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An Open Access Peer Reviewed International Journal
of Kolkata Centre for Studies

~ A UGC-CARE LISTED JOURNAL, E-ISSN: 2278-9758 ~

JULY 2019



Special Papers

Some Aspects of the Rights and Laws of Disabled Persons in India Since Independence

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I. Introduction¹

In this paper, I will present a brief historical survey of the growth of the recognition of the rights of persons with disabilities within Indian legal system. I will identify different sources of the recognition of their rights, such as the Indian Constitution, administrative orders, juridical verdicts, parliamentary enactments and international conventions. Besides such legal documents forming the sources of this paper, I will also use some secondary literature to make specific arguments. In addition, the paper will also draw upon the voices from within the disability sector wherein I have enjoyed first hand access. The survey would bring out an unmistakable expansion of the recognition of their rights, however, it is in no way a simple, straightforward progressive journey. At times, things have become even more complicated and challenging with the growth of the corpus of legal documents on the rights of persons with disabilities. Moreover, there are some burning questions, which were raised before the most recent enactment in 2016, which are still to be addressed.

However, in order to get a proper sense of the plight of persons with disabilities in terms of the enjoyment of equal citizenship, it is requisite to have some idea of their proportion in the total population for which these laws should be applied. Presently, owing to the differences of approach, there exist significant dissimilarities amongst various agencies and scholars in terms of their estimates for the prevalence of disability in India and participation of disabled children in formal education. In this section, I have argued that if we amend our perception and definition of disability in accordance with the internationally upheld perspective, it may considerably modify our understanding of the extent or rate of disability prevalence in India as well. This may also help us to understand afresh the participation or exclusion of disabled persons in public life and encourage us to modify our understanding of the reasons possibly responsible for keeping a large number of them out of it. We will discuss formal education as an example of the larger public sphere in different sections of this paper to show the problems faced by persons with disabilities in achieving equal status and participation.

Although the colonial census enumerated disabled persons from 1872 to 1931, the practice was discontinued thereafter. It was however revived in 1981—the first year of the international decade for

disabled—but again dropped in 1991 census owing to the perception of the failure to accumulate proper information.² However, thanks to the successful pressure exerted by disability rights groups, the Government agreed, albeit in the last minute, to enumerate disabled persons in the Census of 2001, which recorded 2.12 percent disability prevalence rate.³ According to this census, only 25.19 percent disabled persons lived in urban and 74.80 percent in the rural areas. It found that there were more disabled men as compared with disabled women (57.54 % against 42.45 %).

Third Disability Survey of NSSO (58 th round July-December 2002) reported even a lower figure of disability prevalence. According to this survey, 1.8 percent of total population had some or other kind of disability.⁴ The NSSO survey also documented that about 10.63 per cent of the disabled persons suffered from more than one type of disabilities.

At the same time, it is also true that the third disability survey of NSSO (2002) has recorded higher disability prevalence than the previous two surveys.⁵ Similarly, the census of India (2001) has also recorded higher disability prevalence if compared with the past reports. For instance, as distinct from the census of 2001, which has recorded 2.12 percent disability prevalence rate in India, the census of 1931 had recorded only 0.31 percent disability prevalence and the 1981 census recorded even a lower rate of 0.2 percent.⁶ Yet, if compared with many developed and some developing nations, the disability prevalence rate as recorded by the Indian census of 2001 appears to be considerably lower, such as USA (20 percent), UK (12 percent), Brazil (14.5 percent), Turkey (12.3 percent), and Nicaragua (10.1 percent).⁷

We can identify various possible reasons of this low recording of disability prevalence rate in India. For instance, it is possible that owing to the influence of the prevalent male perceptions of attractive female body, wherein disability becomes a kind of ignominy, and which thereby determines women's marital prospects, lesser number of people would have reported instances of the prevalence of physical impairments amongst women. Perhaps because of this low reporting of female disability that contrary to the global trend,⁸ the census of India (2001) recorded lower disability prevalence rate amongst women than men (0.90 % and 1.22 % respectively). Secondly, Government carried out the enumeration without adequately sensitizing the enumerators and surveyors about disability implying “difficulty in functioning”, “activity limitation” or “participation restriction”.⁹ Further, it did not make sufficient prior efforts to create necessary awareness amongst respondents so that they do not hide relevant information and understand accurately what kinds of restrictions may be called disability. In India, the general

perception of disability still revolves around obsolete medical criterion of the degree of physical impairment—a parameter already discredited by various nations and international agencies and scholars owing to its inherent limitations. In other words, it has been recognized that impairment data is not an adequate proxy for disability information.¹⁰ Therefore, countries reporting higher disability prevalence tend to collect their data through surveys and apply a measurement approach that records activity limitations and participation restrictions in addition to impairments.¹¹

Dr. E. Helander, then working for World Health Organization (WHO) had estimated in 1974 that 10 per cent of the world population was disabled.¹² Since then, WHO has been suggesting that about ten percent global population suffers from some or other kind of disability.¹³ In its recent report published in 2011, WHO has increased this global estimate to 15 percent. WHO does not treat disability merely as impairment, instead as a “difficulty in functioning”, “participation restriction”, or “activity limitation”.¹⁴ It has been further suggested by Dr. Helander (in his later book, *Prejudice and Dignity*), that even if we follow the WHO approach but minus the number of those disabled not requiring special rehabilitative support, then also the percentage of disabled population will be more than five percent of the total population.¹⁵

In India, according to R.S. Pandey and Lal Advani, about four per cent of the population can be said to be having ‘obvious’ disability of moderate, severe and profound degree. They suggest that if we also count the milder forms of disabilities, the number may well be around 20 per cent or so.¹⁶

Hence, it should be apparent from the above discussion that a very important factor determining our understanding of participation/exclusion of disabled children in formal education—the subject matter of the next section—would depend on how do we conceptualize and enumerate disability and measure its prevalence. For instance, as distinct from the above-cited official figures of disability prevalence in India amongst the school-going age group, roughly little less than 2 percent of the total population, Mukhopadhyay and Mani estimate 5 percent children with disability in the age group 5-14.¹⁷ Further, if we adopt internationally accepted definition and approach, the reporting of disability prevalence amongst children may increase manifold. For example, according to Cry, one out of every ten children in India is disabled.¹⁸

I found similar results in a survey (yet to be published) which I conducted in 2011 amongst the students enrolled in 10 th, 11 th, and 12 th classes in the schools of the Directorate of Education in Delhi, where

otherwise our objective was to study the cultural understanding of children and the nature of their peer group interaction. In this study, following the international approach of broadly defining disability, we also asked them if they face any physical impairments including enduring pain and ailment (if at all) which cause difficulties in their normal participation in the school on more or less regular basis? Out of the total students randomly selected for this sample, as per our preliminary calculations, 11.81 percent respondents clearly reported various kinds of physical impairments causing “participation restrictions” or “difficulty in functioning” and 1.57 percent respondents gave obscure responses.

In contrast to Indian Census or NSSO, the studies that record higher disability prevalence adhere to a much open definition of disability rather than completely relying on medical criteria of measuring the degree of impairment. Here the point is not whether census or NSSO officials examine medical certificate before classifying a person as disabled. Nonetheless, in a scenario marked by the lack of awareness amongst the enumerators as well as informants about a broader and inclusive definition of disability, census or sample surveys have underestimated disability prevalence in India. Hence, the available official data have limitations to provide the actual number of children who face disabilities while participating in school or the precise number of children who remain out of school owing to their disability.

II. Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Constitution of India

Since different parliamentary and governmental enactments draw their strength from the Indian Constitution, this should be treated as one important fountain source of the rights and entitlements of persons with disabilities in India. It is evident from the previous section that demographically and socially, persons with disabilities are a significant block. However, their status is not so clear in the Indian constitution and depends in a great deal on interpretations. For instance, as Sambhavana Organization (a voluntary, non-governmental and nonprofit making organization for persons with disabilities) alleged in one of their campaigns for constitutional amendment, it is indeed very sad and unfortunate that Constitution of India does not have a single visible provision voicing specifically the rights of Persons with Disabilities in unequivocal terms. On the contrary, many articles contain undue limitations.¹⁹ We can attribute this lacuna in Constitution as one factor responsible for the malady that prevails today in the country with regard to the legal rights of persons with disabilities. “For it is a settled law that while the

interpretation of enactments might vary according to the understanding of courts or amendment in the statutes but the basic structure of the Constitution will remain intact".²⁰

Sambhavana had proposed amendments in the Indian Constitution to the Constitution Review Commission Set-up by the NDA 1. Sambhavana even points out that there are many countries in the world, which have recognized the rights of disabled in their constitutions, for instance, Canada, South Africa and Eritrea.²¹

III. Specific Legal Instruments for Persons with Disabilities in India

Nonetheless, fundamental rights as enshrined in the Indian Constitution do not essentially exclude disabled persons and this is an important strength for their rights. Moreover, we have at least seven specific legal instruments for the protection of the rights and entitlements of persons with disabilities in India as listed below. Of these, five have been provided by the Indian Parliament, one by the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, and one by the international commitment of the Government of India.

(A.) Mental Health Act, 1987;

(B.) the Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992; and

(C.) The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) (PWD) Act, 1995

(D.) The National Trust for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act, 1999.

(E.) National Policy for Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, 2006.

(F.) United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), 2005, to which India has also ratified in 2007.

(G.) Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, Government of India, 2016.

IV. General Legal Instruments for Persons with Disabilities in India

Beside these specifically designed legislations, occasionally, some general enactments of legislative bodies also very explicitly recognize the rights of persons with disabilities, such as the right to education Act 2009, and particularly its amendment in 2010. Even otherwise, general enactments have important bearings on their rights, positive or negative depending upon the specificities of the act in question and its sensitivities or lack of it to the plight of disabled persons.

V. Official Memorandums, Orders, Circulars and Judgements

Similarly, the Official Memorandums (OMs) and circulars issued by different Government agencies are another source of the rights and entitlements of persons with disabilities. Though it should be possible to find these OMs and circulars of a prior date, the DOPT (Department of Personnel and Training) OM of 1982 is considered to be one of the oldest but very useful document in this regard. Another significant document is the DOPT OM of 2005, which is actually a compilation of different OMs and circulars prepared and issued time to time by it.

The OMs issued by the DOPT pertain to the issues of employment; the circulars issued by financial agencies, Ministry of Finance etc. and the banking agencies (such as the Reserve Bank of India and the Indian Banking Association) pertain to the matters concerning the participation of disabled persons in the economic life; and those issued by the MHRD and autonomous bodies like the UGC (University Grants Commission) to education. Similarly, MSJE (Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment) issues orders on miscellaneous other matters.

Beside these, judicial interpretations and verdicts form another very strong corpus of the recognition of the rights and entitlements of persons with disabilities. In fact, these have proved to be by and large the main driving force towards improvement since the enactment of the disability legislation of 1995 not only in terms of the implementation of its provisions, but also for covering more and more areas within its ambit through progressive interpretations. These judgements or verdicts could be again classified in two parts. First, the judgements of various courts. Second, the judgements passed by the office of the Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities, Government of India and its state level equivalents. These commissioner offices have the powers of the session court.

VI. The PWD Act of 1995

The disability legislations of 1987 and 1992 by the Indian parliament dealt with specific disabilities and specific issues, largely relating to education and training. However, the enactment of 1995 was much comprehensive. It specified seven conditions as disabilities: 1. blindness; 2. low vision; 3. leprosy-cured; 4. hearing impairment; 5. loco motor disability; 6. mental retardation; and 7. mental illness. It made special provisions for disabled persons with regard to their rehabilitation, and equal opportunities and participation in employment and education. However, over a period of time, many limitations of this Act were underlined by the disability writes scholars, activists and concerned officials. The Ministry for SJE also prepared a comprehensive list of required amendments in this Act. Hence, the need to amend the PWD Act of 1995 was voiced by the disability sector. Nonetheless, as we shall see shortly, the future course of events moved in a different direction.

VII. Harmonizing Indian Laws with UNCRPD and the Move Towards RPWD Act 2016

In 2007, India became a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), which requires signatory states to harmonize their internal laws and policies with the framework of this Convention. The UNCRPD marks a very important shift from medical model of understanding disability to the social model of comprehending it. Its framework is wider than any other previous legislation and therefore It covers almost every aspect of human life of a person with disability. It treats disability as one of the many diversities that exist in the world. It recognizes that specific physical/mental/visual impairments become disabilities only in interaction with built environment and prevalent social attitudes.²²

In response to the need for harmonization of Indian laws with the framework of the UNCRPD, the Government of India decided to bring about changes in its existing legal framework for persons with disabilities by once again focusing on specific laws legislated exclusively for them, instead of adopting a broad view of amending other laws over a longer period of time. In 2010, the government constituted an expert committee under Professor Sudha Kaul to draft a new Bill for persons with disabilities. This Committee submitted a Draft Bill on June 30, 2011. The draft was discussed in various consultations organized by the governments; and many DPOs (disability rights organizations) also gave their suggestions. The revised draft was although approved by the Cabinet, it could not be passed by the Parliament due to the dissolution of 15th Lok Sabha. It was subsequently passed by the 16 th Loksabha and the Rajyasabha in December 2015.²³

VIII. Issues in the RPWD Bill 2016

Of course, in general, the Bill was written in a more progressive language than the PWD Act of 1995. However, it belied hopes on many counts. Therefore, notwithstanding the fact that many leading disability rights organizations favored the enactment of this legislation perhaps as a contingent solution, it did not trigger the kind of euphoric response that we witnessed in 1995-96. It was thought by many sections within the disability sector that this 2016 legislation not merely frustrated the objective to give full effect to the UNCRPD, but even took away what was already available to them in the earlier Act of 1995 and other legal and juridical instruments.

Even though such reactions might be too sharp at times, however, on specific points, they were not completely off the mark either. This we shall elaborate below. Some of the major criticisms of the bill and the process of its promulgation (as was evident in many consultations) are being summarized below. However, the main focus will be on those areas where issues have been still unresolved even when the bill has become the act.

It was bemoaned that the bill was passed even without putting the final version in the public domain. Many important issues were left in the bill for the formulation of its rules by the bureaucracy. Moreover, a large number of judgments passed by the judiciary in the past had given progressive interpretations advancing the rights of disabled. It was therefore an anxiety that how this jurisprudence would find its place in the new Bill or in the rules to be promulgated for its implementation.

It was resented that the RPWD bill 2016 was passed in the Parliament without elaborate discussion, which is essential to avoid lacunas. Even many of those issues which were resolved in the previous drafts again dropped in the final bill. For instance, while the categories of disabilities were increased from seven to 21, it increased reservation only to 4% from earlier 3%, whilst 5% was provided in the earlier drafts.

