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# **Special Paper Section**

# Management, Organisation and Innovation in Indian Firms: A Case Study based on Enterprise Survey Data

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## **Abstract**

*This paper looks at some aspects of management, organization and innovation at the firm level for the Indian manufacturing sector. Using enterprise survey data for the year 2009 we find that in the period after liberalization began in 1991 a large majority of firms do not undertake any form of conventional technological innovation, i.e., in-house R&D. Some sectors rely more on alternative sources of technological innovation than on intra-mural R&D in terms of introducing new products, hiring external consultants and outsourcing production to other firms. Thus firms have partially moved from the narrow to the broader definition of innovation which shows that firms have realized the importance of innovation to be competitive in both the domestic and in the international markets. However, innovation has extended to incorporate 'management innovation' only very marginally. Management practices remain conservative. Ownership and top management continues to be in the hand of the same family. Inability to find trustworthy employees is generally cited as the most important reason for adopting this method of management. Workers' role in product or process innovation and decision making, especially decisions with financial implications is minimal. Decentralization by establishment and by hierarchy is low. 'Peoples' management' is still low in priority irrespective of firm size. We further complement the analysis with the surveys of 2005 and 2010.*

*JEL Classification: L60, O30, O33*

*Key Words: innovation, competitiveness, innovation survey, innovation systems, Indian manufacturing sector*

## **Introduction**

This paper looks at the management, organization and innovation activity in Indian firms in the liberalization period which began in 1991. This period marked the adoption of the New Economic Policy and the opening-up of the economy to the forces of globalization in response to the balance of payments crisis. Excessive emphasis on price-competitiveness with currency depreciation as a policy tool to promote exports had clearly not delivered the desired results. Competing on the basis of low prices and the advantage of cheap labour is bound to be short-lived for any economy. The need to alter export structures, create dynamic comparative advantage and improve product quality and variety implies that firms upgrade their capabilities to adopt, adapt, assimilate and improve upon imported technologies. This in turn has implications for their capacity to innovate and is contingent on firms' abilities to become dynamic, diversify, use latest technology and continue to

adapt and evolve borrowed technology which in turn depends on firms' capabilities and investment in both physical and human capitals.

By 2009, the year for which the data is used in this paper, more than fifteen years had passed since liberalization. Hence a look at the aspects of management, organization and innovation for a cross-section of firms belonging to the manufacturing sector is instructive in assessing the ability and the readiness of Indian firms and business groups to evolve and adapt to new challenges, especially when 2010-2020 has been declared as the 'Decade of Innovation'. The present analysis has implications for an innovation policy and promotion of innovation at the firm level.

We look at the management, organization and innovation (MOI) aspects of 200 Indian firms covered by Enterprise Survey for the year 2009. This is the latest period for which this survey is available. The respondent firms are spread over eleven sectors. The various heads under which information is collected are: general information about the firm, management, organization, innovation, degree of competition and labour. The overall analysis is complemented with an analysis of firm-level innovation by sector and by firm-size. In India firm-size is generally defined in terms of the investment or by sales-turnover. The present data set lacks any information on either of the variables and hence we classify firms into small, medium and large according to the number of employees.

There are very few studies on firm level innovation in India based on survey data. One of our main findings is that despite liberalization a large majority of firms do not undertake the most conventional form of technological innovation, i.e., in-house R&D. One-third of small and medium sized firms and more than 50 per cent of large firms invest in R&D. Some sectors rely more on alternative sources of technological innovation than intra-mural R&D. These alternative forms comprise introduction of new products or processes, hiring external consultants, outsourcing production to other firms and using imported capital and intermediate goods. We see that firms have partially moved from the narrow or the conventional form of technological change to the broader definition of innovation. Firms have realized the importance of innovation to be competitive in both domestic and international markets but innovation has not extended to substantial non-technological or 'management innovation'. Management practices remain obsolete. Ownership and top management remain vested in a single family. Workers' role in product and process innovation and decision making especially decisions with financial implications is minimal. Decentralization by plant and by hierarchy is low. 'People management' remains neglected.

The next section defines innovation. Data and sample design are briefly discussed in the third section. The fourth section presents the findings of our descriptive analysis. The analysis in the preceding section for 2009 seems incomplete as it does not comment on the overall environment comprising policy, organizations and institutions which affect innovation. To complete the analysis, we discuss the findings of an exhaustive survey of 2005. A recent 2010 survey undertaken

to complement the 2009 survey is discussed to present a complete picture of internal and external factors affecting Indian firm innovation. The last section presents the conclusions.

## **What is Innovation?**

All production takes place at the firm or the plant level. Irrespective of whether a firm caters to the domestic or the international market it faces competition. To remain competitive and retain or increase its market shares the firm must upgrade its product quality and introduce newer, differentiated products. The demand side compulsions have to be addressed by an appropriate supply side response. Firm innovation depends on the interaction between firms and the 'knowledge infrastructure'. There are spill-over effects and externalities of firm-level innovation for other firms, sectors and regions. Differential firm-level innovation determines varied firm performance within a sector.

Most technology used by developing countries is initially imported which is either transferred by the MNCs or is bought by the developing country and consultants are hired to provide know-how. The MNC transfers the standardized product and embodied technology to developing countries and retains the core competencies in the firm in the home country. Firms also learn via exporting thus interacting with their buyers' and change products according to the latter's preferences. A more recent way of acquiring state-of-the-art technology by developing country firms is by participating in the global value chains. International production has become segmented and is located in different countries depending on the complexity, codifiability of tasks and competence of suppliers (CCC). With innovation becoming increasingly internationalized and developing country firms very rapidly joining the global value chains the relevance of innovation system at the national and the regional levels has increased.

Innovation is defined as the use of a new method / discovery / invention. It can be 'new to the firm' or 'new to the market', both national and international. Most literature treats the former as a sufficient condition for innovation at the firm level as it directly affects firm performance. Innovation can be internal or external to the firm. Internal implies the research conducted in the firm's R&D department. External sources include adoption of techniques invented by public research institutes and universities, import of technical know-how (embodied and disembodied), hiring of external consultants, joint collaboration with a MNC or becoming its subsidiary and lastly, being part of a global value chain (GVC).

The core of innovation comprises intra-firm scientific R&D to generate new products and processes. This is the conventional definition of innovation. One can progressively expand the narrow definition of innovation by adding layers to the core definition of innovation. These include making use of new discoveries by other firms or public research institutions/universities for a payment of royalty or technical fees. These may be sourced from within the domestic or

international spheres. Other forms of innovation include import of intermediate inputs and capital goods. These comprise the import of embodied technology. Imports of physical goods can be supplemented by tacit or disembodied imports of technical expertise in the form of hiring services of consultants to provide know-how.

The above concepts of innovation, irrespective of whether they are internal or external to the firm, are concerned with the use of science and technology to produce newer or better products or improving the process of production. It is recognized that innovation must be broadened to include the ways in which businesses are conducted. Termed as 'management innovation', this includes the use of available resources to generate novel methods to address organizational and marketing aspects of firms' activities. Hence innovation comprises both technological and non-technological aspects which are not mutually exclusive. Both kinds of innovation are conducted by coordinating the activities of internal and external agents.

The Oslo Manual defines the concept of innovation and outlines the contents of an innovation survey. Accordingly, innovation implies introduction of newer products, processes (change in production or delivery methods), organizational (change in business practices in workplace or in external relations) and marketing (changes in product design, packaging, advertisement, pricing and placement) methods, either new to the firm or the market. The rationale for this definition is that a large majority of firms, particularly the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in developing countries, may not have the conventional high R&D-intensity involving 'new to the market' innovation. At best with access to imported technology they can introduce 'new to the firm' innovations. However they may evolve better managerial and business practices on their own or in interaction with clients. These 'new to the market' organizational and marketing changes collectively known as 'management innovation' have been reported and studied by management experts and are also seen as innovation. The rise in the incidence of business-method patents suggests that once a method is successfully implemented in one firm it has positive externalities for other firms. This gives rise to 'appropriability' issues necessitating patents. Use of different methods helps firms achieve better growth and profitability.

Innovation differs by sector, region and nation. The last is influenced by the interaction of firms with their respective factors markets, policy regimes controlling IPRs and legal and social institutions. Learning and innovation are thus interconnected with firms embedded in the local social contexts. Firms' technological capabilities depend on internal organization and capabilities which occur in the context of and within the framework provided by national innovation systems.

The concept of 'national system of innovation' (NSI) provides an alternative dynamic and analytical framework to study economic growth with innovation and learning in the context of 'catching-up' economies. Countries differ in their ability to develop technology within the context of their socio-economic institutions and public policy. Economic structure and institutions are two important pillars of innovation system. Innovation in Schumpeterian sense is both technical and organizational change with the latter, along with human development and training, determining

the success of converting the former into desired economic performance. Government policy, provision of infrastructure, education, industrial relations, legal institutions and research funding affects the environment of innovation. Dynamics of technological change must be understood in the contexts of innovation systems within which firms are embedded .

### **Data and sample design**

The data used in this paper has been taken from the enterprise survey data collected by the World Bank for the year 2009 . There are 200 firms over 11 sectors covered in the MOI survey . Besides the lack of information on sales or investment by firm there is also no data on training, exports and imports by firm. The survey also has no information on the overall environment within which the firms operate which comprises the National Innovation System (NIS). Hence to complete the analysis we draw on the 2005 and the 2010 surveys. These two surveys comment on the environment within which firms operate. Hence the three surveys taken together can be used to comment on the internal and external factors which affect management, innovation and organization of firms.

The percentage distribution of the firms by sector is given in Chart 1. The highest number of firms is in the textiles sector followed by other manufacturing. Together these two sectors account for 45 per cent of the sample. Of the remaining firms 11 per cent belong to the chemicals sector and 12 per cent are in the machinery and equipment sector. The remaining firms are distributed over food, garments, plastics and rubber, basic metals, non-metallic mineral products, fabricated metal products and electronics. Regional location is classified into East, West, North and South. The highest concentration of the surveyed firms is in the western region which has traditionally been endowed with better infrastructure and pro-industry policy. This is followed by the southern and the northern regions.

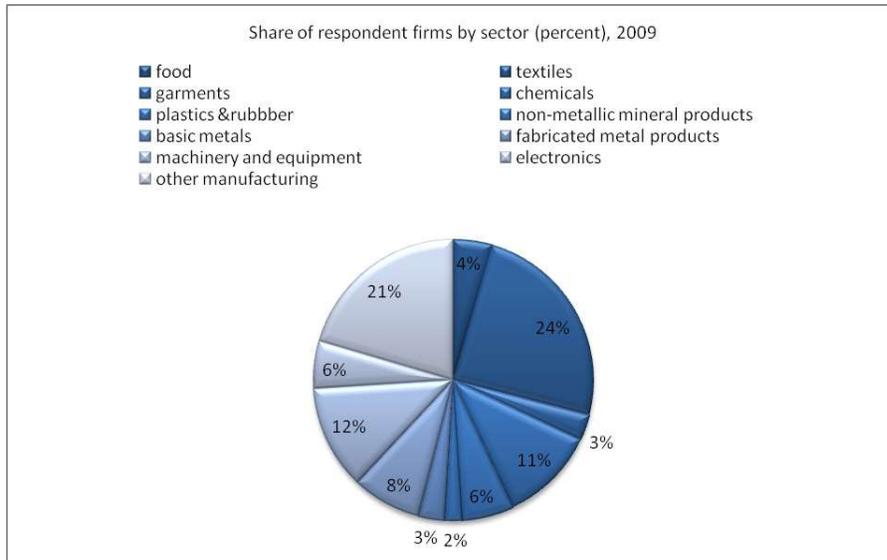


Chart 1

The survey does not provide any figures for sales in 2009. Hence any classification regarding size distribution of the sample firms is done on the basis of number of employees recorded in the survey. In the Indian context size is defined in terms of the investment in plant and machinery (fixed assets excluding land and building) rather than the number of employees. The European Union classifies a small business as one which employs less than 50 employees, a medium business employs between 50 and 250 workers and the remaining firms are considered as large firms. The US uses a different definition. Small enterprises employ less than 100 workers, medium enterprises employ less than 500 workers and firms employing more than 500 workers are designated as large firms. We try both the definitions but report results using the US definition as the range of number of employees is very large. In the given sample 37 firms do not report the number of employees. Of the remaining 163 firms 35 per cent are large firms and medium and small firms comprise 38.5 per cent and 7.5 per cent respectively (Chart 2).

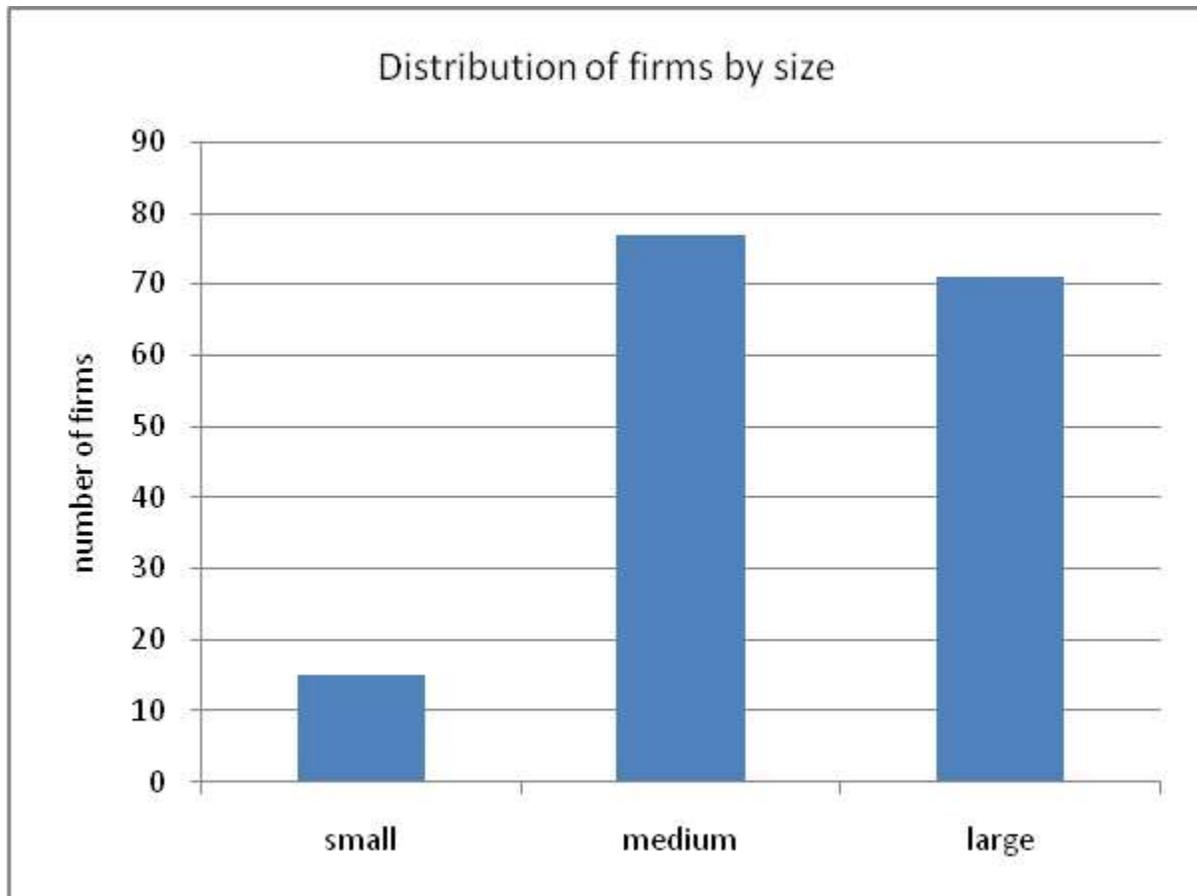


Chart 2

### Main Findings of the Survey

- General Profile: Of the 200 firms 163 firms (81.5 per cent) are part of a bigger firm and the remaining 37 are firms on their own. Distribution of firms by their legal status is shown in Chart 3. A firm's legal status defines the extent of liability or the responsibility of the owner over the firm's obligations. Among the categories given here sole proprietorship and partnership have unlimited liability and the rest have limited liability which means that each owner is only responsible for his proportion of shares. Cooperatives and state-owned firms comprise the category 'others'. Twenty eight percent of the total firms are shareholding firms whose shares are traded in the stock market while 38 per cent of the total firms are shareholding firms whose shares are traded privately. The remaining firms are more or less equally divided between sole proprietorship, partnership and limited partnership. Only 28 per cent of the firms are thus listed in the stock market and 22 per cent firms have unlimited liability. Chart 4 shows that small and medium size firms

have the largest proportion of firms whose shares are traded privately while a large majority of large firms are shareholding are listed in the stock market.



Chart 3

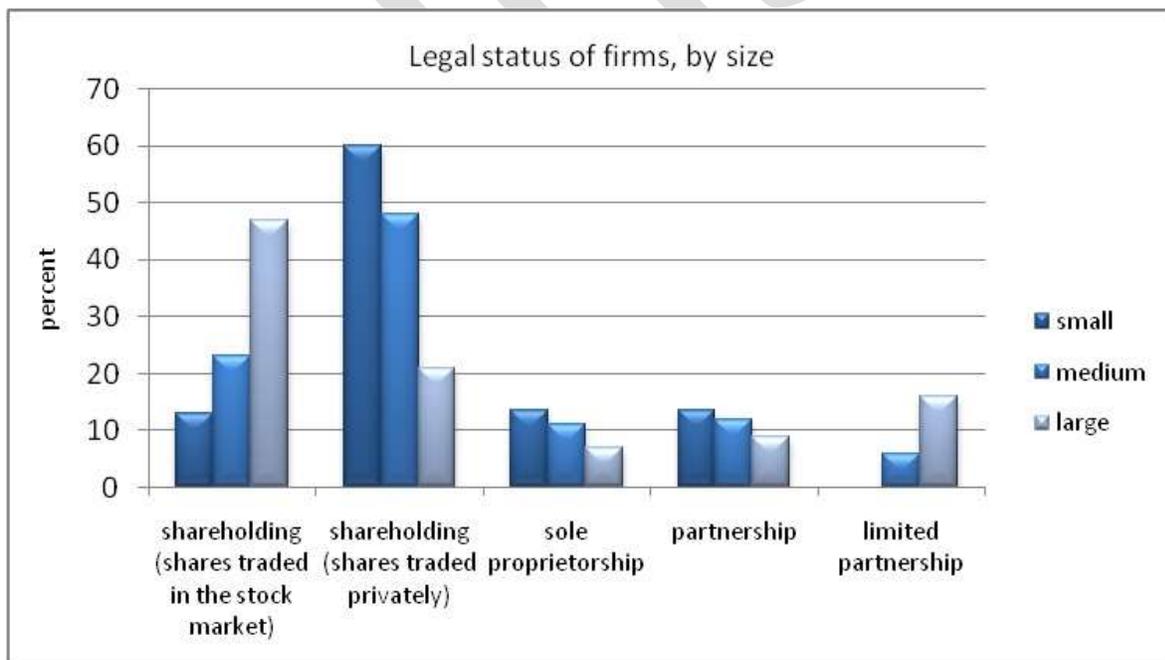


Chart 4

For 67.5 per cent of the total firms the top manager is also the founder of the firm. More than half of the firms (55 per cent) are family owned. Twenty percent of the firms have multiple owners and 17 per cent are owned by individuals. Only 7 firms are designated as foreign firms and one firm is owned by a foreign individual. Ninety-eight percent of the firms (out of 110 reporting for this question) report that the top manager of the firm is the member of the family which owns it and 77 per cent of these managers are first generation managers usually the oldest son. Seventy-five percent of these 110 firms have up to four managers who are part of the family owning the business. For the entire sample (200 firms) the ownership has remained the same over the past three years. Separation between ownership and management is still uncommon.

- Employees: There are 163 responses to the number of employees which means that 18.5 per cent firms are out of this distribution and any analysis that may be made on the basis of firm size. There are 15 firms with 100 or lesser employees (7.5 per cent), 77 firms between 100 and 500 employees (38.5 per cent) and 71 firms with more than 500 employees (35.5 per cent). Three fiscal years ago 15 per cent of the 163 firms had less than 100 employees, 45 per cent of the firms had between 100 to 500 employees and 35 per cent with more than 500 employees. Hence the largest increase is registered by large firms and a perceptible decline in the number of smaller firms. This reflects a restructuring and greater concentration in the manufacturing sector in favour of large firms between 2006 and 2009.

- Decision making: Next we look at how crucial decisions are made at the firm-level and comment on whether the process is still centralized or allows initiative on part of the lower level management. We also see whether decisions are taken by the headquarters or the establishment. The decision to hire a full time, permanent production employee is taken at the establishment level for 55 per cent of the total responding firms (163). Thirty one percent of the firms hire jointly with the headquarters while for 14 per cent of the firms only the head-quarters take these decisions.

Forty two percent of the firms have the power to grant a hike of 10 per cent in the salaries of production employees. Thirty three percent firms do it jointly with the head-quarters and for more than 20 per cent of the sample firms the head-quarters take this decision.

The initiative of introducing new products lies more with the national head-quarters than with the establishment for 55 per cent of the responding firms. Only 11 per cent of the firms have the freedom to take independent decision regarding new products. Similarly the pricing decisions are also controlled more by the national head-quarters (64 per cent) with little freedom at the enterprise level. Only 9 per cent of the 163 firms can take this decision independently.

Advertising decisions are also centralized in that the initiative lies completely with the national head-quarters for almost 70 per cent of the sample and only 5 per cent firms can take this decision independently. Hence decisions with financial implications are more centralized in the hands of the head-quarters. By firm size we find there is greater decentralization in large firms than in small or medium sized firms. For hiring and pay hike the decisions are more decentralized for large firms

while the proportion of firms allowing participation in the remaining three decisions is smaller although still higher for large than small or medium sized firms (Chart 5).

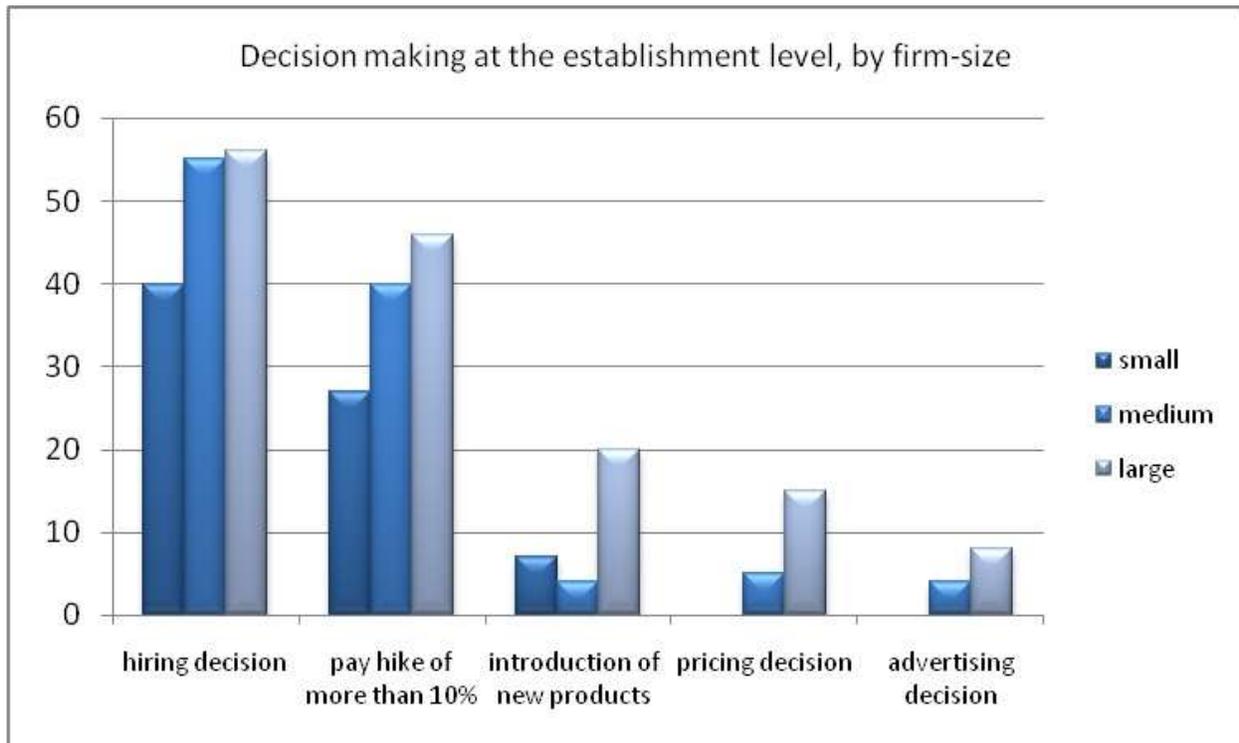


Chart 5

- Hierarchy: The evidence suggests that there are not many layers between the top and the bottom level in the organization. Out of 200 firms 58.5 per cent of the firms have four or less number of levels between the head-quarters top manager and a typical production employee at the level of the establishment. Only one firm each report 9 and 10 levels. The number of levels has increased for 3 firms and decreased for 6 firms but has remained the same for the remaining 96 per cent of the firms. For 37.5 per cent of the firms there is only one level between a production employee and a factory manager with no more than three levels for 83 per cent of the respondents. Forty seven firms out of 200 firms employ four full time top and middle level managers. Eighty eight percent firms have less than 10 such managers. Hence no more than 12 per cent of the sample report between 10 and 50 managers. For 62.5 per cent of the total firms not even one of the top managers is a female. Only 14.5 per cent of these firms have one top manager who is a female and another 13 per cent who have two top managers who are female. The bias in favour of males as top managers is quite strong.

Ninety three percent of total firms have 4 or less top and middle level managers with an MBA from within the country. Fifteen firms have only one top or middle level manager with an MBA

from abroad and 150 firms have no manager with a foreign management degree. Seventy three firms have three or less number of managers who have worked in an MNC before. One firm has 12 and another one has 20 such managers. The top-most manager of almost 82 per cent firms have 30 years or less of experience.

- Management practices: In this sub-section the survey examines the responses of managers in case of problems like machinery break-down, production-performance indicators, monitoring of worker performance, employment of external consultants and issues related to promotion. When process problems arise (like machinery breakdown, human error or failures in communication) 54 per cent of the 200 firms take corrective measures and try to ensure that it does not arise again in the future. Forty five percent firms go further in adopting monitoring measures to be able to anticipate the problem. Sixty four percent of the firms have more than two production performance indicators like quantity, quality, etc. By firm-size 60 per cent of small firms use only one or two indicators and 76 per cent of large firms prefer to use more than two indicators for a large majority of firms.

Around 47 per cent of the firms monitor and collect information on these indicators on a daily basis. Twenty seven percent firms report a weekly monitoring and 20 per cent conduct a monthly review. Factory managers review these indicators daily in 49 per cent firms (out of 189 firms) while factory managers look at these indicators on a weekly basis for 35 per cent of the firms. In these 189 firms workers get to see this information on a daily basis in 54 per cent firms and weekly in 13 per cent firms. A monthly review with the workers is done by 24 per cent of the total number of firms. Sixty three percent firms display these results in more than one place while 23 per cent firms display it at only one place. Fifteen percent of firms do not display this information at all. Top and middle managers also review these indicators continually in 63 per cent firms out of 189 firms and periodically in 32 per cent of the total firms.

However this information is not used to compare performance and promote competition between workers in different shifts in almost 60 per cent of the firms. With respect to the time scale of production targets for the firm's main product, more than half the firms (56 per cent) report having a short term focus (less than one year). Twenty five percent of firms also report an integrated short term and long term targets for the main product. Ninety percent of the 196 firms for which such data is available reward the entire staff for achieving production targets.

External consultants are seen as a source of providing tacit technological know-how in improving management and adopting new, imported technology. Of the 200 firms 57 per cent of the total firms (113) did not hire an external consultant in the last fiscal year. Sixty percent of the remaining 87 firms hired either one or two consultants only. Only one firm reported having hired 8 consultants. By size, smaller firms hired an average of four external consultants followed by two consultants by the medium-sized firms and only one by large firms. Thus large firms have resources to conduct in-house R&D and prefer to guard it by employing researchers rather than rely on external sources. By sector a large proportion of firms hired external consultants in the

other manufacturing and fabricated metals followed by machinery and equipment and chemicals. Simple manufactures like garments and textiles have only 33 per cent and 35 per cent of firms hiring external consultants (chart 6).

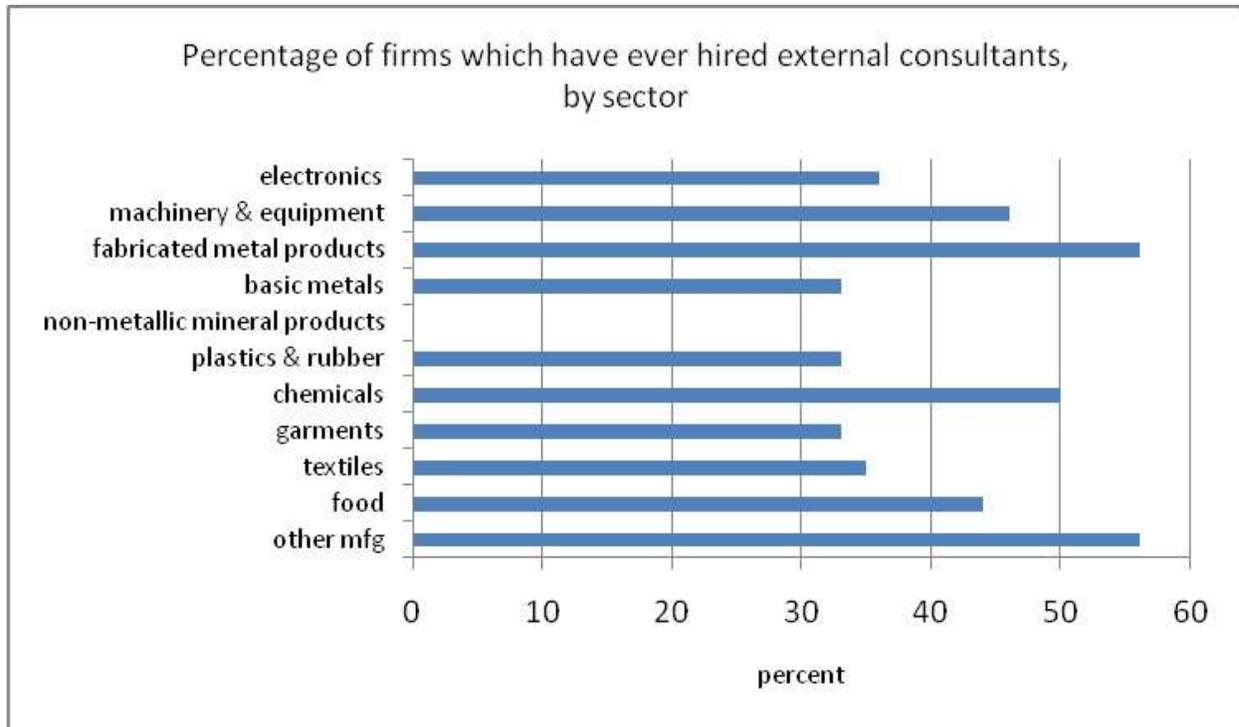


Chart 6

On an average these consultants were hired for no more than 16 days in the year. Only 15 out of 87 firms hired consultants from international agencies. Ninety two percent of the 113 firms which did not hire any consultants maintained that they felt no need for such assistance.

