabina)* was accused of being a bad cook; the decline of culinary talent in the new generation of women was widely lamented and women's education was held responsible for this decline. This essay discusses the culinary practices of the women of Bengal, while devoting special attention to the recipe books written by women. The social tensions generated by the perceived decline in female participation in cooking is also analyzed. This is aptly noted that the educated Bengali woman was allegedly losing interest in cooking. A significant number of Bengali families started employing cooks in the early colonial period (Sengupta 2010, pp. 81-98).
This discussion is confined to the culinary practices of the Bengali Hindu middle class.

With the establishment of colonial rule, rapid and drastic changes were taking place in middle class life and society. A new concept of time took over, as clock time replaced cosmic time. Clocks became an essential feature of everyday life.

Schools, colleges, offices and other colonial institutions all relied on clocks for their daily work. The middle-class Bengali household struggled to cope with this new system of time (Sarkar, 2008, p 58). Bengali women had to change their household routine accordingly, in order to cater to the new needs of the male members of the household who had to go out to work or study. Preparing food for them in time became a new task and a new phrase known as *apisher bhaat* came into existence.

> "Preparations would begin before the clock struck 8 'o clock so that the meal could be ready in time. There would be a rush of activity. Even if there was a Brahmin cook present, the ladies of the household would be just as busy. After the *babu* had finished eating, the table would have to be cleared at once or else there was danger of the *ento chondi* accompanying him to work and ruining his work for the day! Someone would hand the *babu* his glass of water while somebody else brought the towel. A handkerchief, panmasala, and a polished pair of boots would be placed in front of him.... The *babu* would fix his hair and finally step out, *paan*-container (*paaner dibe)* in hand, chanting Durga's prayers. (Datta, 2004, p.22)

It is found that the pursuit of education or employment would drive people in hordes from the villages to Calcutta, the capital city of colonial India. Nearly all of these people were male and they found accommodation in the homes of rich relatives. Now the women would have to prepare meals for all the male members of the household so that they could reach school, college or their place of work in time. For all of these reasons, there was an increasing necessity to employ cooks around this time.

The colonial rule wrought enormous changes in the food habits and culinary practices of the middle class Bengali. Travelling to different parts of the country as well as abroad, besides a general increase in exposure to Western culture, brought middle class Bengalis in contact with diverse cuisines and culinary practices, of which European cuisine proved particularly influential. Bengalis witnessed multiple additions to their diet as they experimented with Western foods and styles of cooking. Affluent and Westernized families became more and more accustomed to European food. The Westernized food habits of the Tagore family came to people's notice during Dwarakanath Tagore's stay in his house in Belgachia. It even became the subject of a rather mocking little song:

"We hear the tinkle of knives and forks coming from the gardens of *Belgachia*-

What do we know about the pleasures of fine dining?

Better ask the *Thakur* company!" (Patry,1988, 54)

Dwarakanath Tagore was known for mingling with the Europeans, and they would frequently be invited to dine at the Belgachia house. The regular meals prepared by the women of the household would not suffice for these occasions. This necessitated the presence of a trained professional chef.

As it is discussed, various factors were responsible for the sudden demand for paid cooks in middle class Bengali households. However, contemporary magazines and journals attributed this development to the rise in female education. Since 1870, the writers of these journals had started to question modern women's culinary expertise and also accused them of neglecting their other household chores. According to some of these writers, modern women found the task of cooking for their family demeaning. An article published in the magazine named *Tattabadhini* in the year 1875 claimed that although

previously middle-class women used to cook for their whole families, now they employed cooks even if their husband's salary was meagre (Stri Shiksha, Tattabodhini Patrika, June 1876). Another author Rajnarayan Bose agreed with this, saying that the modern woman*(nabina)* was indeed deficient in culinary skills and relied entirely on her cook (Bose 1315 Bangabda, 86-7). Farcical plays were written expressing similar opinions regarding the modern woman and her ineptitude at housework. A stock female character would typically be found in these plays, representative of the Western educated modern woman, who spent her time reading novels or doing useless fancy embroidery, rather than cooking or doing household chores. In the farcical play, *Novel Nayika Ba Shikhita Bou,* Haradev, the aggrieved husband of Rukmini, a typical novel-reading modern woman who neglects household chores, complains to her that he is starving to death. "The little bit of *cheere* and tamarind that you give me is simply not enough to sustain oneself through a long day at the office doing copywork!"he says (Hardikbrata Biswas, ed, 729).

Female education and the westernization of society were blamed for this crisis. Now that little girls were going to school, they no longer had time to perfect their household skills at home. It was believed that female education had stopped the passing down of feminine skills from one generation of women to another. It was also seen as an attack on the traditional moral code which taught a woman to place her husband and his household before her own needs and desires.

In traditional set-ups, little girls would learn household skills from older women at home. The games that were prescribed for little girls like *rannabati* also

aimed to train them in household arts such as cooking. This is how Bamasundari Devi learned to cook as a child (Sen 1909, 120).

Similarly Purnalata Chakravarti, who would make small replicas of whatever her mother cooked as play, picked up cooking skills in this manner (Chakraborty 1975, 101-102).

It was alleged that Westernized families sent their daughters to school at such a young age that they no longer learned these skills (Priyambda Devi, May, 1901).

However, little girls naturally picked up these skills as they were growing up by observing their mothers and other household women, so this argument holds little ground.

In reality, female education brought about little change in the lives of women. Patriarchal values were preserved and promoted in school and college curriculums. However, there was a fear that women would eventually participate in the work force which would result in the weakening of male control over female labour. These anxieties find reflection in the satires published during this time. This is why women's education was deemed responsible for the changes in culinary practices although they were caused by a variety of factors, as we have discussed.

It was in this social context that a new discourse was born within which cooking was increasingly seen as a gendered activity (Ray, 2009). Cooking for her family became identified as a woman's job, although the cooks who were employed in households were most often Brahmin men, with a small minority of Brahmin women. Even while cooking was viewed as a male-dominated profession, the unpaid labour that went into cooking for one's own family was assigned to women. Cooking, when done by a woman for her family, was seen as a labour of love that was romanticized in the writings of the time. Her status was far

higher, in so far as it was socially glorified, than that of the professional cook who was paid for his services. The woman who cooked for her family was compared to the Goddess Lakshmi. Contemporary women's magazines in their efforts to encourage young women to prioritize this skill would give examples of female mythological figures such as Draupadi, Sita and Damayanti, saying that they had all been great cooks. An excerpt from an article published in the magazine, *Paricharika,* reads: "The art of cooking should not be looked down upon. It is necessary [for a woman] to master some degree of expertise in cooking. Good food is essential for sustaining life and to prepare this food for her family is one of woman's primary responsibilities. No woman must remain untrained in the art of preparing good food for her husband, son, father, mother and so on" Anonimus,Paricharika, Jayishtha, 1295 (bangabda), p. 43). Women were advised to supervise the cooking even if there was a cook present, as she was supposed to know the food preferences of her family members. It was said that food being prepared by the female members of the family ensured the good health of the entire family. Culinary expertise came to be regarded as the highest virtue a woman could possess. Eishan chandra Basu wrote: "It is through the art of cooking that a woman's special knowledge, skilland prestige are best reflected" (Basu 1877, 21). Most importantly, because a woman made food out of love for her family and not in exchange for money, the food prepared by her was supposed to taste like *amrita* or food for the Gods. The new importance assigned to cooking and its glorification by society were in all likelihood prompted by the growth of female education and the subsequent fear that educated women would now become social equals of men and equal participants in the workforce, which would threaten patriarchal control over female labour.

Utsa Ray has shown in her works how a certain aesthetic was attached to cooking during this time. Contemporary publications such as magazine articles

portray cooking and other associated household chores, when done by a woman for her family, as possessing a delicate feminine charm. There is little acknowledgment of the mundane and exhausting manual labour that was involved (Ray, op. cit). Rashsundari Devi, who got married at the age of twelve and had to take the responsibility of running the household when her mother-in-law lost her eyesight, describes in her autobiography how cooking was really done in a joint family: "Ours was not a small household... a *puja* was performed daily, for which *annabanjyan* (rice and curry offered as *bhog*) had to be prepared. We were also frequently visited by guests and travellers who had to be given their *seedhapatra* (rice, ghee and uncooked vegetables that were offered to Brahmin visitors). Cooking for all the members of the household was no small feat either. It is true that I had no brothers-in-law, but there were around twenty-five servants who were given their meals twice a day... Around 10 to 12 *sher* of rice was used to prepare each meal. And the master of the household would want his rice immediately after he had taken a bath, he did not like any other food. So then his meal had to be prepared in a hurry. It would be three or four in the afternoon by the time all the cooking was done" (Rassundari Devi 1877, 21).

Sometimes she would stay hungry for the whole day as there was no time for her to eat. The exhausted and overworked woman that we find in these descriptions, a far cry from the aestheticized image of the housewife propagated by magazines, gives us a glimpse into the reality of women's lives at the time.

It did not take long for educated women to internalize such teachings and expectations. Fuelled by a desire to become perfect ladies and inspired by the public imagination of an older generation of women who had possessed unparalleled culinary talent, these women made use of their Western education

to add new dimensions to Bengali cuisine. The contemporary New Woman gathered expertise in both the traditional and modern styles of cooking andcould prepare exotic dishes native to different parts of the country and also European dishes. In 1867, Girish Chandra Ghosh, while praising the culinary progress of Bengali women, wrote that they now knew not only how to make porridge and *jhol* (a thin gravy) but also *polau* and kebabs. Some of them could even cook fowl and cutlets, like those served at the Great Eastern Hotel. Previously, specially trained chefs had to be hired to cook such dishes or else they had to be bought from outside, which incurred a great deal of expenditure. But now women could make such foods at home and help their families to save money. It was prescribed in the magazine *Bamabadhini* that a lady should know how to cook vegetarian meals like rice and curry in the traditional Brahmin style, while also being able to prepare chicken in the Mughal style. She should be able to make sweetmeats using *chola, shewine, daal,* coconuts and pumpkins. She must also know how to prepare European foods like jams, pickles, cakes, biscuits, puddings and breads alongside traditional foods such as *rooti* and *puri.* She should be able to make *pathya* (sick-food) using *sagu,* arrowroot and barley for infants and their nursing mothers or for anyone in the family who was sick (Borthwick,1984, p. 212).

By the end of the 19th century and around the beginning of 20th century, recipe books written in Bengali were being published. The first Bengali recipe book, *Pakrajeshwar,* sponsored by the King of Burdwan, was published in the year 1874. The book mainly dealt with Mughal cuisine, as practised by the Mughal royal family. It did not prove particularly useful for middle class Bengalis. The want of a suitable recipe book for Bengali middle-class homes was fulfilled in

1883 by the publication of *Paak-pranali,* a monthly magazine edited by Bipradas Mukhopadhyay, that was devoted solely to cooking. This magazine aimed to re-introduce young women to the traditional style of cooking that had allegedly been lost due to Western education and influence. It also aimed to train them in the new styles of cooking to accommodate changing tastes and to make new kinds of food at home so that they could reduce their household expenditure. Along with the recipe, a brief history of the food in question would also be provided to peak the reader's interest.

A separate section on cooking was included in many women's magazines from around this time. Some of these recipes were written by women themselves. From the year 1885 onwards, a separate column on cooking was often included in the *Bamabodhini* journal. The *Mahila* journal introduced a similar section from the year 1897. Although the *Punya*magazinewas not specifically targeted towards women, it had a column on cooking right since its inception in 1897. This column was written by the magazine editor Pragyasundari Devi herself. Various recipes for vegetarian as well as non-vegetarian items would be printed here and the prices of the ingredients listed were included in the recipe. From the year 1990 onwards, the *Antapur* magazine started including a cooking column as well and women regularly submitted articles to be printed there.

By the end of the 19th century, more and more women were writing recipes to be published in culinary columns or magazines. Pragyasundari Devi, editor of the *Punya* magazine who wrote its cooking column, was from the Tagore family. She was the grand-daughter of Debendranath Tagore and the daughter of Hemendranath Tagore. Her husband was the famous Assamese writer, Lakshmikanta Bejbarua. There wasa literary quality to her writing and she quickly rose to fame with her recipes and culinary books. While she truly loved

the practical aspect of cooking, she also devoted great attention to its theoretical aspects. She experimented with different styles and often came up with her own culinary inventions. Some of these inventions were named after her loved ones, such as the "*DwaraknathFirni-polau"* and *"Suravee Payesh"* (named after her daughter who died a premature death). For every new food item that she cooked, she would write down the recipe and would later collect them and publish them together in book format. Her 1990 book *Amish o Niramish Ahar* was extremely popular and was reprinted several times. It was published in three volumes. Her desi recipes were mostly derived from the culinary traditions of rural Bengal. Some of her recipes combine Indian and Western culinary styles. She provided detailed instructions on various household matters in the initial chapters of the book such as on ideal food quantity, how to prepare sick-food, how to train servants etc. The book includes a painstaking list of culinary terms that reveal a distinctly female Bengali vocabulary, one that is fast going extinct, Such as *chutput*= the smell of spices cracking;*halshe*= an unpleasant raw smell; *rutitosh*= toast etc, (Deb, 2003, 65-72)

She mentions various cooking utensils that are no longer used frequently. She gives a variety of advice that are likely to be of use in running a household, such as on how to preserve fish and meats, how to restore food that smells burnt, how to distinguish what's fresh from what's stale, how to preserve vegetables by drying them in the sun and so on. There are even instructions on how to prepare certain kinds of Ayurvedic medicine, such as *aluyier bori* (a kind of Ayurvedic medicine that is given to children).This shows us that in traditional households, women played a key role in the treatment and medication of children for minor ailments. A more concise edition of the book was published in 1918.