Further, even though the Supreme Court had interpreted on 9th October 2013 in the matter of 'Union of India Vs. National Federation of Blind' that the section 33 of the PWD Act of 1995 provides reservation in promotion to employees with disabilities in all groups i.e. ABC & D. the bill relegates the right to reservation in promotion to a provision where it is left with the appropriate governments to issue instructions from time to time. Subsequently, the Hon'ble Supreme Court vide its judgment dated 10 Dec 2013 in a case titled as MCD Vs. Manoj Kumar Gupta upheld a judgment of Hon'ble Delhi High court which declared that Section 33 of the Disabilities Act 1995 provided for reservation in promotion for

persons with disabilities in Groups A and B also. Again, in the Writ Petition (Civil) No. 521/2008 titled Rajeev Kumar Gupta and Others Versus Union of India and Others court held that reservation in promotion has to be given in Groups A & B posts under section 33.

The bill did not provide any provisions for women and children with disabilities. The bill lacks any serious engagement on the question of protecting the labour and economic rights of disabled persons employed in the private sector. The bill was also criticized for the lack of Punitive Action in its provisions against the violators except only a fine of Rs 10,000 to Rs 5 lakh.

Another major resentment was that the bill instituted “income ceiling” for provisions of aids & appliances, medicine & diagnostic services & corrective surgery free of cost and for the purpose of disability pension. Moreover, it retained the safeguard of “within the limit of its (state’s) economic capacity & development”.

Yet another critique was that the extension of time limit for making the building accessible on case to case basis as given in section 44 intended to delay accessibility for an indefinite period.

Ninth, another major hue and cry was against the effort to reduce the powers of disability commissioners. Although the bill retains the disability commissions in the center and the state, it did not make their power binding on agencies violating the provisions of the act.

Tenth, the educational provisions as laid down in the bill were found severely inadequate to meet the crisis. Let us see this issue in somewhat more details, because education is otherwise generally regarded as the panacea for the development and exercise of the rights of persons with disabilities. No doubt, the enrollment of disabled children in elementary education (as per the DISE statistics compiled by the NUEPA) has increased from 50 percent in 2001 to about 74 percent by 2009, however, we also find that their enrolment in upper primary education (6th to 8th standards) is merely 34.80 percent of their enrollment in primary education. It means that about 65.20 percent disabled children enrolled in primary education do not reach upper primary level.

We can further understand the failure of school education to retain and promote disabled children with the example of Delhi University, which has about 82 affiliated colleges for undergraduate studies where roughly 1500 disabled students should be every year admitted under three percent reservation quota. However, notwithstanding the fact that Delhi University is a premier central university of national

stature—which otherwise attracts students from all over the country and which claims to provide somewhat better facilities for disabled students—only 503 disabled candidates have been applying for admission over last many years. Even the extra ordinary measures taken by the Equal Opportunity Cell (EOC), University of Delhi (during last few years) to contact schools and provide all possible assistance for the admission of disabled children in undergraduate courses and the intervention on this issue by various Disabled Persons Organizations (DPOs) have not transformed this Situation. It is in this backdrop that we now turn to the provisions laid down in the RPWD Bill 2016 with regard to inclusive education.

(A.) Section 16, subsection (I) provides that disabled children will be admitted by all educational institutions without discrimination and the latter shall provide them education and opportunities for sports and recreation activities equally with others. However, this section, or other sections in this chapter nowhere provide for reservation of disabled children within the EWS category quota in admission in private schools. It should be read with the provisions contained in the chapter dealing with reservation and if required necessary amendments or appropriate cognizance should be taken whilst formulating the rules. It is pertinent to point out here that the RTE Amendment Act 2010 included children with disabilities under the definition of disadvantaged children.

(B.) Subsection (II) of Section 16 of course directs educational institutions to make building, campus and various facilities accessible for disabled. However, it provides No deadline for educational institutions to make their campuses and buildings accessible. Unfortunately, this Act makes no attempt to link the requirement of accessibility with the recognition status of educational institutions. It is all the more regrettable, because this provision is otherwise already in existence within an earlier legislation, namely in the norms annexed with the RTE Act (2009). There, the barrier free environment is made one of the conditions of recognition of educational institutions under the Act. It is a different matter that the same continues to be violated till date. In fact, for this reason of non-compliance, the RPWD Act 2016 could have made it stricter by proposing some effective monitoring mechanism. Moreover, the present RPWD Act 2016 does not present any blueprint or guidelines about the sharing or incentivizing the financial expenditure to be incurred by private institutions to make their premises accessible. It is important, because now these private educational institutions have been brought under the definition of establishment; and also because the chapter on education includes not only the institutions funded by the Government but also those which are recognized by it. Private educational institutions will be covered thus under the latter term i.e. recognized. If budgetary aspects not specified, and if private institutions are

made to comply, they might attempt to transfer this cost on the shoulders of other parents. This might not be so good for mutual social and peer relations between disabled and non-disabled.

(C.) The subsection (V) of Section 16 directs educational institutions to ensure that the education to persons who are blind or deaf or both is imparted in the most appropriate languages and modes and means of communication. An appropriate reading of this provision should cover Braille, e-technology, and Sign language, and any other method that might be devised in future to attain the objective of inclusive education of disabled in full. However, the language of this Subsection has been kept completely abstract without including these exemplary means and modes of communication, such as Braille, Sign Language and E-technology. These have not been explicitly stated here. If this language is not improved, it might become source of confusion. More importantly, improvement in language will send a strong message which is essential to break the inertia that has been in existence over last twenty years. The abstract nature of this subsection is additionally surprising, because it could not have been simply an omission or the result of ignorance, as the PWD Act of 1995 as well as the UNCRPD state these in clear terms. Of course, in order to retain the field open for additional facilities, the word etc could have been inserted after specifying these examples. In fact, this argument of bureaucratic intention to maintain vagueness is further corroborated by the fact that the same chapter elsewhere, in Subsection (F) of Section 17, directs The appropriate Government and the local authorities to promote the use of appropriate augmentative and alternative modes including means and formats of communication, including these exemplary means and modes of communication such as Braille and sign language. This makes it clear that in the section dealing explicitly with educational institutions, the Government wants to retain existing confusion wherein the state and local authorities smartly end up appointing at best the special educators at cluster level instead of appointing them in every school.

(D.) Of course, Subsection (VIII) of Section 16 provides for transportation facilities to the children with disabilities and also the attendant of the children with disabilities having high support needs. However, neither it states that these facilities will be provided to disabled children free of cost nor it clarifies that these facilities will be provided to them up to which age. Further, it does not clarify that in case of private or Aided institutions, who will reimburse this cost if we suppose that disabled students are not to be charged for it? It is important to underline the omission of the proviso of free of cost and upper age limit in this subsection pertaining to educational institutions, because elsewhere within the same chapter, in regard to other facilities, the appropriate Government and the local authorities have been explicitly

directed under Subsection (G) of Section 17 “to provide books, other learning materials and appropriate assistive devices to students with benchmark disabilities free of cost up to the age of eighteen years”.

(E.) In fact, the above-mentioned provision as laid down in Subsection (G) of Section 17 is also dissatisfactory as it enshrines upon the appropriate Government and the local authorities the responsibility “to provide books, other learning materials and appropriate assistive devices to students with benchmark disabilities free of cost up to the age of eighteen”. It means that providing these facilities free of cost to disabled for attaining higher education, where they reach and continue beyond the age of 18 is not the responsibility of the appropriate Government and the local authorities as the RPWD Act 2016 cleverly shirks this liability entirely on the shoulders of the educational institutions.

(F.) The aspects of the training of teachers and other resource persons for children with disabilities have been dealt under Subsections (B.) to (E.) of Section 17. It does talk about training all teachers and staff in disability, but it does not mention any target date.

(G.) The entire chapter on education makes no mention of institutions of special education. The focus on inclusive education is indeed worth welcoming. However, given the current level of research and scholarship as well as the existing scenario, we cannot completely ignore the aspect of special education. Their problems should have been addressed and legal remedies should have been provided.

(H.) Appropriate relaxations in copy Right rules for vision impaired readers is an important issue closely linked to their education. Many significant developments are taking place on the international platform in this regard. However, nothing on this count is mentioned here.

(I.) Unlike earlier drafts, the RPWD act 2016 has not mentioned anything about home-based education. This might appear in the first instance a good sign as the proposed provisions in the earlier drafts of the RPWD Act for home-based education were criticized. However, at the same time, it does not mean that the dangers of home-based education are completely done away with, because this act nowhere unequivocally guarantees full time regular education for all disabled children. Moreover, the RTE Amendment Act 2010 has already provided for home-based education. I have elsewhere discussed the dangers of home-based education in detail.²⁴ Hence, it is highly required that the Government clearly specifies under the rules or through amendments in relevant legislations that the home based education model will be pursued under rarest of rare conditions of extreme disability in interaction with external

environment; and to the extent possible, it would be provided only as a transitional stage, instead of as a regular substitution for inclusive education.

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Impact of Coalition Politics on Federal Institutions - The Indian Experience

Waheed Mansoor and Neelam Panday

Abstract

India, having adopted a parliamentary political structure of government within a federal system, has constitutionally provided for parliamentary structures at both the Centre and in the States. The same principles and norms of parliamentary practice are applied at both levels substantially. Innovations experimented and successfully operated at the Centre or in anyone of the States may be accepted as models or precedents by the rest whenever found useful. It is mostly the Westminster model of parliamentary structures that the Indian Constitution has adopted for both the Central and State governments. However, the Indian political culture is different from that of the UK. The structures have had to be" functionally modified. India being a vast subcontinent with many culturally and ethnically diverse groups, political behaviour within the country, has proved to be different from region to region or State to State. Ethnic loyalties and cultural diversities have tended to produce political behaviours different from each other but within the same constitutional and legal framework. Therefore although the legal framework is uniform throughout the country, political behaviour and practices tend to bedifferent.

Keywords: state; politics; coalition politic; federal system; Indian experience; Analysis.

Introduction

The constitutional system envisages a majoritarian form of parliamentary government in India at the Centre and the States; more or less like the British. However, the political reality has brought about multiple parties resulting in governments of party coalitions or alliances. The Congress party emerging from the national movement and seeking to represent a national consensus on political programmes and ideology wished to provide governments for the Centre and all the States for all time to come. However, the majoritarian single-party governments became an impossibility with the breakdown of the Congress and with the inability of the other parties to provide a single-party alternative. Although the Congress party has shown an unwillingness to share power with other parties at the Central Government, it has permitted its State units to do so and thus participated in coalition governments early in the fifties. The

year 1967 marked a watershed in Indian politics as about eight States had formed non-Congress coalition governments. The Congress' dominance in Indian politics broke in several States, and the party had to sit in the Opposition. Although Congress regain power in some of these States, its popularity throughout the country was further eroded. The Congress lost power at the Centre within a few years, and although it could come back in full glory, it was doomed to lose it again. It lost control of more States in succeeding years so much, so there were non-Congress coalition governments in fourteen States in 1997. The number of states that opted for coalition governments was increasing from 1967, but all States were not steady in the path of coalitions in this period. States like Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh went back to Congress rule, while new States embarked on coalition experiment. Some states like Orissa, Maharashtra, Punjab, Bihar and Goa went back and forth between single-party rule and coalition rule. The steady decline of the Congress and the absence of another big party to take its place either at the Centre or in the States, in general, has brought the coalition system to stay as a dominant mode at the end of the 1990. The coalitional experience within the framework of Westminster model parliamentary structures, based on the present study, may be summed up as follows :

- (i) Coalition governments in a parliamentary system are not necessarily unstable. Stability depends on several factors.
- (ii) Coalition politics compel deviations and innovations in the parliamentary model to suit the needs of the coalition system.
- (iii) The areas wherein coalition politics have made a noticeable impact are broadly the Executive, the Legislature and the Party system.

Early writers used to presume that coalition politics undoubtedly led to short-lived governments, and they preferred statistics to prove the same. Their treatises failed to analyse the multi-dimensional causes involved and tended to make the inferences biased. E. Sreedharan points out four sets of factors that affect the stability of coalition governments¹

First, the regime-level attributes or the institutional structures within which coalitions are formed. These include the fragmented character of the parties, the adequate number of parties, the degree of ideological polarization, the opposition's access to policy influence, the legal provision for elections in case of a government collapse and the provision for a constructive noton audience vote as well as for a formal confidence vote after vestiture.

Second, the attributes of the coalition itself, such as the majority or minority status of the coalition, the number of parties in the coalition, its ideological cohesiveness.

Third, the nature of the ideological spectrum, that is, whether the coalition is ideologically single-polar, bi-polar or multi-polar.

Fourth, the incidence of any political event that creates diverging reactions among members of the coalition. Gregory M. Luebbert points to the kind of compromise reached between partners based on their respective policy profiles as the key to stability²

The above observations based on Western theories are presumed to be universalistic in character and application. However, “the Indian society and politics do not fit into the Western framework. In the Indian situation, the present study leads to certain inferences which may be listed as follows :

Coalitions cut across Left-Right, communal-secular national-regional divisions with the chief pursuit of office as the only reality.

The coalition between a principle party and secondary parties tends to be stable.

Among such coalitions, if the anchor party commands a majority by itself as in it is likely to be stabler. A coalition of mutually dependent parties (that is, no party having a majority on its own) also is likely to be durable. Of the two categories mentioned, the former is likely to be stabler.

Minority coalitions, supported by external support, whether conditionally or unconditionally, are not likely to be stable.

The anchor party tends to make more than proportionate concessions to the smaller ones who gain more than proportionately to their strength.

Factions within the parties, particularly the anchor party. Threaten the stability of the coalition.

Factional splits are adjusted to be accommodative in the pursuit of office-seeking interest.

Surplus majority or large size coalitions are stabler than minimal-winning coalitions.

Political future of Indian States vary, and some are more conducive to stable coalition politics than the others.

The impact made on the Executive, the Legislature and the party System may be analysed separately concerning each area and the consequences assessed.

The Executive

The three dimensions of the parliamentary executive that are influenced by coalition politics are Cabinet formation, Cabinet management and the nature of the Cabinet. The institutional and legal, the political and personal dimensions of the Cabinet system get interlinked with the two fundamental processes of the parliamentary executive, viz. Cabinet formation and Cabinet management. The majoritarian Cabinet and the coalition Cabinet, being different as regards the above three dimensions, tend to produce different impacts on the two processes and their results. The Constitution envisages, as already pointed out, a majoritarian government of the British model and provides for a parliamentary government. Article 74 and Article 163 of Indian Constitution states that there shall be a Council of Ministers headed by Prime Minister to aid and advise the President of India in the exercise of his functions. According to the parliamentary practice, the leader of the majority party in the Parliament becomes the Prime Minister and he, in turn, selects his colleagues in the Council of Ministers.