Slightly less than half the firms promote their employees on the basis of ability and merit while for 38.5 per cent of the firms tenure also matters. To deal with employees who do not meet their targets in their given positions 67 per cent firms rapidly retrain them and dismiss them if they continue to fail. All firms prefer merit and ability as the basis of promotion but the proportion of smaller firms is higher than the medium and the large firms. Medium-sized firms have the lowest proportion for using factors other than merit as the basis of promotion while the large firms have the highest percentage (chart 7).

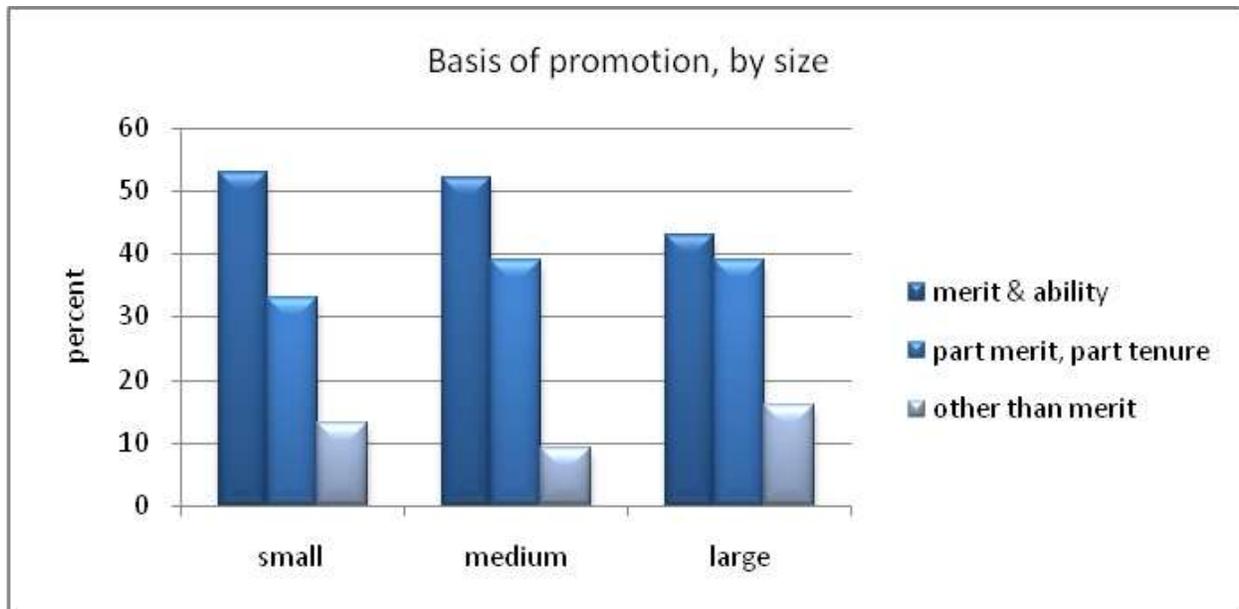


Chart 7

- Organization: Of the 200 firms 98 per cent of the firms have less than 20 employees reporting directly to the factory manager who is singularly responsible for allocating tasks among workers in 84 per cent of the firms. However in 15 per cent of the firms the assignment of task and setting the pace of work is shared by both the workers and the factory manager. In 50 per cent of the firms workers' opinion matters in deciding the number of working hours and the holidays declared by the firm. Eighty nine percent of the firms keep the prerogative of appointing new employees with the management and workers have little say in the matter. Investment decisions are still more centralized with the management (92 per cent of the firms). Only 13 per cent firms ask for workers' opinion regarding introduction of new products. Ninety nine percent of the firms reserve the pricing decision with the management only. Workers' opinions are more important in making most of the decisions in small firms vis a vis large firms except in case of pricing decision which is a right reserved by the management for itself across almost all firms.

Perception regarding how well the firm is managed overall, regarding people management and regarding operations management shows that only 24 per cent of the firms feel that their firms follow the 'best practice' for overall management. Twenty nine percent of the firms feel that 'best practice' operations management techniques are adopted and 19 per cent perceive that 'best practice' people management methods are used by the sample firms.

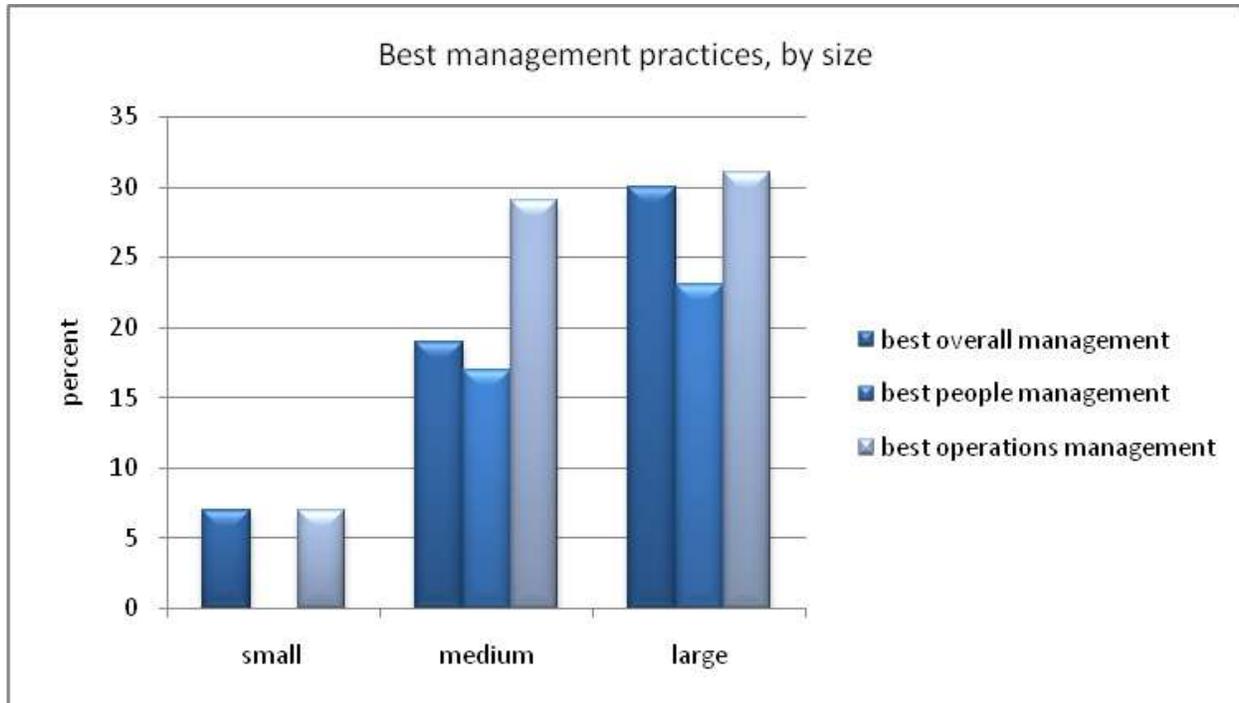


Chart 8

Chart 8 gives the share of firms, by size, which report that their firms follow best overall management practices, best people management practices and best operations management practices. Only 7 per cent of the small firms feel that their firms follow best operations and best overall management practices but none feels they have the best people management practices. For medium sized firms the lowest number firms feel that their firms have the best people management practices while the maximum number feels that their firms have the best operations management practices. Large firms have the largest measure of all indices but even for the large firms people management figure is lower than the other two indices. For all three groups the figure for operations management practices is the highest followed by overall management with the least figure for people management practices. Large firms are the 'best' managed in terms of operations, people and overall management followed by medium and small firms.

- **Innovation:** Innovation is defined in both conventional and unconventional terms. The former studies the internal R&D and the number of patents obtained either within the country or abroad. The conventional definition must be broadened to incorporate not only technological change leading to the introduction of a range of new products or processes with the adoption of newer methods of organization and marketing. Factors like worker-training, acquisition of embodied technology in terms of new capital goods and equipment, outsourcing, employment of external consultants, international certification, better methods of management, increased worker participation in decision making, stress on acquiring a more educated work force both production

and non-production employees, etc are some other aspects of innovation. These may not involve large outlays but lead to better organization and management of the enterprise and hence different ways of doing the same things. This survey allows us to comment on some of these aspects which enhance our understanding of the manner in which modern enterprises conduct business with policy implications.

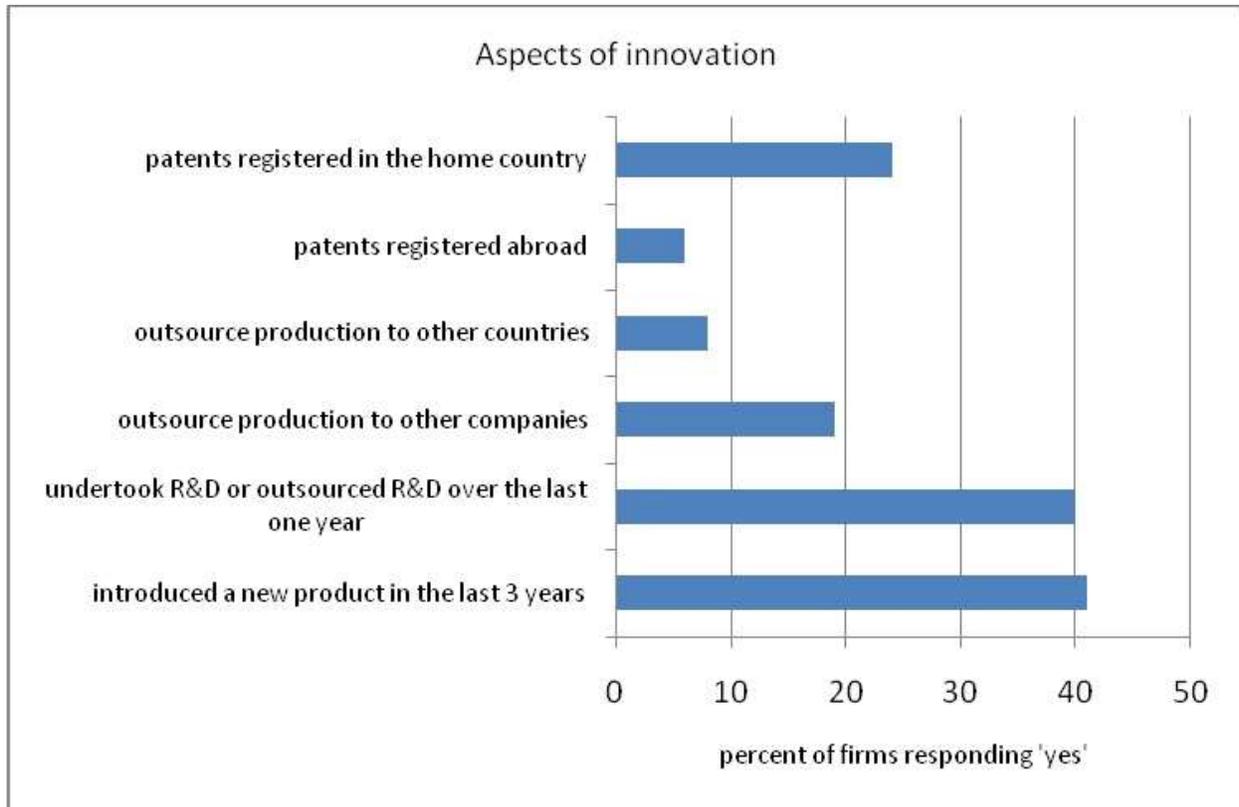


Chart 9

Chart 9 shows certain aspects of innovation for the entire sample. Sixty per cent of the entire sample firms do not undertake any R&D but almost all firms have an internet connection (99 per cent) although 85 per cent of the firms report that less than 50 per cent of their employees use personal computers. Between 2006 and 2009 41 per cent of the 200 firms (82 firms) have introduced a new product. For the entire sample eighty two per cent of the firms do not outsource any part of their production to other firms. Nineteen per cent of the 37 firms which outsource a part of their production do so only to the extent of 5 per cent or less. Forty six per cent of these 37 firms (17 firms) outsourced 10-20 per cent of their production. Two firms outsourced as much as 70 per cent and one firm gave 90 per cent of its production to external firms. Only three firms of the 37 firms outsourced around 15 per cent of their production to a foreign country . Only 12 out of 200 firms have patents registered abroad with one more in the process of acquiring it in 2009. Of these 12

patents only five have been acquired after 1995. Forty seven firms have registered patents within the country.

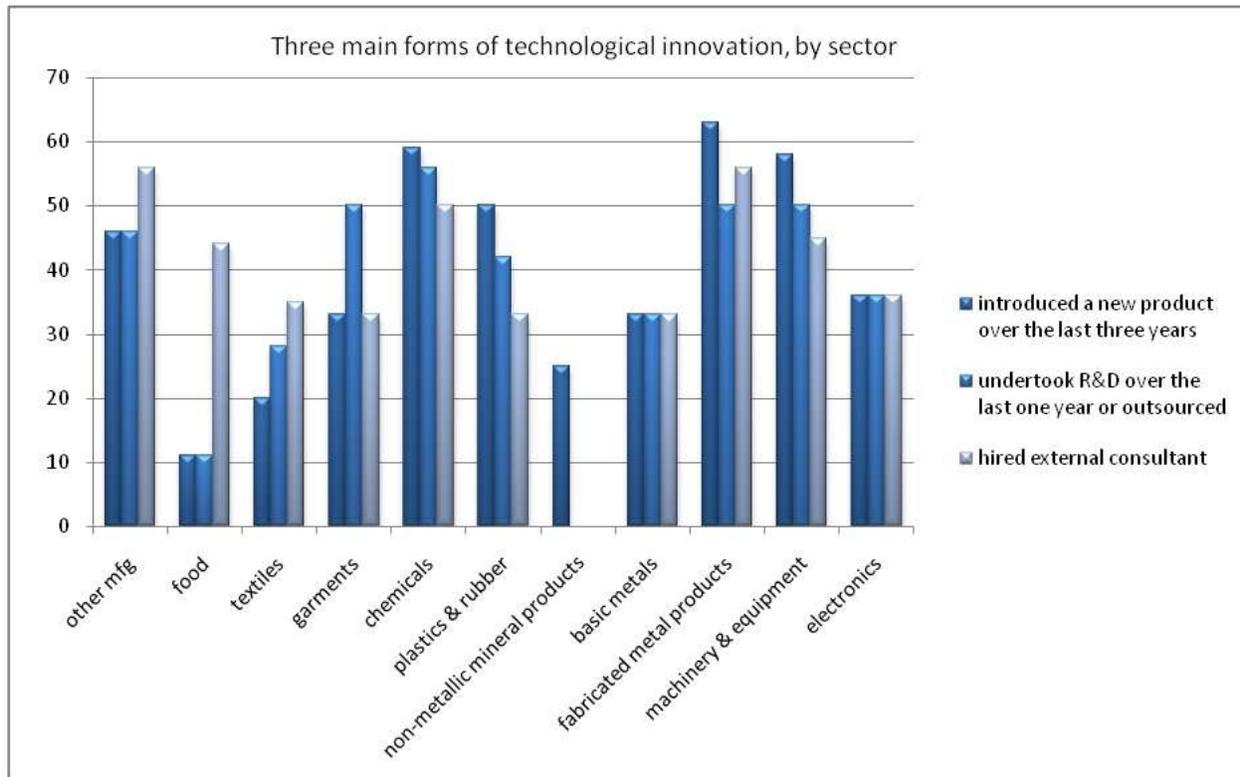


Chart 10

By sector, fabricated metal products have the largest proportion of firms which have introduced a new product in the last three years followed by chemicals, machinery and equipment and plastics and rubber (Chart 10). For these sectors the proportion of firms which have introduced a new product exceeds the share of firms which have undertaken in-house R&D. Hence for these sectors there are non intra-mural R&D sources of technological up-gradation which allow a larger proportion of firms to introduce new products. For garments and textiles the proportion of firms undertaking in-house R&D exceeds the share of firms which have introduced a new product in the last three years implying that there are constraints faced by these sectors which does not allow them to convert their R&D into new products. Food, other manufactures, basic metals and electronics have the same proportion of firms conducting R&D and having introduced new products. External consultants are the most important source of innovation for other manufacturing, food and textiles. Non-metallic manufactures is the least innovative sector with respect to R&D and hiring external consultants and yet 25 per cent firms introduced a new product in the last three years. Fabricated metal products, chemicals and machinery and equipment are the three most innovative sectors.

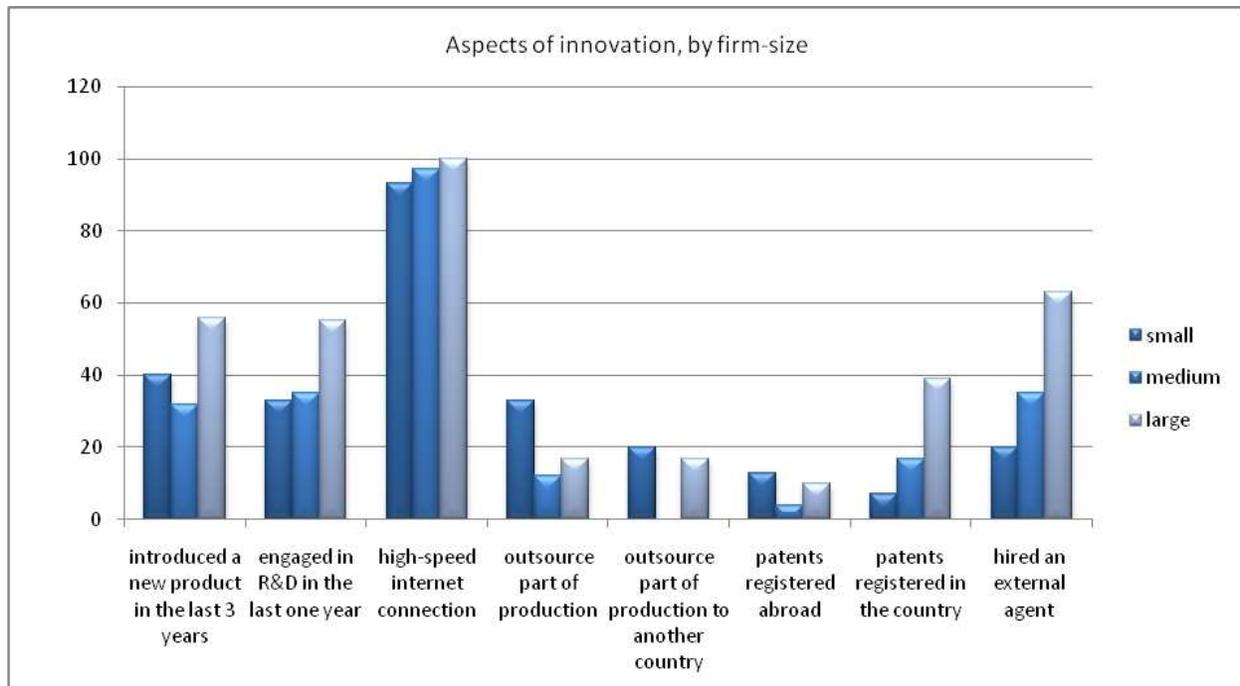


Chart 11

Chart 11 highlights innovation by firm-size. More than 90 per cent of small and medium firms and 100 per cent of all large firms have an internet connection. Large firms have the highest proportion of firms which have introduced a new product in the last three years in 2009 followed by small and then the medium-sized firms although a larger share of medium sized firms undertake in-house R&D than the small firms. The highest share belongs to large firms as expected. Small firms for lack of funds to undertake internal R&D prefer to outsource more than the other two categories of firms. Medium sized firms have the least outsourcing to other firms within the country and none to foreign country firms. Small firms have the highest proportion of firms with patents registered abroad while the proportion of firms with patents registered within the country is the highest for large firms. More than 60 per cent of large firms hire external consultants followed by medium and small firms. For small firms there is thus greater reliance on creation of new products, in-house R&D and outsourcing production as the main form of technological innovation. For medium and large-sized firms in-house R&D, creation of new products and hiring external consultants are the three most important forms of technological innovation.

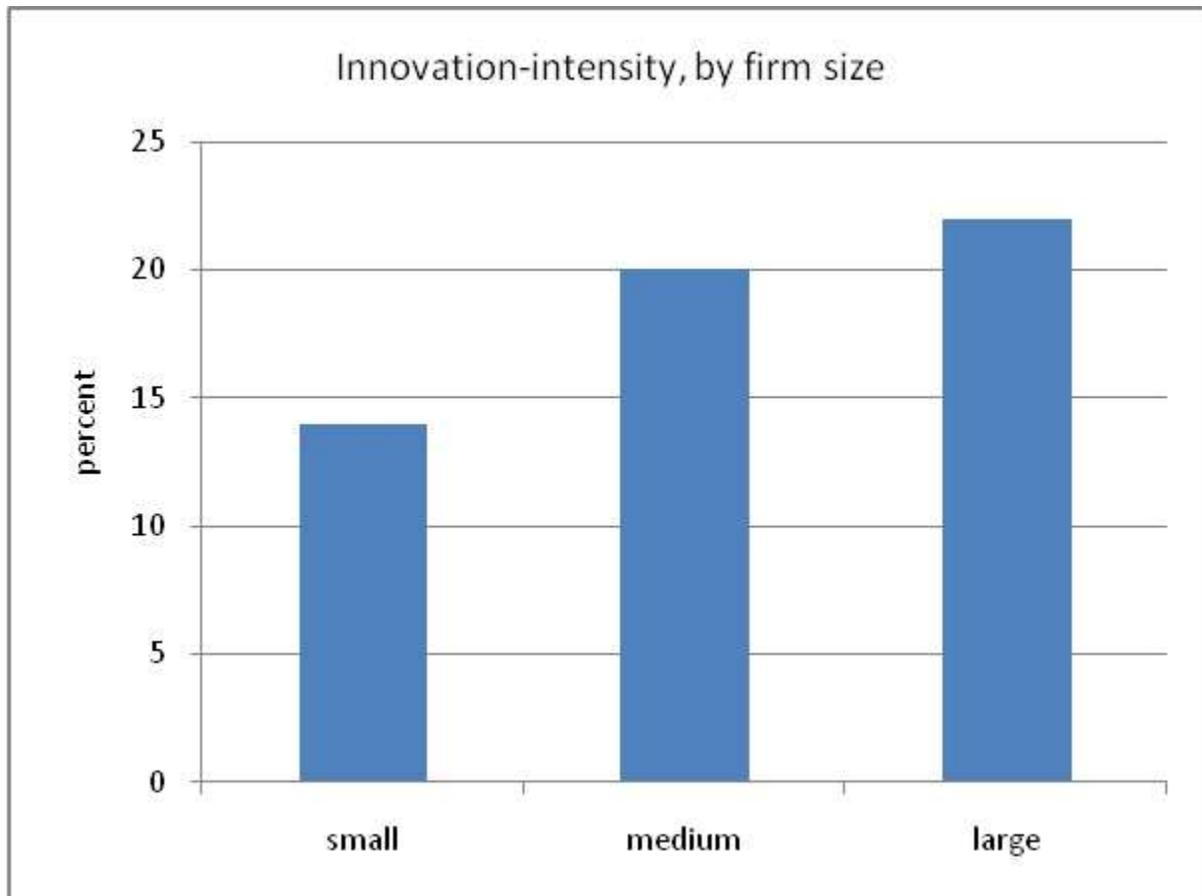


Chart 12

Innovation-intensity is defined as the contribution of the new product (which has been introduced in the last three years) to total sales revenue. The new product or service contributed up to an average of 20 per cent for all firms which introduced a new product. It was 10 per cent of the sales revenue for 25 per cent of the 82 firms which had introduced a new product or service, 20 per cent of total sales for 22 firms whereas for one firm it contributed 70 per cent of total sales and for one the entire 100 per cent. Chart 12 shows the innovation-intensity by firm-size. Of the 82 firms which report introduction of new products, information on number of employees is not available for 11 firms. For the remaining firms innovation-intensity rises with firm-size. New products contributed 14 per cent, 20 per cent and 22 per cent of sales revenue for small, medium and large firms respectively.

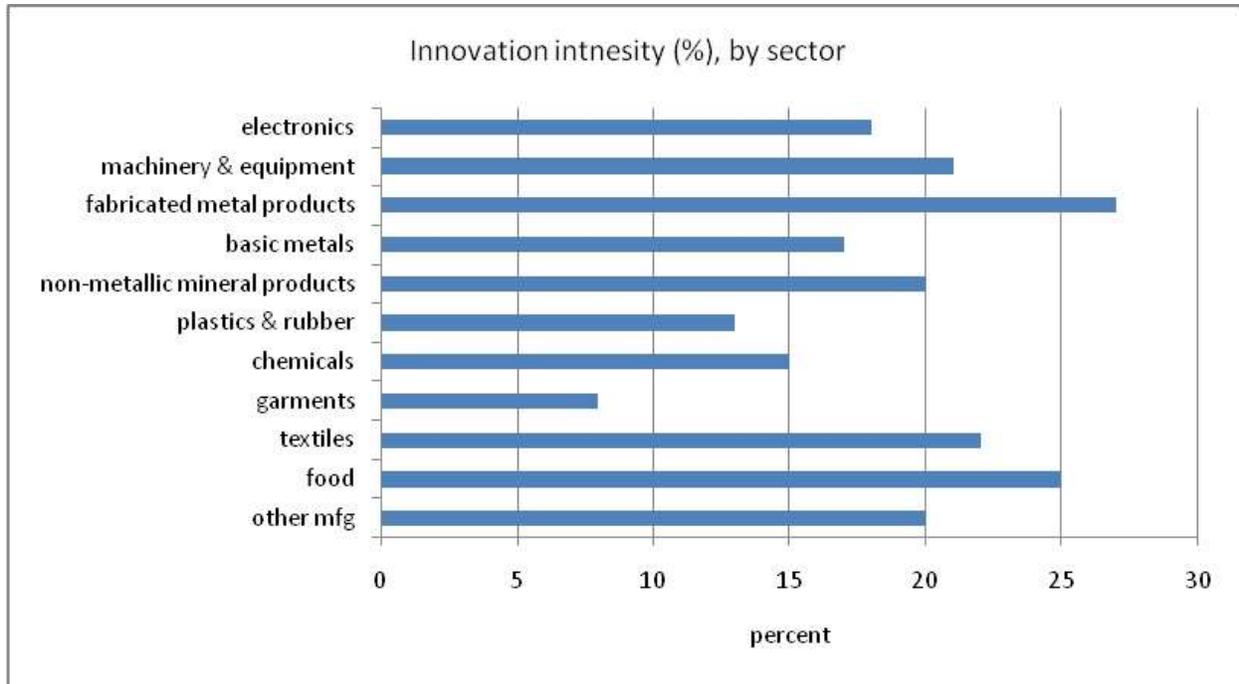


Chart 13

Chart 13 shows innovation-intensity by sector. The highest innovation-intensity is recorded for fabricated metal products and the lowest for garments. In the above analysis we did find that fabricated metal products was one sector in which the largest proportion of firms had introduced new products and it also had the largest number of firms hiring external consultants. Electronics, chemicals, plastics and rubber manufactures and basic metals have innovation-intensity lower than textiles, machinery and equipment and non-metallic mineral products and other manufactures. Among these sectors chemicals sector has a larger proportion of firms undertaking R&D, firms which have introduced new products and hired external consultants compared with machinery and equipment and textiles and non-metallic mineral products. In fact the latter sector has no firm undertaking R&D or has hired any external consultant.

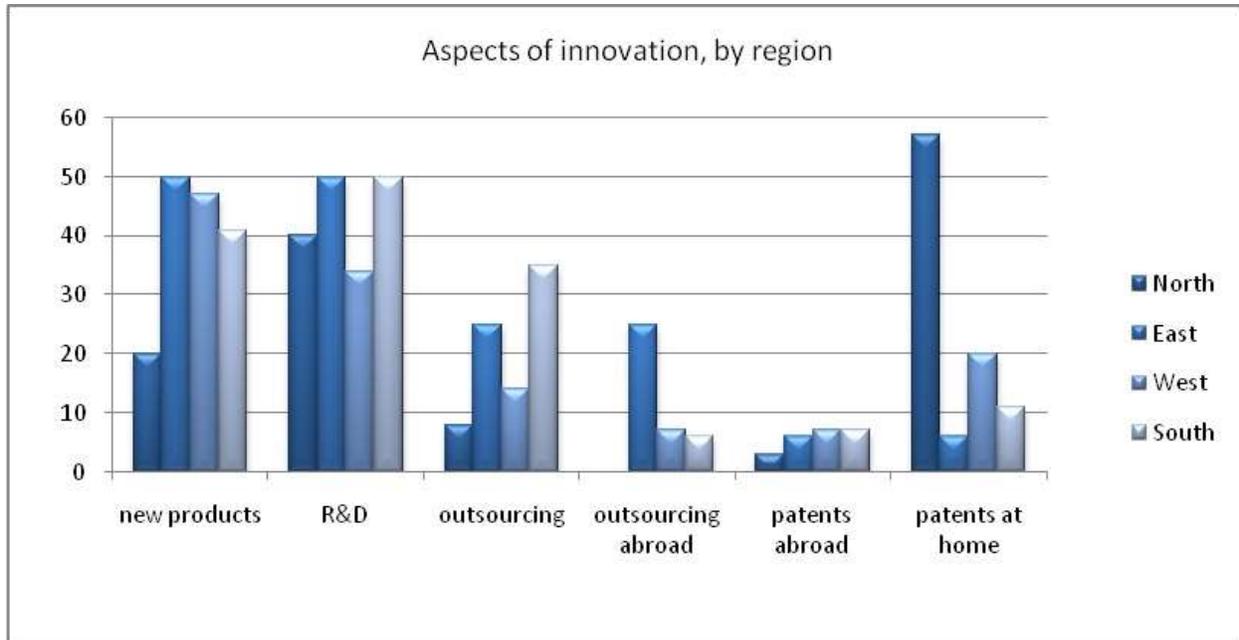


Chart 14

Chart 15 shows that firms in the eastern, western and southern regions are ahead of the northern region in introducing a new product over the last three years while firms in the north are highly intensive in in-house R&D and thus have the highest share of patents registered at home. Firms in the western region are the least R&D intensive where as firms in the south have the highest preference for outsourcing part of their production to other companies.