Not all female authors were as influential as Pragyasundari Devi and few discussed cooking at such length, covering such a variety of topics. Howevera

certain gravitas entered the discourse surrounding cuisine, to the extent that the articles on cooking that were written by women and published in women's magazines at this time have an almost academic tone. In the year 1901, there was a debate about the ideal method of preparing guava jelly, which originated in the *Punya* and *Antahpur* magazines and lasted for quite a long while (Borthwick, op,cit, 215).

This debate is significant because it shows us that educated middle class Bengali women were now not only taking full part in the culinary discourse started by educated middle class Bengali men but adding new layers to it. At one point during this debate it was claimed that recipes written by women are more reliable than those written by men since women have first-hand experience in cooking and put their own recipes to the test. Thus contributions to the discourse should be regarded as more valid and more authentic when they are made by women. Women became the inventors of new culinary tastes and styles, the pioneers of modern Bengali cuisine. Thus by writing recipes and cook-books, women were participating in an important public discourseand gradually asserting themselves as the social equals of men. There was a blurring of boundaries between the public and the private spheres, because of the bold efforts of women such as Pragyasubdari Devi, who started participating in the culinary discourse started by educated middle class Bengali men andalso wrote recipe books.

In conclusion, some of the massive changes that Bengali society underwent as a result of colonial rule caused educated middle class men to regard female education as a prerequisite for modernity. But there was an anxiety that this would lead women to abandon their traditional roles within the arena of the home and family. Men feared that women would start to earn their own livings

which would weaken male control over their labour. Men might have to relinquish control over all aspects of women's lives. Thus a new narrative emerged which portrayed modern women as bad cooks and housewives, who had lost all interest in their traditional household duties. These claims were espoused in magazine articles and in fiction while at the same time, the capable housewife devoted to the care of her family became a glorified figure. Women internalized the values embedded in this sort of rhetoric and we find echoes of them in their own writings as well. However, they made use of their much-maligned education to bring about phenomenal changes to Bengali cuisine. Indeed, they were the pioneers of Bengali cuisine as we know it today. They became engaged in the task of writing recipes for magazines and journals and some like Pragyasundari Devi wrote full-length books on cooking. Cooking became a means of self-expression for these women and their contributions enabled them to enter the realm of the public, where they were able to forge a new space and a new identity for themselves.

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Inclusive

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Seeking Inclusion and Predicting Identities: a study of children with special needs in Kolkata

Somrita Sengupta

Abstract

Inclusion in mainstream schools is considered as a reasonable option for children with special needs (CWSN) since the Jomtien Declaration, 1990. It is reflected in different Government supported intervention-programmes across the world, whose positive outcomes have helped the CWSN to accommodate different social, political, intellectual, commercial environment. As an ethnographic exploration of inclusive governance in education, the paper attempts to understand the process of inclusion in Government aided 'regular' schools.

Keywords: social inclusion, intellectual disabilities, CWSN, resource room, special educator (SE), social skills

Introduction

Question of inclusion of children with congenital impairment has triggered a prolonged debate among the policy makers since the 1980s (Stainback & Stainback, 1984, 1996; Stainback, Stainback, Courtnage, & Jaben, 1985). The philosophy of inclusive education advocates universal necessity of 'schools for all children' for the benefit of each child in the process of inclusion (Zigler & Hall, 1995; Gena 2006). The practice of inclusion in inclusive schools is inherently dependent on various factors and circumstances. In this connection there is no denying the fact that this practice in the schools is a multi-participant and multi-layered process. Hence the role of stakeholders in the process of inclusion in schools is of paramount importance (Yang, Wolfberg, Wu, & Hwu, 2003). Intervention programmes in the schools involve a significant role of the school

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teachers and the special educators in specialized learning centers. Thus, children are benefitted from the type of education imparted by the regular schools and specialized learning centres, (for instance Government aided resource rooms) which help them to adopt different 'social skills' (Mesibov and Shea 1996) through continuous interactions (McDonnell, 1998).

The Government of India adheres to the philosophy of inclusion through a range of policy mechanisms that include Rehabilitation Council of India Act 1992; Persons with Disabilities Act 1995(PWD, 1995), National Trust for Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act 1999. Since its initiation from the Salamanca World Conference (UNESCO, 1994) as an extension of the 1990 Jomtien Declaration, there has been a discernable shift of worldwide policy towards continuous evaluation of the purpose of Education for All (Chenga et al., 2021: 181). As a result, growing numbers of intervention-programmes for inclusive education have been implemented in the system of mainstream (regular) school system across the globe (Graham & Jahnukainen, 2011; Sin, 2010). As a signatory of the Salamanca Conference, India implements the inclusive policy in education by mandating free and compulsory elementary education, backed by the 86th Amendment of the Indian Constitution.

Empirical and observational studies conducted during last few decades apprise the process of enabling the disabled children, set to overcome their learning difficulties (Guralnick, 1999; Odom, 2002). Large number of published works reveals that CWSN are benefitted from inclusive learning programmes with the support of special teaching squad (for instance SEs) (Evans, Salisbury, Palombaro, Berryman, & Hollowood, 1992; Laushey & Heflin, 2000; Kamps et al., 2002). The intensive engagement of SE-supported procedures is related to different short protocol programmes within the premises of specialized learning centers like resource rooms (Harrower and Dunlap 2001). Resource rooms therefore encourage designated pupils to adopt social skills, where SEs act as conciliating spur (Kamps et al., 2002).

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Several remarkable studies on social inclusion that address the outcomes of the intervention programmes in mainstream schools (Gena, 2006; Sainato et al., 2015). Tsang and Cheng (2017) conclude that the overall performance of the CWSN in the schools is dependent on the behaviour of school stakeholders. Some other intervention studies reveal a positive correlation between the CWSN and the focused engagement of the stakeholders, which are primarily based on the prolonged involvement in joyful learning and other play sessions that provide mental space to speak out and spontaneous response through oral and signed language (Chan & O'Reilly, 2008; Nelson et al., 2007; Woods & Poulson, 2006).

In the backdrop of conceptual underpinnings stated above, the present study aims to trace the inclusive process of CWSN in government aided schools of Kolkata. Besides, the study tries to explore the politics of identity involving CWSN in government-aided inclusive learning centers.

Methods and Materials

The present qualitative study involves 10 primary school children with special needs, who are desperately looking for inclusive space in regular schools. These children go to resource rooms (government aided learning centers) in order to obtain additional learning outcomes. For this purpose, Semi-Structured Interview (SSI) method followed by observation has been adopted to conduct the study in two randomly-chosen resource-rooms located in two primary education circles of Kolkata Primary School Council. In terms of its objective the study also seeks to understand the process of inclusion from children's own frame of reference. Here we can draw relevance with Simons (1995) concern for children's adequate participation in school-based educational research. Slee (1993) also addressed this issue by exploring the process of inclusion of CWSN in three premises: regular school, classroom and resource rooms. Further the study also involves parents as well as special educators who have helped in connecting and fulfilling the voids in interviews with CWSN subjects.

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Challenges of Inclusion in Everyday Interactions

The philosophy of inclusive education aims to create 'communities of learners' in inclusionary set-up (Salend 1998). India follows a full-scale inclusion strategy prompting the CWSN to attend regular mainstream schools as well as the resource rooms for additional learning outcomes. Here, CWSN are specially educated by the designated SEs who help them adapt to the inclusive environment of the mainstream school system (Ferguson 1996).

Outcomes of interviews of ten different children can be classified into four categories. Akash and Barsha belong to the category of mild cerebral palsy, Alka, Purnima, Rani, Shivani, Amrita and Shyam belong to the category of intellectual disability, Aman belongs to the type locomotor disability while Rahul is in the category of hearing impairment.

Understanding the everyday interaction patterns of CWSN within schools is necessary to measure the extent of inclusion. In a school, a child's 'significant' communication exchanges involve his/ her classmates and teachers, who are required to facilitate their inclusion. Thus, beyond the policy level formulation, emphasis needs to be given on the behavioral practices of all participants.

Akash, aged 11, admitted in a regular primary school, is a boy, retarded with mild level cerebral palsy. He is the only son to his parents. His parents accompany him to the school and the resource room. He is disheartened to being called a 'paagla' (mad) by his peers and others. Such name-calling reinforces low self-esteem and causes the growth his negative mindset. This eventually hinders his mental development to interrupt his learning outcomes. Narrative from Akash's parent describes the exclusionary practice. He says:

> *'My son Akash has improved a lot. In spite of that, he is often nicknamed as 'Paagla' (mad). Initially he was regularly harassed and often physically assaulted by others. He was called by derogatory names. Students and sometimes children used to make a fun of him. One of*

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the teachers used to speak in an improper way. Even the guardians of other learners did not want Akash to study with their children. Finally, aunty (Special Educator) had a talk with the Head Teacher (Principal). The situation improved a bit after her timely intervention. (Akash's Father) […].'

Two other cases of name-calling have also been narrated by Amrita and Barsha's mother. Amrita, a thirteen-year-old girl with intellectual disability tries to keep herself isolated because of her peer's misbehaviour. As the third child, she does not even get adequate attention and affection from her parents. She is a case of mild intellectual disability followed by hyper-activeness and stammering. It further deters her from actively participating in in-house events of the school. Her presence and absence in the inclusive learning program depends on the whims of her parents. She says:

'*There is a girl…… sharmila, who often mock me.... she makes false complaints to the Miss against me. Even our Miss believes her words and scolds me. She gets good marks…… Miss loves her. Sharmila and Manjira call me…… 'paagol' (mad) 'khapa' (lunatic) …. Other girls also make fun……. They address me…. as 'Haanda' (idiot) or 'Boka' (foolish). If I complain to Miss…. she tells me to sit quietly […]'*

Nine-year-old Barsha, the only child of her family, is also a case of mild cerebral palsy. Her school peers point to her 'pagol'(mad) characteristics in offensive sense, which she does not like. She is almost regular in resource room and actively participates in 'joy learning' and other playful events. She is quite attached to her mother and enjoys adorable relationship. Her mother complains:

'*My daughter is regularly victimized due to offensive name-calling. She is identified as 'pagol'. Although Barsha does not complain at all, but after making queries, she has expressed her state of affairs. I have persuaded with the concerned SE and requested her to intervene […]*'

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Alka-Purnima-Rani-Shivani-Shyam are some typical cases of mild intellectual disabilities who have improved reasonably well due to assistance from both 'regular' schools and resource rooms. Alka is a ten-year-old girl with learning disability. She is almost regular in her local primary school. She is a dexterous 'joyful learning' performer with exhibiting leadership quality, fairly awarded with the epithet of '*paka buri'* by the special educators. Twelve-year-old Purnima, the second child of her family is a case of mild intellectual disability. While she was asked about her school and friends, she says…

> *'I don't like to go to school. Nobody likes to play with me. I sit alone in the last bench. Often my friends tease me[..]'*

Addressing the weak with a series of names with mockery as a topping has been quite a common factor in interaction between a CWSN and children without disability. It can also be acknowledged as bullying or verbal abuse. The 'name calling' incidences clearly reflect exclusionary practice, where these labels may consciously or unconsciously make them aware of their unfit status or blatantly convince them of being 'different'. Further it can be said that this labels often act as an exclusive identity for these children leading to isolation and solitude. Crossman (2014) argues that negative labels contribute to low self-esteem, lack of confidence, rejection and denial, and may cause more deviancies. In this context, it can be said that the society inherently prescribes a set of norms, on the basis of which individuals perform, if he /she conforms to it they may be termed as 'normal' or conformist and if they do not, they are labeled as 'abnormal' or deviant.

Concept of Self

Shyam, a 10-year-old child, with intellectual disability, attends primary school as well as visits a resource room. He also goes to a NGO-based counseling center for advanced learning which provides programmed education for children with intellectual disability. On being asked about his

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school, he expresses his inclination towards the counseling centre where he likes his teacher named Rita Aunty. In his own words:

> *[…] 'Rita aunty is good…… she does not have a leg…. once she fell down and her leg was cut…. I like her… she teaches in the centre.*

The narrative sheds light on two important factors. One may include that the child's choice of favourite teacher being is influenced by his/her teacher's own disability. It also reflects the child's perception of himself as 'different' from non-disabled individuals. Shyam's inclination to the counseling center raises question on the inclusive practice of government aided schools.

Eleven-year-old Rani and Shivani attend the regular school like other CWSN children. While interacting, they also narrate incidences of bullying as well as physical abuse, which is the major cause of their absenteeism in regular schools. The field has also reflected low attendance rates of CWSN in regular schools which is indeed a stumbling block to the vision of inclusive education.

Ten-year-old Aman is willing to learn despite having hearing disability. His twin brother acts as saviour both in outside and inside the school premise. Aman says:

> *'My brother and me study in the same class. He loves me a lot. He helps me in the school. If other children tease me, he fights with them. I have my brother and some friends in the school. I love to go to the school, since my brother is there. […]'*

The above narrative shows that warm relationships with participants, such as family, teachers and peers immensely help in the process of inclusion. Aman's brother protects him from any exclusionary practices in the school as well as helps him to participate in the classroom. In this context, it can be said that schools and most prominently class rooms are one of the crucial

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spaces where children learn and envision. Relationships developed in 'classroom culture' develop through the process of verbal and non-verbal interactions. Here the teacher and peers play a significant role in the process of including CWSN. Further the fieldwork also reflects consistent process of identifying CWSN by their 'exceptionality', which can be termed as a hidden exclusionary practices in the inclusive set up. The vision of inclusive education aims to mainstream CWSN, whereas the fieldwork reflects critical gaps in policy-implementations and schools-based interventions.