In coalition politics, the leader of the leading party is usually elected as the leader of the parliamentary party of the coalition, but he shall be acceptable to the allies as well. Sometimes the leader of a minority party may be chosen by the coalition to head the Cabinet. The general principle is that the head of the Cabinet, whatever the degree of standing he has in his own Party, shall be acceptable to all partners of the coalition whose Will may turn out decisive in the matter of electing the Prime Minister. The occasion for electing the Prime Minister as the whole election process is centred around the leader of the elected party or the leader of the alliance of parties. However, in a coalition set up the post-election situation can upset the earlier arrangements.

As regards the appointment of the council of Ministers, Article 75(1) and Article 164(1) of the Constitution say that there shall be a Prime minister appointed by the president and that the other Ministers shall be appointed by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister. The traditional practice

is that the Prime Minister will choose the Ministers by paying due weight to various factors to be considered. In coalition politics in India, the Ministers are chosen by the respective parties themselves, and the Prime Minister may not have a say in normal circumstances. This situation further weakens the position of the Prime Minister in relation to his party, mainly if it is ridden with factionalism. There are instances of Prime Ministers being dictated to by factions in their party about appointing some members as Ministers or even about avoiding the appointment of somebody whom they do not like to be with them in the Cabinet. This is possible in a single-party government also, but in a multi-party government, the Prime Minister is comparatively weaker. The coalition is a bargaining process between the partners, and the process is on-going from start to finish. The representation of the partners in the Ministry, the allocation of proportionate seats and the distribution of portfolios among them often occasion serious bargaining. It is admissible if the major parties get a more significant share as they can be supposed to have a more significant stake in election campaigns and a greater responsibility in administration. However, it often happens in India that the smaller parties plead for a disproportionately larger pay off in terms of the number and importance of positions, and they often succeed in winning them. This is particularly so when the leading party is dependent on the minor parties for the maintenance of the coalition. The minor partners seem to presume that it becomes the responsibility of the leading party to preserve the coalition, and they behave in irresponsible ways very often. So to say, the leading party becomes the loser in the bargaining game as it has to give up a part of its due share in order to satisfy the bullying partners. It must be surprising that in some coalitions, all MLAs of a partner party are made Ministers in order to prop up the Ministry. As regards the distribution of portfolios there is always a fight for 'plum posts' like finance, External Affairs, Railways and Defence at the Centre and for similar prestigious portfolios.

Such distribution can be arranged to the satisfaction of all parties only by the process of negotiation and compromise. Compromise can be arrived at through inter-party discussions or discussions in the coordination committees. Issues like distribution of portfolios can be settled most effectively by coordination committees. Any discontentment left in this regard may crop up again and create new crises now and then which may even lead to the destruction of the coalition. Hence the distribution of portfolios is a very delicate task for the Prime Minister in a coalition demanding intelligent handling. The demand for more significant representation and better portfolios is likely to create funny situations as regards the size of the Cabinet. The number of Ministers may go on increasing as the 'accommodating spirit' waxes,

and one may wonder if a developing country like India can afford to have so many Ministers to govern them.

Based on the recommendation of the Karan Singh Committee (1992), it was generally accepted that ministerial positions should not exceed one-tenth of the strength of the lower house concerned. However, this has been violated by Chief Ministers like Kalyan Singh of UP and Rabri Devi of Bihar who offered to make Ministers of all defectors in order to Win their support to prop up the Ministry.³ Members of the Lok Tantrik Congress party who formed the new party after crossing floor from the Congress(I) were all Ministers in Kalyan Singh's illusory and later in R.P. Gupta's Ministry. Some of them had Only minor portfolios or had no portfolios at all. Once the Council of Ministers is formed, there arises the Problem of coordinating them and pulling them together. As "they belong to different political parties, the Ministers may have different or even contradictory opinions, interests and visions. The foremost characteristic of a coalition Ministry is the absence of political homogeneity. As such, the management of ministerial colleagues and monitoring of their activities call for extraordinary competence and patience on the part of the Prime Minister.

The Cabinet system of UK has historically evolved the character of collective responsibility. The Indian Constitution has legalised this character in Article 75(3) and Article 164(2) which state that the Council of Ministers shall be collectively responsible to the Lower House. 'Collective responsibility' implies that all Ministers hold themselves responsible for all decisions of the Cabinet and that, once a decision is taken by the Cabinet, each Minister has the obligation to defend it publicly. Even if someone has a dissent with the collective decision, the dissenting view is expected to be suppressed or kept in reserve for the time. In recent times the country has witnessed the PMK and MDMK ministers of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government openly dissenting with the Central Cabinet's collective stand on Sri Lanka.⁴ Hence the concept of collective responsibility in its classical form needs to be made flexible in the coalitional structure of government. Political homogeneity being the first victim of coalition governments, an agreement to accommodate dissent becomes inevitable. In majoritarian governments there is no institution other than the Cabinet to formulate policies and co-ordinate Ministries or departments of government. The party machinery exercises control over the Prime Minister and other Ministers directly. The idea of an all-party national government was suggested time and again, since 1989, in the context of a single-party failing to get the majority in the Lok Sabha.⁵ One of the suggestions envisaged was the election of the Prime Minister by the Lok Sabha using the single transferable vote from among candidates (not necessarily members of Parliament) who would secure the support of at least 100 Lok Sabha

members. The Council of Ministers would consist of representatives of all parties in proportion to their strength in the House. A common minimum programme acceptable to all or most parties should be placed before both houses of Parliament and approved. A no-confidence motion passed against the government should be active only after the Election of an alternative Prime Minister. Other suggestions included:

- (i) the Prime Minister be elected by the Lok Sabha and shall resign only when an alternative leader is chosen;
- (ii) the Prime Minister be elected by 2/3rd majority of the Lok Sabha;
- (iii) the Prime Minister be elected by a majority of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha;
- (iv) the Prime Minister to elect by a majority of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha and be removed only by a 2/3rd majority in both houses; and
- (v) the Prime Minister be elected by a simple majority of the Lok Sabha and a no-confidence motion passed by 2/3rd majority of the Lok Sabha.

The coalition is the skilful execution of a tight-rope balancing, involving a compromise between two or more distant or even contrary standpoints. The deciding factor may be the payoffs emerging out of the bargaining process. Since each partner wants to take more for itself and give less to the other partners in the coalition, the centrally located parties are at an ' advantage in local bargaining.⁶ It may theoretically be argued that larger parties possess better bargaining power because of their conspicuous presence and leadership status.⁷ However, this is not always proved in practice, and in the Indian situation, smaller parties are found to be enjoying a disproportionately larger share in the arrangements. The leading party in the ruling coalition is often forced to part with its favourite choice to satisfy the smaller parties.

The present system of arrangements at the Centre, the BJP is at a disadvantage when compared to the other partners of the coalition. Out of the eleven committee Chairmen of the Lok Sabha, the BJP has only one whereas the Congress(I), the leading party of the opposition, has two. Moreover, out of six Rajya Sabha Committees, the BJP has two Chairmen and the Congress (I) two. In parliamentary delegations, the minor partners get more than the proportionate number of representatives. It may also be noted that in the seating arrangements of the Lok Sabha, the BJP does not have a proportionate number of seats in the front row of the chamber. It is sometimes observed that two political parties representing the same social

division or having the same ideological roots may find it more difficult to form an alliance or coalition than for two parties representing different social bases.⁸ Since the objective of the partners is to maximise their position and power within the government, it is presumed that they behave in a rational manner. But the bargaining game is not always as rational as it is presumed to be and as such, the durability of the coalition could be in jeopardy.

The Legislature

Structurally, coalition politics has not brought about any change in the Parliament or State legislatures. The parliamentary functionaries remain the same, and the rules of procedure and conduct of business also do not change. There are as many parliamentary parties and whips as there are political parties represented, and there will be a joint parliamentary party for the whole alliance, whether ruling or in opposition. Committees will be constituted and monitored under the same norms as they exist in parliamentary practices. Bills can be passed if the required majority is forthcoming as per rules. Constitutional amendments may be severely hampered or pushed back when it becomes challenging to muster two-third majority without the backing of the opposition. When the coalition gains a two-thirds majority on its own, it was still the burden of carrying all the coalition partners with it. In a parliamentary system of government, it was the Parliament that originated as the centre of power, the Cabinet being dependent on and responsible to the Parliament. As time lapsed, the Cabinet appropriated political power and importance, and the governmental system came to be described “Cabinet dictatorship”. The growth of the importance of the Prime Minister, centralisation of power in his hands and the consequent subjugation of the party and the ministers to the Prime Minister justified the sobriquet of “Prime Ministerial” government for the same parliamentary system. However, the changes were indicative of the trends in the paradigm shift of legislature-executive relationship in the parliamentary system. The emergence of coalition politics and the consequent weakening of the Prime Ministerial position tended to effect a change in the role of the Parliament about the executive. The coalition partners, being participants in the government, are supposed to provide it solidity and be collectively responsible for its performance. However, being different in origin and character, they often make for dissent and mutual criticism. Thus a coalition government has also a built-in mechanism for mutual checks and balances. However, the actual performance of coalitions deviates from the idealistic vision of smooth collaboration and peaceful dissent. They sometimes break into Open fights on the floor of the house and outside. Any observer of the

conduct of business in the Lok Sabha will be shocked by the behavioural contrast of the members. During the Congress regime and the post-Congress Coalition period, The incidence of unruly behaviour in both houses of Parliament has been more frequent during the latter, and the Speaker has been compelled to convene meetings of parliamentary party leaders more often than before to settle quarrels. This points to the absence of a centralised parliamentary party organisation in a coalition system when contrasted to a single-party majority.

From a sociological point of view, this phenomenon is reflective of a general decline in the elitist character of the people's representatives. Legislators speak in the language of the masses and behave in style understandable to them. They come from the grassroots and represent the popular culture, unlike the legislators of the fifties and sixties who represented a higher-level culture. Moreover, with many parties represented in the Parliament, the MPs feel themselves closer to their respective party chiefs and immediately respond to them unlike in the days of the Congress dominance system. The party chiefs behave like feudal lords and demand total loyalty from their legislators. The latter is dependent on their leaders for their career and future political existence. Today the legislators' freedom of speech in the legislature is restrained by the party leadership even though no legal provision provides for it.⁹ The Opposition may also be a coalition as in Kerala, or it may consist of disunited single parties or groups of parties as in West Bengal or at the Centre. In either case, one primary function of the Opposition appears to be to entice the ruling coalition partners into their fold, not only to pull down the government but to strengthen their ranks. So the Opposition is never satisfied with attacking the policies of the government as in an orderly parliamentary system, but it is always alert on using other means for overthrowing the ruling coalition. Both sides being coalitions, it may be presumed that they are easily susceptible to efforts to make wedges in their blocs. Relatively, the Opposition of the coalition system at the Centre has become more potent than that of the earlier-Congress system.

The Party System

Coalition politics centres around political parties as it involves games played by the latter to gain the maximum pay off. It becomes relevant when no single-party can transfer power on its own. In such circumstances, one party adjoins another one or more parties to fight the elections and to form a government. The coalition is an alliance of parties that decide to work together in the election process or

after the elections and share power in running the government. Coalitions or party alliances could be pre-election or post-election phenomena. Many parties may cluster together, pool their resources and work jointly to maximise their gain by defeating counterparts in the election process. If there is a one alliance fighting against individualised rival parties, the prospect of the alliance winning more seats as compared to its rivals is stronger. If two equally strong accords are pitted against each other, the effect will be that of a healthy two-party system, either of them getting a majority to form the government. If more than two alliances compete, the result will be likewise in favour of one of them or no one at all, with no alliance being able to capture a winning majority. The only possible solution will be a further coalition of two or more alliances. 1. Single alliance vs Disunited parties 2. First alliance vs Second alliance 3. First alliance vs Second alliance vs Third alliance. According to M. Laver, political parties make policy packages as storefronts to attract voters, and the leaders forget them once the election won. Anthony Downs said that parties formulate policies in order to win elections rather than win elections to formulate policies. However, that a well-drawn-out policy and a commitment to implement the same will help maintain lengthy credibility of the party or faction of parties is nowhere doubted. When 'like-minded parties' or parties with similar ideological goals make a coalition, they make a joint programme that may not have serious setbacks. Serious problems occur when ideologically polarised parties work together. The common minimum programme becoming a joint manifesto for all parties to join that coalition. With a perspective to accommodating the ideologically distant parties, many ideological or 'fundamentalist' sacrifices will have to be made by the leading parties. Long-standing coalitions will recognise the importance of CMPs and prepare them sufficiently early to face the elections.

According to Ajay K. Mehra, Deve Gowda government had developed a Common Minimum Programme (CMP) which was thereof not only on the manifestos of the coalition partners but incorporated the political agenda of those parties which had not taken part in the government."5 The common minimum programme (CMP) was a broad statement of approaches to handle India's problems. The BJP-led coalition of 1998 elections debated of framing a Common Minimum Programme. After the elections they set-up a drafting committee with George Fernandes as the convener for the purpose. The document, called the National Agenda and prepared by Govindacharya, a General Secretary of the BJP, under direct inputs from Vajpayee, Advani and Fernandes, sought to avoid the politics of confrontation and usher in an epoch of national reconciliation and consensus. The BJP perceived the growing returns coming from appearing moderate and accommodating. The BJP changed its stance on some contentious issues like the reconstruction of the Ram Temple at Ayodhya, the prelude of a Uniform Civil Code, the deletion of

Article 370 which gave special status to the Jammu and Kashmir State. These items were dropped from the common minimum programme (CMP) of the coalition government. This was a serious setback for the BJP which had tried to build the party organisation on this plank.

Moreover, the AIADMK, which was an associate in the election disapproved support to the BJP to establish the government until some of its unreasonable demands were incorporated into the agenda. The AIADMK leader Jayalalitha had put forth five conditions :

dismissal of ' DMK government in Tamil Nadu;

Central Finance Ministry to go to Subramanian Swamy;

implementation of Cauvery Tribunal Award immediately;

making Tamil an official language; and

allowing states to have their own reservation policy.