- Degree of competition: Twenty nine firms (15 per cent) out of 200 firms sold their main product in the local market where the firm was located. One hundred and thirty nine firms sold across the country and the remaining 32 firms focused on the international market.

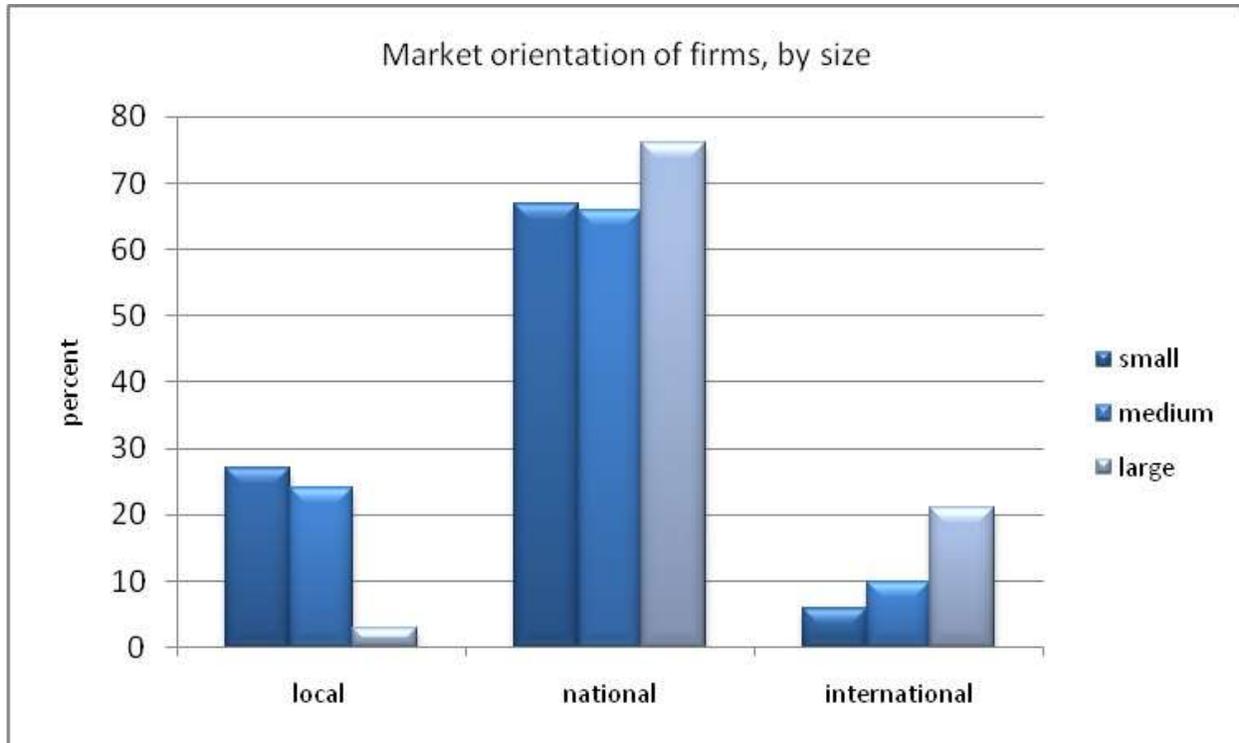


Chart 15

By size, small and medium firms sell more than large firms in the local market although the focus for all firm sizes is the national market (Chart 15). International orientation is the highest for large firms and the least for small firms as the latter have limited resources to venture into the more risky and uncertain arena.

Fifty nine percent of the firms (99 out of 168 reporting firms) face competition from MNCs in their main market and 113 firms out of 168 firms reporting (67 per cent) face competition from imported products. More than half the firms faced competition from more than five competitors in their main market. Large firms faced more competition from MNCs and from imported goods in their main markets followed by the medium and the small firms.

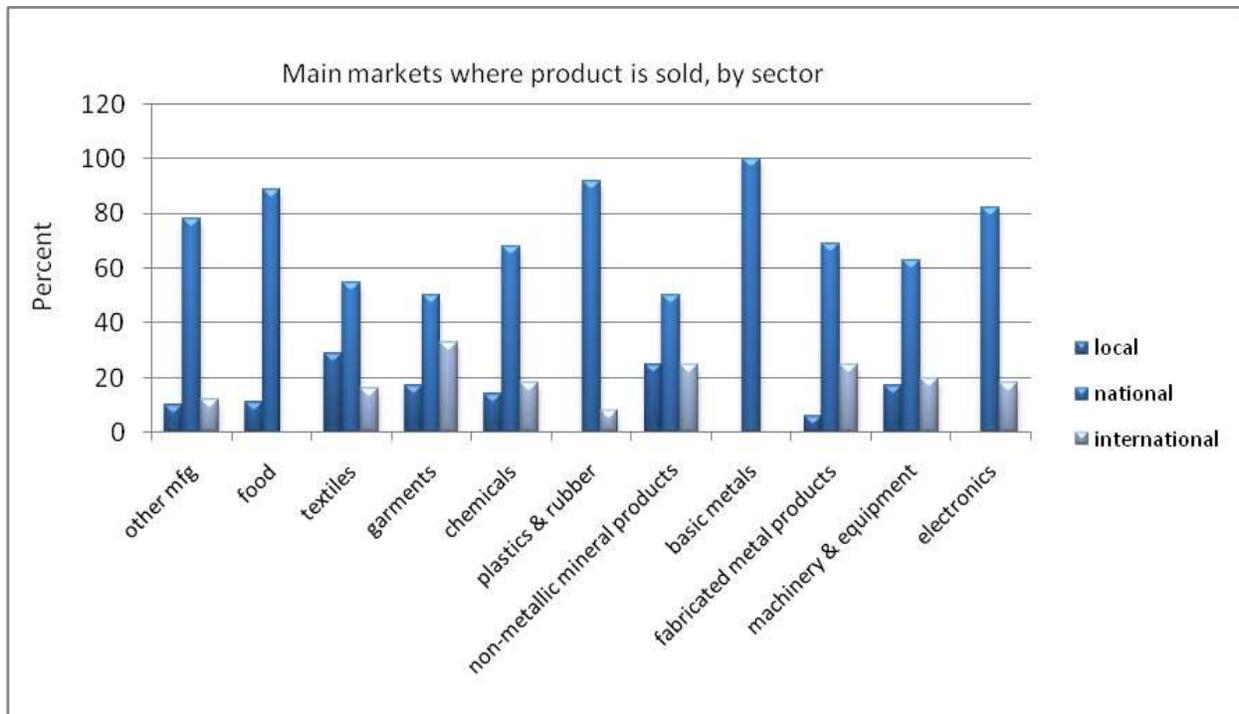


Chart 16

By sector, chart 16 shows that all sectors have a distinct national market orientation with the highest share for basic metals. Garments exhibit the highest international market orientation among all sectors followed by non-metallic mineral products and fabricated metal products. Hence the more internationally dynamic non-traditional manufactures like chemicals and machinery and equipment have a lower orientation towards international market. *This underlines the fact that India's export basket has not evolved in favour of dynamic non-traditional manufactures.*

Whether these firms produce products for which they have niche markets is reflected in whether their consumers are able to replace their products if the firm stops production (Chart 17).



Chart 17

Only 12 out of 200 firms report that the consumers will never be able to find a replacement. It would be possible to replace the products of a firm within a day for 14 firms (7 per cent of all firms), in less than a week for 26 firms (13 per cent) and in less than a month for 82 firms (41 per cent). It would take more than a month for 64 firms. Nine percent of the large firms report that their customers will never find a replacement compared to 3 per cent for medium and none for small firms. Hence even now most firms do not produce products for which they have a monopoly or have managed to create a niche for themselves in the international market.

- Labour: The total number of permanent full-time employees and managers range from 8 to 3000 for the sample of 200 firms. Of these 21 per cent of the employees are female. For 59 firms the share of production employees was more than 80 per cent. Firms with less than 100 employees hired an average 63 people on temporary basis. Firms with employees between 100 and 500 employed only 33 people on an average on a temporary basis while larger firms with more than 500 personnel had an average of 75 persons per firm as temporary workers. However the average duration of employment of these full time temporary employees was uniformly a week for all firm sizes. On an average 4 per cent of the employees quit in a fiscal year with the average higher for larger firms (6 per cent).

Chart 18 shows the average level of education by category (production and non-production workers) and by firm-size. It tabulates the percent of firms having workers in the two categories with a university degree.

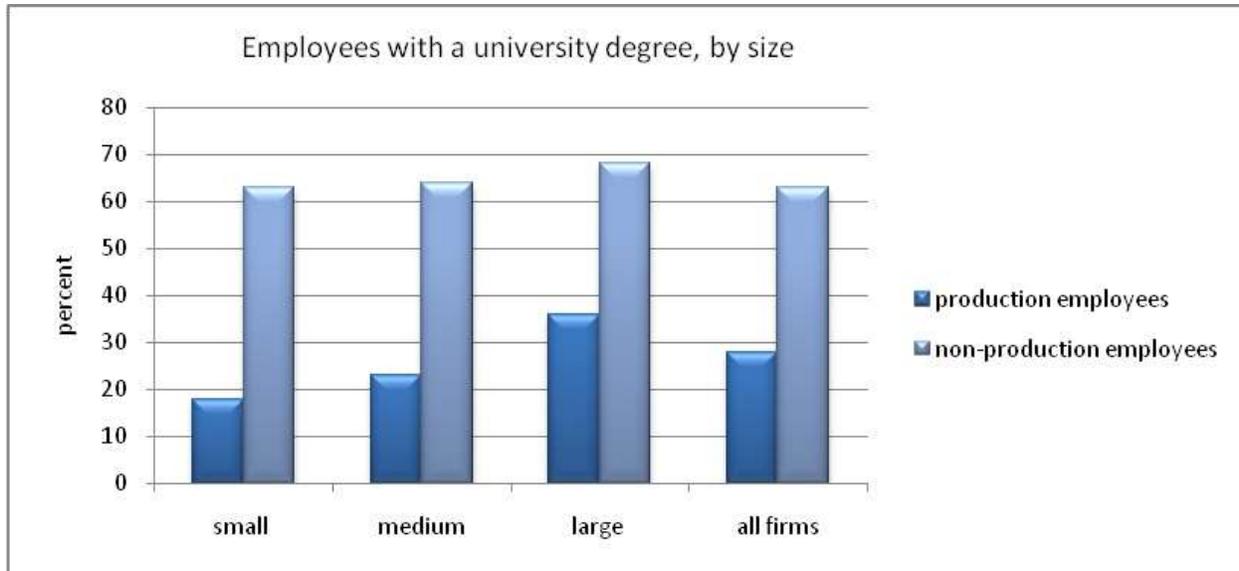


Chart 18

For the last fiscal year recorded an average of 28 per cent of permanent, full-time production employees and 63 per cent of permanent, full-time non-production employees have a university degree. The average for production employees for small (18 per cent) and medium (23 per cent) firms is lower than the overall average while it is above average for larger firms (36 per cent). The average for small firms is the same as the overall average for non-production employees while it is 64 per cent and 68 per cent for medium and large firms.

• **Complementing the analysis with 2005 and 2010 surveys:**

The above analysis provides a detailed exposition of the MOI aspects of firms. However the environment comprising infrastructure, organizations and institutions also affect firm performance. This information is not present in the 2009 survey. Hence we complement the discussion, in brief, with the surveys of 2005 and 2010 which provide an assessment of business environment. The three surveys taken together provide a more complete analysis.

Findings of the 2005 survey:

• **Sample**

2286 firms, largest shares of garments, textiles, machine tools, auto components, drugs & pharmaceuticals, electrical appliances and food processing.

• **Legal status**

Largest share of firms are sole proprietorship (43 per cent). One-fourth each is partnership and private limited. Public limited only 7 per cent.

- Capacity utilization

100 per cent in 11 per cent of the firms. 50 per cent in 20 per cent firms.

- Forms of technological up gradation adopted:

Less than 5 years old machinery and equipment in 17 per cent firms only. 76 per cent of the total firms had at least 50 per cent of their equipment which was less than five years old.

95 per cent firms do not use any technology licensed from a foreign owned company.

23 per cent firms have already received international quality certification like the ISO 9000 or ISO 14000 and 3 per cent firms are in the process of getting one.

40 per cent firms introduced a new product while 60 per cent firms managed to upgrade the existing product in the last two years.

9 per cent firms entered into joint-venture arrangements with a foreign partner over the last two years.

Over the past two years (2003-05) 20 per cent of the firms outsourced a production activity which was earlier conducted in-house. This indicates concern for quality, standardization and expert services being acquired to increase competitiveness.

Out of 2240 firms only 364 firms (16 per cent) adopted any kind of new technology in the past two years to alter production process or introduce a new product. The first important way of adopting new technology is purchase of embodied capital equipment (plant and machinery) followed by hiring key personnel for expert advice.

- Finance:

The most important source of funding new technology is internal funds followed by bank loans.

- Impact of new technology:

The impact of the new technology was registered on sales, employment, exports and costs. Sales increased for 69 per cent units, the number of workers increased in 58 per cent units and exports increased for 48 per cent of the 296 exporting units out of 356 units which adopted new technology. Production costs remained the same for 47 per cent units and decreased for 27 per cent units.

615 out of 2278 units (27 per cent) engage in in-house R&D. Of the total number of firms 10 per cent outsource R&D projects to other companies.

- Access to new technology

43 per cent of the 201 reporting units feel that access to foreign technology is constrained by domestic regulation while only 21 per cent feel that it is constrained by unwillingness on part of the foreign supplier.

- Market-orientation, export and import-intensity

The main focus of the firms continues to be the domestic market with 86 per cent of the total sales sold domestically. An average of 12 per cent of total sales were directed to exports directly and 17 per cent indirectly.

Export-intensity of the 1506 firms averaged 39 per cent in 2004 for their most important export product. Average import-intensity of a single most important import product for 1172 firms was 8 per cent.

96 per cent of the total inputs used by the given 2098 firms are purchased from domestic sources.

- Training

15 per cent units provided formal internal training and 7 per cent percent units offered formal external training to their permanent employees. Some of the individual sector shares of formal internal training are 23 per cent in drugs and pharmaceuticals, 29 per cent in auto components, 25 per cent in paints and varnishes, 21 per cent in mineral processing, 31 per cent in marine food processing and 20 per cent in agro-processing. Formal external training was the highest in agro processing (25 per cent) followed by auto components (15 per cent units), drugs and pharmaceuticals, paper and paper products and paints and varnishes (10 per cent each)

- Loans

A large majority of the loans is in domestic currency (95 per cent). For 82 per cent of the 712 firms it takes 10 weeks or less to get the loan application approved.

- Infrastructure

An average of 8 per cent of sales revenue was lost in the previous year due to power cuts, 3 per cent due to water shortages and 4 per cent due to poor communication infrastructure. The cost of the electricity from the generator is double the cost per kilowatt-hour from the public grid. Only 22 per cent of the water used in the process of production is obtained from public sources. 11 per cent of the firms use their own transport for shipments.

- Land

70 per cent of the 2281 firms own land and the remaining 30 per cent lease it. Of the unsuccessful firms the two most important reasons for not being able to acquire the desired land (excluding the price of land) is the inability to find land in the desired industrial zone and the long time it takes to get the zoning approval. It takes an average of 17 weeks to register, negotiate with sellers and obtain all licenses and zoning permissions. For paints and varnishes (41 weeks), auto components (36 weeks), machine tools (28 weeks) and pharmaceuticals (23 weeks). The average unofficial transactions fee (bribes) is slightly more than Rs. 15000. The maximum value for this variable is Rs. 90,000.

- Legal system

10 per cent of the firms have no faith in the system that it will look after or protect its property rights and help enforce contractual rights and another 15 per cent are also skeptical. 21 per cent of the total monthly sales are not paid within the agreed time period, around 4 per cent are never paid for and it takes on an average two months to negotiate to realize a delayed payment. If the case reaches the courts it takes an average of 26 months to resolve it but the court's decision is

enforced in only 53 per cent of the cases. Almost 25 per cent of the firms are dissatisfied with the law and order situation. An average of informal amount of Rs. 13000 per year is paid as protection money.

- Labour

75 per cent of the total firms work single shift, 15 per cent work double shift and 10 per cent work triple shift. Most important constraint faced by the firms is finding skillful and trustworthy workers.

- Business and government

30 per cent of the firms tend to disagree that government officials' interpretation of regulations is predictable. Senior managers spend over 12 per cent of their man-days dealing with the requirements imposed by government regulation. Almost 50 per cent of the firms agree that they 'have to make informal payments or gifts' to government officials and these payments amount to almost 5 per cent of their annual sales.

In order to obtain a telephone connection, electricity connection or water connection firms may have to wait from anywhere between 11 days to a month. To obtain a permit related to construction, an import license or an operating license the waiting period on an average is 14 to 28 days. To obtain these permits a large majority of firms pay bribes.

Tax evasion occurs on 15 per cent of the sales. 81 per cent of the workforce is reported for payroll taxes. 30 per cent firms have to pay informal gifts to get government contracts which amounts to 6.5 per cent of the total value of the contract. 25 per cent of the firms use a facilitator or a consultant to obtain these licenses.

- Obstacles to firm growth

- 60-70 per cent firms feel the most critical obstacle is the shortage of electricity followed by high taxes, customs and trade regulations and tax administration and corruption

- 50 per cent of the firms consider labour regulations, lack of skilled and educated workers and the cost of finance as impediments.

- 40 per cent of the firms consider acquiring business license and permits, access to financing and crime as obstacles.

- 35 per cent of the firms feel that the uncertainty of economic policy impedes growth.

- 20-25 per cent firms consider anti-competitive practices and informal practices, industry-specific regulation conflict resolution and legal system and access to land as major problems.

- 12 per cent firms consider constrained access to technology an impediment.

- Unsecured land titles generate insecurity for 50 per cent of the firms. Fifty five percent of the firms find problematic and costly registration of land a tedious process. Forty four percent of the firms consider red tape during the land development process a hurdle and almost 75 per cent of the firms feel that land prices are a big deterrent.

- Anti-competitive and informal practices are an impediment which manifest in terms of unfair enforcement of taxes and labour rules (66 per cent firms respond in the affirmative), unequal energy costs (40 per cent), unfair enforcement of land related obligations (30 per cent) and unfair enforcement of product standards and property rights (43 per cent). Almost 93 per cent of the firms do not find anti-dumping actions an impediment to exporting.

- The most important industry-specific deterrent is the restriction on prices (62 per cent of the firms) followed by restrictions on FDI (29 per cent) and restrictions on imports (27 per cent).

- Access to foreign technology is impeded more by domestic regulation (43 per cent) than unwillingness on part of the foreign supplier of technology (28 per cent).

- Location

Maharashtra is voted the best location for business and Bihar the worst. If the firm would shift from its current location to Maharashtra its cost of production would decline by 11 per cent on an average. If on the other hand it would shift to Bihar its costs would rise by 20 per cent.

- Accounting

Energy costs form an average of 6 per cent of the total costs. Net profits after tax form an average of 12 per cent of total annual sales. Almost 49 per cent of the post-tax profits are invested back in the establishment for all the sectors taken together. Other costs constitute 7 per cent of total costs. Of these other costs 67 per cent on an average constitutes transport expenditure, 15 per cent fuel costs for generator and 15 per cent for telecommunications. Less than 2 per cent is spent on royalty payments to domestic and foreign companies. Imported raw material constitutes an average of 14 per cent of the total raw material purchased in 2004 which was lower than 16 per cent in the previous period. It forms an average of 5 per cent of total sales for the year 2004.

- Human resources

Of the total permanent workers in 2003 'management' personnel constitute an average of 14 per cent, 'professionals' form 10 per cent of the total work force, 53 per cent constitute skilled production-workers and 29 per cent are the unskilled component. 15 per cent of the firms provide internal training and 7 per cent provide external training to their employees.

### Findings of the 2010 survey:

- Sample

482 firms in the sample covering manufacturing and services. Firm-size is also defined in the survey for all the four categories – micro (less than 5), small (5 – 19), medium (20 – 99) and large (100+) by the number of employees. The number of units in each category is 12, 152, 173 and 145. This survey covers 271 firms over 11 manufacturing sectors and 211 in 7 service sectors .

- Legal status

Ownership pattern: 96.5 per cent of the firms are fully owned by domestic entrepreneurs and 1 per cent are fully owned by foreign companies. There is no firm owned by the government.

- Capacity utilization

Of 482 firms 83 per cent expect their sales to increase in a year's time. Competition with informal firms is also severe and strong in that 55 per cent firms report that they face competition from these firms in their markets. This competition is the most severe for textiles with 90 per cent firms facing this competition followed by the hotel and the transport sectors. By size there is no competition for micro units followed by 65 per cent, 54 per cent and 50 per cent of the firms in the small, medium and large sectors respectively facing competition from firms located in the informal sector.

- Finance:

Financing of working capital – on an average the share of internal funds in financing of working capital is 73 per cent followed by 18 per cent, 3 per cent, 5 per cent and 1 per cent from banks, NBFIs, suppliers' credit and others (comprising money lenders, friends and relatives). For micro units internal funds are the main source (99 per cent) of financing working capital followed by 76 per cent of working capital requirements of small firms fulfilled by internal resources. Medium and large firms meet 70 per cent of their working capital requirements using internal funds

Financing of fixed assets - internal funds form 68 per cent for all firms taken together and 100 per cent for micro units. For small, medium and large units internal funds contribute 68 per cent, 69 per cent and 67 per cent respectively. Bank loans comprise the second largest source for fixed assets. It is nil for micro units while it forms 26 per cent, 23 per cent and 20 per cent for small, medium and large firms. An overall average of 5 per cent for funding fixed assets comprises owner's funds or new equity issues. It is nil for micro units while it is 1 per cent, 5 per cent and 9 per cent for small, medium and large sized firms. As size increases firms rely increasingly on equity finance. Funds from NBFIs form around 3 per cent overall, suppliers' credit less than 1 per cent and informal sources around 1.5 per cent. At the time of the survey 38 per cent of the firms have a bank loan and 61 per cent report that they require collateral to finance it which on an average forms 16 per cent of the value of the loan.

- Technological up-gradation and funding:

As a measure of technological up-gradation embodied in capital goods 48 per cent of firms purchased fixed assets such as plant and machinery, vehicles, land or buildings in 2009. This proportion of firms by size is 42 per cent for micro units, 34 per cent for small firms, 47 per cent for medium and 65 per cent for large firms.

- Market orientation:

On average for all firms 95 per cent of the total sales are domestic market sales. The remaining 5 per cent comprised exports. By size – micro enterprises sell 100 per cent of their output in the national market, medium, small and large sell 99 per cent, 97 per cent and 90 per cent respectively in the domestic market. Hence as size increases firms cater more to the domestic market. Firms thus use external markets to reap scale economies and later switch to domestic market. Exports as a percent of sales comprise 1.2 per cent, 3.4 per cent and 10.4 per cent for small, medium and large firms respectively.

- Infrastructure:

85 per cent firms experienced power outages in the previous fiscal year. The duration of these outages ranges between 1 to 8 hours a day.

- Labour:

The average number of full time employees by size is 4, 10, 42 and 887 for micro, small, medium and large units respectively. This figure is higher for all firm categories by size compared to the average number of employees three fiscal years ago. Over the current fiscal year (2009/10) large firms employed an average of 126 temporary workers followed by 10 by medium units and 3 by small units. The average for micro units is less than one. The average length of the employment of temporary workers is uniformly around 5-6 months. The proportion of firms by size planning to increase their workforce varies increases with rise in the firm size. The proportion of micro units planning to expand is 33 per cent followed by 51 per cent, 65 per cent and 67 per cent for small, medium and large units.

- Business and government:

In a typical week 9 per cent of the senior manager's time is spent in dealing with requirements imposed by government regulations which is a good measure of red-tape from the firm's viewpoint. This percent is 7 per cent, 8 per cent, 9 per cent and 9 per cent for micro, small, medium and large units. The premises of these units were inspected on an average at least 3 times by tax officials over the previous year. The average for large units is 5. Only 56 per cent firms clearly say a 'no' to having paid informal payments / gifts (bribes) to tax officials during these meetings and 27 per cent say a 'yes' to having paid these gifts. The rest are either unsure or maybe do not want to disclose. Of the small units 18 per cent accept that they have to pay these bribes. Medium units have the highest average of firms answering in the affirmative at 33 per cent while 30 per cent of the large firms report that they make informal gifts to the tax officials or inspectors.

- Obstacles to firm growth;

The pressing problems faced by firms include shortage of electricity followed by access to finance, practices of competitors in the informal sector, acquiring business license and permits and poor transport. For micro units, competition from firms in the informal sector is the biggest impediment followed by problems in acquiring business license and permits, low access to finance and high corruption. Small and medium sized units report shortage of electricity, competition from informal sector and poor access to finance as the three biggest problems. In addition to these problems large firms find acquiring business licenses and permits and poor transport facilities to be obstacles as well. Between the first three options access to land is a bigger impediment than access to finance and acquisition of business license and permits.

Ranking the five main problems; 89 per cent firms feel that power shortage is a problem, 88 per cent find labour regulations a problem, 75 per cent feel access to finance impedes business operations, 76 per cent find inadequate transport infrastructure to be problem and 65 per cent firms have to deal with corruption.

- Effect of global economic crisis 2008:

Of all 482 firms covered in the sample spanning over the manufacturing and the services sectors 43 per cent firms report a negative effect of the economic crisis. 42 per cent firms do not experience any effect. 15 per cent firms feel the positive effect of the crisis. By size, 67 per cent of the micro

units are not affected by the crisis. For small, medium and large firms the share of firms not affected by the crisis is 40 per cent, 44 per cent and 39 per cent.

Positive impact of the crisis - 44 per cent firms of the total 71 responding firms report increased availability of more skilled and affordable labour, 10 per cent experience a decrease in input costs and 44 per cent face a rise in demand for the firms' products. By size for small and medium firms the gain in terms of availability of cheaper and more skilled labour is more than the rise in the demand for the firms' products. For large firms 24 per cent firms gain in terms of more skilled and affordable labour being available while 58 per cent firms face a rise in their demand.

Negative effects - increase in the level of debt, increase in input costs, reduced access to credit and drop in the demand for the firms' products or services. For 205 responding firms 61 per cent firms face a drop in the demand in their products or services followed by 17 per cent firms facing a rise in input costs, 10 per cent firms feel a reduced access to credit and 4 per cent experience a rise in level of debt. By size all four micro units report a decline in demand for their products. Of the 66 small firms 59 per cent experience a drop in demand and 22 per cent face an increase in input costs. Nine percent face reduced access to credit and 5 per cent report a rise in the level of their debt. Sixty percent of the 60 medium units face a drop in demand, 11 per cent each experience a rise in input costs and reduced access to credit followed by 4 per cent firms reporting a rise in their debt levels. For 65 large firms 63 per cent of the firms face a drop in demand for their products, 18 per cent note an increase in input costs, 11 per cent experience a reduced access to credit and for 5 per cent firms level of debt increases.

## Conclusion

We have analysed the 2009 survey data based on 200 firms of which more than 70 per cent comprise medium and large firms and complemented it with the surveys of 2005 and 2010. More than half the sample belongs to the western region. The largest share of firms is unlisted shareholding firms. Majority of the small and medium-sized firms are unlisted shareholding firms whereas majority of large firms are listed shareholding firms. Some of the main conclusions are as follows. Only 28 per cent of the firms are listed in the stock market and 22 per cent firms have unlimited liability. A large majority of firms is still family owned and top managers are family members. Separation between ownership and management is rare. Decision-making with financial implications like hiring new employees, granting pay hike of more than 10 per cent, introduction of new products, pricing decisions and advertisement decisions are more in the hands of the headquarters than establishments. There are not many layers between the top and the bottom level in the organization. An overwhelming majority of top managers are males. A formal degree in business management which potentially helps in creating a professional outlook among managers is found only among the top three or four managers.

More than two-thirds of the total firms monitor worker performance using two or more indicators and around half of total firms take corrective measures when production process breaks down. A

large majority of firms collect this information daily and share it with their workers. However this information is not used to compare performance or promote competition between workers in different shifts. Small firms hire a larger number of external consultants than medium or large firms. Large firms rely mainly on their in-house R&D. They prefer to guard their internal R&D by employing researchers rather than rely on external sources.

Only 13 per cent of the total firms use factors other than merit to promote their employees although the incidence of larger firms using these factors is greater than the small or medium sized firms. Workers' opinions in decision making is more important in small vis a vis large firms except in case of pricing decision which is a right reserved by the management for itself universally across all firms. Participatory management practices are followed more in small firms than the other two firm groups. For all three groups the proportion of firms which follow 'best' operations management practices exceeds the percentage of firms who adopt 'best' overall management followed by the share of firms who have 'best' 'people management' practices. Hence the opinion that management does the least for its workers is very strong across all firm sizes.