In lieu of a conclusion

The study expects to be a step forward to be duly dealt with the ever-growing complex factors originating from the CWSN. It provides some light on the array of every day interactions that the targeted ten subjects undergo. Nevertheless, the paper has certain limitations due to small sample sizes. However, it is undeniable that the study has unveiled critical drawbacks in the existing 'inclusive education system' in the schools. Future research is required to identify all the factors that tend to reduce the outcomes of inclusion. At this juncture it is imperative to make a consortium of researchers, SEs, and parents for monitoring the impact of different Government-guided programmes. Researchers and school administration need to work together so as to validate and exchange information about effective practices of inclusion, policies, and programs. This will enable all participant to work in a cohesive manner in order to realize the objectives of inclusive education for children with special needs.

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Gender, Memory and Movement: A case study of Northeast India

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Abstract

Memory as a tool plays an essential role in shaping up and continuing a movement. Once the movement ends, people's experiences become a part of their individual and collective memory. A particular time frame does not limit the relevance of some movements. With the emergence of specific socio-political situations, certain movements again gain relevance. In such cases, the process of remembering is also persistent. People tend to focus on specific elements that help to introspect the movement from a different lens during the process. So, the process of memory construction itself shows the power play among various agents of the state, civil society, intellectuals, and common people. Based on this context, this paper attempts to understand the gender equation in the Bodoland movement, a movement for autonomy in Northeast India. This paper engages with remembering and rethinking the role played by women. Individual memories are navigated through in-depth narratives to understand the movement from a gendered perspective.

Keywords: Bodoland Movement, Gender, Memory, and Women

Introduction

Movement constitutes a more significant part of human history. Movements exhibit different aims and ideologies, but the common thread is that they induce a sense of identity. The vital ideological underpinnings of a movement go beyond generations through various mediums. Memory is one such medium for carrying the genesis of a particular movement. In remembering, people tend to retain parts that give them a sense of happiness and forget the problems. Most importantly, this remembering or forgetting always happens with a cause. Remembering some event is always meaningful to understand the whole scenario. When it comes to a movement or a conflict-like situation involving considerable violence and a mass scale mobilisation, it is difficult to use one's memory to understand such an event. People often glorify a specific part that gives them a sense of connectedness or forget those memories about violence, known as collective amnesia. But reading or understanding one's memory also helps to look into a movement from a different perspective because it talks about the other side of the debate involving common people's participation and sufferings. To reflect on a social movement after a certain period and to introspect its

outcome, memory has been one such tool that helps researchers understand the movement and help it situate in the larger scenario of a particular area or region.

The Northeastern part of India is an amalgamation of various tribes with different socio-cultural setups. As one of the key states of Northeast India, Assam also preserves cultural diversity. While different ethnic communities live together, there are chances of conflict and maintaining one's identity. This process is rampant in the Northeastern part of India. The movements occurred after Independence in Northeast have shown certain characteristics like autonomy, campaigns against the state repression, identity movement, movement against military regimes, etc. The region also has specific separatist tendencies, development problems, grievances against the central government. The Bodoland movement of Assam is one such example. This movement involves Bodo identity issues, conflict over land, greater autonomy, preservation of Bodo language and culture, etc. The time frame of the movement was 1986 to 2003; still, the movement's demand is ongoing and hence the key ideas. The signing of the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) accord on January 27, 2020 for a peaceful and developed region, again making the issues of the Bodoland movement very alive. This paper attempts to reflect on the movement using narratives based on this context. It looks into gender and memory coherently and its role in remembering and reflecting on the movement.

Gender, Movements and Memory: Literature Review

Memory plays a vital role in movements. Movements are central to the creation of many collective memories. Similarly, collective memory is a powerful cultural resource to realise the cause of a movement. A range of literature deals with the interconnectedness of memory and movement. For example, one set of writing deals with the gross level of violence like holocaust memories of Jews camps in Germany, whereas another set of literature talks about understanding partition and liberation movement from human memories. After a certain point, some literature reflects on movement to know various equations like a gender role. There is literature discussing memory's role in sustaining a movement by creating nationalistic sentiments. To understand the role of memory in the functioning of social movements, we came across a range of literature. Kubal and Becerra (2014) said that memory plays a diverse role in different levels of social movement. At the micro-level, collective memory exists as an aggregate of individual beliefs and practices and is primarily used in the case of oral histories. In comparison, macro-level studies examine the historical process of a movement by remembering the past, which helps to express their interest in present times. The meso level of study regards collective memory as an interactive accomplishment among group members by using ethnographic methods of inquiry. This also involves group observation to gain collective memory.

For Halbwachs (1992), memory is always collective, structured from the experiences shared by the individuals within the societal frameworks. Even if the experience is felt only by a subject, it gets apprehended by perception and remembered and redefined by each evocation of the past and always pervaded by values and dialogues developed in the collective. In short, individual memory in the larger collective form takes different shapes and meanings many times. Moreover, the constituent elements of collective memory are the events lived individually and experienced by the group to which the person feels to belong. Though people often think that memories are highly personal and private, research indicates that a composite component exists in memory formation.

Another set of literature reflects on the process of memory work in a particular movement and how it becomes a site of struggle. Leal (2017) argues that memory configures itself in political struggle and functions as an alternative instrument to rewrite the past to transform the present and mark the worthiness of remembering it in present times. Thus, from memory, one can know about the space and gender equation at a particular point of time. Another dominant theme of memory literature tries to understand a past event from a different perspective dealing with a gross level of violence against humanity. Bamuel's (1998) work focuses on the Holocaust memories of Israel. In the holocaust iconography of Israel, four gender motifs are assigned to women, namely women as mothers, virgins, warriors, and weeping elderly victims. Out of these images, women as mothers have become the dominant form of Israeli Holocaust iconography. On similar lines, Jacob's (2008) work on the women representation at Auschwitz, which was a concentration camp in German-occupied Poland, has a lot to offer in terms of women's representation in holocaust memories. The study suggests that, as nations and groups seek to recall accurately and remember mass violence against women, traumatised societies must be wary of creating visual and public narratives that promote voyeurism and exploit the memory of the dead. So, the representation of women in the public sphere like the museum has marked that gender biases are part of memory construction. Dubrinway and Poirot (2017) talk about he gendered form of remembering in memorials and museums. So, it will be interesting to know, is there any other role ascribed to women in the memory of a social movement or the account of social memory?

A significant trend in memory work also involves reflecting a movement that has historical importance. In this context, authors like Butalia (1998) writes extensively on rewriting the history of partition based on the memories of common people who experienced fate. She argues that it is not simply a political divide or division of properties and assets, as the survivors repeatedly used the term 'division of hearts.' Further, she talks about how people coped with trauma, rebuilt their lives and how all these shaped their lives find little

reflection in history. So, using memory as an alternative to studying partition is equally problematic. Because memory is not even pure and unmediated, it depends on who remembers what and with whom. But when it comes to remembering something, then another related question is why they want to remember that particular event, especially in the case of the horrific nature of the partition associated memories that people were reluctant to discuss those days. Though there are pitfalls in using memory as a source to understand history, it is essential to question whether history can make space for these small individual voices. Butalia also raises the question of differences in the version of a speech by men and women while interviewing. In such context, can we have a gendered telling of partition?

Similarly, in another account, Roy (2007) situates herself in the memory of the Naxalbari Movement and tried to find the gender gap in the existing literature of the movement. She collects a range of narratives from women actively involved in the movement and tried to figure out the relationship between gender, movement, and space. She also tries to look into their memories, from where she tries to find out the role played by women in that movement. Fascinating results come from those narratives, such as revolutionary femininity and how it was imagined and lived in everyday life of this political movement. The role played by women also pointed out the gender division of political labour and the gendering of political space. It provides a sheer critique of radical politics where women are entitled to technical work such as delivering messages; if they were involved in revolutionary activities, those mainly provided the raw material for bomb-making. Such role assignation complicates the performative aspect of femininity in the political domain. The various testimonies of women who participated in the Naxalbari movement have shown a close relationship between collective modes of mythification and personal memories of the everyday site of gendered vulnerability. But at the same time, women's narratives have shown that they remember that phase of their life with fondness and as a moment of freedom and fearlessness. After reviewing the above literature on the interplay of gender, memory and movement, it is evident that the memory construction process is not free from gender biases. Remembering or reflecting on a movement using individual narratives gives a new impetus to understand the movement. Gender as a lens altogether provides a unique understanding even to movement.

Movements of Northeast India: Situating the Study

The region of Northeast India is home to diverse cultures, ethnicities. Along with this, the nature of the state is also questionable in the region. Butola (1998, 31) has argued that the state in the region is an alien superstructure imposed initially by British rule and consolidated under independent India. This

superimposed state specializes in using repressive measures, which creates the atmosphere for the rise of social movements in the region. Political scientist Baruah (2005) describes a condition of 'durable disorder' where the Northeast region is being treated as a special fraction of the Indian state, as a frontier region, due to the Indian state's obsession with conflict and insurgency in the region. He refers to a situation where insurgency and counter-insurgency operations have caused loss of human lives and material destruction and eroded the democratic setup of the region. Further, it institutionalised authoritarianism by using repressive measures. The repressive nature of the state has created distrust among the people in the region, and there is no direct connection between the state and citizens. In the Northeast Indian context, the social movements are basically about challenging the repressive authority of the state and trying to assert their indigenous forms of governance. This scenario got aggravated due to the negligent attitude of the central government towards the region. In recent times, the missing history of Northeast India from the school curriculum has raised concerns. It points to inadequate inclusion of Northeast India's past in India's standard historical accounts.

The women in the region of Northeast India are deeply rooted in the cultural matrix. Their rootedness is visible from the way they describe their stories. Her role as a mother influences a woman image in Northeast India. Women in this region form a collective identity as mothers. One such example is Ima Keithal, a women's market in Manipur. Women of Manipur are visible in public spaces and economically support their families. Brara (2017,77) argues that no societies are gender-neutral. Though Northeast Indian women are visible in socio-economic spheres and informal politics, still customary laws bind them, as it is associated with the identity issue. Women in the region have come to the forefront as protesters and peacemakers. But they are not included in the policy and decision-making bodies. The glass ceiling comes in customary laws, land ownership, inheritance laws, etc.

Women's body in the Northeastern part of India is both racialised and gendered. A conflict centric approach looks into women's intervention in the movement from a peacemaking perspective. Some of the prominent women-led social movements began in the 1970s and 1980s on the issue of a ban on alcohol and gradually transformed into movements that took up the case of human rights violations and peace negotiations. In this context, Deka (2016) argues that women, mainly from Manipur and Nagaland, played two-pronged roles in the movements. Firstly, they were crafting space for them while facing challenges from within and without. Secondly, they dealt with the dilemmas of taking some difficult positions against the state and the community. Though women are caught between two extreme poles of patriarchy, i.e., community and the

state, their attempt to ban alcoholism can be a positive start to imagining women role in such societies. In such a scenario, it is evident that histories of Indian women have not incorporated women's experiences from Northeast India adequately. So, women of the region are a complex subject constituted by multiple narratives of violence, peacemaking, trauma, culture, patriarchy, matriarchy, etc.

Bodoland Movement: Background of the study

The Bodo tribe is the aborigines of Assam. The demand for a separate Bodo state resulted from the government's disappointment in dealing with their key issues. There are two significant issues of distrust, one is language, and the other is a land issue. After independence for a few years, the land issue was not there. But the state government has started the system through which they were selling land to refugees with central government funds. This process harms the tribal people. The method of forest extension or settlement of refugees impacted the tribal block most as they are the population living in those areas or dependent on those resources. And this process targeted their economic support system. Moreover, the issue of language gave the emotional cause for Bodo people who are already aspiring to have a political set-up through which land could be protected and preserve their culture and tradition (Choudhary 2007,105-108). Induced by language and land issues, the movement took a different shape in the coming time. The movement was a long one divided into two phases. The first phase started in 1986 onward and ended with the Bodoland Administrative Council (BAC) Accord's signing in 1993. The second phase began in 1996 as they were not happy with the council's work and ended in 2003 with the formation of Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC). Not satisfied with the BTC accord as it has not created a separate homeland for the Bodos, the Bodo Security Force (BSF) took a new turn. It was renamed in 2004 as the National Democratic Front of Bodos (NDFB). The government and NDFB signed a peace agreement in 2005. Again in 2008, it got divided into two groups due to some misunderstanding. One is known as NDFB (P), and the other is NDFB, headed by Ranjan Daimary. But a breakaway group of NDFB under I K Songbijit, known as NDFB(S), was also formed. After the peace agreement, this region has undergone multiple ethnic clashes among Bodo and Non-Bodo communities. But their demand for a separate state or homeland is a distant dream yet. A recent development is the signing of the BTR accord in 2020 with the Government of India. This accord aims at bringing peace and development to the region.

Methodology

It is always problematic to study movement by using memory. There are multiple ways of approaching memory as a form of methodological tool. In one way, one situates oneself in the context of that memory and tries to draw personal linkage with that movement. In contrast, another trend is collecting narratives and reflecting on different factors behind memory construction. For this study, I chose the second one. For the study, the primary method is ethnographic methods, emphasising participant observation. Data collection also includes reading diaries, memos, documents related to a particular event of the movement. An interview is the key methodological tool. The content of the questionnaire depends on the typology of the interviewee. Make the interview a systematic one; the sample further divided into two categories, namely-

A) Individual: - This includes categories like participants, participants' families and relatives, social activists, intelligentsia, artists, political leaders, etc. Narratives of women both as victims and participants were also collected to understand the gender angle effectively.