She also wanted to be put on the agenda a demand for raising the height of the Periyar dam in Kerala to 150 feet. In such circumstances, the process of preparing the CMP could be an impossible task. However, preparation of the CMP is also a strategy of making the partners acceptable to each other.

In the 1998 Lok Sabha elections the United Front (UF) brought out a common minimum programme (CMP) and a joint statement policy on behalf of its partners, but the Left parties issued a separate manifesto highlighting their differences with the United Front. Personality-based factions and parties are a known phenomenon of the Indian political scene. This provides personality clash as a most common cause for party splits, and in such cases, any alliance between two newly emerging personality-centred parties became an impossibility, despite policy closeness or similarity of social base. Bitter hostility between the rival leaders and their followers may foreclose a meeting point, as in the cases of Karunanidhi vs Jayalalitha, Laloo Prasad Yadav vs Ram Vilas Paswan and Ramakrishna Hegde vs. Deve Gowda. However, a common enemy or the lure of office may bring them together into the same coalition or another coalition after a lapse of time. Party coalitions in India always try to develop their base by attracting more parties than required for keeping themselves in power. In other words, large-sized coalitions are significant in the Indian situation. Following the rule of the Indian National Congress in accommodating a large number of groups and interests, the party coalitions tend to produce themselves

'Maha-coalitions' for winning the most significant number of seats for themselves and demote the opposition to nil. So, the ruling coalition's seem to be on a constant search to pick and swallow from the opposition. At the Centre, a government can function effectively only if it is assured of a two-third majority to make constitutional amendments possible although the general tendency is to accommodate large-sized coalitions. This is a characteristic reactive of the political culture of the country.

Another phenomenon in Indian politics is the nonparticipating external support that some parties prefer to offer in order to sustain up a party or coalition of parties in power without making a commitment to share the responsibilities of government. Parties think ahead about the aftermath of their participation as regards the forthcoming elections to Parliament And if they find the payoffs from immediate power is lesser than the pay up in store for them.¹⁰ Riker and Laver do not consider policy even as an instrument in electoral politics and coalition formation.¹¹ Anthony Downs said that parties formulate policies in order to win elections rather than win elections to formulate policies.¹² This has been the policy of TDP and Trinamool Congress towards the NDA government. However, TDP was prepared to have minimal participation by accepting the Speakership of Lok Sabha. This policy may also result from other covert considerations of the party leader, such as striking the growth of rival members in the party by blocking their entry into power positions. This further makes them feel free to declare their independence of the regime at slight provocations.

Conclusion

The political culture of coalitional politics linkage in the Indian situation is clear from the observations made above. What we can call the Indian political culture is amalgamated of mixed, State-based political cultures further different by ethnocentric factors and evolutionary phases. The coalitional setup is a political power relationship evolved from an all-inclusive, umbrella organisation of the Congress party and shaped by historical imperatives like the declining one-party dominance and Marxian change of attitude towards parliamentary palliative. However, the common cultural elements may contribute to the formation of stable political arrangements in most States of the country, if not in all.

Finally, the dependence of coalition politics on the electoral system needs to be examined. Maurice Duverger evolved a three-point thesis, from his analysis of European electoral politics, regarding proportional representation and the party system. The thesis included': (i) that proportional representation tends to lead to the formation of many independent parties; (ii) that the two-ballot majority system tends

to lead to the formation of many parties that are allied with each other; and (iii) that the plurality rule tends to produce a two-party system.¹³ Duverger's law has been examined at length, stimulating a whole body of research into the political consequences of electoral systems. However, the impact of the plurality rule in the Indian situation has not been unidimensional, or even bi-dimensional is complicated by several factors such as ethnic divisions, economic cleavages and size of constituencies. The Italian experience of Proportional Representation compelled the .revision of the electoral law in 1993, introducing plurality rule in three-quarters of the seats for Senate and Chamber of Deputies while retaining proportionality for the other part.¹⁴ The first elections held in 1994 after the adoption of the new law witnessed a trend towards three alliances Left, Right and Centre.

However, in contrast to Britain and the US, the Left and the Right were not unitarian political parties but loose alliances of very different parties. The plurality system's seatvote disproportionality reinforces the stability of coalitions based on compromises. Disunity would mean to them vote disaggregation and excessive loss of votes. Hence it follows that Duverger's thesis that the plurality rule system would tend to produce a two-party system may partially be established in the situation wherein the opportunistic phase is crossed over.

Acknowledgement

I am sincerely thankful to my guide, Dr Neelam Panday, Associate professor, Dept of political science and public administration, Annamalai University, Tamil Nadu, for helping in this research paper. Without her, it would not have been possible. The discussion we did, helped in making a better understanding of the topic, and she also helped in the collection of material. My sincere thanks to my friends who helped me in the discussion process for making this research paper.

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Islam in Local Context: An Ethnographic Study of Ghaus-e-Bangala Shrine (India)

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Abstract

In India, and many other parts of the world, a long and complex debate has persisted regarding the nature of Islam. The debate is mainly centered on making a distinction between Islam as it appears in the form of text and Islam as practiced in the local context, also known as lived Islam. The paper attempts to locate the discourse surrounding the validity of the two forms of Islam. The site chosen for the fieldwork is the shrine of Ghaus-e-Bangala, located in the town of Raniganj in West Bengal, India. It is a descriptive account of the shrine and the rituals associated with it.

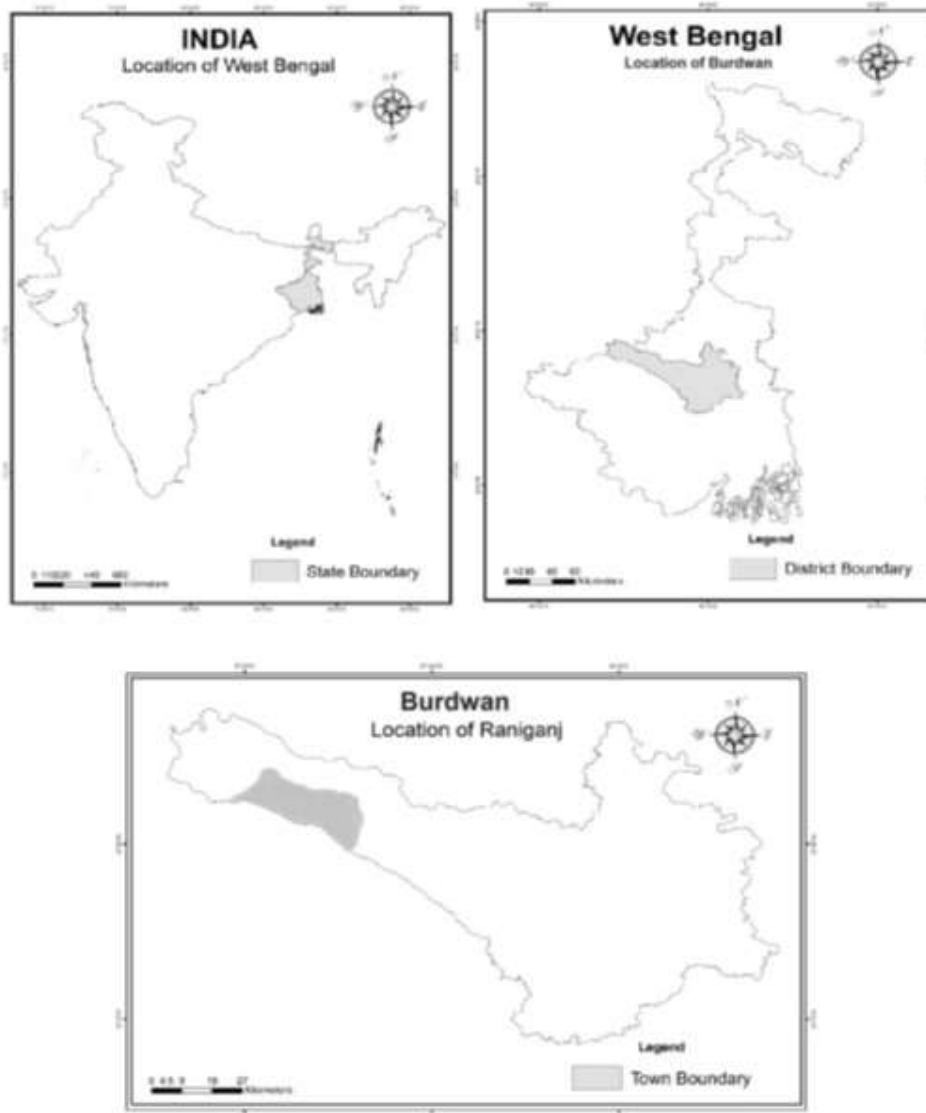
The shrine is an emblem of religious, linguistic and cultural diversity. On the occasion of annual urs (death anniversary), Muslims as well as non-Muslims from various parts of the country come to the tomb. The rituals associated with the dargah (tomb of holy man) forms a symbolic representation of their idea about Islam. In Raniganj, Muslims are divided into two major sects: Barelvis, those who follow the Sufi form of Islam, and Deobandis, a reformist sect. For the believers of sufism, Islam is what they practice. In Raniganj, and in many other parts of the world, sufism within Islam and those who follow it have come under intense criticism by the proponents of various reform movements within Islam. The reform movement among the Muslims of Raniganj is a recent phenomenon, mainly correlated with the widening urban experiences of the Muslims with the outside world. The two forms of Islam seem to be in constant conflict.

In South Asia, in general, and India, in particular, religion forms the fundamental basis for identity construction. Followers of all the major world religions live in India. Muslims, the followers of Islam as they are called, form the second largest religious community of the country. As opposed to other religions which originated in India, Islam came to India from outside. It has its existence in the country for almost thirteen hundred years. Islam, always and everywhere, like other world religions, exists in local, cultural, historical and geographical contexts. Islam as it exists in India is deeply rooted in the local traditions of the country. "Indian Islam represents a mosaic of demotic, superstitious and syncretic beliefs".¹ An understanding of the religious system of Muslims in India entirely based on texts and scriptures may lead to an ambiguous interpretation. The context in which they practice Islam should also be taken into

consideration. Ahmad identified three levels of understanding the religious system of Muslims in India.² The first level corresponds to the beliefs and practices as mentioned in the text, the Holy Quran. The second level consists of “beliefs and values of a more limited spread...not derived from the Islamic scriptural literature...sometimes may even be opposed or antithetical to the latter”.³ The third level corresponds to the pragmatic or practical religion which “contains a large number of non-philosophical elements”.⁴

At broader level, Islam is understood to be divided into local or folk and textual or official Islam. The two seems to be diametrically placed. The present study deals with the former, i.e. local Islam. Eickelman writes, “the study of a world religion in local contexts implies what from some perspective is obvious—any religion’s ideology and practice are elaborated, understood and subsequently reproduced in particular places and at particular moments. Even external truths are necessarily revealed in a specific language and setting”.⁵ He continues, “the main challenge for the study of Islam in local contexts is to describe and analyse how the universalistic principles of Islam have been realised in various social and historical contexts without representing Islam as a seamless essence on the one hand or as a plastic congeries of beliefs and practices on the other”.⁶ With this background, the present study makes an attempt to understand how the universalistic principles of Islam are practiced locally. The shrine of Ghaus-e-Bangala was chosen as the site for fieldwork. The data on which the present research is based includes secondary sources in the form of books and articles, biographical information, ethnographic observations of ritual performance and pilgrimage practices, and interviews. The data related to the shrine and its rituals was collected during the annual urs (death anniversary) celebration of the saint in the year 2009. In order to understand the changing contour of idea about what Islam is and how those follow Sufism and those who are opposed to it make a social construction of each other, many short visits were made to the town between 2009 to 2018.

The Setting: Raniganj is a small town in the Paschim Bardhaman district of West Bengal. Paschim Bardhaman is a predominantly urban industrial district which was formed in 2017 after bifurcating the erstwhile Bardhaman district. The other is Purba Bardhaman district. The history of the town is synonymous with the history of coal mining in India. The area is famous for being the birthplace of coal-mining in India. In 1774 A. D., first coal mining operation in the country was started in this region by S. G. Heatly and J. Sumner.



Map 1: Map Showing the Location of Raniganj Town.

Administratively, Paschim Bardhaman district is divided into two sub-divisions: Asansol Sadar and Durgapur whereas Purba Bardhaman district is divided into four sub-divisions: Kalna, Katwa, Burdawn (North), Burdwan (South) (see map 2 below). The two districts differ from each other. Purba Bardhaman, which is the eastern division of the erstwhile Bardhaman district, is a wide alluvial plain enclosed by the river Ajay in the north, the Bhagirathi in the east and Damodar in the south. The area is mainly agricultural in character and at places the land is cultivated extensively. The natural conditions make the region very fertile for rice production. Whereas Paschim Bardhaman, which is the western division of the erstwhile Bardhaman district, is a predominantly industrial region dotted with various medium and heavy industries. Raniganj is centrally located in Paschim Bardhaman district.



Map 2: Showing the different natural conditions of the eastern and western division of the erstwhile Burdwan district.

History of the Shrine: The shrine of Syed Shamsuddin Andarabi, popularly known as Ghaus-e-Bangala, is revered by people of all faiths. He is also addressed as “Baba”, “Sarkar”, and “Ala Hazrat”. The shrine is the symbol of communal harmony. The shrine, and the pir, is considered as the jewel of the town. Syed Shamsuddin Andarabi was the eldest son of Syed Fakruddin, who is famous as Bade Pir (great saint). He belongs to the Andarabi silsila (spiritual lineage). The name is derived from the place called Andarab, where it originated, located in the southern part of the present day Baghlan district in Afghanistan. From Andarab, it spread to various places such as Kashmir, Punjab, Delhi, Bihar, West Bengal, Nepal, Tibet, etc. The details of the earliest sufis of the silsila are very sketchy and so it is very difficult to identify the chronological events related to its spread. So, the present discussion will be centered on the life of Bade Pir and afterwards. However, it is reported that one of their earliest ancestors came to Kashmir as early as in 781 hijri (1379 A.D).⁷ Bade Pir was born in Kashmir. When his family moved to Delhi, he came to village Maael (present day Muzaffarpur district) in Bihar. He travelled to various parts of the country and also made journeys to Nepal and Lhasa (Tibet) for spreading Islam. In Nepal, his miracles led many to embrace the faith. He stayed in Patna for a long time. He finally made Calcutta (Kolkata) his permanent residence. He died in 1296 hijri (1878 A.D) and is buried at Kolkata. Annual urs is also held at his dargah in Kolkata.