Sixty percent of the entire sample firms do not undertake any R&D but almost all firms have an internet connection. Only 41 per cent firms have introduced a new product in the last three years and more than 80 per cent firms do not outsource production which is a possible way of acquiring better quality inputs or parts than firms produce on their own and achieve vertical integration. Technological innovation by small firms comprises primarily introduction of new products, in-house R&D and outsourcing production. For medium and large-sized firms in-house R&D, creation of new products and external consultants are the three most important forms of technological innovation. Non-metallic manufactures is the least innovative sector while fabricated metal products, chemicals and machinery and equipment are the three most innovative sectors. Innovation-intensity rises with firm-size. The highest innovation-intensity is recorded for fabricated metal products and the lowest for garments. Electronics, chemicals, plastics and rubber manufactures and basic metals have a lower innovation-intensity than textiles, machinery and equipment, non-metallic mineral products and other manufactures.

The main focus of all firms is the national market although the local market orientation is the highest for small firms and international market orientation is the highest for large firms. This is a direct consequence of the resource-base which varies directly by size and the ability to weather competition in a more uncertain and risky external environment. A large majority of firms do not produce products which cannot be easily replaced. Hence barring 6 per cent of the 200 firms which claim that their buyers will never find a replacement if they stopped production 61 per cent of the firms report that a substitute can be found at the most within a month. One-third of the sample firms claim that it may take more than a month but it is not impossible to find a replacement for their product. It is easier to replace small firms' products more easily compared to large firms. *This is a critical finding because Indian exports even at present comprise largely traditional manufactures which do not command a niche in the international market. Close substitutes for their products are easily available in the overseas market.*

The share of temporary workers is the highest for small firms. On an average, for all firms, the level of education of production workers is below a graduation degree for more than 70 per cent of the firms while it is close to two-thirds for non-production employees who are mainly at the managerial level. By size, this figure is the lowest for small firms followed by medium and large firms. Small firms also rely more on casual, temporary workers compared to the large and medium-size firms. A smaller proportion of production workers have a university degree compared to non-production workers although the share of workers in both the categories with a university degree is the highest for large firms.

In sum, post-liberalization, a large majority of firms have not undertaken any form of conventional technological innovation. Some sectors rely more on external sources of technological innovation than narrowly defined innovation in terms of intra-mural R&D, i.e., introducing new products or processes, hiring external consultants and outsourcing production to other firms. Firms have moved from the narrow to the broader definition of innovation which shows that firms have realized the importance of technological innovation to be competitive. However innovation has not been extended to incorporate the non-technological aspects or 'management innovation'. Management practices remain old fashioned. Ownership and top management is in the hands of the same family. Inability to find trustworthy employees is generally cited as one of the most important reason for this. Product and process innovations are the two important aspects of technological innovation which have been undertaken by a set of firms but no bottom-upwards innovation has taken place in these firms. Production employees who are the actual users of technology can potentially understand the limitations of the existing technology and hence their feed-back can make a difference to production methods and products. Workers' role in decision making especially decisions with financial implications is minimal. Decentralization by plant and by hierarchy is low. Moreover 'people management' is still the lowest priority of the management – the workers do not have a sense of belonging to the enterprise and hence remain unwilling to give the firm their best - the conservative nature of corporate governance in Indian firms depresses innovation.

The 2005 and 2010 surveys are not extremely different in terms of the firms' responses to internal factors, level of R&D, new products, etc. The response to the questions on business environment in which the firms operate is a pointer to the improvement needed in state policy, infrastructure and institutional arrangements. The biggest obstacle to firm performance is the lack of adequate infrastructure. Making private arrangements is more expensive, raises costs and reduces competitiveness. Inability to acquire the desired land is also a critical issue. The legal system is slow in addressing the problems of the businesses. Senior managers have to lobby with government officials and pay bribes to overcome institutional impediments. Internal funds remain the most important source of financing investment and working capital. Domestic market orientation has increased. Inadequate infrastructure, institutional credit, access to land, labour laws and corruption are the unresolved problems. These issues have serious social and political ramifications. The effect of global economic crisis of 2008 recorded in the 2010 survey shows that micro and medium-sized firms weathered the crisis better than small and large firms.

## Notes and References

1. At the outset a caveat must be added to the definition of innovation used here and the sectoral coverage involved. In this paper we provide a preliminary analysis of firm level innovation in the manufacturing sector. However one must bear in mind that innovation or generation of new ideas applied to any activity can and must take place in other sectors as well especially in the agricultural sector and the services sector. In the Indian context this is particularly significant because more the 50 per cent of the population still lives in the rural areas and is dependent on agriculture. The share of services has increased to more than 50 per cent in GDP and hence newer ways of doing things and evolving better products in different service sector industries is critical to improve factor productivity and overall efficiency. See V. V. Krishna, 'Science, Technology and Innovation Policy 2013: High on Goals, Low on Commitment', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XLVIII, No. 16, April 20, 2013, pp. 15-19.
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3. Knowledge is the resource and learning is the process. Knowledge infrastructure comprises educational institutions, research institutes and other firms' research and innovation which have externalities for other firms. Knowledge is largely tacit embodied in people. See B. Lundvall, 'National Innovation Systems - Analytical Concept and Development Tool', in *Industry and Innovation*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 2007, pp. 95-119.
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## Interrogating 'New Local Governance': The West Bengal Experience

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### **Abstract**

*As a neo-liberal recipe of good governance at the cutting edge level, informed by post-bureaucratic organizational precepts of flexibility, networking and negotiation, the 'new local governance' advocates the growing role of quasi-governmental bodies like quangos, NGOs and business elites as joint stakeholders in the decision making process. The said paradigm also calls for a host of institutional and structural changes, viz. restructuring, privatization, contracting out, entrepreneurship, hollowing out of state, downsizing of bureaucracy, etc., in order to infuse efficiency and economy in local management. The above paradigmatic shift from local government to local governance enjoys a lot of fanfare across the globe and West Bengal (India), although ruled by a Left Front government for last three decades, shows little exception in this regard. The purpose of this paper is to show the impact of this 'new local governance' on the political processes of West Bengal.*

*Research Questions The study is based on the following research questions:*

*Does 'new local governance' lead to de-democratization process in local development?*

*Does it deny the access of local people in local government in favour of professional quangos and NGOs?*

*Does it overlook ethno-cultural specificities of the post-colonial countries in favour of a cohesive principle of local management?*

*Is it at all possible or desirable to get the state off our back?*

*Methodology: This study has relied on the case study of local governance especially the issues of decentralized service delivery, participatory model of local development in the district of Burdwan in West Bengal.*

### **Introduction**

It would perhaps not be an overstatement that there has been an intellectual fermentation over the last couple of decades and the field has been experiencing intense academic activities. Scholars, however, differ in characterizing the exact nature of the change that had transpired at the subterranean level. Despite the growing literatures on the subject, there is hardly any consensus on

the recent unfolding of events at the bottom level as they are variously termed as 'new local governance?', 'new localism (mostly in pejorative sense)?, 'transition from local government to local governance?' and so on. However, majority of the scholars seem quite comfortable with the more inclusive concept like 'local governance?'. There is no denying that the concept of local governance widens the ambit of governance beyond the legal-formalistic notion of government to a more inclusive enterprise which includes non-governmental sector, civil society organizations, and people's initiatives. The paradigm of local governance also calls for a host of institutional and structural changes, viz. restructuring, privatization, contracting out, entrepreneurship, hollowing out of state, and downsizing of bureaucracy in order to infuse efficiency and economy in local management. Moreover, this neologism is also hailed for its believed flexibility, adaptability and efficiency. The neo-liberal recipe of 'local governance?' or what is often associated with a prefix 'new?', assures us to overcome the bureaucratic formalism of local government to a more accommodative, post-bureaucratic kind of organization based on networking and negotiation. The huge fanfare notwithstanding, critics argue, the concept smacks of a typical neo-liberal design of hollowing out of the state and the provision of extra space for market. In fact, the very labeling of the prefix 'new?' has a neo-liberal overtone of banishing the over-bureaucratized state with a consequent expansion of market.

Though it might seem bit out of place to draw on the local governance experiment under the Left regime in West Bengal (India), especially after a near- routing of left in the assembly election of 2011, its uniqueness can hardly be denied. This paper in the perspective of the state of West Bengal (India) seeks to interrogate the neo-liberal portrayal of new local governance as the panacea to all kinds of issues pertaining to local management. The paper has the following sections: section-I explains the concept of local governance and the inherent weaknesses it has; section-II presents an overview of local governance scenario in India; section-III deals with the West Bengal experience. Finally, the paper comes out with a conclusion.

### **Section-I: Local Governance: The conceptual exploration**

Before we explore the neo-liberal recipe of new local governance, a brief conceptual analysis of the idea should be placed here. Stripping of all jargons, the local governance or the new local governance as a few commentators prefer to call to distinguish it from its old variant, can be defined as a process of governing at the cutting edge level involving a huge constellation of agencies and actors including the conventional government, non-governmental and quasi-governmental sectors, civil society organization, business elites and so on. Decision making process in new local governance, unlike the age-old model of local government, is considered to be a collaborative effort with multiple agencies involved in the process as the joint-stakeholders. In other words it seeks to carve out a new discursive space for non-governmental organizations, self-help groups, and people's initiatives within the political society. Based on the post-bureaucratic and post-Fordist notion of organization, the new local governance encourages networking and negotiations over formalism. Moreover, in new local governance, 'the traditional conduits of local politics and policy implementation?', as rightly put by Raco & Imrie, 'have to

coexist, collaborate and compete with a plethora of new agencies, networks and organizations, all jostling for resources, power and influence? In addition to that the new local governance has also welcomed the entry of business elites at the local decision making process, which, is no doubt a redeeming feature. Business has a love-hate relationship with politics in a democratic set-up. Neither business-houses nor politicians have ever felt comfortable about the interrelationship. In most cases the relationship is kept under the carpet. Local governance by allowing business elites in the decision-making process takes the curtain off the discrete relationship between business and politics, and makes the process more transparent. Moreover, the paradigm also calls for a host of structural, procedural and attitudinal changes to streamline the process.

Structurally, the paradigm of local governance seeks to transform the state-controlled bureaucratically managed local administration to a more flexible, market-based administration. Maximum emphasis in new local governance has been placed on decentralizing the authority to the local bodies, flattening of hierarchies, slimming of bureaucracy, etc. Apart from administrative overhauling of the traditional form of local government, the new paradigm is also advocating in favour of giving the local bodies an extra ounce of financial freedom by slackening the stranglehold of state over local finance.

### **Procedural**

Similarly, at the procedural level the new paradigm is sought to bring about several procedural changes, viz. leasing out / contracting out of services, introduction of performance measurement techniques, introduction of quality assurance yardsticks like Service Quality Initiatives, Quality Circle, Total Quality Management, Citizen's Report Card, Citizen's Charter and so on.

### **Attitudinal**

Another important element of change that the new local governance wants to invoke is the attitudinal or perceptual change in local government vis-a-vis the citizens. Citizens, especially those at the post-colonial countries have so long been treated as the passive recipient of goods and services. In new local governance, citizens are viewed as centre of development discourse. Naturally the traditional perception regarding the citizen has been redefined as 'active customers' to be always kept in good humour. Hence, serving the citizen has become the central focus of city administration. Consequently, the gap between the public and private gets increasingly blurred, thereby paving the way for greater Public-Private-NGO interface. In fact, the success of local governance is largely contingent upon the attitudinal changes.

However, the winds of change in local governance as sketched briefly above, have not originated overnight. Several factors have been held responsible for this paradigm-shift in local governance. Denters and Rose have categorized them into two broad heads-macro environment and micro environment. In the macro environment local governments have encountered three major forces, viz. urbanization, globalization and Europeanization; and in the micro environment local

governments have to function within an environment of heightened customer enlightenment, leading to increasing demand overload<sup>2</sup>. Almost in a similar vein, Carolina Andrew and Michael Goldsmith in their article argue that "much of this process is the result of external changes over which individual local governments have had little influence: increasing economic interdependence; the process of globalization; changing technologies; or the fall of communism in Eastern Europe, for example"<sup>1</sup>. And some will be generated from within local governments themselves, be they processes on delayering, privatization and contracting out of services; attempts at improving customer care and citizen relationships<sup>3</sup>. The above factors compel local governments to reorient and re-invent itself with the evolving environment. I

### **Interrogating New local governance**

However, the neo-liberal model of new local governance is no magic wand that can bail out local government from all kind of odds. In this section an attempt has been made to interrogate new local governance on the following areas:

#### **De-politicization**

Scanning through the ever-widening literature on the subject, one would appreciate that the scholars working in this area have been suffering from a classic syndrome of "missing the wood for trees" as the central focus of governance, i.e. local government is conspicuous by its absence. The existing literature on local governance hardly refers to local government; rather it concentrates on other associated paraphernalia of the governing processes. In other words new local governance by ignoring the centrality of structures/institution (by replacing state/ government with civil society, NGOs, etc.) and relying heavily on processes of governing leads to de-politicization. Kevin G. Ward has nicely captured this neo-liberal agenda of de-politicization, implicit in the existing literature on governance.

"Once upon a time local government was legally charged with a certain number of functions. Economy and society was regulated at the national level and the local state within it delivered national policies locally. It was the long arm of the Keynesian welfare National State. Though there were isolated incidents of pro-active local strategizing, the capacity and desire to intervene was locally contingent. Sometimes in the 1980s, however, this changed, so the story goes. The creation of a raft new local economic institutions, the political "call to arms" issued by national government to local business and the globalization of economic activity, with all its implications for the ability of capital to withdraw from local economics, combined to change the local political terrain. Some state functions were re-scaled, as the state was "hollowed out" both from outside and from within and a volatile relationship developed between national and local state in the UK. A tential shift was said to be underway to a new state shell, referred to as the Schumpeterian Workfare Post national Regime (SWPR). At the heart of this story was that what could be observed was somehow new. Never before had local democracy been so fragile and never before had policy been targeted on those areas on which it was now focused"<sup>4</sup>

### **Diminution of State**

The new local governance is also called into question for its alleged diminution of the role of state. As a part of neo-liberal agenda, new local governance calls for lesser role of state and more market. The transition of the role of state from the sole provider of goods and services to a strategic enabler leads to virtual emasculation of state especially its role in the social sector. The decent nomenclature of 'strategic enabler' or 'partnering state', etc., notwithstanding, under the new local governance state has lost its past glory of 'the dispenser of social justice'. Consequently, the social sector becomes exposed to the vagaries of market force, leading thereby to increasing pauperization.

### **De-democratization**

De-democratization or what Imrie and Raco<sup>5</sup> call the 'democratic deficit' is another major criticism labeled against new local governance. Though the neo-liberals have altogether different arguments to offer, i.e. the new paradigm has salvaged the institution of local state from being relegated into a 'mobocracy' by infusing the concern for civil space. The emotive argument notwithstanding, the said paradigm on the pretext of expanding the horizons of decision making, allowed a plethora of agencies, non-governmental organizations, user groups, stakeholder committees, self-help groups, etc., in the overall decision making process and thereby diluted the very essence of democratic process.

### **Empowerment of Business Elites**

The new local governance is also severely criticized for allowing business elites in the local politics. New local governance has opened up avenues for business elites to re-enter local politics. It is through this paradigm neo-liberals started recapturing their lost grounds.

### **Benign Neglect of Ethno-Cultural Specificity**

The neo-liberal prescription of new local governance and the package of goodies it promises to offer overlooks the ethno-cultural and spatial dimensions of local government. In other words, it sought to project a 'homogenized view of local management' (mostly Western) as a 'heuristic type' to be followed by others. However, in the process it blissfully overlooks the societal fault-lines in favour of a cohesive principle of local management. The root of this kind of general apathy towards societal fault-lines can be traced back to the Western socio-political culture itself and to be more specific in the UK under the new right regime of Margaret Thatcher. Hence, the version of local governance has to be context specific.

### Section-III: The West Bengal Experience

West Bengal holds a distinct place in the history of parliamentary communism. By remaining within the liberal legal-constitutional framework, how a Marxist state government had managed to hold the power for such an unbelievable spell of 34 odd years, remains a matter of curiosity for the entire globe. The consolidation of the Left in West Bengal cannot be properly understood if we dissociate it from its international context. Due to this unique feature of operating simultaneously in two different levels-national as well as international<sup>6</sup>, the Left in India has been a subject of severe misunderstanding, public opprobrium and suspicion ever since it came into being in 1920 at Tashkent. For this peculiar ideological position, the Left was occasionally caught in crossfire of allegiance. On the one hand left has an international commitment of taking on imperialism, and on the other, as a mainstream political party it cannot afford to ignore its role in the battle against British for independence either. Moreover, the Left had to withstand several forms of repression. Consequently, the Left has been suffering from a fear psychosis of being perennially stalked by non-Left parties. The Leftist mobilization both in the rural and urban areas can be seen as an attempt to establish a counter leftist hegemony. They realized that the success of left political mobilization was contingent upon their penetration in the social and cultural space. Hence, they engaged in alternative cultural mobilization along with political. However, it would be wrong to assume that the left especially CPI-M has been in power for three decades only by mobilizational politics. In fact, the mobilizational politics of left was backed up by a series of credible policy decisions like decentralization, land reform and so on. Decentralization by its very nature does not essentially betoken popular participation and democracy. In fact, history is replete with examples where decentralization was used as a strategic or administrative contrivance to command over far flung areas. The LF government in West Bengal adopted the policy of decentralization as a strategic weapon to ensconce the class dimension of Left politics. The state of West Bengal in India has adopted a participatory model of decentralized local governance based on administrative and financial devolution for both rural and urban areas way back in 1977. The planning process in this form of governance also got decentralized with an intention of taking the governance process to the hearts of commoners. This model of decentralized local governance or what is popularly known as 'democratic decentralization' was virtually emulated at the national level through a couple of constitutional amendment Acts. Before we could move into the nuances of the West Bengal model of decentralized local governance, a brief account of the evolution of the model warrants some attention here.

The history of 'democratic decentralization' in West Bengal can be traced back to the colonial Bengal as Bengal (subsequently partitioned and known as West Bengal) like other provinces in India was under British colonial subjugation for more than two hundred years. The colonial rulers were not interested in local self government as such. The primary objective of the colonizers was to consolidate the empire and to further their business interest. Naturally, whatever little rural reconstruction and urban development was done during the period was basically the part of their housekeeping functions. The British colonial state as a part of its house keeping functions has adopted several constitutional measures to streamline local self government. Notable among them

were the Ripon Resolution (1882), the Bengal Local Self-Government Act (1885), the Bengal Village Self-Government Act (1919), etc. The Bengal Village Self Government Act of 1919 may be regarded as the beginning of local self government in Bengal that provided a two-tier structure of union boards at the bottom level and district boards at the higher level. However, those self-governing structures were neither self nor local as those bodies were handicapped by the perennial resource crisis, over-bureaucratization, and dominance of local landed gentry. Local government in West Bengal in its true sense of the term got started exactly a decade after independence with the introduction of West Bengal Panchayat Act, 1957, reflecting the constitutional directives of promoting 'Panchayati Raj'. The Act made it mandatory to construct a Gram Panchayat in every village, so that it would function as the executive body of the Gram Sabha, consisting of all the voters in a village.

This Act, in fact, anticipated the much-hyped Balwantrai Mehta Committee recommendations (1957), which had virtually shaped the course of decentralization in independent India. Subsequently, a four-tier system of rural local government with Zilla Parishads at the apex, Anchalik Parishads at the intermediate level and Anchal Panchayats and Gram Panchayats respectively at the bottom level, came into being with the passage of The Zilla Parishad Act of 1963. In the evolution of local government in West Bengal, the decade of 1960 was a volatile time as the state was reeling under several political, economic and social crises during this phase. Consequently, elections in the local bodies remained pending. In 1973 the West Bengal Panchayat Act was passed, replacing the four-tier structure by the emerging three-tier system. The Act, no doubt, was an improvement on previous legislations, however, no election was held in those bodies until the ascendancy of Left in 1977. In June 1978, elections were held simultaneously in those local bodies for the first time under the tutelage of the Left. The event had brought a qualitative change in local governance of West Bengal. Since then elections in those local bodies were held at regular intervals.

By dint of being in power for three consecutive decades and experimenting with local governance, the Left Front government in West Bengal has evolved a new model of decentralized local governance. The distinctiveness of the West Bengal model (which will be dealt with later on) of local governance is largely attributed to the Leftist ideological position. Ideologically speaking, the Leftist agenda for democratic decentralization, sharply against its neo-liberal opponents ---is political mobilization.

### **The West Bengal model of decentralized local governance is unique in several counts:**

Firstly, the model of decentralized local governance is brought into being by a Leftist government, ideologically inclined to democratic centralism. Ideological underpinnings of choosing democratic decentralization for the Left were almost diametrically opposite to the neo-liberal positions. The Leftist government in West Bengal has opted for decentralization as an alternative policy option. It was a part of 'social engineering' within the overarching liberal structure of the Indian state, analogous to overall socialist position. Interesting part of the story is --while a Leftist government

had embarked upon decentralization as a part of its socialist mobilization and picked up the Panchayat Raj system to operationalize it way back in 1978, the Government of India had to wait till 1990s and that too as a part of Fund-Bank directives.

Second, The Left in West Bengal has successfully amalgamated democracy with development in their experiment with decentralized local governance, braving the popular Western discourse on democracy, which believes democracy, is a luxury for the developing world especially for those who are very keen in projecting their country in growth trajectory.

West Bengal model of decentralized local governance, democratically constituted through direct election, has the following features. They are: administrative/ functional, financial autonomy, decentralization of the planning process, democratic elections, people's participation, etc.

#### **Administration/Functional Autonomy-**

The most significant feature of West Bengal model of decentralized local governance is the administrative or functional autonomy. The ruling Left Front by virtue of being in power for a pretty long time, has granted a substantial amount of administrative or functional autonomy to the local bodies. From carrying out several national rural development schemes to the delivery of public services, local bodies have to discharge a host of functions.

#### **Financial Autonomy/ Devolution-**

West Bengal was perhaps the first state in the country to have adopted serious efforts at devolving funds from state government level to lower administration. The provision of devolving some amount of untied funds from the 1985-86 plan, directly to the district bodies was the first such measure by any state government, though government of Kerala followed suit in the 1990s by adopting a large scale and systematic experiment of local level planning.

Decentralized Planning- Another important hallmark of the West Bengal variant of local governance is the introduction of decentralized planning process. So long planning was couched as a highly technical job to be done by a group of seasoned mandarins. But of late, the notion of planning has undergone a sea change as the Left Front government in West Bengal had decided to favour 'bottom-up' approach instead of the conventional paradigm of 'top-down' model. In other words, the state-initiated rural development through scheme-based activities with the participation of the people in implementing the activities has been reversed and replaced by people-initiated rural development programmes with the participation of the government<sup>7</sup>. People are now conceived as the stakeholders of development. Article 243G of the Constitutional Amendment Act, for example, has recognized the panchayats as 'institutions of self government' and entrusted to them the responsibilities of preparing plans for promoting economic development and social justice. The State Panchayat Acts have at least formally given necessary powers and functions to the panchayats to formulate plans. However, barring a few states like Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil

Nadu, the track record of grass root planning in the rest of the country is anything but inspiring. In fact, Kerala has taken a giant stride in this direction. For example, Kerala's much-hyped 'people's campaign for the Ninth Plan' may be mentioned. Under the programme the panchayats have been entrusted to prepare and prioritize projects in an integrated and scientific manner. The programme also ensured maximum participation of local people at every stage of the planning process.

The West Bengal government has successfully implemented the decentralized planning process by harnessing local people in the overall planning process. The Left government in West Bengal had adopted several measures to ensure popular participation in the planning process. Structurally speaking there was a three-tier institutional structure for developmental planning in the state, i.e. State Planning Board at the apex, District Planning and Coordination Committee with District Planning Committee as its executive arm at the district level and Block Planning Committee at the block level. However, the District Planning Committee remains the key institution in the decentralized planning structure. Recently, the 'Gram Unnayan Samitis' of Gram Panchayats are also roped in the planning process in order to take the planning process closer to the people.

### **Participatory model of governance**

The said model also had an avowed pro-people and pro-poor bias in developmental activities. The Left Front government soon after assuming the power started de-bureaucratizing the local administration by constructing parallel democratically elected local bodies.

#### **'Burdwan District ---- a case study**

'Burdwan as a prosperous district of West Bengal, rich in agriculture, industry, mineral resources, has been under Leftist rule for more than three decades. With a view to interrogate neo-liberal variant of local governance with special reference to West Bengal, the district of Burdwan was picked up for a case study. The choice of Burdwan district as case was anything but random. The district in addition to her historical legacies is also known for Left mobilization and socialist experimentations such as land reform, land redistribution, etc. and the Left coalition has been controlling the district councils for three decades. Since the Left has an avowed ideological position against the hollowing out of state and attenuation of state's role in social sector, the case study of Burdwan seems to be an interesting one. Burdwan being a 'red bastion' of West Bengal has been suffering from a dilemma. On the one hand it has to adopt new local governance to make a quick stride towards development; and on the other hand, ideologically the incumbent Left is in a fix as to whether it should welcome neo-liberal prescription of new local governance as it means gradual phasing out of the state from the social sector. The paper in the light of Burdwan district interrogated new local governance on four counts:

Whether it led to de-democratization and de-politicization? 2. Whether it denied the access of local people in local government in favour of professional quangos and NGOs? 3. Whether it overlooked

ethno-cultural specificities of the post-colonial countries in favour of a cohesive principle of local management? And last but not the least Whether it led to hollowing out of the state?

To elicit answers of the questions posed above, and to further investigate the nature of local governance, two blocks from Burdwan district viz. Bhatar and Memeri-I have been selected for the field study. For garnering information both the deliverer's as well as the receiver's perspectives have been taken into consideration. This study has been conducted with a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods to collect data and information. For obtaining receiver's perspective, quantitative data have been gathered from the receivers. Total samples of three hundred households from the above two blocks were surveyed. From each Block, 150 households, representing three specific categories of mouzas, have been surveyed; of which 50 were Muslim, 50 (SC, ST, OBC) and 50 General Caste households respectively. The receivers were mainly a cross-section of people from both the sexes comprising the General caste, Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes, OBC and Muslims population. For getting a clearer picture of the deliverer's perspective vis-à-vis the local governance, the elected political executives from the selected villages along with the office bearers were interviewed. The present paper primarily dwells on the findings of the study.

### Major Findings

The study revealed that the Left government in West Bengal has evolved a new model of local governance, which has defied the neo-liberal recipe of new local governance. Following conclusions can be drawn from the above study.

There is no sign of withdrawal of state in West Bengal model of local governance. On the contrary state is actively brought in the social leveling up process. Unlike the neo-liberal apprehension of state involvement in local governance, which they fear 'might generate a 'dependency syndrome' among the people and roadblocks for sustainable development', the Left front government in West Bengal has a cautious optimism regarding the state. The Left Front government in West Bengal has decided to repose faith on the good old institution of local state, i.e. the PRIs for increasing the life chances of people and infrastructural development. The study has further revealed that the people are actively participating in the governing process of the local state.

The West Bengal variant of local governance welcomes rational-secular authority of state so that ethno-cultural diversity may not be manipulated by any fissiparous forces. In other words, the West Bengal model is against leaving the so-called 'the discursive space of NGOs, civil society, people initiatives, and so on' advocated by the neo-liberals absolutely free from state control, as it is vulnerable to manipulation.

The study also revealed that the West Bengal model of local governance did not shun the politicization process as advocated by the neo-liberal in the garb of new-local governance. In fact, West Bengal has experimented with competitive political process of governance based on single-

member constituency. Political parties with different ideological positions are allowed to compete in a single-member constituency to govern the local state.

The West Bengal model of local governance also defied the neo-liberal ploy of de-democratization by replacing the role of government (local) with NGOs, civil society organizations, and people's initiatives. The study has revealed that NGOs and civil society organizations are operating in the state of West Bengal and facilitating local governments, but they are not in a position to replace government altogether.

### **Concluding Observations:**

In the foregoing analysis an attempt has been made to interrogate the model of new-local governance in the light of the subnational state West Bengal. The study points out that the new local governance smacks of neo-liberal design of de-politicization, diminution of state, de-democratization. Based on a micro-study conducted in the district of Burdwan in West Bengal, the study further reveals that the West Bengal in its practice of local governance has questioned the very efficacy and the feasibility of the neo-liberal prescription. Moreover there is an apprehension that the emulation of the said model would further decapitate the capacity of the state as the dispenser of equity and social justice, leading thereby to increasing pauperization and marginalization in society. The uniqueness of the West Bengal model of local governance is that it has not only countered the neo-liberal model of governance informed by diminution of state, but also provided an alternative to that by harping on the necessity of bringing back the state in for welfare of the marginalized..

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Inclusive

## Innocence Turning Ugly: Note on Politics around a Student Death in West Bengal

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### *Abstract*

*In the first week of April 2013, West Bengal witnessed a tragic death of a college student, Sudipta Gupta, while participating in a "law-breaking" rally led by the CPI (M) student wing "SFI (Student Federation of India) against the decision of the state government to withhold elections to student unions in colleges and universities. Sudipta's death was allegedly caused by the brutal beating of the police followed by the casualness of the medical staffs. The very next day entire Bengal, and thanks to community forum "face-book" and some media channels, entire nation saw the innocent and bright face of the student and plunged into sorrow. Such a normal reaction over an innocent death was soon followed up by some ugly demonstration of protest and counter-protest allegedly by the student wings of both CPI (M) and Trinamul Congress (TMC). This article after taking note on these events concludes that in tune with the practical (non-ideological) political milieu of our country, student politics too is getting deviated from its ideological position and becoming similar irrespective of the Leftist and rightist genre. Keywords: Politics, Student, Ideology, Elections, West Bengal*

### **Introduction**

I dont want it to be fought at all! An election is a moral horror, as bad as a battle, except for the blood; a mud bath for every soul concerned in it. You know very well that it will not be fought on principle(Shaw: 2007).

The element of violence in election arena is a matter of great concern for contemporary political analysts as well as psephologists and the situation become even more shocking once it entered in the educational institutions engulfing student politics. The event of untimely student deaths, a situation in vogue in West Bengal for the past few years, perturbs any sensible soul mind that prays/urges for non-repetition of such incidents. As prayer cannot be the "only" thing to be done in any circumstance, the series of student violence that characterizes contemporary student politics culminating into fatal injuries and even death, calls for in-depth analysis of the reasons for and solution to such incidents. The section I of the present paper based on some personal experience of student politics in West Bengal over the past decade tries to understand the shifts and changes in the outlook of students towards the political system and that of political parties to their student wings. The section II tries to understand in greater detail the particular death of Sudipta Gupta and arguments based on "custodial death" targeting the state government. Section III brings in

theoretical understanding of student politics and tries to link it with recent events in West Bengal particularly as a critique of the politics of the Left leaning student groups. Finally a concluding section is presented to show that the overall trend of national politics does influence the politics at the formative ages of a person “ at the level of student politics.