B) Organisations: It includes various agencies that shape shared memories through their organisational platforms, such as the All-Bodo Women Welfare Federation (ABWWF).

Key Findings

This study attempts to understand the process of memory construction around the Bodoland movement. While conducting interviews, a substantial number of women narratives hinted towards the Bodoland movement and their sense of connectedness vis-a-vis a referring point to remember and assert their position in the public sphere. In the process of remembering, they have created an alternate picture of women's involvement in the movement. For a systematic understanding, the narratives collected during the study are divided into three subtypes. They are as follows—

A) Women as active participants: People from the region participated in different capacities during the movement time. Women played a crucial role in the Bodoland movement. At an earlier stage of the movement, very few women actively participated. Bodo women participated in the Script movement also. Malati Rani Narzary was one pioneer woman who participated actively in various movements to preserve Bodo identity. From 1968 onwards, she participated in different movements started by the Bodos, but not in a leadership position. From 1973 onwards, she has actively engaged in the Script movement, and in 1974 she and 24 other women went to jail. For the first time, Bodo women were jailed. She is also associated with the All Assam Tribal Women Welfare Forum (AATWWF), which was established in 1986 to promote

and protect the interests of tribal women. AATWWF is the only organisation working for women then. Later this has come to be known as ABWWF. Tribal women as a part of ABWWF started participating in the movement. They played various roles, such as protesting peacefully against the arrest of older people and innocent people. If the police caught some, these women ensured that no innocent people were behind bars. AATWWF mainly involves family planning, hygiene, motherly role, etc. Another important organisation is the Bodo Volunteer Force (BVF), the military wing of the All Bodo Student Union. Many AATWWF women who were part of BVF were also secret messengers. This role assignation to women also shows the feminine nature of their involvement and patriarchy working in conflict situations.[1]

Women who were a part of the movements showed a sense of remembrance by reflecting on their unique and emancipatory experiences. Sitting in the office corner, Rita rejoiced her days as a messenger and said that:

> 'During those days, the task of delivering messages and coordinating among the core members was difficult. But this role allowed me to do something for the betterment of the Bodo community. Remembering those days always gives me a sense of accomplishment compared to my mundane life these days. Those days were the most sacred days of my life.'[2](Translated by author)

From the above narrative, it is evident that being a part of the movements gave women a moment of greatness for their entire life. Such role assigning gave women hope and moments to be treasured for the rest of life in a patriarchal society.

Women as peacemakers during and after the movement are crucial points to ponder. An active peace negotiator remembered her days when she worked as a mediator between the Assam government and NDFB said that:

> 'As a sister of the NDFB head, it was a huge responsibility to negotiate a dialogue between both sides. It has been a life-changing experience for me as and for the first time was entrusted with such a strategic responsibility that will affect the Bodo community's larger good.'[3]

In this part, remembering the Bodoland movement resulted in focusing on particular aspects which are very personal to the respondents but at the same time helps in drawing a public account of women's position in the Bodoland movement.

B) Women as victims: Along with the active participation in the movement, women had undergone a phase of extreme violence. It was reported that five Bodo women, including a 60-year-old, were allegedly gang-raped by jawans of the Kumaon Regiment at Ultapani village under Bismuri police outpost in Kokrajhar district during the intervening night of December 31,2003and January 1, 2004. Insurgent activities are still going into the region of BTR. Women are suffering acute problems of security and health-related issues. When a section of women has involved actively in various defining moments of the movement, at the same time, most of the women faced inhumane treatment. The lives of women in camps are also full of challenges. A place named Saraibill, near Gossaigaon, where two newly married pregnant women were shot dead by police personnel. These two women have been regarded as the first women martyrs of the Bodo movement.[4] The gross violence did not stop there. In January 1988, twelve Bodo women were raped by security personnel. Earlier, no case was registered against them. But Chief Justice Lodha of Guwahati High court came to know about this and filed a sue motto cognition. A committee was formed to look into the case. Those victimised women got financial compensations, but the real culprits were not punished. In a way, justice was not done to those twelve women. The narratives around the movement depict the trauma and violence faced by women and their family members and delayed representation because of the severe nature of such memories.

C) Torchbearer of tradition and culture: Another trend of remembering is women's sense of ethnic identity was realised during this movement. In this regard, Malati Rani Narzary, who played a leadership role in the movement said that:

> 'As women, we felt the need that it's time to save the Bodo *Jati,* the need to preserve indigenous culture. We are the sons of the soil, hence realising the essence of the movement. I participated in it and also went to jail. At that time, our sole intention was to preserve the Bodo *Jati*.'[5] (Translated by author)

This is a long shift from seeing women as cultural symbols to a position where women realise the essence of preserving their culture and finding out how to do it. Moreover, this movement also culminated in creating the first tribal women organisation in Assam, known as AATWWF, in 1984. Later on, this has become ABWWF which not only worked as a platform to bring all tribal women's issues at that point but also continued to do works for the betterment of Bodo women.

Another set of narratives on Bodoland movements exhibits a trend of distrust, misuse and dissatisfaction. While reflecting, women felt underrepresented. In this regard, Pratibha said that:

> 'Women have only used a symbol of culture, wearing *dakhana* (Bodo women traditional attire) and holding banners in rallies to symbolise women's presence in the movement.'[6]

Such narratives raised concerns about women's role as the torch-bearer of tradition and culture. Many times, women are not asked about the role they want to play but assumed as a bearer of culture. Such observations highlight the possibility of seeing women within the Bodoland movement with a limited agency. Further, it makes women's identity suppressed and subsumed into the existing role-playing of society.

Assigning of the role also plays an integral part in the success of any movement. Women from all strata of Bodo society participated in their full capacities. On the question of their role in the movement Anjali said that:

> 'We were assigned feminine roles such as cooking food, weaving *aronai* (Bodo garland), nursing the wounded ones. Only a few women were at the leadership level who already belonged to an influential family.'[7]

Looking into the different narratives, one can say that the Bodoland movement is not merely an autonomy movement but an equally important movement from a gendered perspective. It helps to understand the movement from the perspective of gender relations and its impact on memory construction about the movement.

Conclusion

This paper critically discusses the Bodoland movement. The narratives collected after a decade of the movement show that women were the victims of violence and had their moments of empowerment and greatness being a part of the movement. It also shows their attempt to fight against patriarchal norms during the movement and make their presence visible in the collective memory of the movement. So, listening to unheard voices helps to understand a movement effectively and do justice to individual voices that were sidelined from public memory. Narratives of women from the Bodoland region altogether marked another picture to understand autonomy and ethnic identity movement from a unique standpoint. The way women remember their days is also remarkably different from how men did. However, this study has limitations about understanding the equation of Bodo and Non-Bodo voices in constructing collective memory about the region. One can always extend it further while keeping in mind the spatio-temporal specificities of the area and how remembering has become gendered.

Notes

[1]Interview with the founder member of AATWWF, September 14, 2021.

[2]Interview with Rita (name changed), a woman employee of BTC secretariat, an ex-ABWWF member, January 17, 2018.

[3] Interview with the founder of Bodo women Justice forum, January 28, 2017.

[4]Interview with ex-MP, Kokrajhar, March 17, 2018.

[5]Interview with woman participant of Bodoland movement, January 18, 2018.

[6]Interview with Pratibha Brahma, woman political leader, February 4, 2018.

[7] Interview with Anjali (name changed), a woman participant of Bodoland movement on January 23, 2018.

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Homeless Invisibles in Kolkata: An Urban Poverty Perspective

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Abstract

Homelessness is a major global concern since many decades. Kolkata as the largest mega city of eastern India attracts exodus number of rural people from its extensive peripheral region. According to the census report of 2011, West Bengal (134,040) ranked seven in India and Kolkata (69,798) ranked first in district wise distribution of homeless population. Pavement dwellers are prone to a variety of social and environmental problems including socio-economic marginalization, inadequate livelihood, lack of job opportunity, malnutrition, health issues and inadequate housing to combat seasonal variations etc. Present study attempts to explore the status of pavement dwellers in north Kolkata with special reference to economic vulnerability and social wellbeing. To justify the outlined research objectives both quantitative and qualitative methods are taken into consideration which includes poverty gap index, head count index, average weighted index, Z-score, measure of dispersion, other cartographic and GIS techniques for mapping etc. The result shows that low literacy rate, lack of job opportunity and high urban poverty index does not allow the pavement dwellers to come out of the vicious cycle. Prolonged economic and social deprivation and inability to provide basic needs to the family, homeless people often tend to get involved in illegal activities or any unfair means to earn

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livelihood. Improvement of rural areas in terms of profit maximization in agricultural sector, access to job and basic amenities can reduce the stress of overutilization on resources in third world urbanization process.

Keywords: Urban Poverty, Homelessness, Poverty Gap Index, Social Wellbeing, Sustainable Development

Introduction

Basic human need approach advocates 'shelter' as the minimum requirement to ensure human wellbeing. Due to the absence of adequate housing, people who migrate from rural areas live in slums and shanties in an urban area of developing countries (Som, 1987; Wardhaugh, 2012; Sattar, 2014; Sivaramakrishnan and Mondal, 2014). Top metro cities in the world like New York, Washington D.C. also suffer due to large number of homeless population (Ullah et al., 1999; Jegede, 2018). Homeless people, often known as pavement dwellers are one of the most important indicators of urban poverty (Dey and Majumder, 2015; Roy and Siddique, 2018). The face of the city rapidly declines in terms of quality of life, safety index, per capita income, pollution level, aesthetic quality. Mostly uneducated or school dropouts from the rural areas of West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand Odisha etc. reach Kolkata to attain success in life (Jagannath and Halder, 1988; Bhattacharya, 2012; Mustaquim and Ismail, 2013). Decreasing profit from agricultural sector and disinterest among the youth to work in any primary sector of economy opens up the trend of job-oriented migration into the urban areas (Dey, 2021). By remaining unemployed in the city, managing a four-square meal would be exorbitant. The pavement dwellers are often considered imperceptible. Pavement dwellers are thus being made the scapegoats for all urban ills of which they are the symptoms, not the cause (SPARC, 1985). According to the Census Report published in 2011 West Bengal with a population of 134,040 ranks seven as compared to the other Indian states in terms of distribution of homeless population. Kolkata as the capital city,

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ranks first with a population of 69,798 in comparison (Fig. 1a and b) to the other districts and cities (Government of India, Census Report, 2011). Kolkata as a megacity exhibits a sharp contrast between its southern and northern municipal wards. North Kolkata is the oldest part of the city where mostly the native people live. The behaviour and lifestyle of the people are traditional whereas, people living in South Kolkata belong to newer generation with currently popular beliefs and practices.

Therefore, to understand the economic vulnerability and social wellbeing of the homeless invisibles in north Kolkata the following objectives have been taken into consideration – a) compare the demographic, educational and economic status of the pavement dwellers; b) introspect into the poverty gap index and availability of household amenities; and c) examine the level of vulnerability of the pavement dwellers towards socio-environmental hazard.

Study Area

Kolkata is located in the eastern part of India, along the bank of Hugli River at 22°82'N latitude and 88°20'E longitude. It is one of the most important and largest metro cities in India. It has spread linearly along the bank of the River Hugli with an eastward slope. The city stands at an average elevation of 6.5m above MSL with a total area of 187.33 sq. km. and is divided into number of boroughs and wards (Fig. 2). As per 2011 census total population of Kolkata is 4.5 million whereas greater Kolkata has 14.1 million populations (Dey and Modak, 2015). As per administrative divisions, Kolkata is separated into two parts like North Kolkata and south Kolkata under the Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) which was founded in 1876. At present the city is divided into 141 municipal wards of which 09 different wards are randomly selected to meet the purpose of structured questionnaire survey (Table 1).