Bade Pir was married to Hazrat Syeda Sakina, daughter of Mir Inayat Hussain. On 12 Rajab, 1268 hijri (May 2 nd, 1852 A.D), Syed Shamsuddin Andarabi was born at Azimabad, Patna. From childhood, he possessed extraordinary learning capacities. By the age of fifteen, he started Dars-e-Quran (teaching of Quran). He was well versed with the Persian language and usually preferred Persian instead of Urdu for conversation. His activities were mainly centered on places like Maael, Meenapur, Madhaul, Mahua, Jalalpur and Hasina (all are in present day state of Bihar). When his popularity grew far and wide, on the request of Fazal Haque Sarkar, a prominent Muslim of Raniganj, he decided to leave for Raniganj. When his companions came to know about his decision, many of them objected. Syed Shamsuddin made his

first visit to Raniganj probably in the year 1296 hijri.⁸ Miracles performed by him in Raniganj drew many followers, Muslims as well as non-Muslims, to his fold. His preachings focused on the value of love, communal harmony and human relationship. He died in the year 1901. From this year, annual urs is celebrated in Raniganj in his remembrance.

Pilgrims and Pilgrimage: Pilgrimage to religious sites is an important feature of many of the world's major religions like Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Judaism. Barber defines pilgrimage as "a journey resulting from religious causes, externally to a holy site, and internally for spiritual purposes and internal understanding".⁹ In Islam, pilgrimage to Kabah in Mecca, called hajj, is one of the pillars of Islam (al-arkan al-khamsa). The performance of hajj is incumbent upon every Muslim once in his lifetime if they can afford it and are physically able. Other than hajj, Muslims also perform ziyarat (visit to a holy place). Ziyarat is the only type of Islamic pilgrimage that corresponds to the pilgrimage found in other religions. Whereas hajj is fard (obligatory), ziyarat is considered mustahabb (meritorious). Although some may consider the visit to the tomb of a saint un-Islamic, the fact remains that they continue to attract people from faraway places. "Saints' tombs are a characteristic feature of the landscape in most Muslim countries, where, whether associated with mosques or isolated, they are popular centres of visitation. The orthodox divines have spoken frequently and vigorously against this practice of visitation, but the consensus of the community has almost everywhere proved stronger than the condemnation of the theologians and the common folk still visit the tombs of saints to pray, to leave ex-votos, to seek blessing (baraka) and the intercession of the holy persons buried there".¹⁰

Ziyarat to the dargah of a Sufi has long been a tradition in the history of Islam. Dargah is a Sufi Islamic shrine built over the grave of a revered religious figure, a Sufi or dervish. Most of the scholarly work carried out by social scientists has focused upon the obligatory pilgrimage to Mecca, i.e. hajj, because of its importance as God ordained religious duty. In spite of the fact that dargahs of Sufis attract millions of people from all over the world, the study of ziyarat remains a neglected field of study. The danger such kind of neglect poses is that it creates a monolithic image of Islam "contrary to the vibrant cultural variety of Islamic societies in the world".¹¹ Commenting upon the importance of non-hajj pilgrimage, Bhardwaj notes, "the study of ziyarat, as part of the dynamic tradition of Islamic religious circulation, is necessary to understand Islam's variegated cultural manifestations."¹²

The dargah of Ghaus-e-Bangala in Raniganj is a major centre of ziyarat to which people from various parts of the country come during the annual urs. Ziyarat to the dargah is considered necessary for the attainment of salvation. It is a common notion among the Muslims that one is able to perform hajj only when God wills it. However, the same kind of explanation is propounded for the performance of ziyarat. Interaction with the pilgrims made it clear that it is the saint (Ghaus-e-Bangala), and not the pilgrim, who gives them commands and capability to perform ziyarat. "Baba jisko chahtein hain wahi aa paata hai. Nahin to bahut se aise log bhi hain jo yahan (Raniganj) rahkar bhi nahin aa paate. Baba ka bulawa aata hai to aana hi padta hai" (it is the saint who decides whom he wants to come otherwise many people are not able to come in spite of the fact that they live in Raniganj. When the saint summons, I have to come- Personal Interview). For the zahirin (one who performs ziyarat), coming to the dargah of a Sufi is a liberating experience. The baraka (blessings of the saint) purifies their souls and removes their sins. For the devotees, all saints, whether of lesser or greater prominence, should be held in great esteem and regular visits should be made to their shrines for attaining salvation. It is a part of the same process as that of hajj. When asked do you visit any other shrine, one respondent said, "haan, jahan baba bulaate hain wahan jaata hoon. Ajmer, Nizamuddin, Haji Ali sab jagah jaate hain" (yes, wherever the saint summons, I go. Ajmer, Nizamuddin, Haji Ali¹³ and everywhere- Personal Interview).



Figure 1: Devotees coming from faraway places for offering chadar on the shrine.



Figure 2: Local devotees from Raniganj.

The Ritual: An academic debate persists within religious studies over the primacy of religion or ritual. At a more general level, ritual is a form of human action that have material traces, whereas religion is a more abstract, symbolic system consisting of beliefs, myths, and doctrines. Geertz defines religion as “a system

of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive, and long lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic".¹⁴ Rituals provide an explicit symbolic meaning to implicit abstract religious beliefs in a way that can be easily understood by the masses. As stated by Wallace, "ritual is religion in action; it is the cutting edge of the tool... It is the ritual that accomplishes what religion sets out to do".¹⁵ It is through the enactment of rituals that people realize their religion. According to Warms, "rituals are prescribed, stylized, stereotyped ways of performing a religious action".¹⁶

Every shrine or dargah attracts people from different places. The number of people visiting a dargah varies from day to day. It is usually on Thursday and Friday that most of the people make a visit to the dargah of Ghaus-e-Bangala. Most of them happen to be local residents. But the most important event associated with the shrine is the annual urs (death anniversary) on which people not only from different parts of the country but from various other countries as well participate. Approximately 1 lakh people visit the shrine on annual urs. The date of urs is decided by Bengali calendar and not Islamic. The year in which the fieldwork was done (2009), it fell on February 16 of the Gregorian calendar. Before the urs starts formally, another important ritual takes place which is again determined by the Bengali calendar. It is called the ritual of ghusl or gusul (ritual bath). It was observed on 13th February, 2009. The day was Friday. After offering the Friday prayer, the devotees started gathering for the ritual. Most of them had come from faraway places like Calcutta (Kolkata), Ranchi, Jamshedpur, etc. The ritual of ghusl started around 2:30 in the afternoon. The ritual of ghusl is one of the most celebrated rituals. Literally it means washing the grave of the saint. Islamic funeral rites dictate that the dead body should be washed in the prescribed manner before burial. The purpose is to physically cleanse the body. The grave (an elevated marble structure) is washed with the water from the hauz (water tank) situated in the shrine complex.

The ritual is mainly for the murids (disciples) who have taken bayat (oath of allegiance) either from the current gadde-nashi¹⁷ or from the earlier gadde-nashins. They all stand in parallel queue starting from the main entrance of the dargah to the hauz located in the outer compound of the dargah. Every murid carries a matka (earthen pot) along with them. They hold the matka with both the hands on their shoulders. Gadde-nashin leads the procession from the main entrance to the hauz where he first fills his matka and then the murids follow. Gadde-nashin himself does not carry the matka. After filling their respective matkas, they make a round of the hauz in a clockwise manner and complete one circle and then follow the same route and enter the main gate of the dargah. When the gadde-nashin returns from the hauz, people put money in his hand. They usually put Rs. 10, 20, or 50, according to their wish. When all the murids had entered the main gate then other devotees follow. All the murids and gadde-nashin are bare footed. The ghusl ritual is meant only for the murids and only men can participate.

After entering the main entrance which opens in the inner compound of the dargah, the procession it finally enters the sanctum sanctorum (grave of the saint) through another gate. When all the murids and gadde-nashin had entered the sanctum sanctorum, the gates are closed. The devotees have to wait in the inner compound of the dargah. They are not allowed to observe the ritual bath. The grave of the saint is covered with marble stones which is covered with chadars (clothes meant for covering the grave) of various colours. Verses from the Quran or some du'a (supplication) are usually written on it. All the chadars are removed and gadde-nashin first pours the water from the matka over the grave. The murids follow him and wash the grave and the floor with the water which they were carrying. As they wash the grave (giving ghusl to the saint), the water flows out in the compound where devotees keep waiting for collecting the water. Since the water flows on a plain surface and does not accumulate anywhere, the only way to collect it is either by bringing their hands together and making it look like cup shape or by soaking

the water in the clothes (handkerchief, dupatta, etc.) and then wring out the water in bottle or some other pots. Because the water flows on the floor on which people walk, it turns black in colour by mixing with the dust of the floor. However, for the devotees, the colour of the water is insignificant. For them its importance lies in the fact this water has been used for the ghusl of the saint. Everyone fights to collect as much water as possible.

There are various beliefs widespread among the devotees concerning the benefits of this water. They say that it is more of a medicine rather than simple water. Shrines are usually famous for possessing particular magical and curative powers. The shrine's magicality is grounded in heterodox beliefs regarding the divine powers of the saints, who are thought to be able to intercede for the living in their search for personal boons (worldly success, fertility, health) by granting them saintly baraka (divine blessing). The water of the ghusl is believed to possess curative power. People use it in case of stomach ache, problems related to digestive system, pregnancy related ailments, etc. The curative and magical power of the water was very aptly described by a devotee when he said that "jab koi doctor kaam nahi aata hai, yeh paani kaam aata hai. Yeh paani ek challenge hai science ke liye" (when a doctor fails, the water cures. It is a challenge to modern science- Personal Interview).

When the ghusl is over, a white sheet is laid over the grave. During the ghusl, there is no chadar over the grave. During this period, the saint is not purdah-nashin but be-purdah¹⁸ (without purdah). After putting the white sheet over the grave, the doors are opened for the public. When the gates are opened, everybody wants to enter first so that he/she can collect the water which was still lying on the floor around the grave. This is their prime objective. From now, devotees can visit the shrine and pay their homage to the saint. Devotees pray and do sajda (prostration) before the pir. The pir is lying buried with his head in the north direction. Devotees prostrate at the feet of the pir. It is this act of prostration which is particularly criticized by the reformist Islam. When devotees leave, they keep their face towards the grave and move backward. One should not turn his back towards the pir. It is considered improper.

Various kind of chadhawa¹⁹ (offerings) is made on the shrine. Rose water, itr (perfume), khurma (locally made sweet of flour and sugar) shirni (a kind of sweet) is offered on the shrine. People sprinkle only a part of the rose water and itr and carry the remaining quantity along with them. Similarly, only a part of the khurma and shirni are offered. The people themselves do not make the offerings. They hand over the things to be offered (rose water, itr, sweet, etc.) to the attendants standing near the grave. The attendants after offering a part of the material object return the remaining part to the devotees. After making the offerings, the remaining quantity of the things offered are believed to become a sacred thing, with some spiritual power in it. Therefore, disrespect to it is considered a sin. For example, if someone is offered the chadhawa, he should accept it. If anybody declines the offer, they are reminded "mazar ka hai", which means that it is a chadhawa and should not be refused. The rose water is also used as a medicine, particularly in stomach related ailments. Devotees also lit incense sticks and put in the stands near the saint. The ashes of the incense stick are also considered possessing spiritual blessedness of the saint. Many devotees carry ashes for using as anti-septic or for curing skin related problems.

Another important ritual associated with the dargah is that of sandal. The ritual involves applying the sandalwood paste on the grave of the saint.²⁰ It is performed on the third day after the ritual bath. In the year 2009 (in which fieldwork was done), it was observed on February 16th. The white chadar laid over the grave on the day of ghusl will be there till the night of sandal. The ritual is popularly known as "sandal ki raat" (the night of sandal). It is from this day, the urs formally starts. Sandal ceremony is not open for all. Only the selected members of the mazar committee, as it is locally called, and few volunteers are allowed. These volunteers are called razakars (volunteers). These razakars assist the devotees during

the sandal ceremony. The ritual usually starts by the midnight and continue till dawn. At about 12:30 A.M., the volunteers ask the devotees to vacate the compound. It is noteworthy to mention that women are allowed to stay there and watch the ritual. The gadde-nashin applies the sandalwood paste on the forehead of the women. When the gates are closed, people outside it just roam around the mazar and try to find some places where they can rest. Some of them get busy in shopping. The shops remain open throughout the night.

For attending the sandal night, people come from far away places. Those coming from outside the town usually arrive by the evening whereas the locals of the town come in the night. People usually come in groups. The strength of these groups may vary from 4-5 persons to 50-60 persons. Larger groups are mostly from outside the town. They arrive with chartered buses. Banners inscribed with words like “Urs Ghaus-e-Bangala” are hanged on these buses.

The first three chadars on the grave is offered by the descendants of the pir. Offering of each chadar is indicated by an explosion (by firing crackers). So, three chadars and three explosions. People outside the gate eagerly wait for the explosions to be heard. The assembled people keep raising slogans in the praise of their Lord and the pir. “Naara-e-Taqbir-Allah-hu-Akbar”²¹ and “Ghaus ka daaman nahi chodenge” are commonly pronounced. On hearing the first explosion



Figure 3: People outside the *dargah* on the night of *sandal*.

(around 3:00 A.M), the people become jubilant and a kind of celebratory milieu can be seen. At 3:20 A.M., the second explosion was heard. People became more jubilant and started gathering around the entrance. Sloganeering became louder. At 3:35 A.M., the third explosion was heard. Devotees were now ready to enter the gate and waiting for it to be opened. The gates were finally opened at 4:30 A.M. From now, devotees can offer chadar on the grave of the saint. The urs usually continues for about 6-7 days.

The Conflict: The practice of veneration of the graves of Sufis has remained an integral part of Islam from its very beginning and so its critiques. However, this conflict has become sharpened in more recent years under the influence of various reform movements within Islam. Reformist Islam considers grave worship as *biddat* (innovation) and a major sin as it leads to *shirq* (associating someone with God). They consider Sufism as a later development when Islam came into contact with the pantheistic and animistic traditions of the world. However, for the followers of Sufism, visitation to the graves of holy men is an integral part of the Islamic tradition which can lead to *fana*²² (annihilation), the ultimate goal of human existence. For the followers of Sufism, the germs of Sufism were present in the original Islam from the time of Prophet Muhammad and both Quran and Hadith contain numerous references which indicate a deeper true nature of Islam which only later blossomed into a mystical dimension. The following verses of Quran itself indicates its mystical aspects

“To Allah belong the East and the West, whithersoever ye turn, there is Allah’s countenance. For Allah is All-Embracing, All Knowing” (2:115); and “He is the First and the Last, the Evident and the Hidden” (57:3). Another verse cherished by Sufis and his followers is: “We are nearer to him (man) than his jugular vein” (50:16).²³ They also expound the integrity of Sufism with Islam through various hadith. One of the most famous hadith *qudsi*²⁴ is: “I was a hidden treasure, and I wished to be known, so I created the world”.²⁵ For the Sufis, these verses and hadith authenticate Islamic mysticism.