## I

It was in the early years of this millennium that I joined as a student in one of the reputed government colleges in central Kolkata and was introduced to a dialogue between “political politics” and “apolitical politics” taking place between several groups of students in the classrooms, in corridors, in canteens and even in the streets leading to the college. Nañve as I was to distinguish between the types of politics, I tried to listen carefully to the arguments of both the groups “ one led by the leftist student wing (SFI, Student Federation of India) and the other by rightists” student wing claiming independence from all political parties. The former accused the latter of diluting the ideological element in politics and promoting “emotional bond” and “face politics”, i.e. popularizing certain key faces of students through their presence in canteen and cultural forums of the college and then seek vote in their support. The latter group accused the former of politicising educational arenas with political attitudes akin to programme of particular leftist ideology based political parties. Needless to mention, both the groups appeared to uphold the welfare and development of the college and its students as their topmost priority areas and they reflected their position through more or less similar ways of slogans, posters, and campaigns in classrooms before elections. The rightist group used to get funds from outside (it was alleged so) while the state level leaders of SFI were visible in the campus to step up the electoral mood among students, particularly those supporting them.

It was in the late years of the first decade of this millennium that I joined as a teacher (temporary) in a reputed missionary college of Kolkata. I found that everything was happening there “ student seminars, cultural programmes of the students, fresher welcome party- as the case with the college where I studied but with a difference “ a total absence of any popular and active student wing of any particular political party or any attempt to counter them by some other brand of politics. Here I found that the student union was present, active, vibrant, and participative with regular change of portfolio holders but without any political approach. However, in classrooms I found that the students were equally aware, politically and culturally about the happenings around them, just I found it among my peers in my college days. Outside influence of political parties or political student groups were at an arm"s length from the students and student union of this college.

Quite accustomed with the concepts and ideas of political science as a subject and politics as a process, I stepped in to a heritage college of South Kolkata as a full time teacher and taught there for three years where student behavior, student agitations and student union elections reminded of my college days. It was so similar but again with a difference “which I later realized, a difference structured by different generation. The students both in the left ideological camp (SFI) and in the right (for the first time I came across Chatra Parishad(CP) and then the TMCP(Trinamul Chatra

Parishad), were extremely adamant to their positions and tried to take recourse to any means between themselves, even in the college premises in front of teachers, “ threats, street fights, usage of slangs, physical brutal assaults “ to see to it that decisions of college authorities come in their favour. Couple of student leaders on both sides were extremely argumentative and at the same time quite logical with full information about the trend of party politics in the state. Being located in central place of south Kolkata, the student supporters of both the groups were influence by various street campaigns led by state level leaders of both the student groups just outside the college premises.

Presently, as the millennium steps into its second decade, I'm engaged in teaching in a university in rural backdrop where I'm dealing with students mostly from economically and socially backward community students and to their vision "politics" is simply defined as "student union" and "student politics" is just "to remain present sometime in the union room"! An interesting feature here is of a total absence of the opposition in student union. The only presence is of that student group which corresponds to the party in power at the state. A very recent instance would be total change of unit after unit of student union overnight from one party affiliation to another with the change of guards at the state power corridor.

In the above narration of particular experiences over the last one decade some generalizations can be made: (a) student unions are always acting as the face of power of political parties (b) political parties view student unions as recruiting machines for being party members (c) the nature of student politics swings with the changes in state politics (d) the brute powerful influence of politics on student unions is more reflected in rural areas where political reasoning bypasses logical reasoning (e) in urban areas and gradually in rural areas as well, media attraction is a prime mover of violence in student politics (f) however a different model of student union, though not anti-political but innocent, sensible and logical, is available in the state.

With this personal experience as a background the next section catches up with a particular incident of student death where politics, student union and party politics intersects “ the death of Sudipta Gupta on April 2, 2013.

## II

Unable to contain violence in college union polls, committed these days mostly by the TMC's student wing after forcing police into inaction, the government had declared a moratorium on students' union elections. Demanding its withdrawal, four left students' organisations gave a call for 'law-break' agitation. The programme was undertaken with prior permission from the concerned authority. However, due to high deficit in police arrangement minor scuffles ensued, and the students were lathi-charged. Then hundreds of students were packed in three or four buses, while according to media report, a circular from the police headquarters had instructed to keep at least 20 buses ready to take the lawbreakers to jail. On way to the Presidency jail, Sudipto Gupta, a state committee member of the Students Federation of India fell on the road with a serious head

injury. He was taken to the hospital where, it is alleged by his friends, he lay unattended for more than an hour. And finally when the doctors intervened there was little to do. A student of 22 years, the only son of an ailing widower-father, succumbed. According to the police, the death was due to an accident, but eyewitness reports give a totally different version of police beatings and callousness causing death.

Important in this incident was the way in which the state government and its police forces were put under severe criticism over the issue of custodial death. The very fact that the students were taken by bus after "token" police arrest having only two policemen as per report in the newspapers, led the critiques to term it as a death in police custody and hence "custodial death" and thereby directly placing the responsibility on the police and the government. One of the comments publicized by the critiques read like this: 'We have watched with disgust and horror the brutal police assault on students during a peaceful demonstration organised by four Left students' organisations on 2 April 2013 in Kolkata and the subsequent death of Sudipta Gupta, a participant in the demonstration, while in police custody. Sudipta was a bright student and a leading activist of the Students Federation of India. We are shocked to see the chief minister of the state absolve the police of any responsibility for Sudipta's death even before a proper enquiry had been initiated' (EPW Letters :2013). Another critic argues: 'Now, if under the pressure of the media and the people any administrative inquiry is instituted we can guess what findings it would come up with! The people of West Bengal are fast losing faith in the honesty and civility of the chief minister. The minimum that we as ordinary citizens of the country can demand and the government should be forced to grant is a judicial probe into the death of Sudipto' (Chakroborty: 2013). The problem with these arguments is to shift attention from student politics to state politics " from academics to politics.

Moreover "Custodial death" means the death of a person in the custody of a public officer or any person acting on behalf of a public officer. (a) The term "custody" includes all occasions where a person is detained by a public officer or any person acting on behalf of a public officer, irrespective of the legality, nature and the place of detention; (b) It includes judicial custody and all other forms of temporary and permanent restraint upon the movement of a person by law, or by force or by other means enforced by a public officer or any person acting on behalf of a public officer; (c) It includes deaths occurring whilst a person is being arrested or taken into detention or being questioned; (d) In all cases where the death of a person is within 72 hours after his release from 'custody', or at any other subsequent occasion and where the cause of death can be attributed to acts committed upon the deceased by a public officer or anyone acting on his behalf while the deceased was in custody; (e) "Custodial death" may have taken place on police, private or medical premises, in a public place or in a police or other vehicle(IPC Act, 2010). This definition in some remote way supports projection of Sudipto's death as "custodial death as there are many brutal instances of custodial death on police torture in jail custody. Those who are asking for a probe, indeed justifiably, are diluting their own position by branding the incident before the probe itself!

The pent up anger against the state administration got reflected at New Delhi when the Chief Minister along with some important cabinet ministers en route to the finance commission office was mobbed and heckled on 9th April 2013, by left leaning student unions in memoriam of the "innocent" death of their student leader, Sudipto. Present in this incident according to media footage was the all India general secretary of SFI. At any stretch of imagination this was an "ugly" demonstration of anger seeking justice through judicial probe of Sudipto's death. Such ugly demonstrations become more disturbing when it gets validation by one of the important left ideologue of the country in the following words: 'Those who get perturbed by heckling and would like a more civilised and humane discourse, must themselves also engage in such a discourse. One cannot call the death of a young idealistic student, and that too in police custody, a 'small and petty affair' , a remark that is offensive to fundamental humanity; and then complain if angry demonstrators heckle one. To claim the right to make inhumane comments about others, and then to complain when others heckle one, amounts to having one's cake and eating it too. Of course even when one's discourse is perfectly humane and 'civilised' , in so far as the consequences of one's decisions are deleterious to some people's lives, one still has to be prepared to face demonstrations and heckling. But if one's discourse too is inhumane then the chances of this happening multiply several-fold' (Patnaik : 2013).. This justification again gets political as it is directed against state administration and pats for the extension of student politics to the arena of state politics. The ugliest incident in this follow up of events was still to be seen and finally happened at Presidency College, Kolkata where some hooligans vandalized and destroyed the heritage Baker Laboratory and to utter dismay this demonstrations carried flag of TMC and media footage showed the presence of the local councilor of TMC outside the gate of the college during the incident. This act was a protest against the demonstrations that TMC ministers faced at New Delhi. So, politics within academic arena, as showed by these incidents, no longer involves students only but the political party, their image and prestige, state power apparatus, etc.

An academic explanation regarding the source of the SFI "law-breaking; rally and hence the source of all these follow ups involves the legality of the state government decision to withheld student elections. It reads: 'In this milieu of violence even many well meaning people have started to blame student politics as the repository of violence and demanded that student union elections be banned in the state. This debate started when an on-duty police officer was killed by goons belonging to the ruling TMC during the process of nomination in a Kolkata College. Subsequently, the government announced that student union elections will be withheld for 6 months and with the incident of Sudipto Gupta, the clamour has increased that students should be kept out of politics. Prima facie, the demand to ban student union election is unconstitutional. The Constitution of India gives every person the right to form associations; hence students cannot be arbitrarily denied this right. Secondly, the Lyngdoh Commission constituted by the Supreme Court to frame guidelines for conducting student union elections is unambiguous when it comes to the question of whether election should be held or not. It states, 'Universities and colleges across the country must ordinarily conduct elections for the appointment of students to student representative bodies. These elections may be conducted in the manner prescribed herein, or in a manner that conforms to the standards prescribed herein.' (Lyngdoh Commission Report, Page: 40)' (Chowdhury: 2013).

However, such arguments falls flat in a politicized environment as is seen in contemporary West Bengal where student supporters of particular opinion behave like party members. They are becoming that rigid and closed.

Student politics, or for that matter politics, ideally must depend on taking advantages of situation created. In the events that happened both the SFI and TMC leaders were becoming more similar in their self-destructive positional tactics (both were leading destructive marches) thereby leaving the space of politics of students in an ideological and programmatic vacuum in the days to come.

### III

Given the special significance and weight of students in the politics of many new nations, the questions: (a) whether or not their politics are like national politics and integrated with them; (b) whether student politics are separate from, opposed to, or ahead of, national politics; and (c) what conditions promote one or another of those tendencies; become questions of some interest and importance. In India, student politics tend towards congruence with national politics. Unlike industrial workers, peasants, or capitalist, students have not aspired to be a ruling class; they lack the ideological identity and mission in the political system. If students have not "and perhaps cannot" become one of the political classes that aspire to power in their own right, they have become on occasion a leading sector in the political system"-expressing in an organised and militant form dissatisfactions or aspirations well before such sentiments have been clearly articulated and expressed by the established means of political representation and leadership. While students have often played a role in the regime politics of a number of nations and in the ideological politics of others, in India the orientation of student politics in the aggregate has remained relatively congruent with that of national politics (Rudolph & Rudolph : 1966).

Professor T.K. Oomen succinctly describes the situation leading to student unrest in campuses: 'œThe exercise of student power in India is constrained by several structural factors. Student politicians are rarely, if ever, autonomous. They depend on political parties or other outside agencies for ideas, finance, and organizational support. It is but natural this involvement by outsiders is based on expectation of political payoffs. Often this takes the form of the student politician becoming their agent or propagandist on the campus. Naturally he has to abide by the instructions of his patron; the relationship between political parties and student political organization is always a hierarchical one and the latter is usually at the receiving end.(p. 255) The real task of the politically oriented student activist is to transform the latent discontent and vague rebelliousness into a coherent revolutionary vision. Usually the passive, indolent, dull majority is provoked through the offering of an occasion to be involved in a demonstration. Here what is important is not the cause for which students agitate but due to their involvement in agitation. Sometimes the zeal and commitment of the passive many is greater than that of routine activists, once they are involved. Student leaders will deliberately plan often physical violence by destroying public property or by assaulting some higher official of the university. Once this happens usually the formal agencies of social contract, particularly the police and the press, step

in!If the attempt of student leaders to "manufacture" a couple of student martyrs succeeds they are at the height of their glory. The martyrs are those who get shot, injured, arrested, dismissed or suspended. Student power is often effective only through violent agitations and this is for three reasons:- first, violence is the most effective means of focusing attention on issues and this invites the sudden intervention of higher authorities. Second, violence is the medium through which the passivity, which envelops the majority, is at least temporarily effaced, galvanizing it into action. Third, it is violence, which makes the hitherto unwilling university authorities concede demands, which they have been continuously refusing. (Oomen: 2010; 255, 263, 264).

Over the past three decades, college and university elections in West Bengal in particular and the country at large have become arenas of contest among political parties. One of the reasons behind this is the manner in which much of the student politics in most of these institutions have come to be reduced entirely to winning or losing students' union elections. Earlier, the elections used to be at an intellectual level but now the environment has entirely changed. Some years back the injury suffered by a student named Souvick (who lost one of his eye forever in a pre college election violence) in a south Kolkata college led to the SFI union leader leading the protest in front of the then opposition leader and landing up getting a party ticket to contest the assembly polls in 2011. Now elections are stopped for some period by the state government (for reasons of security). There are arguments to bring back "party based elections" in the name of democratic participation of students in the formation of college unions (keeping in mind the sad stories of violence leading to the recent incidents of Souvick and Sudipto Kole) criticisms are at a galore. The SFI general secretary comments: 'œBut the protest is very much in the air. There are Left students who are not allowed to enter campuses'. But still they have not given up the flag of SFI. They are in the barricade of resistance. The wall writing is sharp, bold and clear- "If politics determines our education we must determine the politics". This determination to determine politics is the silver lining in this worst of times' (Bhattacharyay : 2013) Hardly one can find arguments calling upon general students belonging to all ideologies to come together and form "party-less union" for cultural and social development of the students in colleges.

#### IV

An innocent death of a student occur, the student is highlighted as a party cadre and brought into the limelight, police officials and home minister, i.e. the chief minister is accused, activists of the deceased student camp heckles chief minister and cabinet ministers, in that situation the general secretary of the deceased students' group was seen, the act has to be condemned but not by words but through retaliation, the vandalism in the Baker laboratory of Presidency University was carried out and in the scene was noticed the councillor of the chief minister's party. This running summary shoes that how an innocent death turns political and utterly ugly within a fortnight leaving a lasting impact on student politics of the state. The central question is to search for alternative model of organizing student politics.

Ranabir Samaddar argues, 'œIn West Bengal large student movements have never been organized centering on union elections but rather on bigger issues of society regarding education and solidarity of labourers, sometimes even on international issues particularly anti-imperialism. At time, students and youth would join hands to manage disasters like drought or floods and thereby such days of student politics were marked by ideological and philosophical politics far away from the present institutionalised election centered student politics. The first effect of such calculative student politics is its politics and career centricity cut off from the real problems of society and thus marked by "academic nobility" and for this vacuum general students are in favour to stay away from such "bad politics" and student politics is under the threat of corrupt practices. Such practices have surfaced in recent years in liberal society of United States.Â Thus not United States but the European student politics particularly that are seen in 2010-2011 in Italy, France, Great Britain, Spain must be the model for student politics in the coming days. Thousands of students protested in the streets of Barcelona, Bolonia, Rome, Paris, London, Berlin demanding the removal of neo-liberal policy restrictions on educational campus, ending oppression to immigrants and ensuring security to common people. Student politics must return to its golden days not for its reiteration but for its renewal. During 1966-77 student protest in Presidency stroked chord among student community at large as in the face of threats of bombing, police activities in the college the elite students were saved by students, teachers from outside the campus. The model is to break free from party affiliations and dictates and to move ahead for student solidarity across party lines' (Samaddar : 2013).

The idea that students can be or should be kept out of politics comes from a narrow understanding of what politics is. Politics is not simply about what political parties say. Politics is basically about a debate, a discourse on what society as a whole should or should not do. For example, the courses studied in our universities, the amount of fees that we pay, the level of salaries of the teachers etc all are decided by politics. Students, who are the most vibrant section within the society, cannot be kept aloof of this debate and discussion or politics. They must be free to listen to every view and form their own opinions about it. "But politics is not merely about debates and discussions. Politics is also about power (Chowdhury: 2013). So, all debates among student groups have boiled down to powerful and violent rigid explorations of one"s position diluting the age-old open policy of "Let the Hundred Flowers Bloom". The student movements, in this spirit, ultimately get marred by violence and get robbed off its traditional mission of positive contributions to society, with one exception, organizing blood donations camp has been a matter of competition among competing student groups and at least blood donation is made.

The student movements of any particular period reflect the direction of the character of the new vision of the society at its micro level.. Students get into the process of political socialization through their participation in these movements. In the process the role of social and political culture, information and communication channels and technological advancements becomes critical in determining the intensity of student movements. In a globalised world, students are the most susceptible section of the society to cultural influences.Â The various ways by which the students try to popularize their support base among their peers, mainly through facebook and

twitter and email and "sms" exchanges, indicates the new cultural influences on them across the left and right wing student groups. In this flow, both the left and right wing student unions are in same direction. The way picture of a blood ejecting one eye lost Souvick, bandaged picture of Sudipto Kole's dead body and picture of innocent Sudipta Gupta's face has been spread over the web world and in the streets, to generate awareness of the degree of violence and to create emotional attachment " a question crops up " has the left student unions taken recourse to the same "emotional politics" of the type they hated most in my college days?

The article tries to contextualise the events unfolding around the death of Sudipta Gupta in the overall perspective of trends in student politics. There has been a sharp increase in violence in student politics but the present incident is not a cause of inter-student front collisions but due to lack of humane management of the situation. It is also of deep worry that one can hardly find any difference between the tone and texture of the student politics pursued by the leftist and rightist camps presently in West Bengal. In most instances the campus politics are based on party line divisions of "us" and "them" as reflected in the local, state and national level political space. Gone are the days when student politics of debates and discussions, of academics and society coated student agitations. Now it's all about politics, in the bad and amoral sense of the term. To conclude one can reiterate the lines of Rabindranath Tagore: Firbey Na Ta Jani, Tobu Tomar Potho Cheye Joluk Pradipkhani..("The student politics will never be the same, but let us keep our hopes lightened in the anticipation of the return of a more open and civilised approach to society and politics. "). Politics in the college premises must be seen in terms of socialization rather than politicization and academic environment related specific demand based movements must replace popular political politics. It is in college and university that a person is in his/her formative ages and to be groomed to be a good citizen and not to be a trained political-party supporter. It is now a duty to all persons related to academics- teachers, students, non-teaching staffs and even a transformed open ended student groups to work together in that direction. Sudipto Kole and Sudipto Gupta are dead but Souvick is alive with one eye and a violence free academic campus will be the best homage to all of them. Let's start making the gift.

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## Use of Technology for Inclusive Governance

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In a country like India, where more than 30 per cent of the population is below poverty line, corruption is rampant and politics is caste and religion based, using technology becomes imperative to make the society more equal, reduce bias and control corruption. The under privileged in India suffer from not only low income but also from lower means to quality health, education, infrastructure and other civil services. They lack access to public-facilities and are given a secondary quality of service. According to the theory of social contract, agreement is between individuals and not between ruler and the ruled. Going by this approach, the role of government is that of a trustee or a care taker to work for the betterment of the society irrespective of caste, colour, creed or sex and other disabilities. Since this is far from reality, there is an urgent need for Inclusive Governance

According to World bank, good governance can be defined as 'epitomized by predictable, open and enlightened policy making; a bureaucracy imbued with a professional ethos; an executive arm of government accountable for its actions; a strong civil society participating in public affairs; and all behaving under the rule of law' 1 .The word 'electronic' in the term e-Governance implies technology driven governance. E-Governance is the application of Information and communication Technology (ICT) for delivering government Services, exchange of information communication transactions, integration various stand-one systems and services between Government-to-citizens (G2C), Government-to-Business (G2B), Government-to-Government ( G2G) as well as back office processes and interactions within the entire government frame work to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, service delivery and to promote democracy. 2

E-Governance marks a paradigm shift in the philosophy of governance moving the focus from process to citizens thus enabling large scale public participation. The result of E-enablement could exceed beyond corruption and inclusivity and eventually lead to a more effective, efficient, transparent and democratic government.

Participation is feasible given that political, economic, technological and social barriers are removed and access to those opportunities are equitably distributed. The goal of e-participation initiatives is to boost the citizen's access to information and public services and promote participation of people in making decisions that impact the wellbeing of society, in general, and hence specifically, the individual.

Also one of the most important problem faced by government towards successful implementation of its programs is a timely feedback from the grassroots to modify and improvise the scheme. Use of information technology provides the facility of providing first hand grass root feedback at real time and facilitates the dissemination of knowledge. E-inclusion thus goes on to the far side of governance.

## Pre-requisites for E-governance

The E-governance initiative for inclusive growth is emerging as a policy model for India, which needs to be replicated in all types of policy implementation processes. Having strong partnerships between all levels of government, organizations and communities is crucial to develop inclusive growth strategy which encompasses management of social, political and economic issues. Use of technology has several benefits compared to other forms of inclusion adopted such as social auditing, empowerment of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI) as it enables a cost effective and widely accessible mechanism to reorient civil service to meet the needs of communities at large and also increase accountability of the revenue collection and public procurement functions. It also enables deployment of economic growth and social equity, enabling better targeting of government and empowers monitoring by citizens and advocacy groups.

The importance of E-governance has been steadily growing and different state governments are becoming more technology enabled to improve service delivery to citizens. The government has initiated the national E-Governance program (NeGP) with the main objectives to improve the quality, accessibility and effectiveness of government services by making them available to citizens and businesses particularly among the poor and rural communities, through the use of ICT. The programme encourages all Government departments and ministries to manage their internal process electronically. Effectively, this means creating almost paperless departments.

'The Government of India's aim of providing web-enabled anytime, anywhere access to information and e-services can have significant social and economic benefits. Reducing the financial and opportunity costs of obtaining specific services through enabling policy measures can go a long way in transforming service delivery in the country,' said Roberto Zaghera, World Bank Country Director in India . 3

To ensure that the benefits of enablement reach all the citizens alike, the following parameters are necessary:

**Availability of Capital:** The cost of implementing total NeGP is anticipated to be around \$ 3.2 billion of which \$ 500million will be provided under specific investment loan by World Bank.

**Infrastructure Development for implementation of technology:** Infrastructure plays a very crucial role in enablement. At a national level, it is important to have state wide area networks to provide connectivity up to block level, data centres for efficient data management and support networking infrastructure such as access points to deploy low cost technology solutions.

**Up-Scaling of existing mission mode projects (MMP) :** there are 27 MMP and 10 components initiated by NeGP of which the emphasis is made on backward states and those projects involving the poor and the underprivileged.

Training and communication: Having the building blocks in place is not enough. It is important that citizens at the panchayat level be made aware of the objectives, role, and benefits of the technology and the functioning of the services be made available. Hence it is necessary to have training initiatives at the central, state and block levels.

### **Comparison of technology implementation internationally**

The United Nations has initiated a framework of the United Nations e-government program. E-government in this context encompasses the capacity and the willingness of the public sector to deploy ICT for improving knowledge and information in the service of the citizen. According to the Global E-readiness survey conducted by the United Nations, India ranks 122 in the world for Fixed Broadband Penetration, with only 1.1 per every 100 inhabitants having access to fixed broadband. The world average is 9.9 per 100 inhabitants. Only 12.6 per cent of the population has access to Internet in the country, placing India at 122 rank for broadband penetration. The introduction of broadband has generated close to 9 million direct and indirect jobs in India, making a 1 per cent increase in broadband penetration contributing to 0.11 per cent to Indian GDP according to State of Broadband 2013 report by UNESCO. 4

According to another global survey conducted by United Nations Public Administration Programme, The UN E-government Survey 5, India scores 0.383 in E-government Index against world average of 0.496. It scores very badly in infrastructure index at 0.11 against world average of 0.326. Its E-participation index is 0.184, world average being 0.268. India stands at 125 rank in E-governance from 190 countries surveyed.

### **E-Initiatives by India**

The E-enablement of India evolved gradually from computerization of government departments to a more involved technology such as citizen centricity, service orientation and transparency. The National e-Governance Plan (NeGP), takes a holistic view of e-Governance initiatives across the country. The vision of NeGP is to 'make all Government services accessible to the common man in his locality, through common service delivery outlets and ensure efficiency, transparency and reliability of such services at affordable costs to realize the basic needs of the common man' 6. NeGP mainly executes Government to Customers, Government to Business Mission Mode projects at central level, state level and hybrid level in which centre and state implement a scheme or a project in joint collaboration. Each project of NeGP is owned and spearheaded by relevant ministry or agency at central or state level. The impact of technology implementation is expected to have far reaching social benefits across all spheres of the society particularly with schemes related to rural welfare such as public distribution system, rural health, pension and educational scholarships. The table of mission mode projects initiated by NeGP is mentioned below:

Central	State	Integrated
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Services to Citizens (G2C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Income tax</li> <li>Passport, visa and immigration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Land records</li> <li>Property registration</li> <li>Road transport</li> <li>Agriculture</li> <li>Municipalities</li> <li>Panchayats</li> <li>Police</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Common service centers</li> <li>India portal</li> </ul>
Services to Business (G2B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Excise</li> <li>Company affairs (DCA21)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commercial taxes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EDI</li> <li>e-Biz</li> <li>e-Procurement</li> </ul>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National ID</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National e-governance gateway</li> </ul>

The Bhoomi project, an attempt made by state government of Karnataka to computerize land records is one of the most successful E-governance initiatives. More than 20 million records belonging to 6.7 million land owners in 176 taluks of the state have been computerised under this scheme. The software was designed by National Informatics centre and sponsored by Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India and State Government of Karnataka. Computerization of land records has had far reaching effects in terms of prevention of exploitation of poor and marginalized farmers from harassment and extortion, easy access to land records and reduction in processing time for mutation.

Another initiative worth mentioning is the implementation of UID and use of direct benefit transfer through UID linkages. Although the matter has been debated and there are several limitations highlighted about the drawbacks of the use of UID, the fact remains that it is one of the most efficient ways of tackling several civil services issues in one stroke. Under direct benefit transfer scheme, all direct subsidies under different schemes such as Antyodaya Anna Yojana, health insurance under Rashtriya Swasthya Beema Yojana, and cash transfers such as pension and educational scholarship will be transferred directly to the beneficiaries' UID linked account eliminating time lags and improving efficiency. The direct transfer of the benefits also eliminate the middlemen involved thus reducing drastically if not eliminating leakages and curbing corruption. The sheer scope of the task of enrolling a billion plus population, maintaining their

records safely and securely online and linking beneficiaries with schemes is a daunting task and will take time to reflect its full effect after implementation.

## Challenges

While e governance is definitely a step forward towards an effective government, yet, the absence of Inclusive Governance continues to widen the much debated divide between rich and poor. Inclusion of indigenous groups of people such as minorities, poor people, women, people with disabilities and OBCs is extremely important, not only for them to exercise their rights but also to overcome the economic and social inequalities existing in the country. It is only when each individual can be heard and is capable of making his or her voice heard in matters of governance will the society be truly inclusive.

Although NeGP has been substantially successful in its approach and objective, it faces several challenges in its implementation and outreach.

**Access** : From the perspective of social inclusion, accessibility of services is of utmost importance. A huge majority of citizens in our villages do not have access to E-services. One of the primary reason, surprisingly is not extension of internet facilities to the villages, but availability of electricity. In a country where rural electrification itself is a challenge, e-enablement is a secondary concern. The internet penetration of rural India is dismal but slowly catching up, with 68 million users <sup>7</sup> . The government has aggressive plans to extend IT services to 2.5 lakh villages.

**Capacity** : Users at a village level also lack the requisite capacity to understand and use internet services. Awareness of such facilities is also a challenge which relates to the digital divide and can create bias if only certain sections of the society use the facility. Often discussion about the digital divide concentrates on the interaction between individuals, technology and society. The argument is that once on-line there is no gap and that everyone can utilize the internet and benefit from the information society. However, in the present societal framework, the extent to which all citizens can utilize and benefit from internet equally is not certain.

**Infrastructure** : Several state governments have not implemented the IT enablement within their states completely, or have done so with substandard facilities, resulting in non-functional kiosks. This has mainly arisen due to poor monitoring mechanism existing in execution of mission mode projects. There is also a need to facilitate use of mobile platforms to deliver government services at low cost to the citizens.

**Users** : The biggest challenge that the government faces in involving citizens in governance is the lack of faith that people have in the government. People are sceptical about the encouragement of participation in a particular initiative and consider it to be politically motivated, leading to insufficient participation from end users. It becomes very difficult for the government to sustain

citizen interest and participation, since not all benefits are instant, and there is a natural reluctance to change. Identification of beneficiaries in e-transactions is also a challenge for the government.

## Conclusion

There is no doubt about the future of good governance being in automation and efficient use of technology. This will not only eliminate political favouritism or selective participation but also ensure efficiency, effectivity, transparency, accountability and equal access to all to the public services in the real sense. Technology can solve multiple issues such as corruption, accessibility and implementation of individual rights. However, to make it a reality, political will is of utmost importance. A lack of commitment and political reluctance will only delay the process of technology implementation, adversely affecting the development of the country. Also, there has to be a holistic approach and several of human development initiatives such as literacy rate and women empowerment have to be rammed up. The government should also focus on making a conducive environment for technology penetration by ensuring citizens access to electricity and capacity building to use technology.

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## In the Quest of Shakespeare

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“Must I remember? Why she would hang on him

As if increase of appetite had grown

By what it fed on. And yet within a month

Let me not think on it – Frailty, thy name is Woman” (Hamlet,1.2.140-146)

These are the words uttered by Hamlet in his first soliloquy, in Shakespeare's famous play *Hamlet*. This question is, can we determine whose voice is this? Is it the author himself? Or is it the Hero? Is it wisdom that is shared by all humanity? Is it the author's different roles-one, an individual informed by his personal experience? Or is it the author taking up a definite stand on femininity? The answer to any of these questions can never be obtained, for the act of writing obliterates such a voice. It is a neutral act which erases all identity.