Table 1: List of Primary Survey points in North Kolkata

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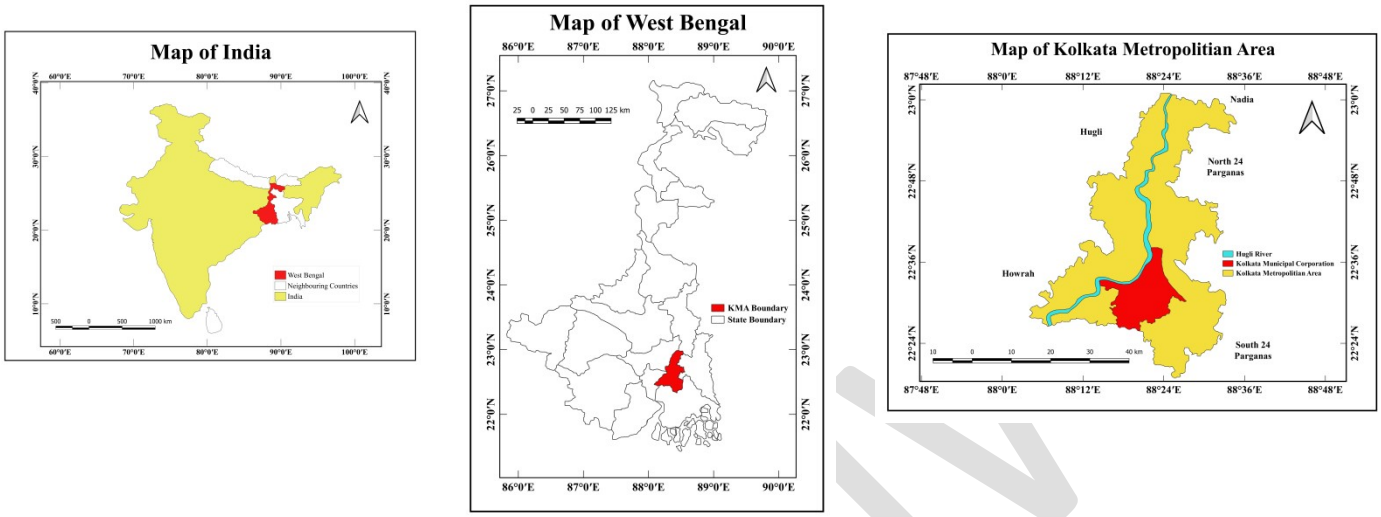
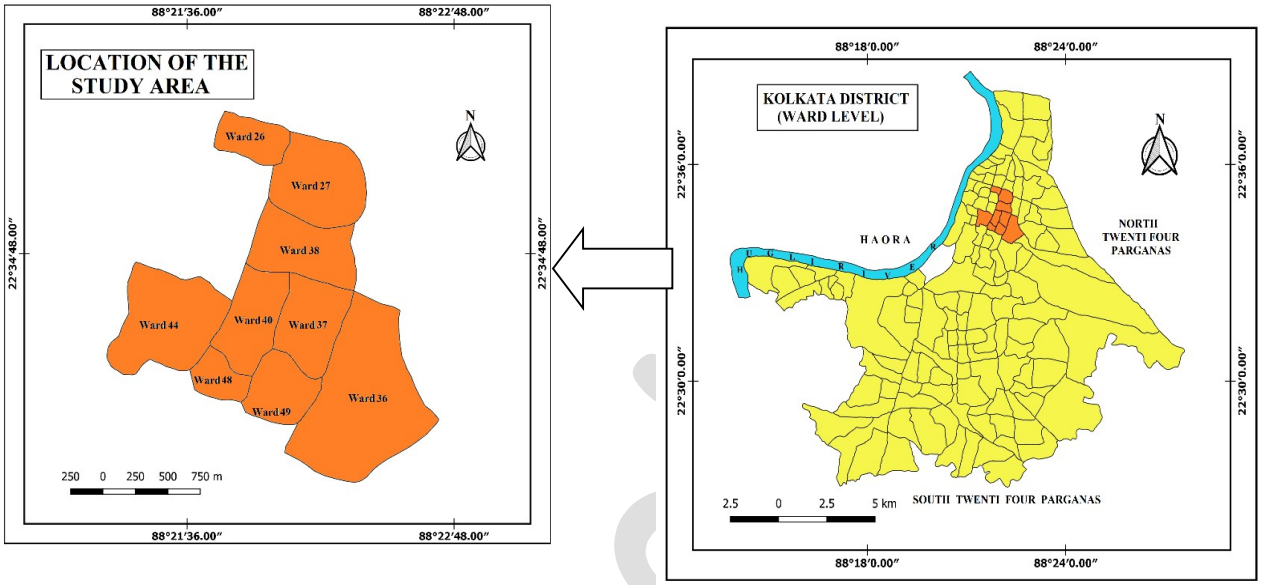


Sl. No.	Ward No.	Primary Survey Points	Population (Surveyed)		
			Total	Male	Female
a.	26	Hedua and neighbourhood	58	31	27
b.	27	Vivekananda Road and Bidhan Sarani	55	22	33
c.	36	Sealdah Area (along the A.P.C Road)	69	36	33
d.	37	Amherst Street Area (Raja Ram Mohan Roy Sarani)	54	21	33
e.	38	Amherst Street Area (Raja Ram Mohan Roy Sarani)	63	34	29
f.	40	College Street Area	48	23	25
g.	44	Maulana Sauket Ali Street.	46	25	21
h.	48	Raja Ram Mohan Sarani (Bank of India area)	42	23	19
i.	49	Surya Sen Street, B.B Ganguli Street, A.P.C Road	48	27	21
		Total	**483**	**242**	**241**

Source: *Field survey, 2019*

Fig. 2. Location of the Study Area

Source: NATMO, 2019



MATERIAL AND METHODS

This paper is a blend of both quantitative and qualitative analysis based on both primary and secondary data collected from various administrative offices, government reports and database. The primary data was collected on a stratified random selection basis. Door to door personal interview and group discussion was conducted in the selected wards based on a target oriented structured questionnaire during March 2019 to December 2019. The criteria of the ward selection were mainly based on available permanent pavement households, point to point accessibility of the respondents, willingness to answer the questions that were asked. A sum of 106 households were surveyed during the field work and 483 members were interviewed which totals around 0.7 percentage of the total homeless population of Kolkata. Target groups of the research were mainly the family heads, women, children, and the senile population.

Locational attribute of their huts or tents were geographically coordinated with the help of Global Positioning System (GPS) and Garmin Software for further digitization. Demographic attributes like

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sex ratio and dependency ratio, primary and post primary enrolment of the children was calculated and analysed based on Z-score results. Measures of dispersion were taken into consideration to evaluate the nature of available household amenities. Assessment of economic vulnerability and exposure to low standard of living was conducted as per Poverty Gap Index (PGI) and Head Count Index (HCI) analysis. Average Weighted Index (AWI) was employed to understand the perception of their problems. Mapping of the spatial attributes was prepared based on QGIS software. Location maps were collected from National Atlas and Thematic Mapping Organization (NATMO) headquarters in Kolkata (2019).

Results and Discussion

Demographic Attributes

The demographic status of the pavement population surveyed in the selected wards of North Kolkata reveals that they are leading an inferior quality life. The demographic characteristics like sex ratio, dependency ratio, birth rate, death rate, migration, marital status, age of marriage, language, number of family member, religion represent the socio-economic and socio-cultural characteristics of the study area.

Based on the primary survey of the pavement dwellers in the selected wards of North Kolkata, the most preferred family size among the pavement dwellers is about 3 to 6 persons per family. Families with more than 6 members indicates high fertility rate which is affected by several factors like lack of knowledge about birth control and family planning policies, child marriage, poverty, unemployment etc. Child marriage is one of the main reasons for high birth rate and is a major problem among the pavement dwellers because it affects the quality of life. Child marriage in India, according to the Indian law, is a marriage where either the woman is below the age of 18 or the man is below the age of 21. Most child marriages amongst the destitute involve girls, due to their poor socio-economic

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conditions. Primary data reveals that death rate, which is a significant demographic element is high between the age of 31 to 45 years because of diseases and accidents (Table 2).

Table 2: Composite Index of the selected Demographic Parameters

Ward No.	Sex Ratio			Dependency Ratio			Total Rank Score
	Value	Z-score	Rank	Value	Z-score	Rank	
26	870.967	-0.23	5	132	0.349	3	8
27	1500	1.88	2	120	-0.154	4	6
36	916.666	-0.08	4	97.14	-1.114	9	13
37	1571.428	2.12	1	107.69	-0.671	7	8
38	852.941	-0.29	6	117.24	-0.27	6	12
40	1086.956	0.49	3	140	0.685	2	5
44	840	-0.34	7	119.05	-0.194	5	12
48	826.087	-0.48	8	180	2.365	1	9
49	777.777	-0.54	9	100	-0.994	8	17

The Z-Score method is used to clearly portray the regional imbalance of demographic attributes across the selected wards in North Kolkata (Dey and Majumdar, 2015). Due to economic pressure and rural poverty in the surrounding districts the rate of migration is steadily increasing and a large number of rural populations are forced to migrate towards urban area like Kolkata for employment opportunities and better living. Natural calamities like flood and drought also forces people to relocate to the urban areas. The landless labourers who have faced low productivity of soil and are deeply enclosed in poverty tends to migrate towards the city for better economic opportunities. There are several factors which lead to migration and spread of pavement dwellers in Kolkata. Primary survey reveals that most of the pavement dwellers have migrated due to economic reasons like employment opportunity (61.11 per cent), increase income (27.77 per cent) etc. Social reasons like marriage amongst women are also reasons behind migration. Nearly 35.71 per cent of pavement dwellers have migrated in Kolkata more than 30 years ago and few families have migrated less than 5 years ago in those selected wards.

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Majority of migrants came from rural areas especially from the interior of South 24 Parganas, where salt water intrusion makes agriculture difficult and numerous factors make communication difficult (Das, 2015). Field survey reveals that there has been inter-state, inter-districts and international migration. At College street, Amherst street, B. B. Ganguly street and its surrounding area some street dwellers have migrated from Bihar, Odisha, and from neighbouring countries like Bangladesh (especially in surrounding areas of Amherst Street). While around Sealdah, Hedua and some part of College street majority of migrants have relocated from S.24 Parganas.

Education Profile

While measuring the quality of population in any given region, educational status is considered as the basic criteria. With the help of primary data, enrolment in school is shown by Z-score and composite score method. The study reveals that ward 26 and 49 ranks highest (total rank score is 9 and 5) which is followed by ward 27, 36, 37, 38, 48 with a moderate score (total rank score is 10, 14, 13, 20, 20) and ward 40 and 44 ranks lowest (total rank score is 23 and 21) respectively (Table 3).

Table 3: Composite Index of Primary and Post Primary Enrolment

Ward No.	Primary Enrolment (Girls)			Primary Enrolment (Boys)			Post Primary Enrolment			Total Rank Score
	Value	Z-score	Rank	Value	Z-score	Rank	Value	Z-score	Rank	
26	113.33	0.62	3	90.9	-0.45	5	13.25	1.85	1	9
27	142.86	1.51	1	133.33	1.22	2	-7.8	-1.09	7	10
36	89.47	-0.09	6	130	1.09	3	0.2	0.03	5	14
37	105.88	0.39	5	100	-0.09	4	1.29	0.18	4	13
38	57.14	-1.07	8	87.5	-0.58	6	-3.46	-0.48	6	20
40	28.57	-1.93	9	66.66	-1.4	9	3.31	0.46	3	21
44	70	-0.68	7	84.61	-0.69	7	-7.8	-1.09	9	23
48	110	0.52	4	83.33	-0.75	8	-7.8	-1.09	8	20
49	116.66	0.72	2	144.44	1.66	1	8.86	1.24	2	5

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Primary education enrolment might be high but in the later years the rate of dropouts is high. Primary survey shows that the level of education is much better in ward 26, 27, 36, 37 in comparison to ward 40, 44, 48 and 49. In ward number 38 a huge disparity is seen in the level of education between male and female. Educational dropout is one of the major problems among the pavement dwellers in North Kolkata. The main factors behind this dropout is financial constraint, children engaged in menial economic activities, lack of documents, medical issues, problems with peer in school and these downtrodden children face punishment and safety issues etc. Literacy is higher in the lower age groups, showing that some government policy has worked. The problem of child labour should be strictly dealt with which would reform the education system in return (Rawat, 2013). In the preliminary survey, a large number of educational dropouts were found in ward 36, 26, and 40. On the other hand, a very small number of dropouts have been found in ward 27. Marriage is one of the main reasons amongst the females for dropping out of school.

Economic Profile

Economic or earning issue is one of the major problems of being a pavement deweller and lead a vulnerable life on urban streets (Das, 2013). Primary survey reveals that nearly 47 per cent of the respondent's families earn between 100-200 rupees per day, whereas another 39 per cent families earn less than 100 rupees per day and nearly 27 per cent of respondent families earn 3000-5000 rupees per month whereas another 39 per cent respondent's families earn less than 1000 rupees per month. Income of the pavement dwellers changes with seasonal variation. The income level shoots down mainly in monsoon and winter season in respect to the summer season. In festive seasons like Durga puja the income level improves for some families.

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Field survey shows that most of the male pavement dwellers at Hedua and Hati bagan (ward 26, 27**)** worked as van or rickshaw puller and females worked as maid servant, whereas at Sealdah, Amhartstreet and College Street surrounding areas (ward 36, 37, 38, 40, 44, 48, 49) males are mostly engaged in daily wage labour, van pullers, rag pickers, work in road side hotel, drivers, work in transport sector and female street dwellers are engaged in rag picking. A few numbers of pavement dwellers are categorised as beggars as well. Their occupational profile and their income status easily indicate their quality of live and standard of living (Fig. 3).

Housing Conditions, Household Amenities and Assets

Economic prospective of housing and shelter are being question for third world country, particularly so when the urban poor is in the target group. The established economic role of housing as a composite good provides a heterogeneous mix of services, such as a stimulus to savings and investment as a source of supplemental income (Jagannathan and Halder, 1988). The pavement dwellers spend their troubled living on the open road side under the open sky, inside a private building which is under construction, inside a public building and in some temporary dilapidated hut on the footpaths. They prefer to live in the same place for a long time until they are forcibly evicted. Primary survey of the pavement dwellers shows that nearly 78 per cent of street families live under the open sky, 12 per cent inside a public building (ward 26, 27, 37, 38), 5 per cent in temporary hut (ward 48, 36) and another 5 per cent inside a private building (ward 48). 61 per cent of those living under open sky use hard plastic sheet as house hold materials especially in ward 36 and 24 per cent uses light plastic sheets mainly in College street area. Street dwellers change their housing situation with seasonal variation. During summer most of the pavement dwellers live under the open sky, whereas in winter and monsoon most of them choose temporary hut as their place of residence (Fig. 4).