Muslims of the town are divided in terms of their sectarian affiliation. They are divided between the Deoband and Barelvi school of thought. This is the division around which mainly the Muslims of South Asia are divided. Both belong to the Sunni Islam. The two movements are named after the name of the place from which it originated. Both of these originated in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh. Although there are number of doctrinal differences regarding the world view of Islam and its application, the most talked and hotly contested debate is of the issue of worshipping the *dargahs* (tombs) of holy saints by the Barelvis. *Dargahs* are revered by Muslim communities throughout the world and are often attributed to be instrumental in the spread of Islam in the world. These *dargahs* are most numerous in the South Asian region. However, with the spread of reformist sects within Islam, the practice of visit to *dargahs* has come under serious attack. Deobandi movement is one of the most important and influential movements within Islam. The movement was started in 1866 A. D. in Deoband, India. It is a reform movement aimed at spiritual purification of the Muslim faith. It considers praying to saints and making pilgrimages to tombs as innovation which has no place in the Islamic monotheism, preached by Muhammad. *Tabligh Jamaat* is an offshoot of the Deobandi movement started in the early 20th century in opposition to the Hindu reform movement. The movement mainly aims at Islamic spiritual reformation and works towards bringing Muslims of all socio-economic strata closer to the practices of Prophet Muhammad. *Tabligh* is a way of spreading the message of Islam as contained in the Holy Quran and the Hadith. It mainly works at the grass root level and emphasizes a personal communication for spreading the faith. It uses the method of *dawah*²⁶ for preaching the faith. In Raniganj, the followers of Barelvi sect predominate. They do not allow the mosques to be used for preaching the Deobandi version of Islam. Deobandis preach through only three mosques. The mosque of Qassab mohalla acts as the markaz of the movement.²⁷ If any *jamaat* comes from outside, it will stay in this mosque. Two more mosques (mosques of Jama Masjid Lane and Charbi mohalla) also welcome the *jamaats*. *Jamaats* are not allowed to preach through other mosques.

This reform movement within Islam has a class dimension as well. It is the more wealthy and educated class of the Muslims who are the proponents and followers of the reformist Islam. One respondent explained, “I belong to *jamaat* (Deoband). All the educated class of Muslims in Raniganj follow the Deoband school and as you go down the hierarchy majority of them are of Barelvi school of thought. Most of the people in Raniganj are involved in *shirq* (associating God with other humans) and *biddat*

(innovation). People worship the grave of which Islam does not give permission. God is omnipresent, but these people (Barelvis) want to solve their problems with the help of pirs thinking them as possessing intercessionary powers. Both males and females go to the tomb of Ghaus-e-Bangala.” Similar tendency has been noted by Vasanthi Raman in her study of weavers of Banaras. “It is generally among the well-to-do Momin Ansaris that there is a discernible thrust towards the practice of a more purist, scriptural Islam and a stricter adherence to the Quran, the Shariat and the Hadith”.²⁸ Followers of reformist Islam (or Deobandi) accuse the Barelvis of being illiterate (in a religious sense) and ignorant. The pace of Islamisation is greater among the well off Muslims of Raniganj as compared to the lowly placed, illiterate Muslims. However, for those who believe in the saints and dargahs, visiting to dargahs do not constitute biddat. It is the way for attaining salvation.

Conclusion: Popular or local Islam has played a fundamental role in the spread of Islam in the subcontinent. Whereas most of the discussions on pilgrimage in Islam focus on the obligatory hajj, the study of ziyarat is still limited. Shrines, wherever they exist, are an integral part of the daily life of people. Whereas hajj represents the universal aspect of Islam, visitations to the tombs of holy men is an emblem of the regional, local aspect of Islam. They perform certain functions for the believers. Despite reformist movements targeting the shrine practices as un-Islamic, the continued vitality of Sufism in India is evident.

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Ibid., p. 70

Both Ajmer (Rajasthan) and Nizamuddin (Delhi) are the major centres of pilgrimage in India for both Muslims and non-Muslims. Haji Ali is a famous sufi shrine located in Mumbai, India.

Clifford Geertz,. The Interpretation of Cultures, Basic Books, New York, 1973.

A. F. C. Wallace, Culture and Personality, Random Books, New York, 1966.

Richard Warms, James Garber and Jon McGee (eds.), Sacred Realms: Essays in Religion, Belief, and Society, Oxford University Press, New York, 2004.

Gadde nashin or sajjada nashin is the term usually used for those who represent the spiritual heir to the pir. By virtue of being a descendant from the saint, they are supposed to possess the spiritual power of the saint.

During the course of the fieldwork, the researcher realised that nobody is using the word death for the saint. The researcher was reminded by many that the pir has not died but become purdah-nashin or, in their own words, “who purdah kar gaye” (he has put himself behind purdah). The idea implicit in the notion of purdah-nashin is that although the pir has died in the physical sense of the death of the body but his essence is still alive. The pir is believed to be alive beyond the grave. So, on the day of ghusl only gadde-nashin and the murids are allowed.

In Hinduism, the term prashad is commonly used for offerings. The terms are synonymous.

The ritual of applying sandalwood paste on the graves of Sufi’s is common throughout the Indian subcontinent.

Naara means “shout out loud” and the word taqbir is the Arabic name for the phrase “Allah-hu-Akbar.” So when someone says “naara-e-taqbir,” they are literally saying shout out the phrase “Allah-hu-Akbar.”

The concept of fana is one of the central tenets of Sufism. It represents the stage when the individual come to lose his own identity and gets merged with the identity of God.

All the verses quoted in the text have been taken from The Holy Quran: Text, Translation and Commentary, Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Farid Book Depot Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi, 1998.

Hadith qudsi are those hadith (sayings) in which it is believed that God himself speaks through the mouth of the Prophet. However, these sayings are distinct from the Quranic revelations.

William Stoddart and R. A. Nicholson, Sufism: The Mystical Doctrines and the Idea of Personality , Adam Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi, 2009.

Dawah is a form of preaching the Islamic faith to both Muslims and non-Muslims. It involves interacting with the people and inviting them to learn and follow the faith as practiced by the Prophet.

Markaz is the center through which the activities of the jamaats are coordinated. The markaz organizes the group of volunteers (jamaats) which travel to different places to remind and invite people to the Islamic faith.

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Development, Eurocentrism and the Destiny of Global South: Reflections from Lohia's Thought

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Abstract

By exploring the intersections of development thought and intellectual traditions in India, this paper seeks to delve upon three under-explored aspects of Rammanohar Lohia's oeuvre. An engagement with these aspects in Lohia's intellectual practice is important as here one finds an exceptional sensitivity towards, what has of late been termed as, Eurocentrism of epistemic frameworks. Beyond such frameworks, Lohia undertook some bold theoretical expeditions and chalks out the unfolding of the process of capitalism from the perspective of colonised. With this Lohia also advances the principle of 'equal irrelevance' of Eurocentric doctrines for such societies. Such theoretical vignettes advanced by him allows one to not only re-visit some of the axiomatic features of mainstream development discourse but also provides perspective to argue that the mainstream development discourse is both constituted by and situated within a Eurocentric discourse.

Key Words: Eurocentrism, RammanoharLohia, Development thought/thinking, Indian Thought, Indian Intellectual Traditions, Capitalism

Introduction

The politics of the idea of development, it has been argued, is about taming the future of global South.¹ Though the idea of mainstream development, and all that it represents, has acquired the status of a 'global faith', scholars have shown that it is rooted in Western intellectual tradition.² In contemporary times de facto, 'nothing is more spectacularly global than the formal frameworks of knowledge which have bequeathed to every corner of the globe a universal supposedly tested and verifiable recipe of development'.³ It is the narrative of mainstream development, as a constellation, which commands the global South from 'backwardness' to 'modernity', from agriculture to industry, from countryside to city and so on - to finally become like 'them'. However, this 'universal' idea, embedded in Eurocentrism, is increasingly contested and there is a felt need to pluralise this conception of development. Such an effort, needless to say, requires an exploration and drawing upon intellectual traditions outside the West. In this spirit, to make a contribution from intellectual tradition of India, this paper seeks to delve upon three

aspects of RammanoharLohia's intellectual practice which emboldens one to trace and question the Eurocentrism⁴ of development discourse. As a 'methodological principle', 'a hermeneutic of suspicion'⁵ informed Lohia's approach towards various forms of Eurocentrism. Three aspects of his thought, resulting from what may be called three 'creative suspicions', can be identified which not only capture and elucidate forms of Eurocentrism but also carry important implications for development thinking.

Firstly, one finds an exceptional scepticism towards the Eurocentrism of prevalent epistemic frameworks in Lohia. He comes up as an unusual thinker who is aware that in the discourses of knowledge, hegemony and dominance are intrinsically interwoven. This awareness was much ahead of his time. Secondly, we also find a suspicion for Eurocentric Marxist reading of the history of capitalist development in his writings. Despite its universal claims, Lohia argued that the prime inputs in theorisation of the Marxist understanding were drawn from the specific situations of Western Europe. He calls for a critical scrutiny of such doctrines to contest their universality. Debunking the inadequacies of Marxist mode of reasoning in the unfolding of capitalism, and by bringing in the dimensions of 'external dynamics' and 'twin origin', he opened up new vistas to re-theorise the phenomenon of capitalist development. And thirdly, along with a scepticism for Western techno-industrialism, Lohia formulated the principle of equal irrelevance of capitalism and communism for societies like India. These three points, if valid even partially, may open up novel ways of approaching some of the axiomatic aspects of mainstream development thinking.

Though Lohia has been seen as a frontal figure in Indian socialist movement and is widely known for his stand on the caste question and banish English programme, his perspective on the aspects associated with development is less known. In this terrain of his ideas, notwithstanding his vast exposure to various ideas and ideologies, Lohia's 'line of vision' remained rooted in the specificities of his location. This can be specifically asserted with reference to the three ideas explored in this paper. Lohia was convinced that the fate of the societies like India meant re-imagination of new civilisation beyond the modern West - and its two ideological manifestations, viz. capitalism and communism. This naturally meant neither an uncritical rejection nor a passive acceptance, but a nuanced and critical engagement with modernity. In this sense, Lohia comes up as an exceptional 'socialist' who had the firm belief that any authentic idea has to be embedded in, and also address and anchor, the peculiar context in which it has to be practiced.

Eurocentrism of Epistemic Tools

Lohia stands quite in contrast to many other illustrious thinkers of modern India, with exceptions like M K Gandhi, who warmly embraced the dominant Eurocentric conceptions of thinking and imagining the world. In the same way, scholarship in Indian universities often remain a passive recipient of the conceptual apparatus, theoretical contemplations, modes of thought and inquiry emanating from the West. What Lohia is insisting is to historicise and analyse a Marx or a Smith squarely in their context and not to assume a default 'universal' in their articulations. His insights, in this regard, assume more significance in wake of a tendency on part of epistemic communities in most post-colonial societies to refer to the European intellectual tradition as the only one of any significance.

In an insightful piece titled 'On Scheme of Research at Indian Universities'⁶ Lohia states his concerns about the epistemic engagements in social sciences and humanities in Indian academia. He makes a distinction between 'theoretical-analytical' and 'descriptive-analytical' research where the former is of a 'broader extent'. In contrast, the descriptive-analytical looks at the specific cases through existing theoretical-analytical. Lohia points out categorically that, in the case of arts and social sciences, 'the descriptive-analytical must prepare the way for the theoretical-analytical, of which there is almost complete dearth in the Indian universities. Without research into the theoretical-analytical, enquiries of a descriptive kind must inevitably lose their value and become insipid dissertations for doctors of second grade status'.⁷ Following this observation Lohia advances a powerful vignette, 'particularly, must the enquiry into the theoretical-analytical become intense in non-European lands, as the conceptual tools of worldwide usage are European in origin and validity. These tools must be subjected to a thorough inquiry. Their pertinence at world-wide validity must be laid bare and the way must be prepared for better conceptual tools through fundamental analysis'.⁸

Lohia comes up with an explicit awareness about the latent Eurocentrism of dominant epistemic frameworks and underlines the importance of theoretical innovations from alternate perspectives. He flags the epistemic indebtedness of the academia in the non-Western world and asserts, 'Europe has so dominated the world's current thought that it does not occur to university men in the non-European world to submit these concepts to close examination'. Drawing an analogy, he argues, 'like the team of

blinkered oxen in an oil press, they [academia] go on and on researching into sectional conditions with Europe's tools and without a thought that these tools are inadequate and required to be refashioned'.⁹ Lohia states that the present thought is littered with concepts - such as 'progress', 'plenty', 'capitalism', 'socialism' and 'communism' - which are of partial validity because they originated in specific conditions of Europe. An attempt to trace the genealogy of the conceptual apparatus, theoretical formations, modes of thought and inquiry of the scholarship will invariably point to Europe. Lohia pleads that the academics in India should at least strive to acquire the talent to examine such concepts from 'inside as well as outside'. In this context 'all doctrines, so it appears, have their being within a certain framework of power. They are unable to burst this framework, not unless they are born outside it'.¹⁰ Lohia took upon himself the mandate to look at the truth from 'outside' undertook some bold theoretical expeditions, a glimpse of which is presented in the next section.

Debunking Eurocentric Reading of Capitalist Development

Lohia was convinced that experiences of Europe do not embody the universal experiences of the future of other societies like India. In his treatise 'Economics after Marx', written in 1943, Lohia made his key intellectual statements in this direction. Here, he reads Marxist analysis of capitalist development with 'creative suspicion' - from the perspective of colonial masses. His analysis revolves around three interrelated formulations, i.e. a revision of the concept of 'surplus value', 'external dynamics' and the principle of 'twin origin of capitalism and imperialism'. Through these ideas Lohia arrives at his core conviction that capitalism needs an 'outside' to trigger, develop and sustain. This is an alternative reading of the unfolding of capitalism in the West.