Roland Barthes in his essay '*The Death of the Author*' emphasizes that the moment a fact is narrated, the voice loses its origin. The beginning of the writing spells the death of the author. For Barthes, 'To give a text an Author' and assign a single, corresponding interpretation of it 'is to impose a limit on that text'. Readers must separate a literary work from its creator in order to liberate it from interpretive tyranny, for each piece of writing contains multiple layers and meanings. In a famous quotation, Barthes draws an analogy between text and textiles, declaring that a "text is a tissue [or fabric] of quotations," drawn from "innumerable centres of culture," rather than from one, individual experience. Barthes by decreeing the demise of the author, privileges (1) the text as a space for the play of several voices, (2) the reader as a space where these multiple voices gain their force. The disputes regarding the authorship of the works of Shakespeare can be seen in a new light if we consider the above discussion.

It is to be noted that the works of Shakespeare consist of allusions and specialized terms relating to numerous fields, which possibly could not be used by the author without any expertise in that particular field. The mystery regarding what author could have had all the learning, talents and experience attributed to Shakespeare was partly answered by Dr. Sigmund Freud and Mr. Looney when they identified Edward-de-Vere, the Earl of Oxford as the possible author of the works of Shakespeare. Many other candidates have been proposed, beginning with William Shakspeare. If only his personal connection with the works of Shakespeare could be established, there would be no authorship problem. There is however, dispute, first over the claims on behalf of Shakspeare, then Bacon, then Oxford, Derby, Marlowe and a procession of others. Dr. Sigmund Freud could not

believe that the author of *King Lear*, *Hamlet* and *Othello* was an ill-educated rustic, nor even that he was Anglo-Saxon. He was convinced that the real Shakespeare was, if not French, a man of Norman blood – Edward-de-Vere, the seventeenth Earl of Oxford. The cause of this heresy was 'Shakespeare' identified by J. Thomas Looney. Freud wrote in 1937 that 'the man from Stratford seems to have nothing at all to justify his claims, whereas Oxford has almost everything'. In *King Lear*, one of Freud's favourite plays, he was impressed by the correspondence between Lear and Oxford, who each had three daughters. His letter on this topic to his Shakespearean friend James Bransom in the year of 1937 is quoted in the Biography by his disciple, Earnest Jones. Looney from a reading of Shakespeare's plays and poems had drawn a list of features about their Author. The features identified by Looney were : (1) A mature man of recognized genius (2) Apparently eccentric and mysterious (3) Unconventional (4) Of pronounced and known literary taste (5) An enthusiasts in the world of drama (6) A lyric poet of recognized talent (7) Of superior education-classical – the habitual associate of educated people (8) A man with feudal connections (9) One of the higher aristocracy (10) An enthusiast for Italy (11) Loose and improvident in money matters (12) Doubtful and somewhat conflicting in his attitude to women (13) Of probable Catholic learning but touched with scepticism. The next stage was to look for a sixteenth-century poet who wrote in the characteristic Shakespearian rhythm, as in *Venus and Adonis*. Looney went through an anthology of poetry and homed in on a poem which not only had the correct form of stanza but seemed to express to him Shakespearean sentiments. It was Edward-de-Vere's '*Women*'. Knowing nothing about de Vere, Looney looked him up in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. The article was written by the great Stratfordian, Sir Sidney Lee. Certain sentences mentioned about the Earl of Oxford led Looney on. The information found in the *Dictionary of National Biography* about the Earl of Oxford:

“Oxford, despite his violent and perverse temper, his eccentric taste in dress, and his reckless waste of substance, evinced a genuine taste in music and wrote verse of much lyric beauty...”

One of the basic concerns in literary studies, particularly in the case of Shakespeare, is the connection between life and personal experiences of an author and his imaginative writings. Freud believed that in the sonnets and in plays such as *Hamlet* the author was writing from his inner soul. While reading Shakespeare's famous play *Hamlet*, Looney was struck by the remarkable correspondence between Hamlet and Oxford. Several of the characters in Hamlet's story have their parallels in Oxford's family and close associates. The person who poisoned Hamlet's father and then married his mother is an exaggerated version of Oxford's stepfather. Polonius, Lord Chamberlain in the Court of Denmark and Hamlet's tedious counsellor, is a caricature of Queen Elizabeth's chief minister, Lord Burghley, who was Oxford's guardian. The daughter of Polonius was Hamlet's Ophelia, while Burghley's daughter, Anne Cecil was the partner in Oxford's troubled marriage.

Anne's brother, Thomas Cecil, was Oxford's rival, as Ophelia's brother. Laertes, was the rival of Hamlet. Heratio, Hamlet's loyal friend, and the soldier Francisco are reminiscent of Sir Horace and Francios-de-Vere, Oxford's cousins, whom he admired for their military achievements. However, the meaning interpreted by Looney from a reading of the text of *Hamlet*, can be challenged by the *Reader-Response Theory*. Search for 'meaning' has always inspired critics to explore various approaches to it. The main trend has been to see a work as a product of the author's consciousness, his intensions and visions that were formed mostly by the value-systems to which he subscribed. Meaning is therefore, largely seen in terms of the author's biographical and social factors, inseparably interwoven as they appear with his creative energies. Another tradition seeks to establish the meaning by a close textual examination of this autonomous work which offers itself for analysis in terms of its own rules and principles. A third tradition insists that it is the reader whose responses create the text. In this case meaning does not exist *a priori*, it inheres not in the text but in the reader, or rather the reading community. Therefore, training their critical focus on the reading process, the critics explore meaning from the angle of psychology, philosophy and linguistics. According to Stanley Fish, reading is a complicated semiotic and fundamentally social process which varies both in place and in time. Different readers read differently because they belong to what are known as interpretative communities, each of which acts upon print differently and for different purposes. For Fish, an interpretative community is a loosely connected group of literary scholars who share basic assumptions about the nature of literature, about the goals of literary criticism, and about the nature of Interpretative process.

However, the tendency to disembodify authors in print, while powerful, does not always dominate. Fissures have developed in the scheme, some instigated by editors and publishers, some by academicians themselves. First, as authors grow more prominent, editors often indulge them in a photograph on the book jacket and or in sharing certain information that goes beyond the name-rank-affiliation formula. Authors too, include acknowledgements in their books in which they enjoy more liberty to express themselves. More important to this inquiry into authorial representation is the movement initiated in the mid -1980s to inform professional scholarship with personal narrative and experience. Jane Tompkins is an important figure in this discussion of the personal and the professional. In her article, '*Me and My Shadow*' (1989) she identifies the problem.

One of the objections raised by the Stratfordians against the Authorship theory in support of Edward-de-Vere, gives rise to the possibility of the existence of a particular Oxford Group. The Stratfordians' one line rebuttal of the Oxford theory is that Oxford died in 1604, but new Shakespeare plays kept on appearing. He died before the first staging of *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Timon of Athens*, *Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale* and *Tempest*. The first Shakespearean poem *Venus and Adonis*, generally considered to be work of a young poet, was published when he was forty-three. Oxfordians believed that Oxford must have died with several plays unfinished, and they were later completed by his followers. A book of 1589, *The Art of English Poesie*, by an anonymous author, thought to have been George Puttenham stated that there were many hidden poets at the court of Queen Elizabeth and Oxford was their

leader. The evidence for it was discovered in 1928 by the Oxfordian writer Captain B.M. Ward in the form of a Privy Seal Warrant, signed by Queen Elizabeth on 26 th June 1586. It commanded the treasury to pay the Earl of Oxford the annual sum of 1000 pounds which continued till his death. The form of grant, said Ward, was typical of the Secret Service. Oxford was being paid to set up a sort of Government Propaganda department, producing plays such as Marlow's *Edward the Second* and the *King John* and *Henry the Fifth* of Shakespeare to encourage patriotic sentiments during the wars with Spain.

The author of *Shakespeare's Sonnets* wrote from the heart, exposing his emotions and inner nature, but without ever revealing the one thing that everyone would like to know about him, his identity. He was a senior man in both rank and age. He was cultured, sensitive, fastidious and inclined to self-pity. Physically he had been lamed or wounded, but the main reason for his suffering was his deep sense of disgrace and failure. For the sake of his lover's reputation he could not openly declare his love. Finally, in two Sonnets he insists repeatedly that 'my name is Will'. The 'Will' sonnets (135, 136, 143 with their elaborate wordplay on 'Will', a name in inverted commas, and 'will', meaning something else, seems to imply that the poet was called William. This is good for supporters of William Shakespeare and William Stanley, Earl of Derby, but the Oxfordians have found evidence that Edward-de-Vere was known to his fellow poets as Willy. The Sonnets are about love. The first 126 are mostly addressed to a fair youth, beginning with a series of seventeen in which he urged to marry so as to perpetuate his beauty and lineage through children. In the final sequence, the poet is bewitched by a dark-eyed dark-skinned woman. Edward - de- Vere can be easily identified as the Sonnet-writer. Anne Vavasor, his mistress who had a son by him, fills the role of the dark lady. The beloved youth is identified as Henry Writhesley, Earl of Southampton. In 1590 when he was seventeen, he was urged by his guardian, Lord Burghley, to marry Oxford's eldest daughter, Elizabeth. If Oxford was the author of the sonnets, he was giving the same advice, as a prospective father-in-law. Shakespeare's Sonnets were in private circulation before 1598, and the earliest were perhaps written in about 1590 when Oxford was forty and William Shakespeare twenty – six. The older man is clearly indicated by many self- references such as 'That time of the year thou mayst in me behold/When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang'(Sonnet 73); 'But when my glass shows myself indeed/Beated and chopp'd with tann'd antiquity' (Sonnet 62)..

This evidence again can be easily challenged when viewed from a modern perspective. Ideas presented in ' *The Death of the Author* ' by Barthes were fully anticipated by the philosophy of the school of New Criticism, a group of 20 th century literary critics who sought to read literary texts removed from 'historical or biographical contexts. The crucial New Critical precept of the " *Intentional Fallacy* " declare that a poem does not belong to its author; rather, 'it is detached from the author at birth and goes about the world beyond his power to intend about it or control it. The poem belongs to the public 1 '. William Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley wrote this in 1946, decades before Barthes' essay.

The strongest evidence in the Oxfordian chain regarding Edward-de-Vere being the author of the sonnets is found in the edition of *Shakespeare's Sonnets* , published by Thomas Thorpe in 1609

using the suspiciously, impersonal, hyphenated name. Adding to the mystery, Thorpe prefixed a publisher's dedication to the *Sonnets*. In the thirty or so words above his initials he set up an enigma that has attracted theorists ever since. The main questions are about the dedicatee, Mr. W.H., who he was and in what sense he was the 'only begetter' of the *Sonnets*. Sir Sidney Lee in his *Life of William Shakespeare* shed light on these questions. The dedication was not, as had commonly been supposed, to the fair youth who inspired the *Sonnets*, but to their begetter in another sense, meaning the person who procured them on Thorpe's behalf. By his initials and the name, Mr. W. H. ALL, hidden in the dedication, Lee identified him as William Hall, one of Thorpe's occasional collaborators. A significant link between William Hall, the *Sonnets* and the Earl of Oxford was discovered in 1922 by Colonel R. B. Ward and described in his book, *The Mystery of Mr. W. H.* William Hall had acquired and published *A Four-fold Meditation*, a poem by Robert Southwell. Its author was an illegal Jesuit missionary to England, who was arrested in 1592, tortured for three years in the Tower and then executed at Tyburn. His earlier place of refuge was in the house of Lord Vaux at Hackney. After his retirement Oxford also lived at Hackney. In 1956 his second wife, Elizabeth, bought a large house there, King's palace, which was probably where Lord Vaux had sheltered Southwell. William Hall found the manuscripts of his poem, and perhaps he found the sonnets there too. The most strikingly odd feature of Thorpe's dedication to Hall is the phrase which he applies to the author of the *Sonnets* – 'Our ever-living poet'. The phrase 'Our ever-living poet' is not appropriate to a person still living. Oxfordian researchers have looked far and wide for examples of 'ever-living' in literature, and found that in every case it refers to someone who is no longer alive. In 1609 when the *Sonnets* appeared, William Shakespeare still had seven years to live, Bacon, Derby, Rutland were flourishing, but Oxford was five years dead. It has been suggested that those words do not just say that the poet is dead, but have a further specific meaning. As Bacon was known by his personal motto, *Mediocria firma*, so was Oxford by his *Vero nil verius*. It is believed that Thorpe took Oxford's motto, shifted its thirteen letters around to make an anagram, and by substituting a final 'G' for the final 'S' he obtained 'Our ever-living'.

## NIL VERO VERIUS to OUR EVER-LIVING 2

It should be noted that almost all the evidences stated by numerous theorists not only in support of the Oxfordian Case but also in support of the Stratfordian, Baconian and Marlowvian cases seem to be equally believable and justified. This further increases the confusion regarding the true identity of Shakespeare. Michel Foucault gives a solution to this in his essay '*What is an Author ?*' where he emphasizes on the decentralization of the author. According to him, the essential basis of writing is not the exalted emotions related to the act of composition or the insertion of a subject into language. Rather, it is primarily concerned with creating an opening where the writing subject endlessly disappears. He also talks about the kinship between writing and death.

The concept of a spoken or written narrative as a protection against death has been transformed by our culture. Writing is now linked to sacrifice and to the sacrifice of life itself. Where a work had the duty of creating immortality, it now attains the right, to become the murderer of its author. Flaubert, Proust, and Kafka are obvious examples of this reversal. In fact Foucault considers the

disappearance of the Author as a blessing, which gives his work a transcendental quality required for its immortality. This is the notion of *écriture*. *Écriture* means a form of writing or verbal activity. Here the French *écriture* is meant with its double reference to the act of writing and to the primordial and metaphysical nature of writing as an entity in itself. Like the theme of self-referential writing, it too builds on a theory of the sign and denotes writing as the interplay of presence and absence in that “signs represent the present in its absence”.

This concept merely transposed the empirical characteristics of an author to a transcendental anonymity. Foucault on the other hand does not completely disregard the importance of the presence of the Author's name. He is interested not in the Author's identity but in the other purposes that the Author's name can serve. The presence of the Author's name is functional in that it serves as a means of classification. A name can group together a number of texts and thus differentiate them from others. Finally, the author's name characterizes a particular manner of existence of discourse. Discourse that possesses an author's name is not to be immediately consumed and forgotten. Rather, its status and its manner of reception are regulated by the culture in which it circulates. Not only were the texts, even the theatrical productions of Shakespearean plays were open to numerous kind of interpretations. During the Elizabethan period, the performance of the text was important more than the text itself. Shakespeare and his contemporaries did not care for the preservation of an original copy of the text, with the exception of Ben Jonson. This led to the tampering with the language and rhetoric of the text, which could very easily change the meaning and situations of the plot. Considering all these aspects one would realize the futility of the quest for the identity of not only the true Shakespeare but of any author as such.

But then again researches done on Shakespeare's true identity reveal such striking facts that we are forced to rethink. The Ashbourne portrait<sup>3</sup>, now exhibited in the Folger Shakespeare Library, turned up in the middle of the nineteenth century. In 1939 Charles Winser Barrell was allowed by the Folger to examine the portrait with X-ray and infra-red photography, and in the following year his sensational conclusions were announced in *The Scientific American*, January 1940. The portrait, he found had been doctored to make it resemble the conventional Shakespeare. Beneath the over painting Barrell discerned an original portrait of the Earl of Oxford. Thus the Quest for Shakespeare's true identity continues to haunt us like a mirage, towards which we cannot stop progressing in spite of being aware of its futility.

## Notes

1 Sewance Review.” *The Intentional Fallacy*.” Vol.54 (1946): 468-488.

2 Dedication page from the *Sonnets*. Both the hyphenated name and the words “ever-living poet”, have fuelled controversy within the authorship debate: TO.THE.ONLY.BEGETTER. OF. THESE.INSVING.SONNETS.

Mr W.H. ALL. HAPPINESS.  
AND. THAT. ETERNITIE.  
PROMISED.  
BY.  
OVR. EVER.LIVING. POET.  
WISHETH.  
THE. WELL.WISHING.  
ADVENTURER. IN.  
SETTING.  
FORTH.  
T.T.



3 The Ashbourne Portrait, which hangs in the Folger Shakespeare Library and which has been long believed to depict William Shakespeare, was analyzed by Charles Barrell, an expert in infra-red photography, who determined it was an over-painting of the Earl of Oxford, though this is disputed.

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## History of the Movement for the Donation of Posthumous Bodies

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This paper deals with the history of the initiatives taken for the donation of posthumous bodies, mainly in West Bengal. However, in this context, instances of other areas are also mentioned here. These initiatives are referred to as a movement here. This movement has started in recent past. However, as a backdrop of this movement the social attitude of the Indians towards dead-body and its dissection has been taken into account. Thus, though the paper concentrates on the time period prevalent during the 1980s and afterwards, it mentions the related aspects even in the nineteenth century. This paper intends to explore a new arena of social movements as well as the history of mentality.

The importance of the dissection of bodies has been present in Indian society since ancient times. It was mentioned in the Susruta Samhita that a (medical) student should make some experimentation in order to get the proper knowledge. According to the Samhita dissections of body were essential for medical learners.<sup>2</sup>

In the nineteenth century, the Superintendent of the Native Medical Association categorically mentioned in a letter that, without dissection, the medical students cannot learn anatomy<sup>3</sup>. But the question of getting the required dead body for the purpose of dissection was a problem. According to every institutional religion, the dead bodies were either cremated or buried. To get rid of this problem, the medical students stole dead bodies from the burial ground in England<sup>4</sup>. But that was not the right way.

In India, the Calcutta Medical College was established on 28th January, 1835. From 1st June, 1835 onwards, Dr. Brasley started to deliver lectures on anatomy. From the month of October, the series of lectures on dissection had started. For this purpose the models of human bodies, made of wood were used. After a few months, Professor Dr. Goodeve brought a dead body in his lecture theatre to teach anatomy. The dead body was not the solution. To learn about the human body it was necessary that the body be dissected<sup>5</sup>. Then the question arose: who would dissect the body? No Indian student was ready to come forward to dissect the human body. After a while, a brave person came with a scalpel to eradicate all superstitions by dissecting the dead body. Thus, an undaunted scholar, Pundit Madhusudan Gupta, broke the tradition of the Hindu society. Hindu society prohibited the upper caste from performing dissection of human body. Earlier it was the work of lower caste marginalized people, i.e. Dom, Chandal, etc. So, Madhusudan did not only dissect the human body, but he dissected the superstitious social customs too. As a member of the upper strata of Hindu society by birth, Madhusudan ignored all social taboos. The conservatives naturally were not happy with his deed. But Madhusudan got the support of the progressive people like David Hare, Umacharan Seth, Dwarakanath Tagore, and Rajkrishna Dey. Dwarakanath helped

Madhusudhan Gupta. He took away Madhu to a remote place to escape the wrath of the conservatives. He even awarded an amount of two thousand rupees to the best student of the Medical College<sup>6</sup>.

The question that is likely to be asked in the perspective of this narrative is that why so much importance is given to Madhusudan Gupta for narrating the history of the donation of bodies? Here some points should be made very clear. First, the requirement of dead bodies? Secondly, how were these dead bodies made available? Was donation the only solution? If so, then where in lay the obstacle to achieve this noble cause? The importance of Madhusudan Gupta lay in this third aspect. The main obstacle in the path of fulfilling this cause was superstition. The concepts of soul and the other world were prevalent in almost every institutional religion. But Madhu Gupta dared to challenge this obstacle.

The bodies were not needed for dissection only. These were also needed for organ transplantation. Dr. Manish Pradhan, in his article on Organ Transplantation in Historical Perspective,<sup>7</sup> showed that way back in the sixth century BC the surgeon Susruta had an idea of plastic surgery. Nowadays there is a great development in science and technology related to organ transplantation, but bodies are scarce. For successful transplantation, the organs should be transplanted when the process of blood circulation continues. That is why organs should be transplanted after brain death, but before the death of the cardio-respiratory system.<sup>8</sup> The Transplantation of Human Organs (Act 42) 1994 passed by the Parliament of India has legalized the concept of brain death. <sup>9</sup>

Apart from that, the donation of bodies can also help the medical research in general. With the pathological post-mortem one can learn the real cause of the death, whether it has been caused by some unknown disease or not. Even one might detect the genetic factor in it. Long back in November 1945, the Journal of the Indian Medical Association had mentioned that due to the scarcity of the dead bodies there was an inconvenience in both the learning and research process embarked upon by the medical students<sup>10</sup>. It is unfortunate that after more than fifty years of this publication, the situation has remained more or less the same<sup>11</sup>. However, the effort has not been a complete waste as there remains a silver lining visible in the research on organ transplantation that has been developed in the First World. In 1990, two U.S. scientists Joseph Mare and Edward Mare got the Noble prize jointly in medical science, for their contribution in this field.

As far as the history of donation of bodies is concerned, it was first witnessed in the nineteenth century when the pioneer of utilitarianism Jeremy Bentham pledged to donate his body. It was after his death in 1832, the body of Bentham was received by the world of medical science.<sup>12</sup> In India, the first case of donation was in Maharashtra. The educationist and socialist, Pandurang Sridhar Apte, made a pledge to donate his body for the advancement of medical science.<sup>13</sup> His body was donated by his associates in December 1952 in Pune Medical College. The members of his family honoured his wish and they brought his body to the hospital with a procession of his followers. The second name in this field was J.B.S. Haldane, who was by birth a British, but by choice he took the citizenship of India in 1956. His body was donated to Rangaraiya Medical

College in Kakinara district of Andhra Pradesh on 1st December 1964.<sup>14</sup> The pioneering figure of the rationalist movements, Dr. Abraham T. Kovoov and his wife Akka Kovoov, who died in Sri Lanka, also donated their bodies for the advancement of medical science in 1970s.<sup>15</sup>

There were some instances of body donations in Maharashtra. In 1986, Bina Mehta and Aasha Sohini died in Mumbai and Pune respectively. To honour their spirit, their relatives had to fight against the bureaucracy. In this respect, one case of Tamilnadu should be cited. One Shreekrishnan decided to donate his body after his demise. He had to undertake a by-pass surgery in his heart. Before the surgical operation he wanted to make a declaration along this line. But the hospital authority declined to recognize his will on the pretext of having no such precedence in Tamilnadu. Shreekrishnan did not agree. He made a legal suit and got verdict in his favour. Then, after the execution of a successful by-pass surgery he recovered. But the incident shows that a consciousness for the necessity of this act of body donation was emerging among the people.<sup>16</sup>

The first incident of organized donation of body after death took place in West Bengal in the year of 1990. It was a follow-up activity of making pledge in an organized manner. This organized movement for the donation of bodies was initiated by a voluntary organization Ganadarpan in 1985 though the organization began its journey in 1977 as a cultural association<sup>17</sup>. In 1986, the ninety-fifth birth anniversary of the famous scientist Prof. J.B.S.Haldane was celebrated by the initiative of Ganadarpan. As a part of that celebration thirty four persons pledged to donate their bodies to the medical science after their death. According to that pledge the first donation was made after the death of Sukumar Homchoudhury on 18th January 1990.<sup>18</sup>

The driving force of this movement was the dream of some lively persons. The dream was to improve the condition of medical science, to bring back the visual power of more than ten lakhs of blind people in India through cornea transplantation, to save the lives of many injured and ill people through liver and heart transplantation. The development in the field of medical sciences in this line inspired them to work for the donation of bodies. It was revealed in the news that in the government hospitals of New Delhi, i.e. All India Institute of Medical Sciences (A.I.I.M.S), a number of heart transplantations have already been conducted successfully. An organ bank was also established there. <sup>19</sup>

But we should not forget the problem of illegal organ business while focusing the history of donation of bodies. Many people feared an increase of such business. Some organs, like kidney, are rampantly smuggled. The scarcity of organs was the obvious reason for the development of this illegal organ trade. If the number of donation increases then obviously, the number of cases of organ transplantations can also be increased and then the illegal organ trade would lose its necessity.

Political parties have not helped the movement for donation of bodies directly. This issue has not found mention in their agenda or election manifesto. But both the union and the state governments supported the movement. It was said earlier that Indian parliament passed an act in 1994. On 5th

May 1993, the transplantation of Human Organs Bill was submitted to the Rajya Sabha where it received unanimous approval. In December 1993, however, the Lok Sabha decided to refer the Bill to a Select Committee for further examination. Ultimately, on 15th June 1994 the Bill was passed by the Lok Sabha. It received Presidential assent on 8th July of 1994. This act provided for the regulation of the removal, storage, and transplantation of human organs for therapeutic purposes and for the prevention of commercial dealings in human organs.

The Government of West Bengal showed its interest in 1995. In that year, the health minister of West Bengal, Prasanta Sur, had remarked in a book that there were gaps between the passing of an act and to its application. Ganadarpan had taken the responsibility of doing this hard work of convincing the people. It had received the support of the ministries of health, science and technology and panchayats of the Government of West Bengal, the Indian Medical Association, the Red Cross Society, Paschimbanga Bijnan Mancha, Students Health Home and the science activists, both individuals and organisations, and different voluntary organisations of the state.<sup>20</sup> Before that, a review of the Papers on Proper Utilisation of Donated Bodies was published in the Paschimbanga, the mouthpiece of the Department of Information and Cultural Affairs. Dr. Abirlal Mukherjee reviewed in one of its issue, dated 28th August 1992. So it could not be said that the state government was reluctant on that issue.

The role of religious organizations in this regard is interesting. Usually the last rites, rituals for the peaceful rest of the soul, etc., were observed in the name of institutional religions. But the religious leaders of different sects had recognized the donation of posthumous bodies. In 1986, Swami Lokeswarananda of Ramakrishna Math & Mission delivered a lecture in a seminar on this issue. Through his speech he inspired the activists in this field to do their works<sup>21</sup>. In 1997, the veteran leader of Rastriya Swayam Sevak Sangha [R.S.S], Lalaaji Deshmukh had declared to make a pledge for donation of his body after death. The Organiser, the mouthpiece of R.S.S, in its issue dated 12 October 1997<sup>22</sup> published a full-page story on this issue. This clearly showed that the Sangha Parivar had realized the importance of the particular issue. The R.S.S took the issue to launch pro-Hindu campaign. Deshmukh said that this donation of bodies was a part of 'Hindu culture'; Dadhichi also donated his body<sup>23</sup>. According to Rajju Bhaiya<sup>24</sup>, the concept of donation was always present in Hindu religion. He said that there were references in Caraca Samhita to clean the body. It was only in the West that the medical researchers had to dig out the cemetery for getting the required dead bodies. That is why the relatives of the dead made arrangements to secure the cemeteries.

It should be pointed out here that if this kind of excavation in the cemeteries was a common feature in the West that did not mean that there was no scarcity of dead bodies in the East in general or in India in particular. Adding to that Rajju Bhaiya had termed Caraca as the first surgeon of the earth, which was historically a false statement because Caraca was not a surgeon at all; he was an expert of ayurveda.

Besides Hinduism, the opinion of the other religions should also be taken into account. In general Islam was not concerned about the issue. But a section of it, the Bohra sect, had played a positive role in this regard. And according to Brajo Roy, special reference should be made of the role of Taher Punawala of this Bohra sect<sup>25</sup>.

Among the Christians, the instance of donation was already there in Kolkata. To overcome the belief and rituals regarding life after death and resurrection, the protestant clergy of Kolkata who donated his body was Rev. Kenneth Banerjee. His dead body was received by the authorities of N.R.S. Medical College in 1992. Very next year Right Reverend Bishop Gorai of St. Paul's Cathedral supported the cause in his deliberation in a meeting on the issue held at IPGMR, Kolkata.  
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Among the Persians of Kolkata the famous musician V.Balsara had opposed the religious ritual of the Persians to bring the dead bodies in the silence tower for the eating of the birds like vulture. Then, two activists attached to the movement for the donation of bodies contacted him<sup>27</sup>. In responding them Balsara showed his interest on the issue. 28

So it is seen that whatever lies with the religious theories, the authorities of different religion did not oppose the idea of body donation for the sake of organ transplantation and the development of medical sciences. Then what was the problem? According to Brajo Ray, the chief initiator of this movement in West Bengal, "it was the problem related with superstitions"<sup>29</sup>.

This movement, for the donation of posthumous bodies, is a part of the science movements. To trace the history of science movements one has to depend upon three factors, i.e. the roles of books and magazines, contribution of individuals and organizational initiatives<sup>30</sup>. Same factors were related to the history of donation of posthumous bodies also.

It is true that the different news media made the people conscious about the issue. Among the newspapers of Kolkata the Anandabazar Patrika, the Aajkal, the Kalantar, The Statesman had published various reports and features on it. A number of letters had also been published in response to those articles. Thus it could be said that this issue had entered into the mind of the contemporary psyche. But the scribes personally were not always concerned about it when they wrote the story of any death. They used to report a death as the "leaving of the soul to outer world", while the aim of the movement was to break the superstitions related to soul, outer world, etc.

The print media and the electronic media has also showed their keen interest in it. Different television channels including the government's own Doordarshan conducted a number of programmes on this issue. The popular F.M channel of All India Radio had broadcast a two-hour long phone-in talk show on this cause where the listeners showed their interests by calling the organizers in the studio<sup>31</sup>.

In Bangla literature, huge numbers of short stories were written in the context of outer world, paradise but there was hardly any reference of donation of bodies. In this regard, mention should be made of Day [responsibility] by Rijurekha Chakraborty and Kastipathar by Selina Hossain.