Women and children are facing various problems related with water and toilet facilities. According to the field survey they usually pay 5 rupees a day to use public toilet (‘Pay and Use’ sanitation system) (91 per cent) and they collect their drinking water from public sources like

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municipal or public taps. Food is either purchased from cheap restaurants or cooked in family kitchen (Jagannathan and Halder, 1989). Large majority of the street dwellers use firewood (68 per cent) as a source of fuel for their cooking purpose, which is one of the reasons for creating air pollution in urban areas. In some cases, the use of coal (16 per cent) and kerosene oil (14per cent) also can be noticed. We find that a large majority uses street light (98 per cent) as a main energy source. Surviving in the streets is like a daily fight for the pavement dwellers. In order to ensure a better life for their children and their old age, there is a need for the pavement dwellers to procure durable assets for themselves (Rawat, 2013). The primary survey shows that the pavement dwellers in north Kolkata use minimum amount of household assets such as warm clothes (15.37 per cent) for winter season, bed and mattress (7.08 per cent), mosquito net (9.67 per cent), bed sheets (12.6 per cent), kitchen utensils (16.95), tarpaulin (8.29 per cent), trunk (1.72 per cent) to keep important documents safe, and mobile phone (11.57 per cent) for communication. Some NGOs and influential people contribute blankets, warm clothes and other necessary goods for their social wellbeing (Table 4).

Social Hazard

Poverty is one of the major social hazards which mainly affect the life style of the pavement dwellers in the selected ward of north Kolkata. Primary data show that there are many families who live below the poverty line and they also belong to the poverty cycle. They face challenging conditions like poor housing, high birth rate, and low-income level, lack of food which makes daily life gruelling and exhausting.

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Table 5: Calculation table for Poverty Gap Index (PGI) and Head Count Index (HCI)

Ward No.	Average Family Income (Rs/per	Income Poverty Line (Urban)	Poverty Gap	Poverty Gap Index (PGI)	Families living below poverty	Total Population	Head Count Index(HCI)
26	166.5	200	33.5	0.167	6	58	0.103
27	146.363		53.637	0.268	6	55	0.109
36	133.5		66.5	0.332	12	69	0.232
37	144.545		55.455	0.277	10	54	0.185
38	135.384		64.161	0.323	6	63	0.095
40	143.5		56.5	0.282	12	48	0.25
44	118		82	0.41	17	46	0.369
48	163.5		36.5	0.182	10	42	0.238
49	195.454		4.546	0.022	0	48	0

The primary survey reflects that most of the families were involved in different menial occupation where the income level is very low ranging between 100-200 rupees per day. There are 46 per cent pavement dwellers who earn Rs.100-150 rupees per day and 37 per cent who earn more than 150 rupees per day. Here we see that 17 per cent dweller's income is below Rs.50 rupees per day. Here the extent of the poverty is discussed through Head Count Ratio Index (HCI). The headcount ratio is the proportion of the population that is classified as poor. The headcount poverty ratio or index is defined as the percentage of the population whose living standards lie below a given threshold referred to as "poverty line*"* and the intensity of poverty has also been measured through Poverty Gap Index (PGI). The Poverty Gap Index (PGI) is defined as the ratio of the Poverty Gap (PG) to the poverty line (Das, 2015). Here PGI represents the mean proportionate poverty gap in the population. In study areas, the highest poverty gap index was found at ward number 44 where head count ratio was also highest (0.369). Poverty gap index was least at ward number 49 where head count ratio was the lowest (Table 5).

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Regardless of the reasons for people living on the street, street-dwelling can create specific problems, such as crime, and other antisocial activities, including prostitution, begging and drug abuse (Anam et al. 1997; Dey and Majumdar, 2015; Adhikari, 2015). Urban crime is one of the major socio environmental problems in the metropolitan cities or urban cities in India especially in Kolkata. To gate employment opportunity and to increase income a large number of people migrate towards Kolkata every year, and because of economic scarcity some peoples lived in the street (Bhattacharya, 1996; Bagchi, 2016; Basu, 2016). Due to high amount of joblessness, the tendency to commit crimes is increasing among the people living on street. Based on the primary survey of the pavement dwellers in North Kolkata area, most of the urban crimes in surveyed area are related with harassments, thefts, drug abuse, alcoholism, child labour. Girls are rarely found living alone on the streets. They are usually paired with young or adult men, who offer masculine security in return for emotional or sexual favours as 'husbands' (Josh, 2007). Physical assaults among street dwellers, particularly among women, are a regular phenomenon, especially in Sealdah area but now the intensity of those crimes is much lower.

Homeless people are among the most deprived people in urban areas, in terms of living conditions and lack of access to basic facilities and health indicators (Tribhuvan and Andreassen, 2003; ICDDR, 2011). Pavement dwelling families often face the worst of the urban problems like low sanitation and pollution. They face, almost daily, the ugly side of the intense production activity of the city. They live in surrounding that are hazardous and unfit for a healthy lifestyle. We wanted to explore this aspect of their lives and dedicate an entire section of the survey to explore health issues of pavement dwelling households. The health of the child depends on a variety of influences that range from the participation and education of the mother to the availability of public services (Mukherjee, 1975; Kumuda, 2014). The pavement dwellers prepare and consume food under the open sky which is unhygienic for their health. The problem of the pavement dwellers can be explained in details with the help of this perception study. The AWI methodology analyses the problems they are constantly affecting as a result of living on the streets (Table 6).

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Conclusion

The 2030 Agenda acknowledges that eradicating poverty across the world in its any form and dimension, including extreme poverty, is a global challenge and an urgent requirement for sustainable development. The An increasing number of migrants looking for employment and better living standards are quickly joining India's homeless population. Although non-governmental organisations are working for the removal of the problem of homelessness in India, their works are not enough to solve the entire problem. Attempts at gentrifying the India's problematic neighbourhoods, is also bringing homelessness levels up. This article will provide some background on the status of street families in and around north Kolkata, make linkages between street families and their frequent condition as working and exploited class, and detail the health, educational, socio-economic impacts of the increasing urban poverty concentrated in poor urban slums and squatter settlements. The study in various wards shows a sad, distressed and a deteriorating human condition. Problems like unemployment, school drop outs, poor infrastructure, and unclean environment are co-related with each other. The cycle of poverty can be diminished by involving the government at the grass root level. Providing education, health and employment opportunities in the rural areas and its fringes could solve the issue. Vertical expansion in the cities to accommodate the middle-income groups of the homeless could benefit the environment as well as the urban poor. The Non-Governmental Organisations should be intricately involved with these groups where they could impart free education to children, provide maternity care to new mothers, spread awareness and knowledge about various health related issues. Above all providing women and children of the streets utmost safety and security should be a major concern for the authorities. Population growth also exacerbates pressure on environmental common property resources. However, part of the pressure on these resources can be mitigated by reducing the rate of population growth. Thus to conclude quality of life amongst the homeless invisibles in an urban poverty set up can be achieved through economic sustainability.

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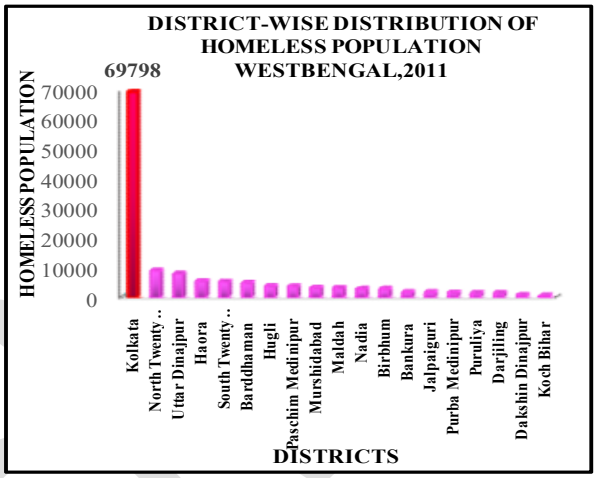


APPENDICES

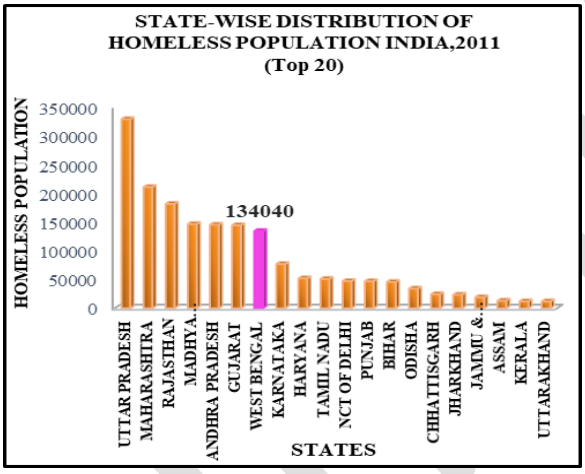
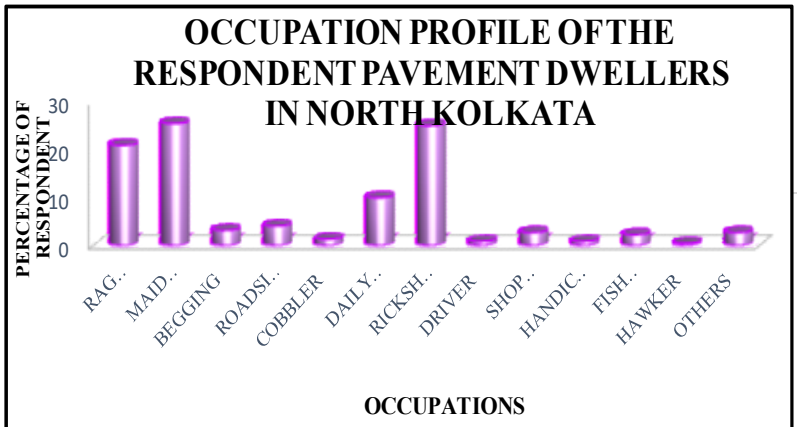
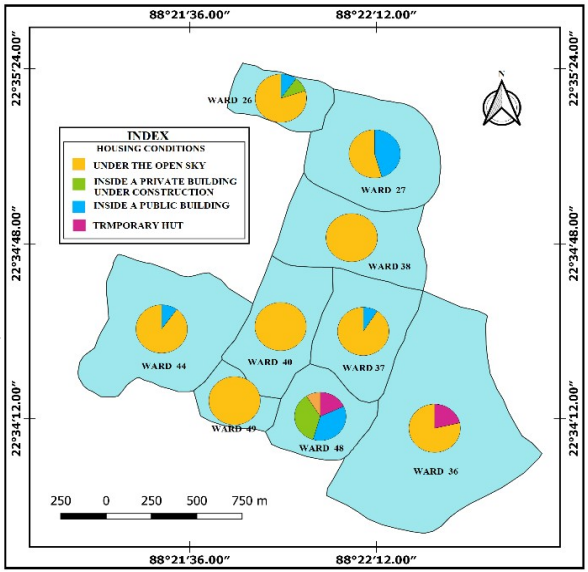


Fig. 1a. Homeless population of West Bengal

Fig. 1b. Homeless population in Kolkata





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Problems of the homeless	Intensity			Total	AWI
	High	Moderate	Low		
Police harassment/abuse	54	22	24	100	0.0687
Drinking water	0	53	47	100	0.0527

Household Assets	Total No.	Mean	$X-\bar{X}$	$(X-\bar{X})^2$	Standard Deviation (SD)
Blanket	97	64.33	32.97	1087.02	29.9913
Bed sheet	73		8.67	75.17	
Bed or mattress	41		-23.33	544.29	
Warm cloths	89		24.67	608.61	
Mosquito net	56		-8.33	69.39	
Tarpaulin	48		-16.33	266.67	
Trunk	10		-54.33	2951.75	
Mobile	67		2.67	7.13	
Kitchen utensils	98		33.67	1133.67	

Fig. 3.

Fig. 4. Housing Condition

Table 4: Measures of Dispersion of selected Household Assets

Income and occupation	87	12	1	100	0.0804
Housing	84	16	0	100	0.08
Sanitary	19	74	7	100	0.065
Family privacy	6	64	30	100	0.0575
Quarrel/fighting	2	40	58	100	0.0508
Seasonal change	1	58	41	100	0.0541
Cooking	8	81	11	100	0.0618
Health	31	64	5	100	0.0679
Sleeping disturbance	93	7	0	100	0.0818
Belongings are stolen	53	22	25	100	0.0683
			High	<0.0575	
			Moderate	0.0575-0.8	
			Low	>0.8	

Table 6: Perception study on Problems of street life

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Commentary Section

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Sexual Violence against Women in Manipur: A Feminine Critique of AFSPA

Bedika Neog

Abstract

Manipur, a small state in North-east India with a population of almost 2.8 million has been witnessing armed conflict for the past six decades and it is one of the most militarized regions of the country with over 1,00,000 troops of the Indian Armed Forces deployed there with Armed Forces Special Power Act (AFSPA). The immunity clause included in this Act protects the members of the armed forces from any legal action within civilian court processes that creates an environment of impunity wherein hardly any cases of abuse by the security forces have been prosecuted; including the cases of sexual abuse. While women all over the world have been the worst victim of militarized conflicts, the condition of women is more deplorable in AFSPA operated areas due to lack of accountability of the government. This paper tries to focus on the violence perpetrated against women in Manipur addressing specific cases of violence, mal-governance and the weave of protest to repeal this act.