The limitation of Marx's conceptualisation of surplus value, for Lohia, is that it is bound within the immediate context of colonial and industrialised countries as it factors in only the exploitation of the worker in the factory. According to it the dynamic and impetus of capitalist development lies in the contradiction between the value and the use-value of the labour – between wages and the produce. However, according to Lohia, this is only partially correct. He emphasises that another parallel suction of surplus value was from colonial peasants and workers. Lohia thus envisions 'a picture of two circles, one placed inside the other, the inner circle representing the free capitalist structures with their dynamic in the contradiction between the capitalist profits and mechanised labour, the other circle representing the colonial economy of the rest of the world with its dynamic between imperial exploitation and colonial labour, the rim of the inner circle possessing an enormously porous capacity to suck into itself the

dynamic of the outer'.¹¹ These two dynamics need to be captured and the interconnections have to be explored simultaneously to arrive at a better and comprehensive understanding about this issue.

Lohia puts forward that, 'there are two distinct values and wages of labour, those effective in the imperial countries and those effective in the colonies. This distinction between imperial labour and colonial labour and their respective wages is of the utmost importance for a proper understanding of the source of surplus value'.¹² In fact the surplus value is the difference between the 'actual earnings of the labour and the per worker world production of the time'.¹³ Because of the surplus value extracted from colonies, it was possible to increase both wages and profits at the same time in capitalist countries. Thus what prima facie appears as the higher produce of imperial labour is directly due to the many generations of imperial-colonial division of labour in the world. Noting the unequal and exploitative relationship at world scale Lohia says, 'one might almost say that the ghosts of hundreds of millions of colonial toilers are invisibly moving the machines in imperial factories. The highly elaborate machinery and its continuing improvement in capitalist countries are due, in large part, to the surplus value created in colonial firms and mines'.¹⁴ The productive capacity of these industries is due, largely, to the colonial toilers who buy their produce. This way, colonial societies become 'one vast village to the capitalist economies'.¹⁵ The history of capitalist development, thus, is the history of increasing pauperisation of not the imperial labour but of the colonial masses.

Exploring a related aspect about the nature of capitalism, Lohia argued that the imperialism and capitalism have jointly developed in capitalist history and are inseparable. This, according to him, can be called the 'twin origins of capitalism and imperialism'. Capitalism and imperialism are twins which grew in concert. Capitalism 'seeks its external dynamic' 'even before it is born and', argues he, 'it gobbles up one country after another'.¹⁶ In order to explain the trajectory and significance of capitalism in the development of the world economy, Lohia refers to the inter-relations between Britain and India from the second half of the 18th century. It was at this tipping point, with its beginnings in England, modern world economy began to emerge. Lohia points to an empire-colony dynamic in the fact that textile was the first industry to employ machinery, which is the technical foundation of capitalism. Thus the thrust which Lancashire industry, at its very beginning, got out of India was due to British rule. Lohia writes, 'history's record shows that, unsupported by British rule over India... the Lancashire industry would have died in its infancy'.¹⁷ Manchester and Lancashire could not have been built in absence of colonial plunder. In similar fashion, 'Britain did not give railways to India; India gave Britain her railways and the engineering industry'¹⁸ and history is full of such truths which seems to go counter to outward

appearances. From such historical instances Lohia derives the assertion that ‘imperialism and capitalism are of joint origin and development’.¹⁹

Survey of British capitalism, Lohia observes, brings one to the inevitable conclusion that imperialism and capitalism are of joint origin and development. But for Marx and Lenin, according to him, imperialism is a tumour of capitalism, and odorous after-growth. The problem with Marx was that the external dynamics were not the integral part of the framework of his understanding of capitalist development. It might be stated that Lohia’s understanding on this issue was quite distinct from Lenin. For Lenin, imperialism has a specific place in a specific stage of capitalism. Thus ‘imperialism’ should be seen ‘as a special stage of capitalism’.²⁰ For Lohia, in contrast, imperialism is not a characteristic of any specific stage of capitalism [as the stage of ‘monopoly’ capital, à la Lenin] but the very condition which moves and sustains the phenomenon since birth. Lohia, argues that in the face of plethora of contra evidences ‘how anyone could have suggested that imperialism is the last stage of capitalism is beyond comprehension’.²¹ Imperialism, in fact, is not only the first stage of capitalism but also goes on developing with it. According to Lohia, it is unlikely that capitalism is at all possible without imperialism.²² Thus it is not a ‘self moving’ West European entity. It constantly feeds upon the imperial dynamic. It is a global system in which different dominions of the globe were inter-bound in a definite asymmetric relationship. This asymmetric imperial relationship may not always necessarily take place between different nations; but may occur within a single nation as well.

The theory of twin origin and the external dynamics lays the foundation for an alternative perspective on the technology. For Lohia, capitalism involves unrestrained use of technology for mass production. Similarly, in the Marxist discourse it is almost a postulate that the development of forces of production is fundamental to the progress; in fact a precondition for the advancement towards socialist society. However, for Lohia, the ‘genuine socialism would have to think in terms of destroying both the capitalist relations of production and the capitalist forces of production, or at least vastly remodelling them’.²³ Thus, the aspect of technology, distinct from Marxist programme, should be analysed independent of the question of production relations.

However, what if capitalism has to be practiced in absence of external dynamic? Lohia argues that ‘capitalism depending upon an exclusive internal dynamic, though theoretically improbable in a vast country with a vast population, will have to bear two burdens at the same time, the joint capitalist-imperialist burdens’.²⁴ In all likelihood it will crash under these burdens; in all likelihood it will cause

impoverishment on a hitherto unknown scale. This specific argument, becomes quite germane in context of Lohia's position on the nature of high technology and industrialism resulting into his principle of 'equal irrelevance' - a subject matter of the third 'creative suspicion' in Lohia's thought one wishes to emphasise.

Equal Irrelevance of European Doctrines of Capitalism and Communism

'Capitalism and Communism', Lohia argued, 'are but two parts of the single complex of existing civilisation',²⁵ barring the property question. There are some striking and fundamental commonalities between capitalism and communism. There exists a shared core in the form of politico-economic centralisation. The lure of industrial grandiose is common to both and both share an unabated faith in technology. Both doctrines, as they share the commitment in terms of means of production, are inadequate theoretical constructs and do not suit the requirement of societies like India because of their specificities. Hence Lohia insists on equal illrelevance of capitalism and communism for such societies. Along with an imperative to disintegrate the premises of these Eurocentric doctrines it is also important to imagine an alternative. Framing his principle, Lohia notes that, 'the theory of equal irrelevance is the decision of the traveller on a new road, who refuses to be tempted by the two other roads that go round and round and lead nowhere. Nothing is more fatal for such a traveller than to waste his time in comparisons between the two other roads; they are equally irrelevant to him'.²⁶

Another malady of modern civilisation, of which the two doctrinal manifestations are capitalism and socialism, is also noted by Lohia. Stressing on the aspect of spiritual equality, he writes, 'if previous civilisations broke down under the weight of spiritual equality coupled to a social inequality, modern civilisation appears to be cracking under the weight of a social equality coupled to a spiritual inequality. Collective life has become so callous, and man is but the object of an experiment'.²⁷ Further, he says that under the two doctrinal manifestations of modern civilisation 'the relationship between man and things is reversed so that things use him rather than he them'.²⁸ Thus, Lohia attracts attention to the hollowness of modern civilisation at one level. Though, he is equally cautious not to denounce this civilisation in every aspect. In fact, he admires its progressive aspects – for example, the idea of social equality – and argues that there is much to learn from the thought and practice of this civilisation. However, he viewed the dominant ideological frameworks of capitalism and communism which have shaped much of the theory and practice in social world with suspicion and pokes at the inherent ethnocentrism of these doctrines.

Under both capitalism or communism, according to Lohia, the unbridled hunger for raising the ‘standards of living’, manifested in concepts like ‘progress’ and ‘plenty’ (which inform the mainstream development thinking), is common. Capitalism expects the dream world of ‘affluence’ to be achieved under the situation of perfect competition, where an individual is driven by his/her self interests. Communists expect this ideal to arise out of social ownership over means of production. Both the doctrines, as they share the same means of production and many conceptual underpinnings, are inadequate theoretical constructs and do not suit the requirements of societies like India. Lohia is deeply sceptical about the possibility and feasibility of the ‘dream world’ of the two doctrines. Of late, a similar idea about the limits of progress has gained currency due to environmental critiques of development which question the idea of limitless growth. Thus the three ‘creative suspicions’ of Lohia helps to unearth three latent forms of Eurocentrism. However what are the entailments of these theoretical positions, if valid, for development discourse/thinking ?

Some Implications for Development Thinking

One can tentatively derive following arguments from the aforesaid discussion with reference to development thinking. First, the aforesaid arguments call for a need to construct, what Lohia calls, ‘theoretical-analytical’ in the development discourse from the perspectives of non-Western societies. ‘Mainstream development thinking’, as Hettne puts it, ‘can be analysed along a continuum running between two ideological anti-poles, socialism versus capitalism’.²⁹ Thus, the mainstream in development discourse represents various shades running between two conventional dominant doctrines, capitalism and orthodox marxism. Lohia’s theory of equal irrelevance of capitalism and communism, as these doctrines carry subtle forms of Eurocentrism, leads to the argument that these systems are ill-assorted to inform the developmental vision for the societies of global South. Further, an intellectual engagement with Lohia also allows to challenge the techno-industrialism, so prevalent in mainstream development discourse.

Second, the mainstream development perspectives - rooted in the ideas like ‘progress’ and ‘plenty’ and the master frames like capitalism and socialism - are to be ‘treated as provincial unless proven otherwise’. Clearly the arguments of Lohia induces to assert that development – having the capital-intensive technology, high industrialism and idea of mass-production, mass-consumption at its core – if to be practiced in the erstwhile colonies will bring immense social and economic costs. Putting forward the argument that capitalist development essentially needs colonies, Lohia cautions against a mad-rush to

attempt the same, without being aware of its darker side, as the desideratum may have devastating consequences for a large part of humanity.

Third, and most importantly, Lohia's arguments also asks one to challenge the *raison d'être* of universalist theories of development, which foster a uni-linearity in the development discourse. Modernisation theories and theories located in orthodox Marxist teachings are examples par excellence which subscribe to the notion of uni-linearity where societies are imagined to pass through set stages, finally arriving at a universal terminus of abundance and affluence. This 'first in the West, then in the rest' informs the core of mainstream development thinking. There is a rule almost cast in stone in the orthodox development discourse about the uni-linearity, also known as 'transition', closely associated with what economists call structural transformation, in the orthodox development understanding.³⁰ It sets a standardised narrative of a dream world - a uniform, universal end-product of mega industrial/urban affluence - to be achieved by all societies. To 'catch up', because of this imperative, has become some sort of tryst with destiny for the societies of global South. Lohia's argument about the external dynamic and twin origin of capitalism and imperialism asks us to critically engage with this narrative. One of the key prospects of his argument is that being 'clones' of the West is not an option for the societies like India. The simplistic uni-linearity assumption, Lohia's approach insists, is often the consequence of a perspective of history as a linear process with Europe as its magnetic compass and terminus. The essential point is that India – and global South at large - cannot adopt the historical path of development hitherto adopted by the modern West.

Lohia, for the arguments of twin origin and the external dynamics, was convinced that capitalist development needs colonies – or an 'outside' – to begin, to sustain and to develop. The capitalist development - having high industrialism and mass production-mass consumption at its core, also quite central to orthodox Marxism - was visualised by him as a process which fosters a global hierarchical system in which different parts of the globe are yoked in a definite asymmetric relationship. A key feature of the expansion of capitalist development, Lohia maintains, is the inherent 'perennial' process of primitive accumulation, though, 'by definition', primitive accumulation precedes capital accumulation. It follows from Lohia's analysis that primitive accumulation is not only a historical fact, but a continuing reality - a perennial process - inbuilt in the very process of capitalist development.³¹ It is constantly experienced especially in the developing world today. This positioning, has specific entailments; primary being that such a process if attempted to be practiced in societies like India, inevitably brings immense social and economic costs for many. The claim is that the very nature and logic of capitalist development

is such that it continuously reproduces 'non-capital'. Further, in the postcolonial contexts, the vast population which gets uprooted in the process cannot be absorbed within the domain of capitalist economy and thus a wasteland of the capitalism's rejects is continuously produced.³² The idea of 'transition' is therefore flawed in itself, rather than a result of flawed implementation of a basically sound idea.

Concluding Observations

Basic take-away which follows from Lohia's three 'creative suspicions' and the resulting formulations is that the mainstream development discourse is both constituted by and situated within a Eurocentric discourse. In order to burst it, it has to be approached from outside. Extremely sensitive to the incongruences between Eurocentric doctrines and the realities in societies like India, Lohia's arguments can serve not only as entry points but may also provide a perspective to explore a wider set of issues related to political economy and development which are germane to the global South. What follows from his 'line of vision' is that societies should evolve their own authentic approaches, particularly with reference to political-economy and development, informed by their specificities. Needless to say, explorations into Lohia's intellectual terrain, surely, will not bring us the panacea, however this exercise potentially equips one to critically engage with some uncritically accepted axiomatic features of mainstream development discourse and assist in conceptualising an alternative. Lohia himself was quite conscious of the fact that doctrines often turn into frozen dogmas and he repeatedly cautioned that 'no man's thought should be made the centre of a political action; it should help but not control'.³³ This applies, obviously, to him and his analysis as well. With these caveats, this article has focused on three aspects of Lohia's thought from the perspective of development however there is more in him, and in intellectual traditions in India in general,³⁴ which may assist one to derive insights and theoretical formulations to sculpt post-Western ideas of alternative development. Reinventing development, through such endeavours, is not only about pluralising a 'normative universal' of our times; it also means a resistance to global structures of dominance and giving back the 'majority' world, the global South, the claim to envision its own future.