The roles of individuals were very much important and significant in this movement. The roles played by Bentham in the West and Apte, Halden of India were referred to earlier. The pioneering role played by Madhusudan Gupta, the first Indian, who dissected the human body with scalpel should be kept in mind. A number of individuals had already made pledges for the donation of their bodies after death and a good number of bodies have been donated till date. Some individuals like Brajo Roy of Ganadarpan had started to make people conscious. Here, references should be made of three young persons, namely Subhankar Das, Chiranjib Choudhuri and Manab Kabasi, of the Arbelia Agradoot Sangha, who organized a cycle rally to spread the message of donation in 1996. They initiated their rally on 30th November 1996 from Arbelia, Basirhat, North 24 Parganas and ended on 10th January 1997 at Kolkata. That rally went to the capital New Delhi and it lasted for long forty days. 32

Based on these types of individual efforts, the movement has grown into prominence. With the co-operation from various universities, medical colleges, Indian Medical Association, Medical Council of India, National Council for Science and Technology Communication, Department of Science and Technology of the Government of India, Health department of the Union Government, health, S&T and panchayet ministries of the Government of West Bengal and various people's organizations the movement got its impetus. The first light was lit by the Ganadarpan of Kolkata and later different organizations of the districts spread the message by taking the torch from the initiator. Among them the name of Bijnan Chetana Forum of the North 24 Parganas, Lokayata Maranottor Dehadaan Sahayata Kendra and Bandhu Cornea Center of Hooghly, United Stars Club of Nadia, etc., need to be mentioned. For the development and spread of this idea a number of informal meetings and seminars were held in regular intervals. There were small meetings held by various local groups and organizations as well as big seminars organized by scholarly bodies. The Asiatic Society, Calcutta (established in 1784) organized a seminar on organ transplantation in historical perspective (from ancient to modern times) on 19th July 1997. After the legal recognition of brain death in the enactment of 1994, the significance of the donation had increased. In 1993, an international conference was held in the Yell Law School under the topic of 'Organ Transplantation and Human Rights: Cross-cultural Perspectives'. To present his paper in that conference Professor Emiko Ohnuki Tierney<sup>34</sup> of Wisconsin University discussed on the cultural basis of medical technology. In 1997, Ganadarpan organized a two-day All India conference on donation of bodies during 10th and 11th January. As the movement for Pledging for Donation of Posthumous Body was launched in 1985 by Ganadarpan, the year 2010 was the Silver Jubilee Year of the movement. Ganadarpan celebrated the same on November 5, 2010 with the programme of Haldane Memorial Lecture, delivered by Prof. Parthapratim Majumder, Director, National Bio-medical Genomics. There was another programme to assess the entire period of the movement called Phire Dekha (Looking Back). There was scope for live interaction with the participants in that programme.<sup>35</sup>This movement also got impetus with the development of infrastructure of

organ transplantation in the state. For instance, it can be mentioned that on 22 April 2013 skin was collected from the dead-body of one Falgu Majumder in the skin bank of S.S.K.M. Hospital of Kolkata.<sup>36</sup> However it should be mentioned that there are problems of collecting dead-bodies in the hospitals. The bodies are collected only in the medical colleges. So the relatives of the deceased had to face problems, where there is no medical college at all. Even when medical college are available to collect the bodies, some problems still remain for the collection beyond the office hours and in holidays. Obviously, it is a limitation of the movement. But side by side it should be kept in mind that this limitation is a part of the movement.

The history of the donation of bodies has two aspects, one of which is the history of the scientific progress on the basis of the development of organ transplantation techniques. Another feature is the social and legal considerations. That aspect witnessed a phenomenal development in respect of making of acts; increase in the number of donations and expanding number of pledges for the donation. The factor for this development lies in the psyche of people. The activists are working for a general change in the attitude of the people towards the issue. Some other states of India had emerged as a commendable force in this movement. References should be made of the Dehadaan Sahayak Mandal of Pune, Maharashtra (1986), the Sat Bichar Parishad of Ahmedabad, Gujarat (late 80s) and the Dadhichi Dehadaan Samity of Delhi (1996).<sup>37</sup> But a factor should be noted here that there was no reference from state like Kerala, which is a progressive state in respect of its literacy and attitudes. It also had a rich history of scientific awareness in the recent past.

To assess the success of the movement it can be said that through an organized movement a number of dead bodies, that include the dead-bodies of a few celebrities, were donated to medical science and a huge number of people made their pledges to donate their bodies after death. Some of those pledges had materialized. Even the relations of some dead persons donated the bodies of the deceased even there was no pledge made by the person concerned. <sup>38</sup> The most important thing was that people have become aware and sensitized to some extent. One case might be cited as a proof of this consciousness.

For the donation of bodies, the friends and relatives of the donor had to bring the body of the deceased to any of the four medical colleges of Kolkata. But it was not that easy for a village-folk to donate his/her body. Ramapada Panda (89) of Eral village of Sabang police station of Medinipur district died on 2nd May 1997. He could be cremated in any nearby crematorium. But to honour the wish of Rampada to donate his body, Saranan, his son, travelled two hundred kilometers and offered the body of his father to the Calcutta Medical College<sup>37</sup>. He had to spend more money for bringing the body in Kolkata than what was needed for his cremation in the village. This needy family would not have to spend the money if the consciousness-level had not developed. Another incident should be noted. In June 1996, Laksmikanta Samat of Jamimanda village of Medinipur district died in N.R.S. Medical college Hospital due to kidney failure. His body was donated to medical science. <sup>38</sup> These incidences showed that the movement has stepped up beyond the middle class boundaries.

Thus, the history of this movement is not only the statistical account of some names and numbers. It is the part of the social history of human civilization. Marx once said that it is not a consciousness that determines a social being; on the contrary it is a social being that determines a consciousness.<sup>39</sup> The development of consciousness of the human beings in the donation of posthumous bodies lies in their social responsibilities.

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## Role of Community Policing - Issues, Perceived Goals, Benefits & Challenges

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### *Abstract*

*Community police partnership or community policing is, in essence, collaboration between the police and the community that identifies and solves community problems. With the police no longer the sole guardians of law and order, all members of the community become active allies in the effort to enhance the safety and quality of neighborhoods. Community policing has far-reaching implications. The expanded outlook on crime control and prevention, the new emphasis on making community members active participants in the process of problem solving, and the patrol officers' pivotal role in community policing require profound changes within the police organization. Creating a constructive partnership will require the energy, creativity, understanding and patience of all involved. Trust is the value that underlies and links the components of community partnership and problem solving that will produce solid achievements. The present article intends to explore into planning process involving a comprehensive and detailed strategic development plan defining clear objectives, implementation benchmarks keeping in view Bengal's local socio-cultural context and resource allocation for such partnerships to happen with monitoring and evaluation at all stages of the reform process to assess whether the intervention is achieving its strategic goals, expected benefits of community policing in terms of control of crime & corruption and potential challenges therein.*

*Key Words: Police, community relationship, Community, Information and communication technologies, Core Components, Trust.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Community policing as a concept has its roots in ancient Indian history. Since the mid 1980s, the concept of 'crime reduction through community partnership' has continued to grow in popularity. At a time when traditional policing activities failed to deliver tangible reductions in local crime rates, this significant shift in the traditional policing paradigm led to the increased use of one important policing strategy: community policing. However, 'community policing' is a very broad term often used to describe many aspects of the process by which the police engage with the community in the prevention of crime. At its core is the recognition that by working with the community, law enforcement agencies can find local solutions to local problems. Engaging the community in crime reduction and prevention allows a more targeted approach to local priorities by empowering the community to identify and respond to local concerns. The benefits can be widespread, from improved police-citizen relations to decreases in the fear of crime.

Community policing is thought to have gained momentum for a variety of reasons, not the least of which was the general community dissatisfaction with traditional law enforcement practices and the demand for greater police accountability for increasing crime rates. Community policing recognizes that community members can work together with law enforcement agencies and play an active role in reducing local crime.<sup>1</sup>

Cordner<sup>2</sup> that there are essentially four facets of community policing: The philosophical, where the community's role is fundamental and the police's role is expanded from traditional policing duties<sup>3</sup>; the strategic, where ideas from community policing are developed into strategies for practice; the tactical, which focuses on the implementation of the strategies developed; and the organizational; where the support offered at an organizational level should be encouraged to promote community policing.

Advocates for community policing have highlighted many reasons why community policing is beneficial to society. These arguments were broken down into three areas by Segrave and Ratcliffe<sup>1</sup>:

Community-specific advantages: Mobilisation and empowerment of communities to identify and respond to concerns; Improved local physical and social environment; Increase in positive attitudes towards police; Reduced fear of crime.

Police-specific benefits: Improved police“community relationship; Improved community perception of police “legitimacy”; An increase in officer satisfaction with their work.

Shared benefits: Decreased potential for police“citizen conflict; reduction in crime rates; better flow of information between the police and community; better implementation of crime prevention and crime control activities, as a result of both parties working towards shared goals.

Not all community policing initiatives will achieve each and every benefit listed here and part of the problem of documenting success is that researchers rarely find that the strategies only have positive effects. Internationally, successful implementation of community policing has been documented, although the results are rarely black and white. Two specific examples of the ambiguity of community policing success can be found in a United States experiment and in an evaluation of Hong Kong's implementation experiences. Hong Kong police were found not to promote greater community“police partnerships, and did not encourage the community to help develop law and order strategies, one of the common goals of community policing.<sup>4</sup> A US community policing study by Hawden<sup>5</sup> assessed that the community's opinion of the police improved when police were more visible, however it did not increase their perception of police effectiveness.

## **Pitfalls**

As an increasing number of studies are conducted on community policing, the pitfalls and challenges of implementing such strategies are becoming more evident. As community policing grows in popularity and implementation, studies have increasingly found that community policing is not a panacea that is easily implemented with immediate success. Related problems can manifest in three different areas: within the police service and within the community.

### **Within the police service**

Many studies on the police services in Australia and overseas have documented the challenges faced when implementing community policing. These include barriers from within the police organizational structure and the organizational climate<sup>6</sup>, where the absence of strong leadership and encouragement in community policing strategies can negatively impact on community policing practices.<sup>7</sup> Whereas police leadership in community activities can be needed and sought by its members, there are some less noticeable hindrances to implementing community policing. Police may also be reluctant to make community policing a priority<sup>8</sup> due to the perception that community policing is distinct from other 'police work,' thus reinforcing the notion that it is not 'real' police work. Moreover, police corruption manifests itself in a variety of ways ranging from petty and bureaucratic corruption to the criminal infiltration of the state, state capture and other forms of political corruption<sup>9</sup> jeopardizing credibility of police & hence their effective relation with public & community at large. The first level of corruption relates to street-level corruption where police officials abuse their power in their day-to-day interactions with citizens to obtain money in exchange for not reporting illegal activities or expediting bureaucratic procedures. In some countries, this can also take the form of extortion when police officers threaten to fine or arrest citizens under false pretence in order to collect bribes. Bureaucratic corruption can also occur when police officers misuse internal procedures and resources for private gain, with practices ranging from misuse of police vehicles for private purposes to diversion of salaries or benefits funds or misappropriation of seized contraband goods. Police resources can also be misused when officers sell or selectively provide their legitimate services to wealthy selected groups or individuals. At another level, police officers can abuse their power to build their own criminal enterprise, protect criminals from law enforcement and/or conspire with criminals to commit crime, leading to collusion between the police and criminal organizations and the criminal infiltration of the police forces. These forms of corruption are especially prevalent in countries with high levels of organized crime, as criminals need to infiltrate law enforcement agencies to sustain and expand their activities. Criminals infiltrate the highest levels of political power to manipulate law and policy making to serve their own interests. Behavioural component serve as another level affecting effective police-public relationship. Law is embedded with power, the power over others. The institutional authority to control crime often gets translated into a private misappropriation of power to threaten, intimidate, abuse public & way of show-offing muscles. This happens more often in cases of public unrest.

## Within the community

There can also be quite a romanticized perception that the community will be eager to embrace community policing methods. For some, community members are reluctant to seek and develop a sustainable partnership with law enforcement<sup>10</sup>, and communication constraints can often hinder community policing success, especially in areas with minority and special needs groups<sup>11</sup>. In their overview of community policing, Segrave and Ratcliffe<sup>12</sup> concluded there were three continuing challenges remaining for community policing implementation: building community partnerships, which in are often more challenging to develop than police perceive; making community policing an integrated approach to policing with other complementary policing strategies (e.g. problem-oriented policing and intelligence-led policing); and the need to strengthen research into community policing strategies to determine its effectiveness as a policing tool.

In this emerging era of community policing, it is rarely considered " or perhaps less widely advertised " whether the increase in community contact by the police can have adverse effects on the police. A challenge faced by those implementing community policing is the increase of civil litigation against police. Some researchers have hypothesized that due to heightened community contact by the police via community policing initiatives, police have greater exposure to litigious circumstances.<sup>13,14</sup> While the main purpose of civil litigation is to enable individuals to seek redress for wrongs committed against them, trends in the numbers and types of cases being brought can indicate organizational failures in procedures, training, and supervision, and also provide a way for individuals to seek accountability for police misconduct. Civil legal action against police can be taken in three main ways: via judicial review of organizational decision-making; negligence actions for the conduct of police investigations; and actions against police officers and their employers for torts against civilians such as assault, false imprisonment, trespass, negligence and malicious prosecution<sup>15,16</sup> and for breaches of other legal schemes such as anti-discrimination and administrative law. Overall, the challenges in implementing community policing vary from nation to nation " even state to state. Law enforcement agencies should not expect immediate results from implementing new community policing initiatives. Community policing requires significant financial and organizational investment and agencies wishing to implement such practices should base actions on proven successful methods and only if they are able to be adapted to suit the local context<sup>17</sup>.

There are compelling reasons why law enforcement leaders believe the time has come to alter the policies and practices of their organizations. These reasons are rooted in the shifting characteristics of crime and violence that affect these communities and in the changing nature of communities. A community is usually understood as group of people who share a common sense of belonging. Community is somehow an amalgam of the interactions, common experience and collective commitments among individuals. Various social, economic and cultural changes are undermining this amalgam. New information and communication technologies are linked with fragmentation of social and economic life. In this fragmented post-industrial society, physical communities & neighbourhoods are perceived to be under threat by the onslaught of information and

communication technologies giving way to 'virtual communities'. There has been a much debate on whether virtual communities can exist as such but in the midst of these debates there has been little recognition that community is a complex phenomenon and 'varieties' of communities can exist: moral, normative or proximate. Evidence suggests that some varieties of community can be constituted via electronic communication but it is not probably possible to replicate those features of community that many people find lacking in modern life. Such a lack and desire for virtual communities as a response to that lack are symptomatic of individual's disengagement from social and political participation which suggests an information society constituted by segmented diversity with isolated pockets of sociability. Most police departments have some type of website presence. At a basic level these websites provide contact information about the department. Some may provide a method for filing complaints. However, just like a modern police building does not reflect a department's community policing efforts; neither does the best website represent a true community policing presence in cyberspace. In the physical neighborhood the crime prevention program promotes the use of better locks, better lighting, marking property with traceable identifiers, keeping a watchful eye out for neighbors, and what people should do if they fall victim to a crime. Community policing in the virtual neighborhood works to meet many of these same goals. In the case of the Internet, the members of the community are users of systems making a connection to the Internet. For each system connected, there is an owner and system administrator that represents a potential victim of a cybercrime. These potential victims need to partnership with law enforcement to identify problems that lead to cybercrime and to develop methods to tackle them. The common purpose is the prevention, detection, mitigation and aggressive investigation of attacks on the nation's financial and critical infrastructures. Unfortunately, many local police departments lack the staff, resources and/or the expertise, for this type of cyberspace policing.

Moreover a normative definition views crime as deviant behavior that violates prevailing norms "a cultural standards prescribing how humans ought to behave normally. This approach considers the complex realities surrounding the concept of crime and seeks to understand how changing social, political, psychological, and economic conditions may affect changing definitions of crime and the form of the legal, law-enforcement, and penal responses made by society. These structural realities remain fluid and often contentious. For example: as cultures change and the political environment shifts, societies may criminalize or decriminalize certain behaviours, which directly affects the statistical crime rates, influence the allocation of resources for the enforcement of laws, and (re-) influence the general public opinion. Practitioners agree that there is a pressing need for innovation to curb the crises in many communities. Many urban communities are experiencing serious problems with illegal drugs, gang violence, murders, muggings, burglaries committed mostly by youths. Suburban and rural communities have not escaped unscathed. They are also noting increases in crime and disorder.

In addition, the social fabric of our country has changed radically. The family unit is not as stable as it once was. Single working parents find it extremely difficult to spend enough time with their children and churches and schools have been unable to fill this void. Immigrants, ethnic groups, and minorities often have different interests and pursue disparate goals.

Governments at all levels are having increased difficulty balancing budgets, which frequently forces police departments to allocate dwindling resources to growing problems. In this rapidly changing environment, where police cope with an epidemic drug problem, gang activity, and increased levels of violence, the concept of community policing is taking hold. Police leaders using this commonsense approach to the problems of crime and disorder, an approach that may very well enhance and maximize performance and resources, have struck a responsive chord in both national and local governments and in communities across the Nation. Community policing is democracy in action. It requires the active participation of local government, civic and business leaders, public and private agencies, residents, churches, schools, and hospitals.

Although community policing or community-public partnership is targeted towards preventing crime as an avowed policy but more broadly it is supposed to cater to addressing several problems that surface in our day to day society like accidents, sudden illness, finding an address or losing way for a visitor, occasional feuds resolution & so on. Of primary importance are accident cases, where lives are at stake. Regarding an accident case people's reaction as bystander to accident victim reflects their relation with police in particular and with law in general. An example will mirror the dismal state of affair. Karan Arora, a 24-year-old who was studying economics in the US, had come down to India for his summer vacation. Along with three friends, Karan set out on a road trip. On the outskirts of Amritsar, he spotted a crowd gathered on the highway, where a mangled car and a bleeding man were lying next to each other. When Karan and his friends decided to take the victim to the hospital, the crowd warned them against it. 'Don't do it, it's an accident case,' one of them said. Karan soon found out why, as the emergency room refused to take the 'police case' in. While Karan called the police, his friends persuaded the doctor to administer the victim first aid. Almost 20 minutes later, the doctor agreed. The police arrived another 15 minutes later and started to grill the youths. It went on for 90 minutes till the four called their parents to vouch for their identity. 'The victim survived, but the cops and the hospital staff made us feel as if we were criminals. I am not sure if I would ever want to do this again,' Karan says. But in most of the cases the victim succumbs to injury. In many cases victims keep begging people to take them to a hospital. But no one responds. When they are admitted it becomes too late. In their book, *Indianomix: Making sense of Modern India*, Vivek Dehejia and Rupa Subramanya argue that the reasons for our apathy to human suffering are many. We are selfish and busy but, more importantly, we are afraid of a potential liability or harassment by the police. 'Human beings are driven by both egoistic and altruistic motives. When you are in a situation where you can help, you might consciously believe that you are saving someone's life but, on the other side, there is the danger that you might be harassed or even accused in the case,' says Dehejia, an economics professor at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada. According to National Survey carried out by SaveLife foundation from January-March 2013, 88% of the people say that they are reluctant to assist injured victims because of legal hassles, repeated police questioning and court appearances. India records one of the highest number of road accidents in the world. In 2011, there was one accident every minute and one life lost every 3.7 minutes. Statistics released by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways in 2011 say there were 4,97,000 road accidents that left 1,45,485 people dead. 18

## **Core Components of Community Policing**

Community policing consists of two complementary core components, community partnership and problem solving. To develop community partnership, police must develop positive relationships with the community, must involve the community in the quest for better crime control and prevention, and must pool their resources with those of the community to address the most urgent concerns of community members. Problem solving is the process, through which the specific concerns of communities are identified and through which the most appropriate remedies to abate these problems are found. Local government officials, social agencies, schools, religious organizations, business people—all those who work and live in the community and have a stake in its development—will share responsibility for finding workable solutions to problems that detract from the safety and security of the community.

Patrol officers are the primary providers of police services and have the most extensive contact with community members. Effective community policing depends on optimizing positive contact between patrol officers and community members. Patrol cars are only one method of conveying police services. Police departments may supplement automobile patrols with foot, bicycle, scooter, and horseback patrols, as well as adding 'mini-stations' to bring police closer to the community. Regular community meetings and forums will afford police and community members an opportunity to air concerns and find ways to address them. Officers working long-term assignments on the same shift and beat will become familiar figures to community members and will become aware of the day-to-day workings of the community. This increased police presence is an initial move in establishing trust and serves to reduce fear of crime among community members, which, in turn, helps create neighborhood security. Fear must be reduced if community members are to participate actively in policing.

Although the delivery of police services is organized by geographic area, a community may encompass widely diverse cultures, values, and concerns, particularly in urban settings & a composite one for rural setting. The officer is supposed to be sensitive to local sentiments, values, beliefs & conditions which will serve to establish a better rapport with the people. Concerns and priorities will vary within and among these communities of interest. Some communities of interest are long-lasting and were formed around racial, ethnic, occupational lines, or a common history, church, or school. Others form and reform new problems are identified and addressed. Interest groups within communities can be in opposition to one another—sometimes in violent opposition. Intra-community disputes have been common in large urban centers, especially in times of changing demographics and population migrations. These multiple and sometimes conflicting interests require patrol officers to function not only as preservers of law and order, but also as skillful mediators. Demands on police from one community of interest can sometimes clash with the rights of another community of interest. For example, a community group may oppose certain police tactics used to crack down on gang activity, which the group believes may result in discriminatory arrest practices. The police must not only protect the rights of the protesting group, but must also work with all of the community members involved to find a way to preserve

neighborhood peace. For this process to be effective, community members must communicate their views and suggestions and back up the negotiating efforts of the police. In this way, the entire community participates in the mediation process and helps preserve order.

### **Community Partnership**

The police must encourage a spirit of cooperation that balances the collective interests of all citizens with the personal rights of individuals. Establishing and maintaining mutual trust is the central goal of the first core component of community policing”community partnership. Building trust will not happen overnight; it will require ongoing effort. To build this trust for an effective community partnership police must treat people with respect and sensitivity. The use of unnecessary force and arrogance, aloofness, or rudeness at any level of the agency will dampen the willingness of community members to ally themselves with the police. Establishing trust and obtaining cooperation are often easier in middle-class and affluent communities than in poorer communities, where mistrust of police may have a long history. Trust & communication travels a circular path each reinforcing other.

TrustÂ facilitates? Community Contact

**facilitates**

**facilitates Communication**

### **Problem Solving**

Problem solving is a broad term that implies more than simply the elimination and prevention of crimes. Problem solving is based on the assumption that 'œcrime and disorder can be reduced in small geographic areas by carefully studying the characteristics of problems in the area, and then applying the appropriate resources...' and on the assumption that 'œIndividuals make choices based on the opportunities presented by the immediate physical and social characteristics of an area. By manipulating these factors, people will be less inclined to act in an offensive manner.' 19, 20 The problem-solving process is explained further:

The theory behind problem-oriented policing is simple. Underlying conditions create problems. These conditions might include the characteristics of the people involved (offenders, potential victims, and others), the social setting in which these people interact, the physical environments, and the way the public deals with these conditions. A problem created by these conditions may generate one or more incidents. These incidents, while stemming from a common source, may appear to be different. For example, social and physical conditions in a deteriorated apartment complex may generate burglaries, acts of vandalism, intimidation of pedestrians by rowdy teenagers, and other incidents. These incidents, some of which come to police attention, are

symptoms of the problems. The incidents will continue so long as the problem that creates them persists.

As police recognize the effectiveness of the problem-solving approach, there is a growing awareness that community involvement is essential for its success. Determining the underlying causes of crime depends, to a great extent, on in-depth knowledge of community. Therefore, community participation in identifying and setting priorities will contribute to effective problem-solving efforts by the community and the police. In addition to the serious crime problems identified by police, community policing must also address the problems of significant concern to the community. Community policing in effect allows community members to bring problems of great concern to them to the attention of the police. Neighborhood groups and the police will not always agree on which specific problems deserve attention first. Police may regard robberies as the biggest problem in a particular community, while residents may find derelicts who sleep in doorways, break bottles on sidewalks, and pick through garbage cans to be the number one problem. Under community policing, the problem with derelicts should also receive early attention from the police with the assistance of other government agencies and community members.

### **Implementation**

Managing the reform implementation can involve a wide range of activities, including conducting pilot projects, establishing adequate accountability and organizational structures, ensuring national and local oversight, conducting capacity-building activities, developing programs addressing corruption risks, designing/implementing internal and external communication strategies, etc 21. Implementation plans will vary from agency to agency and from community to community. The most appropriate implementation method will depend, in part, on internal and external conditions facing the agency. For example, a chief executive who comes into an organization that is ripe for change at a time when confidence in the police is low may find that the organization will respond favorably to innovative policies. On the other hand, a chief executive who inherits a smoothly running organization may find it more difficult to implement change.<sup>22</sup> Another essential element of successful implementation is communication. Communication must be timely, comprehensive, and direct. The implementation of a community policing strategy must be a dynamic and flexible process. Ongoing input, evaluation, and feedback from both inside and outside the police organization are essential to making community policing work. All phases of community policing implementation must be carefully planned and properly timed to maximize success; even good ideas can fail if they are poorly executed.

### **Local Contexts**

The assessment of the local context in the implementation area can include a risk and conflict as well as a crime trend analysis, an assessment of the police organization and its relationship with the broader justice and security sectors, as well as a review of existing governance structures. Community policing interventions are long-term reform processes that should be supported by

ongoing monitoring and evaluation at all stages of the reform process to assess whether the intervention is achieving its strategic goals. If we look at the activity initiatives taken by West Bengal police<sup>23</sup> In Bankura, Purulia, Paschim Medinipur, Jhargram District of West Bengal during the year 2011-12 we see following features: organizing football tournament, medical camps, eye camps, cultural programmes, sports meets, 'Khichuri' meal, blood donation camps, distribution of food/food grains, dress materials, cheques, medicines, books, medicines, sports materials, recruitment of village police volunteers and so on. Direct intervention into crime prevention in partnership with community has not developed to a great extent as yet in these areas.

Paramilitary forces are conducting community-policing programme particularly in West Bengal's Maoist-hit Purulia district in a bid to foster stronger bonds with locals. As per media reports, the Maoists are now targeting children and trying to influence them to join their cadres, thus the police have attempted to raise awareness among the youngsters, as they are more gullible. Additional Superintendent of Police Adesh Prasad that it was impossible for their force to work without the support of the public. Hence, he emphasized on the importance of such programmes to win hearts of the locals and grow closer to them. <sup>24</sup>

The community policing initiative in Kolkata<sup>25</sup> involves the civil society and the police personnel. There are several components to the programme:

**Drug Awareness Programmes:** Drug Awareness Programmes are organized throughout the year by the Detective Department in various educational institutes and slums. In partnership with the local people and leading NGOs of the city drug de-addiction camps are also organized for the drug victims. The World Anti Drug Day is observed every year on the 26th of July.

**Sports Activity:** Kolkata Police organizes the Friendship Cup Football Tournament every year for the local clubs of Kolkata. Over 500 clubs participate in this 3-tier tournament. The Kolkata Police also organizes Inter School Football Tournament for school students each year, in which over 50 schools participate.

**Nabadisha:** This is a programme for the street children of the city. Apart from providing health check-ups, informal literary camps are organized for them. Rotary Club, Lion Club and Vikramshila Education Resource Society work in partnership with the Kolkata police on this project.

**Prabaha:** This is a weekly blood donation programme organized every Saturday at a police station on rotation. Members of the Police Force as well as local residents participate in this project. Blood Group Directories are also published at the end of each year.

**Bravery and Honesty Award:** The Detective Department on behalf of the Kolkata Police organizes this award ceremony each year. Citizens are selected for their acts of bravery and honesty and are felicitated so that others follow the examples set by them.

**Counseling Centres:** The Detective Department of the Kolkata Police along with several leading NGOs of the city have opened counseling centres for women, juveniles, elders, drug or alcohol addicts manned by trained counselors and psychiatrists.

**The Claude Martin Fund:** Financial assistance is given to deserving ex-prisoners in the State Of West Bengal through the Claude Martin Fund. The Trustee of this fund is the Honorable Auditor

General and the Administrator of the fund is the Commissioner of Police who is authorized to render financial assistance to those ex-prisoners who have set an example in the community.

**Poor Box:** This fund was formed in 1934 from the voluntary contribution of the public, contractors for erecting stands in the Maidan (open space in Kolkata), compounding cases of minor breaches of rationing rules and charges for keeping the unclaimed properties under Police custody by the carters for the temporary and emergency relief to the needy and distressed people of Kolkata.

**Sahayata, Nadia District, West-Bengal:** Sahayata is a Bengali word meaning assistance. It is an experiment that has been conceived as a service delivery platform to resolve, through counseling, disputes within family and also between neighbours. In this experiment the police is an active agent in resolving disputes and that too through an inexpensive and prompt system. Community involvement has been kept as its prime objective. The main objectives of this project are: Involving people in the resolution of disputes; Ensuring speedy delivery of justice in a cost-effective manner; Ensuring reconciliation for aggrieved parties looking for a long term solution; Develop a sense of belonging with the State, with an ultimate bearing on national integrity. In 2001, Sahayata centres were set up at all the Police Stations. Sahayata centre was located in a separate accommodation away from the Police Station building. This was helpful as people felt less inhibited and did not suffer from the apprehension of going through strict police formality in lodging their complaints. Panels of citizen volunteers were enrolled to enlist community participation. Women and students were given adequate representation. Senior police Officers and community leaders discussed issues to generate mass awareness. Police personnel with the right aptitude provided technical assistance to citizen volunteers to resolve disputes. This experiment has proved to be a very effective, prompt and inexpensive way in rendering justice and preventing crime and it has also found widespread appeal because of its applicability among community members.

**Community Policing in Diamond Harbour, West Bengal:** Due to an increase in criminal activities in Diamond Harbour area, the police in South 24 Parganas district along with local business community have set up local resistance groups known as RG party to deal with the crime in the rural areas. The main objectives are: to stop villagers from committing crimes when they are idle. The idea is to involve these people in guarding the villages instead of arresting them after they have committed some crimes. Members of RG parties have been provided with torches and caps as sponsored by local businessmen. According to the Sub-divisional police officer, Mehmood Akhtar, the idea is based on community policing as it makes the people confident and involves them in maintenance of law and order. The initiative was also to make the people realize that

policing does not mean beating up and terrorizing the public but to work with them to solve their problems.

Thus community policing as an experiment in West Bengal is targeted towards trust building, crime prevention and problem resolution. Police leadership to be equally held accountable for the current has low image of police in India however carried out some experiments to bring professional content and service element in law enforcement. It has not introduced any far reaching reforms that are needed but has tinkered with the system and tried to introduce citizens' participation. One such experiment has been community policing projects introduced by different officers; sometimes backed by the state at other times purely local police leadership initiatives. Some of them received popular support and media attention causing rippling effect. While many community policing projects are pure public relation exercises a few have been genuine attempts to involve citizens in policing 'themselves'.