Keywords: Manipur, Sexual Violence, Women, AFSPA, Protest

Introduction

Sexual violence against women is widespread in militarized conflicts and it has been used as a war tactic for centuries. The United Nations has adopted several international commitments to address gender related violence in conflict, including UN Security Council Resolution, 1960 that provides an accountability system for conflict related sexual violence, guarantees coordinated and timely collection of information on such violence; and calls for countries to establish specific time-bound commitments (UN Women). But such accountability system is not always present in the conflict areas which are under martial law and some special laws that give enormous powers to the armed forces often with greater level of impunity. One such law is Armed Forces Special Power Act (AFSPA) that gives armed forces the power to maintain public order in 'Disturbed Areas'. In such areas the armed forces have the authority

to prohibit a gathering of five or more persons in an area, can use force or even open fire after giving due warning if they feel a person is in contravention of the law. If reasonable suspicion exists, the army can also arrest a person without a warrant; enter or search a premise without a warrant; and ban the possession of firearms. Besides Jammu and Kashmir, this act is in operation in North Eastern states of Nagaland, Assam, Manipur (excluding seven assembly constituencies of Imphal) and parts of Arunachal Pradesh while the Centre revoked it in Meghalaya in April, 2018 and Tripura revoked it in 2015 (The Hindu Net Desk). Manipur, is a small state in North-East India with almost 2.8 million population is one of the most militarized regions of India embroiled in armed conflicts for the past six decades. AFSPA has been operated in Manipur since 1958 with over 1,00,000 troops of Indian armed forces to combat armed ethnic groups (Nepram, 2015). The past six decades of conflict and imposition of AFSPA resulted in numerous cases of human rights violation and perpetrated extra-judicial killings, sudden disappearances, torture and sexual violence against women in Manipur. Therefore, the North-eastern region, especially Manipur has been witnessing tremendous weave of protest to repeal this act.

Rape as a Weapon of War

Rape is a crime unlike many other as it not only stigmatizes the perpetrator but also the victim, and being raped is being violated in the most intimate way possible. It is a defining experience that make the women experience fear not only of future harm and retribution from the perpetrator but also the fear of revealed as a victim with the community and the women themselves feeling different about them. The effect of rape on the victims and their communities have been exploited by those engaged in war for centuries and it has been a tragic aspect of warfare for as long as there have been written accounts of war. Even the Bible provides many narratives of women being sacrificed by their families, raped and murdered by enemy army in Israel. In the Hundred Years War between England and France, knights were honoured for protecting highborn women from being raped by low-born enemy. Even George Washington once provided a death sentence for a soldier for committing rape during American Revolution. In the World War II, the Japanese invasion of China was carried out through the incorporation of rape as a strategy of domination (Davis, 2000)

Military and paramilitary rape is hardly limited to a particular part of the world, it is prevalent in almost all the militarized societies. While a number of rape and sexual assault against women takes place at prison or detention camps, in Indian context,the military rapes take place in house-to-house searches and reprisal attacks and rape is often justified to the victims as punishment for harbouring terrorists. Army and police often engage in sexual violence against families of insurgents in North-east India (Littlewood, 1997). These cases of rapes and molestations by army personnel buried behind by the fear of stigma and banishment or lack of access to institutions of justice and for the culture of legitimisation of such acts of sexual violence in the name of 'national interest', 'counter-insurgency', 'in the line of duty' and 'upholding the morale of the security forces' who enjoy impunity by the acts like AFSPA. From the mass rape in KunanPoshpora in 1991 to the brutal rape and custodial killing of Thangjam Manorama in Manipur in 2004, the shocking cover up practices by official investigating agencies and the decades of insurgency and counter insurgency period in Jammu and Kashmir and North-East is filled with cases that represent victimization and vulnerability of women in the militarized conflicts (Jamwal, 2013).

Military Rape and Women - Some Cases and Statistics of Manipur

Misuse of power to commit acts of human rights violation and sexual abuses is prominent in various counter-insurgency operations like Operation Bluebird (1987) which was launched by Assam Rifle in the Oinam and its surrounding thirty villages of Senapati district of Manipur to contain the Naga rebels and to recover the firearms that they had looted. During this three-month long operation, the soldiers unleashed a reign of terror in that area with rape, murder, arson, illegal detention and inhuman torture. According to reports 3 women were raped and one of them was raped by the commanding officer (CO), several others were molested by the army men and even pregnant women were beaten up and suffered miscarriages as a consequence (Amnesty International,1990). Likewise, Operation All Clear (2004), Operation

Tornado (2005) and Operation Dragnet (2006) were alsocharacterised by similar cases of rape and molestation, killings and torture.

The first reported and documented rape case by military personnel in Manipur was that of Miss Rose, 19 years old Tangkhul girl of Ngaprum village of Ukhrul District, who was gang raped for hours by the 95 Border Security Forces officers Dy. Comdt. Pundir and Asst. Comdt. Negi in the night of 4th March, 1974. She committed suicide after two days leaving a note for her fiancé while the rapists went scot-free (Premi Devi, 2014). Another case of gang rape by the officers of 95 Border Security Forces was that of Miss Angai, a 24 years old girl of Grihang village who had been tortured and gang-raped for three continuous days from 3-5 March, 1974 under the command of Dy. Comdt. Prakash. She was kicked, beaten, stripped and sticks were forced inserted into her private parts causing profuse bleeding and was brought by the villagers in a nearly dying condition. Again, in the next evening i.e. 6 March, 1974, Mrs. APao and Ms. AShin of Grihang village were taken away by two Indian soldiers under the order of the same Dy. Comdt.Dharam Prakash. Both were forcibly stripped at gun point, beaten severely and raped (Premi Devi, 2014).

The case that horrified the entire nation was the brutal rape and custodial killing of Thangjam Manorama. On 10 July 2004, she was arrested by members of the 17th Assam Rifles as a suspected member of People's Liberation Army (PLA) at her residence in BamonKampu. An arrest memo was given to her family at the time. The next day her dead body was found a few kilometers from her residence (Yurreisem, 2017). The gunshot wounds on her genitals, knife wound on her thigh and semenstains found on her sarong by Central Forensic Science Laboratory indicated towards evidence of rape and its coverup (Mahajan). One of the recent incidenst of crime against women which that attracted strong criticism was the gang rape of 40 years old Jangthailiu Kamei, a U-morok (King Chilly) trader from Nungleiband village of Tamenglong, at Meijrao (Bishnupur) by four persons, among whom two were Indian Reserve Battalion (IRB) personnel on March 21, 2012. She was on her way to Imphal with her brother-in-law to sell king chilly when they were stopped by four persons travelling in a car on the pretext that their vehicle were not registered. They assaulted her brother-in-law and abducted her at gun point to the nearby field and gang raped. When she filed complaint and

went to the police station to identify the culprits, she was offered money to keep her mouth shut but she rejected the offer demanded capital punishment (Yurreisem, 2017).

The following table is consisted of statistical data on the sexual violence against women in Manipur from 2005 to 2012-

Cases	2005-08	2009	2010	2011	2012	FIR	No FIR	Total	Percentage
Molestation	17	9	8	4	8	24	22	46	35.11%
Rape	2	1	1	2	1	7	0	7	5.34%
Girls beaten up	2	3	1	1	2	6	3	9	6.87%
Girls trafficked	5	not disclosed	4	1	2	4	8	12	9.16%
Attempted rape	1	not disclosed	1	1	not disclosed	2	1	3	2.29%
Total crime against women	27	13	15	9	13	43	34	77	58.58%

(*The statistical records are taken from the memorandum called "Manipur: Perils of War &Womenhood which was submitted to Rashida Manjoo (Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes & consequences UNITED NATIONS) by The Civil Society Coalition on Human Rights in Manipur & the UN on 28th April 2013.* ***humanrightsmanipur.wordpress.com***)

The Immunity Clause under AFSPA and the Riddle of Justice

Justice Upendra Singh who headed the Commission to look into the case of brutal rape and custodial killing of Thangjam Manorama found the security personnel of Assam Rifles guilty. But, the Assam Rifles had challenged the validity of the commission arguing that they are governed under a special act and only the centre can set up a commission of inquiry and not the state (Yurreisem, 2017). It could happen because of clause 6 of the Armed

Forces Special Power Act (AFSPA), 1958 that reads – "No prosecution, suit or other legal proceeding shall be instituted, except with the previous sanction of the Central Government, against any person in respect of anything done or purported to be done in exercise of the powers conferred by this Act."This provision was removed in 2004 after the Manorama rape case from seven Assembly Constituency areas of Imphal but it still kept working in other areas transferring the scene of violence to those areas.

Justice Verma Committee, constituted to recommend amendments to the Criminal Law to provide quicker trial and enhanced punishment for criminals accused of sexual assault against women suggested, "bringing sexual violence against women by members of the armed forces or uniformed personnel under the purview of the ordinary criminal law taking special care to ensure the safety of women who are the complainants and witnesses; and setting up special commissioners for women's safety and security in all areas of conflict".While the central government adopted many of the Verma Committee recommendations in a subsequent anti-rape bill, it left out those related to the AFSPA. BinalaxmiNepram, the founder of Manipur Women Gun Survivors Network (MWGSN) said that her attempt to get information about the number of cases of violence against women allegedly by armed forces through the Right to Information Act was rejected by the central government on the ground that it would breach national security (Telegraph India, 2013). Such immunity provisions of AFSPA and lack of accountability of the government to tackle these issues sensitively makes 'justice to the victims' a far-fetched dream.

Weave of Protest Against AFSPA

AFSPA has faced strong criticism and protest throughout the North-eastern states, especially in Mnipur. In July 15, 2004, after Manorama rape case, a dozen of elderly Meitei women (meirapaibi) marched to the area headquarters of the Assam Rifles, stripped naked and waved banners which read, "Indian Army Rape US", "Indian Army Take Our Flesh". This naked protest made it to the headlines in all over the world showing the atrocities committed by the Indian state with the use of its military forces backed by the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, 1958 (Yurreisem, 2017).By using their bodies from a site of sustained vulnerability to an entirely different kind of strengthened vulnerability, they challenged years of sexual violence by the Indian Army. They used their own body as a powerful tool of

protest and resistance against years of sustained violation and humiliation.Following this on 15 August 2004, PebamChittaranjan, who was the advisor of the Manipur Student‘s Federation, Bishnupur district unit, self-immolated himself as a human torch to protestcontinuous imposition of the controversial Armed Forces' special Powers Act. He received about 85% burn on his body and succumbed to the injuries on August 16, 2004 (Premi Devi, 2014).

Irom Sharmila, an ordinary Meitei woman was dragged into the world of activism at the height of rampant killings in Manipur. In November 2000, when Irom was 28-years-old, 10 civilians were allegedly gunned down by the 8th Assam Rifles at MalomMakhaLeikai, near Imphal’s Tulihal airport. The infamous incident is commonly known as the ‘Malom massacre’. The massacre prompted Irom to begin a hunger strike against the atrocities in Malom, which later developed into a prolonged hunger strike against the AFSPA.Three days after she began her fast, Irom was arrested for “attempting suicide” and kept in police custody for 16 years where she continued her hunger strike and she was force-fed through a Ryles tube during her strike (Indian Express,2019).

Conclusion

The need of the hour is to review the provisions of AFSPA and regulate them accordingly. The first step towards resolvingthe problem of conflict-related sexual violence in Manipur and other conflict zones in India is institutional recognition of such violence committed by armed forces. The government needs to be conscious about the evidences and acknowledge that these violations are a reality. There is a need to address the conflict in Manipur by understanding the political, social and historical context of the conflict through peaceful methods such as dialogue, rather than military force.

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Perspective Section

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Contextualizing the Role of Violent Non-State Actors in World Politics

Shasanka Sekhar Pati

One of the most notable developments in the post-cold war period has been the rise of the Violent Non-State Actors in world politics. Despite being non-state actors, they have come to occupy a centre stage in world politics by virtue of their variety and the sheer magnitude of their operations across the length and breadth of the globe. At no stage of history, these actors have played such a vital role in the international system as at present. In fact, they have become the most influential challengers to both the nation-states as well as the international community at large. The Westphalian state system is under stress and strain and is still grappling to cope up with this stark reality of our times.

A Violent Non-State Actor (VNSA) is an organization that uses illegal violence (not authorized by state) to achieve its objectives. Although violent non-state actors (VNSAs) have exerted a perceptible influence on the international system for centuries, it was only after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 that they began to receive significant study in academic and policy circles (Acharya 2007, 274-296). These organizations in recent years have acquired massive powers and influence using which they could make their presence felt in international politics. VNSAs play a prominent, often destabilizing role in society in nearly every humanitarian and political crisis faced by the international community (Williams 2008). They not only pose a challenge to the state's monopoly of using coercive force but also try to develop and sustain parallel governance structures with the objective of providing an alternative to state governance.

Factors responsible for the rise of VNSAs

Violent non-state actors develop out of poor state governance. Whenever a state fails to exercise effective authority within its own territory or unable to create or maintain the loyalty and allegiance of its own population, individuals and groups at that time develop alternative mechanisms of affiliation. 'This causes the family, tribe, clan, etc. to become "the main reference points for political action, often in opposition to the state (Williams 2008)." In other words, violent non-state actors mostly come into

existence because of the prevailing power vacuum in weak or failed states either due to poor governance or absence of legitimate state structures or both. When there are multiple dimensions along which the state is weak, the prospects for the rise of VNSAs are considerably increased (Ronfeldt 2007).