Notes and References

1. A range of literature, in particular post-development thought, have revealed the politics of development and the concerns of global South. For representative texts in this area see Arturo Escobar, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1995; AshisNandy 'Development and Violence' in *Genocide, War and Human Survival*, Charles B. Strozier& Michael Flynn eds., Rowman& Littlefield Publishers, Maryland, 1996.
2. See Gilbert Rist, *The History of Development: From Western Origins to Global Faith*, Academic Foundation, New Delhi, 2002.
3. Vinay Lal, *Empires of Knowledge: Culture and Plurality in the Global South*, Pluto Press, London, 2002, p. 123.
4. It is crucial to note here that the *location of Eurocentrism* or Europe should not be understood *in geographical terms*. As DipeshChakrabarty says, 'it is not about the region of the world we call "Europe"' (DipeshChakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2000, p. 3). ZiauddinSardar clarifies the idea, 'as a civilisation, the West is ... everywhere: the Western Civilisation is not located in a geographical space... As a worldview, the West is the dominant outlook of the planet. Thus, Euro-centrism is not simply *out there* – in the West. It is also *in here* – in the non-West. As a concept and a worldview, the West has colonised the intellectuals in non-European societies. Eurocentrism is thus just as rampant and deep in non-Western societies as in Europe and USA: intellectuals, academics, writers, thinkers, novelists, politicians and decision makers in Asia, Africa and Latin America use the West, almost instinctively, as the standard for judgements and as the yardstick for measuring the social and political progress of their own societies' (ZiauddinSardar, *Development and The Locations of Eurocentricism in Critical Development Theory: Contributions to A New Paradigm*, Ronaldo Munck and Denis O Hearn eds. Zed Books, London, 1999, p. 44). Thus, the West is not only located in the non-West - but also (re)produced by it. It is in this sense the idea is employed here.
5. Yogendra Yadav, *What is Living and What is Dead in RammanoharLohia?* in *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XLV. No.40, 2010, pp. 92-106, p. 95. This theoretically rich essay has interpreted Lohia's ideas, especially those associated with 'Euro-normality' and 'European diffusionism', in wider theoretical context. The present paper draws upon this piece and tries to extend some of its arguments in context of development thought.

6. RammanoharLohia, *Interval During Politics*, RammanoharLohiaSamataVidyalaya Nyasa, Hyderabad, 1965. Henceforth IDP.
7. IDP, p. 93.
8. IDP, p. 93 emphasis added.
9. IDP, p. 94.
10. RammanoharLohia, *Marx, Gandhi and Socialism*, RammanoharLohiaSamataVidyalaya Nyasa, Hyderabad, [1963]1978, p. VIII emphasis added. Henceforth MGS.
11. RammanoharLohia, *Economics after Marx*, Anamika, New Delhi [1943] 2010, p. 22. Henceforth EAM.
12. EAM, p. 25.
13. EAM, p. 28-29 emphasis added.
14. EAM, p. 26.
15. EAM, p. 30-31.
16. EAM, p. 19-20.
17. EAM, p. 16.
18. EAM, p. 16.
19. EAM, p.17.
20. Vladimir Lenin, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Watchmaker Publication. Moscow, [1917]1999, p. 32.
21. EAM, p. 19.
22. Specifically on the notion of eternal dynamics and his analysis of capitalism as a historical process, Lohia has a sort of 'kinship' with Rosa Luxemburg. She is known for making a radical departure from the Marxist orthodoxy and for pointing out the inadequacy in Marx's analysis. According to Luxemburg 'capital needs the means of production and the labour power of the whole globe for untrammelled accumulation; it cannot manage without the natural resources and the labour power of all territories' (Rosa Luxemburg, *The Accumulation of Capital*, Routledge, London, 2013, Translated by Agnes Schwarzschild, pp. 345-46). Exploitation and plunder in other parts of the world, according to Luxemburg, is linked to the key requirements – realisation of surplus value, viz. market for its produce; material elements of constant capital, i.e. raw material and cheap labour. See also Sunil, *Understanding Capitalism through Lohia in Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XLV No.40, 2010, pp. 56-62 on this point.
23. MGS, p. 110 emphasis added.

24. EAM, p. 21 emphasis added.
25. MGS, p. 338.
26. MGS, p. 335-36.
27. MGS, p. 335.
28. MGS, 334.
29. Bjorn Hettne, *The Development of Development Theory* in *Acta Sociologica*, Vol. 26, No. 3/4, 1983, pp. 247-266.
30. See, for instance, Peter Timmer, *A World Without Agriculture: The Structural Transformation in Perspective*, The AEI Press, Washington, D.C., 2009 on structural transformation.
31. See also Kishen Pattanayak, *Visions of Development: The Inevitable Need for Alternatives* in *Futures*, Vol. 36, 2004, pp. 671-78; Sunil, op. cit., p. 60, on this argument. Pattanayak has presented a case for the alternative envisioning of development from Lohiaite perspective.
32. See Kalyan Sanyal (2007), *Rethinking Capitalist Development: Primitive Accumulation, Governmentality and Post-Colonial Capitalism*, Routledge, New Delhi, 2007; Li, Tania Murray, *To Make Live or Let Die? Rural Dispossession and the Protection of Surplus Population* in *Antipode*, Vol.41, 2009, pp. 66-93, among others, on this issue.
33. MGS, 1978, p.1 emphasis added.
34. For another example from intellectual traditions of India in this direction, see, Praveen Dhanda, *Ideas of Charan Singh: An Alternative Perspective on Development* in *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.54, No. 14, 2019, pp. 35-42.

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Perspectives

Jhunsi a Center of Sufism during 13th and 14th Century: A study based on Manba ul Ansab

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Abstract

From time immemorial, Prayag or Allahabad has been a very sacred place for Hindus and it has been the land of knowledge and ascetics of different religions and philosophies. Prayag is told as one of the holy places where the holy rivers meet. Prayag is also revered meeting center of different philosophies and it has provided equal freedom of thought and religious practices to all from the very existence of various cultures of the Indian sub-continent. Such was the honor and grace of Prayag that Manusmriti tells us about Prayag and calls it very holy and sacred place. In the Mughal period Akbar reorganized his territories and divided it into twelve Subas and built a strong fortress on the confluence of the two holy rivers. Akbar also founded a new city in Prayag and named it as Ilahabas of Ilahabad which came to be known as Allahabad in British period. In the Mughal period many sufis and saints migrated to Allahabad and settled into the various parts of this region. In later Mughal period we found at least fourteen major Sufi establishments which were named after their founder saints. This paper tries to underline the settlement of Suhrawardi Sufis in the region during the Delhi Sultanate. We have sources which tell us that before the foundation of Allahabad this region was very fruitful for the Sufis and many Suhrawardi saints had migrated to this region which was then known as Payak or Prayag, and they had settled their hospices into the various parts of the region. A humble attempt has been made in this paper to underline the settlement of early sufis in this region.

In the very beginning of Muslim settlements in India many Sufis and saints had settled in various parts of the country and Allahabad also witnessed settlements of many great Sufis as early as twelve/ thirteenth century. One of the earliest Sufi of this region was Shaban ul Millat, a saint of Suhrawardi order who settled at Jhunsi.¹ Shaban ul Millat Ali Murtaza Bayabani also known as Mahi-Shaban-i-Bayabani, was among the earliest eminent Sufis of the region. He was originally from Bhakkar and born there in 660/1261 AD. In the age of 30 years Shaban ul Millat developed a deep yearning for the divine love and he used to wander to the different spiritual circles and mystics. Finally he went to the Hazrat Samshuddin Arizi of Multan and asked him to initiate himself into his discipleship. But Hazrat Samshuddin said to him that you are made for Wilayat (spiritual guardianship) and asked him to go to in the service of Shaikh Bahuddin Zakariya.

When Shaban Millat reached to Shaikh Bahuddin Zakariya he gave him under the guidance of Shaikh Ruknuddin Abul Fathi. Shaban Millat remained in the service of Shaikh Ruknuddin for a long period and after two years he asked to Shaikh Ruknuddin to educate him about mystical knowledge. Shaikh Ruknuddin told him to perform some strict rituals including fasting and Chilla² (retreat) and finally asked

him to go to Bihar and meet Makhdum Shah Minhazuddin Haji al-Harmain and become his disciple. On the directions of Shaikh Ruknuddin he set out for Bihar and when he reached there he saw that Makhdum Shah Minhaz was waiting for him outside of the city. He remained in the service of Makhdum Shah Minhaj for twelve years and after twelve years he gave him spiritual robe and asked him to settle at Shaikh Pura where he stayed for about two years until he was recalled by Makhdum Shah Minhaz and directed to proceed for Payag (Prayag) and propagate Islam in the region.³

On the instruction of his murshid (mentor) Shaban Millat set out for the Payag with fifty other faqirs. When he reached to Jhunsi it was then called Harbong Pur, they settled at the bank of Ganges in the forests. According to author of Manba al Ansab, here he had a clash with the local ruler of Harbong Pur and raged by the killings of his fellow faqirs Shaikh overturned the Fort of ruler with his spiritual power and settled here with peace forever. He established his khanqah and propagated the teachings of Sufism in the region. He died in 1359 AD and his shrine is located in Jhunsi and the place is famous as Ulta Qila (overturned Fort). Shaikh had two sons and two daughters his elder son Ali Amir Shahid was martyred fighting against the infidels. His second son Saiyid Sadrul Haq Taqi became his spiritual successor.⁴

His son, Saiyid Sadrul Haq Taqi ud Din Muhammad Abul was also a devoted Sufi and he was well known for his piety and knowledge. He received honor and appreciation from royals and common people both and became famous as a great Suhrawardi saint of the region. He was born in 1320 A.D. in Jhunsi (Payag).⁵ He received education and spiritual training under the guidance of his father Shaikh Shaban ul Millat and after completing his spiritual training, received bayt (initiation) from his father. Saiyid Taqi ud din also travelled far and away and visited many famous Sufi centers. During such a tour he met Saiyid Muhammad Bukhari bin Mir Abdul Haq Kabir in Bukhara and stayed with him for twelve years. In the meantime he was married to the daughter of Saiyid Mir Abdul Kabir, who was named Rukmah Begum. Shaikh Taqi ud din also received many spiritual gifts from Saiyid Mir Abdul Haq.⁶ After death of Saiyid Mir Abdul Kabir, he returned to Hindustan with his family and when he reached to Delhi he saw a dream that Sultan ul Mashaikh (King of Saints) Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya had gifted him spiritual robe and Khilafat. So he went to meet to Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya and described his dream to him, Shaikh replied that he has also seen a similar dream and accepted him in his service. Shaikh Taqi ud din remained in the service of him for one year and learned mystic knowledge. After one year Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya gave him spiritual robe and made him one of his khalifas.⁷ Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya also asked him at the time of his departure to meet Mir Saiyid Alauddin Jayuri of Kubrawiya

order. On the instruction of Shaikh Nizamuddin he also met Saiyid Alauddin and received spiritual gifts from him and thus Kubrawiyah order was introduced to his legacy.⁸

Hazrat Shah Jalaluddin or popularly known as Ganj Rawan⁹ also came to Jhunsi to meet Shaikh Taqi ud din. He stayed with him for one week in seclusion and they talked about mysticism after one week Shah Jalaluddin was also very influenced by his spiritual abilities and knowledge of abstruse Sufi subjects.¹⁰ He said these lines about Shaikh Taqi ud din

خدا سیف بی تو ادیب تقی ہے

جدا تن از رابکن عوم سر

(Shaikh Taqiuddin you are the sword of Almighty, Behead my enemies).

Shah Madar Badiuddin also met him and he was very much impressed with his spiritual capabilities and devotion for Almighty. He is said to have stayed with Shaikh Taqi for three days in his huzra (hospice) and remarked that I have seen a real wali (saint) here.¹¹

Along with a great Sufi Shah Taqi ud din was also a good poet and wrote some rubayi (poems) in the praise of Almighty and divine love. Farrukhsiyar had visited Shaikh Taqi ud din's shrine in 1712 AD while he was on his way to fight Jahandar for the crown.¹² A biography of the Shaikh was later on written by one of his followers, Haji Rumi, praising both the son and father and it was entitled as Tahrir ul-Mu taqid fi Halat-i-Murshid.¹³

Conclusion

Manba ul Ansab was originally written in Persian and later it was translated into Urdu. Sayyid Mu ĩn Al-Haqq wrote this book around 830 AH/1426 AD. This book is divided into eleven chapters Along with the history of Prophet Muhammad and The Twelve Imams and The Fourteen Infallibles, it also gives account of various Sufi orders. The book also gives us the genealogy of Prophets and *Manba ul Ansab* has its unique importance as the title suggests itself; *it* gives us crucial information regarding the saints and their genealogy that were related to Bukkur (Bhakkhar) and its surrounding region.

This source gives us crucial information regarding the spread of Sufism in the Prayag (later Allahabad) region during thirteenth century. Jhunsi emerged as the epicenter of Sufis in the period and became abode

of Sufis and mystics in the region. From here many Sufis received mystical training and many of them also settled at various parts in the region including Bamhrauli and Kara-Manikpur. The most renowned Sufi of the region was Khwaja Karak Abdal or Khawaja Gurg who was a disciple of Shaikh Imaduddin Ismaili Suhrawardi, who was in turn a disciple of Shaikh Shaban ul Millat of Jhunsi.¹⁴ These saints played an important role in the spread of Sufism in the region and they founded their hospices (*khanqah*) which in turn became the centers of acculturation and synthesis of liberal ideas.



Fig.1. Tombs of Shaikh Shaban Millat and Shaikh Taqiuddin at Jhunsi (Field Survey)

Notes and References

1. Jhunsi stands near the confluence of the Ganges and the Yamuna, in the immediate neighborhood of Allahabad.
2. *Chilla*, literally forty is a mystic practice of solitude and meditation.
3. *Manba ul Ansab* , Hazrat Makhdum Saiyid Moinul Haq Jhunsvi tr. Allama Dr. Sahil Sehsahrami, Aligarh, pp. 318-20
4. Ibid. p. 326
5. *Manba ul Ansab*, Hazrat Makhdum Saiyid Moinul Haq Jhunsvi tr. Allama Dr. Sahil Sehsahrami, Aligarh, p. 326
6. Ibid, p. 327
7. Ibid, p. 328
8. Ibid. p. 328.
9. Shah Jalal uddin or Ganj Rawan (flowing treasure) was a Suhrawardi saint born in Khirkan near Bukhara and one of the earliest Sufis who settled in Deccan. His tomb is in Unasnagar, Daulatabad. He is popularly known to cure the barren women and give them children by his grace. See. Azad Bilgrami, *Rawzat al Awliya*, 1786, Urdu Tr. Prof. Nisar Ahmad Farooqui, Delhi, 1996, pp. 54-57. See also, Carl W, Ernst, *Eternal Garden*, pp. 232-33.
10. *Manba ul Ansab*, Hazrat Makhdum Saiyid Moinul Haq Jhunsvi tr. Allama Dr. Sahil Sehsahrami, Aligarh, p. 329.
11. Ibid. p. 330.
12. Uttar Pradesh District Gazetteer, Allahabad, 1968, p. 246.
13. Nabi Hadi, *Dictionary of Indo-Persian Literature*, New Delhi, 1995, p. 548
14. *Manba ul Ansab*, Hazrat Makhdum Saiyid Moinul Haq Jhunsvi tr. Allama Dr. Sahil Sehsahrami, Aligarh, p. 325

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