The political, economic, social and technological processes of globalization have diffused power away from states; VNSAs' operational capabilities have increased, rendering them a much more potent threat than at any other time in history (Ronfeldt 2007). VNSAs' evolutionary growth has sparked systemic changes across the entire international system, specifically insofar as a fundamental norm upon which the international system is based – state sovereignty – has been challenged as never before from pressures emanating both from within states as well as between them (Doyle 2011). This has rendered the states incapable to handle the growing security threats emanating from violent non-state actors within the current international legal regime.

All sovereign states represented in the United Nations do not possess the capability of projecting a monopoly of force within their borders. Very few of these states can truly claim a monopoly of force within their territorial borders. Perhaps this is one of the fundamental changes which have been underappreciated as a global phenomenon partly because it has taken different forms in different parts of the world. This explodes the myth present in the current international political and legal system that all states, considered "legally equal" under Westphalian assumptions, sufficiently exercise sovereignty over their territories. This means that although the governments of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Columbia, or Yemen are considered to be the sovereigns of their respective states by the international community, they are either incompetent or unwilling to exercise that sovereignty throughout the whole of their territories and fail to maintain order and security or, to use Max Weber's terminology, fail to monopolize the use of violence (Jackson 2007, 297-317). This is particularly true for many nations in the developing world, especially those granted sovereignty in the wave of decolonization that swept the world in the wake of Second World War. These nations are what Robert Jackson refers to as 'quasi-states', because of the ineffective way in which they exercise sovereignty over their territories. These states typically only provide security and public goods in their cities while the peripheral areas remain subject to lawlessness and violence at the hands of the militias, insurgent groups, criminal cartels, and terrorist organizations

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which fall under the umbrella of 'violent non-state actors' (Jackson 2007, 297-317). The co-existence of a central government with a peripheral VNSAs directly contradict the Westphalian assumptions of sovereignty, territoriality, and autonomy, resulting in what Kledja Mulaj refers to as a condition of 'fragmented sovereignty' that is complemented by a 'system of violence' in which state and non-state actors interact, coexist, cooperate, or conflict tacitly and implicitly, and which "impairs the state's distributive and coercive capabilities, as well as the performance of state institutions, enabling violent non-state actors to penetrate such institutions and find safe havens and launching grounds.(Mulaj 2010, 1-25)."

Challenge to existing international legal regime

The Westphalian ideal of the state is based upon three primary assumptions: first, that the world is composed of sovereign states; second, that these sovereign states exercise a right to complete autonomy over the territories in which they are sovereign; and third that all states are legally-equal in their sovereignty and autonomy (Philips 2009, 94-110). In practice, the greatest implication of these assumptions has been a norm of non-intervention in international politics, by which it is presumed that a state (or group of states) cannot legitimately interfere in the affairs of another (Jackson 2007, 297-317) Thus, this international legal regime was designed to deal with security threats from state actors and not non-state actors.

Increased globalization and subsequent growth of violent non-state actors pose a grave challenge to the current international legal and political regime. Dealing with VNSAs' within the framework of existing international legal and political system has become problematic for the state actors as it does not conform to the prevalent reality of world politics. In the words of Michael Phillips, 'this outcome has rendered the Westphalian ideal useful only as an "academic shorthand rather than empirical reality (Philips 2009, 94-110)." In fact, the very idea of dealing with the newly emerging security threats from VNSAs within the existing international legal and political system is merely a myth.

In the words of Robert Jackson, VNSAs 'must locate and operate on sovereign territory somewhere (Jackson 2007, 297-317).' This is indeed true, as evidenced by the experiences of many violent non- state actors such as al-Qaeda, which bases its operations in Afghanistan and Pakistan, Colombia's FARC guerrillas, or the Yemeni-based al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) (Mulaj 2010, 1-25). When any of these violent non-state actors pose a serious threat or engage in terrorist activities in a foreign soil, then the right to territorial integrity of the host state may be violated despite the fact that the states themselves often have little to do with the belligerent acts of the VNSAs operating from their territory (Acharya 2007, 274-296). In this specific case, the state that becomes the victim of terrorist attack by any violent non-state actor operating from a foreign soil have no option but to take recourse to military intervention to counter any future attacks. This creates a fundamental tension between the different provisions of the UN Charter; specifically, Article 2(4) and Article 51, which guarantee states right to be free from violation of their territorial integrity and to defend them against armed attack, respectively. It is because of this that UN is finding it difficult to discharge its primary obligation of maintaining international peace and security in the wake of attacks by transnational terrorist networks. The vast majority of scholars who have written on this topic have concluded that, in its current form, the UN is incapable of providing states with security against VNSAs and other transnational threats (Doyle 2011).

In his book *Striking First*, Michael Doyle analyzes two attempts by the UN Security Council to combat the threats posed by VNSAs to the world's states in the years following September 11, 2001. The UN Security Council charged with the primary responsibility of maintaining world peace and security passed Resolutions 1540 and 1673 in order to prohibit states from assisting non-state actors in the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction. But these two resolutions proved ineffective largely because of the inherent limitations of the UN as an institution created to mitigate threats from state actors rather than non-state actors. Lack of any international enforcement provisions rendered these resolutions ineffective. These resolutions though ambitious were devoid of any meaningful effect because, as has been argued many of the states in which violent non-state actors operate are either unable to effectively project force into the peripheral areas in which terrorist groups tend to locate and operate or are otherwise complicit in the activities of the violent non-state actors within their territories (Fitzalan 2009, 1-170). This legal and

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procedural deficit has, in turn, left states little choice but to resort to the unilateral use of force against VNSAs in direct violation of the established international political and legal system (Anderson 1994, 1-129)

Due to the inability of the current international political and legal system to adequately confront the threats posed by VNSAs, states that feel threatened by VNSAs or that have been directly attacked by them have resorted to the unilateral use of force in order to maintain their security (Anderson 1994, 1-129). The use of military force serves as an option because the violent non-state actors often 'lack a formalized political apparatus' with which to formally negotiate (Doyle 2011). Terrorists like al-Qaeda are stateless and hence have no homeland to retaliate against. While states' recourse to the unilateral use of force may seem natural or perhaps even desirable at first glance, the fact of the matter is that, when states unilaterally use force in response to VNSAs, they not only directly contravene their commitments to the UN Charter but also destabilize the entire –international system by sparking insecurity and fear among their fellow states (Doyle 2011). It amounts to overriding the powers of the UN Security Council conferred to it under Article 39 of the Charter to determine threats to peace and take suitable actions to deal with the same.

Consequences of unilateral military intervention

Any state's assertion of a right to unilaterally use force not only destabilizes the international system but also violates the Westphalian assumption of 'legal equality' upon which the state system is based. The most glaring example of such an assertion by a state in recent years is the so-called 'Bush Doctrine' proclaimed by President George W. Bush following the attacks of September 11, 2001. Writing in response to the Bush Administration's controversial doctrine of preventive action expressed in its 2002 National Security Strategy, Michael Doyle argues that:

> There is (a) problem with allowing one state to adopt a standard that is as subjective and open-ended as the Bush administration's identification of threats. Invoking the principle of sovereign equality, other states will claim an equivalent right to act on their equivalent arbitrary threat suspicions, which ultimately would be an invitation to chaos. Unless all states agree on what

constitutes a specific threat- and they almost never do – every state will be preempting every other state's preventive strikes (Doyle 2011).

Conclusion

Therefore, it is quite clear that the consequences of any one state's assertion of the right to use force unilaterally against any perceived threats to its national security are severely detrimental to the stability of the international system and to the increasingly fragile norm of sovereignty upon which it is based (Nevers 2007, 1-18). However, the fact remains that there currently exists no viable alternative for the states to deal with security threats from violent non-state actors. So, it is high time that the political leaders, experts and academics should incorporate suitable politico-legal measures within the existing international legal framework using which states would be able to effectively deal with the perceived threats from transnational terrorist networks without disturbing and destabilizing the international system as a whole.

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Book Review

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The Negotiations between the Plutocrats and the Margins

Sreerupa Saha

India's Power Elite: Class, Caste and a Cultural Revolution

Sanjaya Baru, Penguin Random House, India, 2021, pp xvii + 229, Rs. 699

The phrase 'Power Elite' in Sanjaya Baru's new book is reminiscent of C.Wright Mills's famous book *The Power Elite(1956)* and perhaps is a not so subtle insinuation to the prospective reader as to what Baru's book will have as its dominant trope. For any social science student, the concepts that entail what elite and power elite stand for can be gauged from the early writings of Vilfredo Pareto, Gaetano Mosca and Robert Michels. Power, according to Mills is attached to institutions and the elite formation is made possible only in the context of these vital institutions. Sanjaya Baru in his book *India's Power Elite* tried to capture different attributes and manifestations of elite power in India. This book covers three specific areas: the genesis of the elite, second how this particular class and category operate and thirdly, the changing nature of elites in India. The author's scholarship and span of study ranges from the post colonial to the contemporary.

This book tries to elaborate on the site at which class and caste attributes came into play. Most of the book was written during the lockdown in 2020. Baru's focus was to relate 'social distancing' with the practices of physical distancing of Brahmin priests and menstruating women. The tension between the Hindu and Muslim communities can be traced back from before the days of Partition Violence and India has seen multiple riots and communal disharmony over the last 70 years. It is not surprising therefore that one such religious congregation in Delhi would become the epicentre of religious bigotry and blame game leading to the further vilifying of the Muslim community in the so called Pan Hindu imagination. Baru's focus has also been on the issue of social privilege and class - the predicament of migrant workers and the middle class attitude of daily wage earners showed how lockdown affect different social classes incongruously.

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The three segments of the book give an idea about the economic and political context of power. A brief survey of relevant literature is carefully curated and the rest of the book follows a similar structure to that of Wright Mills book but its interrogation and introspection in the Indian context is what makes this book such a delightful read.

The book begins with the section titled A *Cultural Revolution?* under which two introductory chapters were placed –Bombard the Headquaters and Modi's Metaphors. The author begins along the lines of MaoZedong, trying to throw light on the significance of Mao's slogan 'bombard the headquarters' which was an exposition of intra-party power battles, while Modi's cultural revolution was 'vacate the headquarters', indication of Modi's desire to create new Bharat free of Congress rule i.e. the old political elite. During the course of the study, Baru comes to the conclusion that Indian *cultural revolution* is anti-elitist. It is the product of the arrival of the *vernacular middle class Indian.* The Congress party, under the leadership of Nehru-Gandhi family represents the *old elite* whose influence is attenuating. Narendra Modi has depicted Rahul Gandhi as a *son of the privileged* and projected himself *rebel with a cause*.(pg 24)

Baru has associated elitism in India with Lutyens' Delhi. The metaphor of Lutyens' Delhi is a portmanteau phrase that defines India's post-Independence ruling class. The irony of Modi's metaphor is an argument that was widely used by the left. It was left who divide between westernized India and the indigenous Bharat. Modi's metaphor is not only explained in class and caste terms but also in cultural terms. According to Baru the political transition in India can be viewed as a battle for influence between an old and a new power elite.(pg 37)

The segment *Digression into Concepts* comprises of two chapters -*Power and Elitism* and *Social Dominance and Political Power.* Baru tries to explain the concepts like power and elite with help of brief literature survey. Looking at the theoretical premise and backgrounds of what constitutes elitism and following on the foundations of the writings by C. Wright Mills, Antonio Gramsci, M.N. Srinivas to Andre Beteille, this book is a bird's eye view on the larger question of the construction of elites, the social classes they are drawn from, access to education and whether these theories can be applied to India. He opines that democratic politics and

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social change and the role of state in development have all combined to make political power, it is a far more key attribute of the power elite than traditional form of social dominance like caste.

The Wielders of Power – is the third segments of Baru's book, where he talks of the four pillars of the power elite in different write ups and concludes with the balance of power that India acquired through various transitions. The elite in India is a 'dynamic force', which undergoes constant changes with both upward and downward portability. Baru brings into play business, politics, land ownership, class and caste as a mutual interplay for spreading the subject of elite formation to elite functioning. As Kautilya viewed officials of the state as intermediates, Baru tries to compare it with competent associates who were selected not by merit but by the elite stamp they have. In one of the segment the author has described the government as 'plutocracy', the word and the description itself will wield power in the mind of the readers.

Transformation of elite in India was portrayed by the author in the *Shifts of Political Power*. He tries to show that it was on the political milieu (foundation of wealth accumulation shifts) that Modi's BJP has established its hegemonic dominance. The versatility of the power elite in India is what Baru tries to explain in this book and he did it in a detailed and comprehensive manner. He tries to give a picture of the decline of congress and the stir that was formed during the 2014 election. He explained its impact on the social and cultural panorama.

Baru is known as a columnist and policy analyst. He was the media advisor to former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, he tried his writing skill to weave politics, business and socio economic issues to analyse the intricacies that make up India's elite in this book and the outcome is brilliant. He as a media advisor segmented Delhi's media into four types - pure professional, pro government, pro opposition and corrupt. He tries to say that today politicians in power seek the servility of media and the solicitation of celebrities to draw public attention to their own power. (pg 203)

Baru tries to relate the elites with sociology; in the colonial era it was higher caste that wielded power. In past many non upper caste leaders captured power with the help of money but today there is lot of diversity. In the sphere where business and politics are interwoven, the Educated Babu's, who seem to be a

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remnant from the days of the colonial yore and British administrative machinery, are an important clan who drives the agenda. Media plays an important role as it communicates between public. The only area of contention which could have been probed and interrogated was the issue of the role of gender in the construction of power and the flow of it, but nonetheless the book seems to be an invaluable addition to the scholarship that has spawned since the new government has come and stayed in power since 2014.

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