For a long time the police were used as an effective tool to strengthen the hands of the rulers and to quell various rebellions. It was only after independence that serious thought was given to police as a service and not a tool to exploit the citizens, though even today the service element is many times conspicuously absent. The result has been catastrophic for the system. Despite putting in unusually long hours of work for any government department, citizens' satisfaction with police is way below the expected levels. This has caused a serious 'œyou' versus 'œus' divide, unhealthy for any social system. There have been some attempts to salvage the situation, a few meaningful, others superficial. Political leadership after independence has mainly used police for its own ends and not made systematic efforts to strengthen the institution of law enforcement; it has been shortsighted, unable to get out of the temptation to use police for its immediate ends at tremendous long term cost to the society. The police department in India has of late been facing serious resource crunch in manpower and equipment. It has perforce been made to seek community collaboration in attending to its increasingly vast duties. Citizens' participation in law enforcement is thus observed across the country especially as the issues of internal security have caused serious strain on the existing over stretched and rickety machinery of law enforcement.

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## **The Incompleteness of Multiculturalist Agenda: Overlooking the Need for a Shared Identity**

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In recent years, in many well established western democracies, identity politics driven by considerations of nationality, ethnicity, religion, gender, and language has come to the forefront of public debate. It focuses on questions of recognising cultural diversity, the status and rights of immigrants, and in specific cases, of the rights of indigenous people, and underlines the need for group representation and rights. These issues form the subject matter of identity politics with its variants-multiculturalism, politics of recognition of difference and, to the notions of differentiated citizenship and theory of group rights. Classical political theory examined questions concerning justice or democracy in a society which according to J. S. Mill had a shared identity. However, in the 20th century, demographic and political changes have set aside these traditional assumptions about the relationship between culture and politics. Most of the larger countries today have substantial number of minorities from more than one culture and this has altered the debate on ideals of democracy, justice or citizenship, from those when they were first proposed in a situation of relative homogeneity.

The advocates of identity politics question the liberal individualist<sup>1</sup> conception of citizenship as equal rights to all under the law which differed from the feudal perception that decided people's political status by their group identity of guilds. When this well established social practice of group identity, behaviour and social balancing was challenged by the theory of Divine Right of Kings, then the theory of natural rights that provides the individualist basis to liberalism emerged. Cultural pluralists argue that on the contrary citizenship must reflect the distinct socio-cultural identity of groups like - African American, indigenous peoples, ethnic and religious minorities, gays and lesbians who feel excluded and marginalized because of their "difference"<sup>2</sup> from the mainstream of society.

MULTICULTURALISM stresses on the need to accommodate cultural diversity fairly, as there are different consequences and impact that public policies have for persons of different cultural groups within multinational states. For instance, given the importance of language to culture and the role of the modern states in so many facets of life, the choice of official language will affect different people differently. Similarly, the content of education, personal laws or choice of public holidays, national symbols such as the choice of national anthem, immigration and naturalization policy, religious freedom, Â special privileges for minorities or mechanisms for representing minorities have increasingly captured attention of theorists and policy makers in order to avoid policies that entail unfair burdens.<sup>3</sup>

## Origins and Meaning of Multiculturalism

The term Multiculturalism was first used in Canada in 1971 and then, in Australia in 1978, to describe a new public policy that moved away from assimilation of ethnic minorities, and immigrants in particular, towards policies of acceptance and integration of diverse cultures.<sup>4</sup> It entered the American and British political lexicon in the 1980s<sup>5</sup>. In the US, when it entered the public debate, in the first instance, it was about the need for reform of public school curriculum, in disciplines like history, literature and social sciences as its contents reflected a euro-centric bias. Glazer observed that initially, it was about 'how American society, particularly American education should respond to diversity'.<sup>6</sup> Since then, multiculturalism has questioned the traditional conception of the US as a 'melting pot' of diverse people bonded in a common culture of the New World. The metaphor 'melting pot'<sup>7</sup> is seen as a cover for oppressive assimilation to the dominant or hegemonic white culture. As American society, from the very beginning has, in fact been, multiracial and diverse, there is a need to underline the separate characteristics and virtues of the different cultural groups. Instead of 'melting pot', terms such as 'salad bowl' and 'glorious mosaic' is preferred as it conveys more a sense of separateness and distinctiveness in describing a nation of immigrants.<sup>8</sup>

Like many other concepts in political theory, there is no unanimity about what constitutes multiculturalism and it continues to be a contested concept. For some, multiculturalism requires reasonable changes in social and political institutions to enable cultural minorities to preserve their language and their distinctive customs. For others, multiculturalism is about eliminating racism and nurturing rather than repudiating or tolerating 'difference', as differences spring from a universally shared attachment of importance to cultures, and this implies greater social transformation. A unifying theme amongst the multiculturalists is their resistance to homogenization or assimilation which is evident in the conception of citizenship implicit in the contemporary liberal theories of justice that conceptualizes justice as equal rights for all citizens irrespective of their gender, religion and ethnicity. Kymlicka points out that the logical conclusion of liberal principles of justice 'seems to be a 'colour-blind' constitution- the removal of all legislation differentiating people in terms of their race or ethnicity (except for temporary measures, like affirmative action, which are believed necessary to reach a 'colour blind' society'<sup>9</sup> Kymlicka.<sup>9</sup> Multiculturalists see this attempt towards a 'colour blind' society as ill-founded, for it is not possible to separate the state and ethnicity and when the liberal state attempts to do this, it unfairly privileges certain ways of life over others. They allege that liberals do not take diversity seriously. This is despite the fact that liberals value pluralism, with Rawls stressing on 'reasonable pluralism', which is why liberals defend a neutral public philosophy that entails equal rights for all citizens. Kymlicka<sup>10</sup> argues that liberals, like Rawls and Dworkin, have falsely assumed that members of a political community are members of the same cultural community. He regards a culture as a civilization, self-sufficient and with its own social institutions. Parekh observes that Rawls, like many liberals, 'is sensitive to moral but not cultural plurality, and thus takes little account of the cultural aspirations of such communities as the indigenous peoples, national minorities, subnational groups, and the immigrants'.<sup>11</sup> A culture has a claim to rights if it is vital

to the basic interests of its members and contributes to the wider society.<sup>12</sup> Multiculturalism is not merely 'about difference and identity per se but about those that are embedded in and sustained by culture, that is, a body of beliefs and practices in terms of which a group of people understand themselves and the world and organize their individual and collective lives'.<sup>13</sup>

It was in the 1990s, that political theorists began to furnish the theoretical basis of a multicultural society. The first systematic theory of multiculturalism was elaborated by Will Kymlicka in his two major works: *Liberalism, Community and Culture* (1989) and *Multicultural Citizenship* (1995a). Kymlicka criticizes the earlier models of unitary republican citizenship in which all the citizens enjoy common citizenship rights on the grounds, that in its assumption of a more homogenous political community, it ignores cultural and ethnic diversity. He observes that liberalism with its stress on individual rights has not paid adequate attention to group rights. Following J.S. Mill, Kymlicka points out that the distinctive feature of liberalism is that it ascribes to the individual the freedom to choose and revise their conception of good life. The capacity of an individual to make meaningful life choices depends on access to a culture because one is shaped by one's culture. According to him, the institutions of liberal democratic societies embody the culture of the major national group. If members of minority cultural groups are to have autonomy, freedom and identity as those of the majority community, then justice and fairness requires that their culture be secure. This would entail granting demands of minority groups for rights of self government within the polity, of guaranteed representation or veto rights over certain decisions, measures like education arrangements in the form of protection of minority languages through special radio or television channels. These measures can be claimed as a matter of just and equal treatment and not as a matter of special treatment: in this way Kymlicka argues that multiculturalism and liberalism are compatible. He argues that in a multicultural state, a comprehensive theory of justice would have to include both universal rights and certain group differentiated rights or special status for minority cultures.<sup>14</sup>

Kymlicka is dissatisfied with the post-war liberal political theory, which in his view, wrongly assumes that provision of basic individual rights could resolve the problem of national minorities. He contends that minority rights could not be subsumed under human rights because 'human rights standards are simply unable to resolve some of the most important and controversial questions relating to cultural minorities'.<sup>15</sup> These included questions about which languages should be recognized in parliaments, bureaucracies and courts; whether any ethnic or national groups should have publicly funded educations in their mother tongues; whether internal boundaries should be drawn so that cultural minorities form majorities in local regions; whether traditional homelands of indigenous people should be reserved for their benefit; and to what degree of cultural integration might be required of immigrants seeking citizenship.<sup>16</sup> As traditional human rights doctrines offer no guidance on these questions, Kymlicka recommends the need for a theory of minority rights to supplement human rights theory. This would enable us to confront burning issues that raged in places like Eastern Europe which was mired in disputes over local autonomy, language and naturalisation. He proposes to develop a liberal theory of minority rights which would explain 'how minority rights could coexist with human rights and how minority rights are limited by

principles of individual liberty, democracy and social justice'.<sup>17</sup> Kymlicka, in course of elaborating his theory, distinguishes three kinds of minority or group differentiated rights that are to be assured to ethnic and national groups: self government rights, poly-ethnic rights and special representation rights. Self-government rights require the delegation of powers to national minorities, such as indigenous peoples, but are not available to other cultural minorities who had immigrated into the country. Instead, their claim is for rights of fair recognition since immigrant groups choose to immigrate into a host society, they must bear some of the burdens of integration. Poly-ethnic rights are for cultural minorities as it guarantees financial support and legal and political protection from the state for certain practices associated with particular ethnic or religious groups and in particular to aboriginal people as to enable them to maintain their culture and autonomy. Poly-ethnic rights might include legislation to prevent suppression or marginalization of cultural and identity concern of minority ethnic groups by the deliberate, or unthinking, discrimination of the majority ethnic population within a country. Special state support for media policies and funding to address the media interests of minority ethnic groups are one particular expression of poly-ethnic rights. Both indigenous peoples and immigrant minorities might also be eligible for special representation rights which guarantee places for minority representatives on state bodies or institutions.

Of pivotal importance in Kymlicka's account of group-differentiated citizenship is the distinction that he makes between two kinds of minorities: national minorities and ethnic minorities. The former are peoples whose previously self-governing, territorially concentrated cultures have been incorporated into a large state. These are 'American Indians', Puerto Ricans, Chicanos and native Hawaiians in the United States; the Quebecois and various aboriginal communities in Canada and the Aborigines in Australia. Ethnic minorities are peoples who have immigrated to a new society and do not wish to govern themselves, but nonetheless wished to retain their ethnic identities and traditions.

But Kymlicka also strongly believes that group-based protection should not violate rights fundamental to individual well being. He acknowledges the fact that individuals might need protection from the abusive power of their own ethnic communities. He endorses group-differentiated rights which provide for external protection for groups, but does not permit 'internal restrictions' except in cases of systematic and gross human violations like slavery or genocide, in which case state intervention is warranted. For Kymlicka, culture is important because it is the context within which individuals learn how to choose, but its value reduces when it disallows individuals to choose their lives for themselves, thus retaining the overall spirit of liberalism that it permits individual's capacity for autonomous choice. Cultural membership and cultural diversity is to sustain those options within which autonomous persons can exercise choice. Devoid of autonomy, cultural diversity is neither morally or aesthetically valuable.<sup>18</sup>

Parekh insists that members of cultural minorities must be treated as equal and valued members with the rest, as equal respect is central to individual's sense of dignity going beyond conventional notions of nondiscrimination and equal opportunity, and not be given unintended discrimination

in employment, housing, education, promotion, appointment to public offices. Minority communities may be allowed to run their internal affairs themselves so long as they are not internally oppressive. They should also be free to set up their own cultural, educational and other institutions, organize literary, artistic, sports and other events and to institute museums and academies, with the help of the state if they need or ask for. Cultural differences should also be taken into account in the formulation and enforcement of public policies and laws.

## **POLITICS OF RECOGNITION**

Charles Taylor has offered an alternative theory in his 'The politics of recognition'<sup>19</sup> by rejecting as inadequate the liberal theory of multiculturalism Liberalism, which in his view, is incapable of giving culture the recognition it requires. He suggests that the liberal ideal of public neutrality is inapplicable in culturally diverse societies and should be replaced with the idea of equal worth of cultures. Liberalism emphasizes on sameness, viewing individuals as bearers of rights and possessors of dignity as equal citizens, but cultural groups desire recognition of their distinctness and not sameness. He wants to recognize cultures that have fairly large number of members, have survived for some time and articulate a language of moral evaluations. He contends that democracies need to take the claims of indigenous peoples, linguistic minorities and other kinds of social groups seriously. He rejects Kymlicka's efforts to develop a liberalism that might accommodate difference by granting individuals differentiated rights to enable them to pursue their particular ends. According to Taylor, this solution works only 'for existing people who find themselves trapped within a culture under pressure, and can flourish within it or not at all. But it does justify measures designed to ensure survival through indefinite future generations'.<sup>20</sup> In this context, he cites the example of Quebecois whose aim is the long term survival of the French speaking community in Canada.

One of the main foundations for Taylor's theory of recognition is the assertion that our sense of our own well being and moral goals depends critically on how we see ourselves reflected in the eyes of others. Being in a group whose culture is reviled and devalued leads to moral harm of its members and hence there is a need for revaluation and public acknowledgment of the despised group as a legitimate presence in the body politic. While acknowledging the need for 'difference-blind procedures for interpreting and redeeming individual rights' within a liberal polity there is also a need for a substantive sense of common moral purpose forged out of the interaction of the different cultures subsisting within it. He also proposed strongly the need for a multiculturalist education to enhance mutual cultural understanding. For Taylor a multicultural liberal society is one in which individuals are given respect in so far as they are followers of a particular cultural heritage, as well as a distinctive kind of legal-constitutional regime in which the basic structure of rights and liberties is preserved.

## POLITICS OF DIFFERENCE

Defenders of the politics of difference desire an extension of the democratic processes to give greater scope to the participation of cultural minorities in the shaping and governing of the polity.<sup>21</sup> In *Strange Multiplicity*<sup>22</sup> Tully recommends a reconstruction of modern constitutionalism as to accommodate the wide variety of cultural traditions to enhance the quality of liberal constitutional arrangements. Williams<sup>23</sup> proposes measures like proportional representation, holding reserved seats in legislative bodies for members of underrepresented marginalized groups, redrawing of electoral boundaries when underrepresented groups are concentrated in geographically determined ridings or providing for multimember districts when appropriate and providing for quotas for underrepresented groups in political party candidate lists.

Young demands guaranteed representation only of oppressed disadvantaged groups and veto power over policies that affect them. These groups can only be fully integrated through what she calls differentiated citizenship. It means that members of certain groups should be incorporated into the political community, not only as individuals, but also through their group, and their rights should depend in part on their group membership: "group veto power regarding specific policies that affect a group directly, such as reproductive rights policy for women, or land use policy for Indian reservations".<sup>24</sup> Young does not consider protection of minority cultures as a state responsibility, a notion advanced by some liberal multiculturalists like Kymlicka and Raz<sup>25</sup> as adequate, as this is tantamount to confining groups to the private sphere. It fails to give public endorsement to their distinct identities. The public sphere is dominated by norms which appear to be universal and culturally neutral but in reality reflect cultural values of the dominant social categories "middle class white males. Young<sup>26</sup> picking up on the model of "associative democracy' that Cohen and Rogers<sup>27</sup> proposes that the state ought to be an organization of oppressed minorities with the view that they could exercise real power. Arguing within the US context, she<sup>28</sup> also points out exclusive emphasis on rational argument further disadvantages minorities who are well versed in its niceties. She supports forms of communication like rhetoric, story telling (or testimony, or narrative) and an oral tradition argument, which are more accessible to disadvantaged minorities.

Phillips<sup>29</sup> puts forward an essentialist assumption of what she calls "the politics of presence' namely representation for the under-represented (in her example- women) by reserving places in governmental bodies for people from marginalized groups or "the politics of ideas' of ensuring that at least some political party platforms feature marginalized group interests. The second one is complementary to the first one and that will ensure representation of the un-represented segments in government. But it is possible that the representatives would not pursue the specific interest of the group that they represent. Party discipline may lead to some accountability but even proportional representation may not lead to electoral success. One solution is by including group list in the list of political party candidates ensuring representation of marginalized groups.

Phillips<sup>30</sup> conceptualizes the public and private spheres as interdependent but distinct. She thinks it is necessary to integrate the private sphere into analysis and focus on gendered nature of power relations within the family, and not ignore it as traditional political science has done. The inequities within the family are as relevant to issues of social justice as inequalities in the public sphere. Democratization of the public sphere understood in terms of higher participation of women is possible only if there is prior democratisation of the private sphere. This, she desires by maintaining the public-private distinction, like Okin<sup>31</sup> and Young<sup>32</sup> so as to preserve areas for individual decision and privacy. In this context, she mentions the right of abortion. She also argues for the need to detach the two spheres of gender differences and base it instead on the criterion of right to privacy.

## CRITICISMS

Critics raise a number of objections to many of the aforesaid basic formulations. For some, it is simple that only individuals, and not groups, have rights.<sup>33</sup> Graf<sup>34</sup> observes that groups are fictitious entities and fictitious entities could not be right bearers. The idea of differentiated citizenship is a contradiction in terms. If groups are encouraged to focus on their 'difference' then how can citizenship be a shared identity, a source of commonality and solidarity among the various groups in society.

Aboriginal peoples, on whose behalf multiculturalists speak, see multiculturalism as facilitating further marginalization of their communities and culture in a modern state which is more attuned to the needs of migrants than to the aborigines. Many press for the rights of indigenous minorities and insist that unlike immigrants, what they need is not only recognition of their independent status but also rectification of past injustice.

A severe objection to multiculturalism is that in pleading for special rights for cultural groups or religious communities, it may permit these groups to continue with practices that are sexist and highly disadvantageous, if not harmful to women. Okin<sup>35</sup> finds among most exponents of multiculturalism a weak commitment to women's rights and interests.

The non liberal critics contend that the prevailing theories of liberal multiculturalism are essentially arguments for homogeneity, since the idea that one will support cultural diversity as long as the cultures are liberal. They observe that liberal multiculturalism is narrow: since its base is in a liberal theory of autonomy, it does not give enough support to non-liberal cultures.<sup>36</sup> The non liberal multiculturalists stress on the intrinsic worth of culture.

Mouffe<sup>37</sup> in response to group-differentiated citizenship points out that the solution is not to make gender or other group characteristics important to the concept of citizenship but to reduce their significance. She proposes a conception of citizenship which is neither gendered nor gender neutral but one based on real equality and liberty for all citizens. She stresses on political issues and claims,

and observes that the public-private distinction needs to be redefined from case to case, according to the type of political demands, and not in a fixed and permanent way.

Miller<sup>38</sup> considers identity politics as dangerous to the groups, which it is supposed to serve as the identities of these groups are much more open and fluid than recognised by the advocates of group identity. Identity politics emphasizes on separateness creating a barrier to the politics of inclusion. This political mechanism of inclusion is important to reshape the public space, as an expression of shared national identity in a manner that, it is "more hospitable to women, ethnic minorities and other groups without emptying them of content and destroying the underpinnings of democratic politics".<sup>39</sup> Miller mentions J.S. Mill who, despite lending support to the independence movements in Poland, Hungary and Italy, is appreciative of the role that national identities play in supporting liberal institutions.<sup>40</sup> In the *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861), Mill argues that unless the several groups, which compose a society, have mutual sympathy and trust that is derived from a common nationality, it would be difficult to have free institutions. There would be no common interest to prevent government excesses and politics would become a zero-sum game, in which each group could only hope to profit by the exploitation of the others. Rule of law in such a situation usually becomes the first casualty. Miller also cites the example of Mazzini who argued passionately for Italian unity and independence while defending individual rights and republican government. He observes that liberal thinkers by the mid-nineteenth century "forged links between individual freedom, national independence, and representative government in opposing the imperial powers of Europe".<sup>41</sup> Miller<sup>42</sup> argues that nationality is important and its recognition need not mean suppression of other sources of ethnicity or culture. One major reason as to why nationality is important is because it is the precondition of the pursuit of social justice, which cannot be pursued globally.<sup>43</sup> The pursuit of social justice requires a measure of social solidarity and that would mean that citizens go along with the institutions which perform a redistributive function.

Waldron<sup>44</sup> questions as to whether there exist distinct cultures as most of us are cultural fragments imbibing from a variety of ethno-cultural sources without feeling any sense of membership in or dependence on a particular culture. Defending the cosmopolitan alternative, he argues that most of the people in the modern world live "in a kaleidoscope of culture" moving freely from one cultural tradition to another. Cultures can no longer remain monolithic in view of globalization of trade, the increase in human mobility and the development of international institutions and communications. The only way that a culture could remain authentic is by adopting a wholly inauthentic way of life by denying the "overwhelming reality of cultural interchange and global interdependence".<sup>45</sup> A liberal conception of the self give importance to the ability of individuals to question and revise in inherited ways of life which is in contrast to the communitarian perception of viewing people as embedded in particular cultures. Waldron rightly worries that this process of cultural interchange would be decisively hampered if the notion of protecting the "authenticity" of minority cultures through minority rights is accepted.

Glazer<sup>46</sup> and Walzer<sup>47</sup> points out that expression and perpetuation of cultural identities should be left to the private sphere and, as Glazer observes the response of the state ought to be one of "salutary neglect."<sup>48</sup> Protection against discrimination and prejudice is provided to members of ethnic and national groups and they are free to maintain their identity and heritage, consistent with the rights of others but strictly in the private sphere.

Barry<sup>49</sup> argues that multiculturalism is a fog that blots out recognition of class inequalities and human rights abuses. It is inconsistent with liberalism and disrespectful of liberal values and should be rejected. By replacing the idea of equal citizenship based on equal rights with culturally differentially rights, and in modifying the doctrine of equal citizenship, the multiculturalists are insensitive to the abuse of power which is inevitable in such a policy. Barry considers the concept of uniform citizenship and individual autonomy as an achievement of the Enlightenment. By criticising the Enlightenment and in advocating culturally differentiated rights, these theorists overlook the gross irregularities and inequities that existed prior to the Enlightenment. Barry finds an affinity between the Right and the Left in their anti-liberal rhetoric as emphasis on special interests is an old policy of divide and rule beneficial to those who gain from the status-quo. Such an emphasis denies any unified struggle for the common demand of the disadvantaged. There is a larger arena at the shared disadvantages of all like unemployment, poverty, low quality housing and inadequate public housing which can be tackled only from the point of view of the larger category of the disadvantaged. Particularity of group politics dissipates the political effort for mobilising people on the basis of a broad shared interest. Emphasis on cultural heterogeneity does not lead to either promotion of liberty or equality. Such policies are policies of retreat as group differentiated politics is inimical to the pursuit of a programme of universal material benefit to which all must have access. He insists that politics of multiculturalism undermines the politics of redistribution.

Barry is clear that the conflict between culture and law is over-emphasised as exemptions in the name of culture normally leads to sidetracking or breaking the law in the context of denial of individual rights within the group. He additionally regards multiculturalism and group rights discourses as endangering protections hard won over the centuries, in now liberal polities for individuals' religious and family autonomy. Arguing within the framework provided by J.S. Mill, Barry writes:

The defining feature of a liberal is, I suggest, that it is someone who holds that there are certain rights against oppression, exploitation and injury to which every single human being is entitled to lay claim, and that appeals to cultural diversity and pluralism under no circumstances trump the value of basic human rights. For [the multiculturalists] a society is to be conceived as a fictitious body whose real constituents are communities (ibid: 132-133, 300).<sup>50</sup>

Contrary to "Enlightenment liberalism" which Barry defends is "Reformation Liberalism" propounded by Galston<sup>51</sup> one which takes into account diversity and underlines the importance of "differences among individuals and groups over such matters as the nature of the good life,

sources of moral authority, reason versus faith, and the like'.<sup>52</sup> Barry rejects Reformation Liberalism on three grounds: (1) Liberal theory is based on the primacy of respect for individuals which included the culture as well provided the culture is not illiberal by itself and does not violate equal respect to other cultures. (2) On the question of liberalism's commitment to diversity as enhancing the range of choice, Barry argues that for liberals, individualism is more important than diversity. (3) Regarding the question of public-private divide and the liberal commitment to non intervention in the private sphere, Barry points out that throughout the process of history, liberalism has challenged both parental and paternal authority while protecting the individual from the group to which he belongs. On the question of every group having to conform to liberalism, Barry points that it is a free choice of the individuals to join any group or association with a rider that such groups are to be consistent with the legal protection that exists for all those outside the group. There are, however, two important preconditions: (a) all participants in the group are sane adults and (b) and participation should be voluntary.<sup>53</sup> Groups may then do as they please, provided those who do not like the way the group functions can exit without facing undue costs.<sup>54</sup>

Barry<sup>55</sup> castigates multiculturalists for supporting national autonomy as 'they see it as a way of enabling nations within which illiberal values are politically dominant to pursue them in ways that violate the constraints imposed by any standard list of liberal rights, such as those embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the US Constitution, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms or the European Convention on Human Rights'. Liberalism guarantees norms and institutional devices to ensure freedom from injustice and oppression and 'these do not (contrary to a popular multiculturalist claim) prevent different societies from expressing their differences politically'.<sup>56</sup> Barry stresses the need to subject minority cultural rights to democratic deliberation. 'If a cultural or a religious minority failed to gain a concession from the political process' then it 'could not properly claim that it had suffered an injustice'.<sup>57</sup>

### **Concluding Remarks**

Ever since Durkheim and Weber paid attention to the cultural dimension of social, economic and political analyses it has remained an important component of enquiry within liberalism. However, Tawney's critique of Weber on the factors of the rise of capitalism has brought in serious limitations of this approach as well. Multiculturalism is a continuation of this trend reinforced by the present post modernist assertion of rejection of traditional post Enlightenment liberal intellectual tradition. Habermas gives an effective reply to such post modernist assertions. Multiculturalism has remained a critique rather than becoming a viable alternative to traditional liberalism which since J.S. Mill has been able to refine and modernize its premises while retaining its core values to withstand the continuous onslaught. Twentieth century liberalism is conscious of the limits of philosophical enquiry and also the need to limit the political, and instead emphasise on building institutions that are accountable, and protect and enhance civil liberties. In the American context, Daniel Bell observes that the mainstay of the civil society is the existence of the Constitution and the Supreme Court. Within the larger framework of liberal politics, which inevitably consolidates a liberal society, much of the fears whether of recognition or participation

can be taken care by not merely highlighting cultural differences but pointing out to the larger commonality of the disadvantaged.

Multiculturalism rejects the idea of the liberal state of J.S. Mill, Rawls and Barry as being neutral to differing conceptions of good life. For Kymlicka, liberalism is about autonomy. A perfectionist liberal, he rejects the idea of the liberal state of Mill, Rawls and Barry as being neutral to differing conceptions of good life. Autonomy is good, as long as it is anchored in choice, the quintessence of negative liberty according to Berlin. Dworkin<sup>58</sup> asserts that liberal principles flow from two principles and these are: (1) each human life is intrinsically and equally valuable and (2) each person has an inalienable personal responsibility for identifying and realising the values in his life.

Multiculturalism's charge that Liberalism's championing of individualism intrinsically incapacitates it from explaining some of the inherently collective features of political life are flawed. In the nineteenth century, European liberal thinkers, in contrast with their Enlightenment predecessors and their twentieth century successors with the exception of Berlin and Raz, understood the importance of collective identities to human beings, other than, and more particularistic than, that of the species as a whole. J.S. Mill, for instance considered the sentiment of nationality an important source of social solidarity, and of political stability of a liberal society. Berlin's own life long commitment to the idea of a Jewish nationalist homeland or Zionism is within the broader liberal framework of his thought. He also supported a Palestinian state for the Palestinians. He is clear that individual well being demands common cultural forms, and that individual self identity and self-esteem require the respectful recognition of these cultural forms by others. However, he does not advocate special rights for the members of minority cultures nor does he insist on the need of the state to extend official recognition ranging from legal exemptions to self determination to minority cultures within its jurisdiction. He is not advocating assimilation but integration where the members of the group maintain their distinct identity within the family and voluntary associations while accepting the same public rights and duties as other citizens. He subordinates cultural identity and diversity to two values: (1) freedom, understood as choice which implies that people have a right to choose how to live, a right which is common to all human beings. Cultures also have to promote diversity of goods. (2) A successful liberal politics cannot flourish in situations of chronic instability, like the Weimar Republic. It requires high levels of trust and cooperation and that is possible only if there exists within a society, a common cultural identity. Aggressive cultures which encourage divisiveness in society cannot sustain free institutions.

Both traditional liberalism and multiculturalism are concerned with addressing the problems of the disadvantaged. The former, since Green's revision of the doctrine which paved the way for Keynesian consensus and the inauguration of the welfare state in the post second world war period and Rawls' theory focusing on the procedural elevation of the worst off, with its stress on non discrimination and equal opportunity through the mechanism of constitutional guarantees of equal rights within the rule of law, ensures that individuals are not adversely affected because of their beliefs and ways of life in matters pertaining to education and employment. The guarantee and

protection of individual rights which is the basis of a liberal state is still an important component of modern democracy. Multiculturalism with its emphasis on cultural exclusivity tries to bring in marginalized and neglected groups and redesigns the political space by accepting larger fragmentation and then, its incorporation. However, in doing so, not only are economic disadvantages relegated to secondary importance but the attempt to stress and highlight difference results in fragmentation of identities thus undermining the benefits which uniform citizenship based on one person one vote, and equal rights for all, after years of protracted struggle, guaranteed. Stressing any one identity to the point of excluding others make it meaningless as modern societies accepts the multiple identities of persons in which no one identity is decisive and that different identities- gender, class, language, religion, region, ethnicity, culture, colour and race coalesce in a person. It is this spirit of unity in diversity, of the possibilities of co-existence of various identities in a person which multiculturalism overlooks. Cultural exclusivity and differentiation beyond a point could both be oppressive and coercive. Within the groups, some practices could be discriminatory and oppressive. What is the possibility for redress of grievance available to the individual against such practices? What is the basis of their assumption that the group will protect and advance the rights of its individual members than the constitutional state? On these important questions the multiculturalists do offer satisfactory answers.

As Miller points out that "by turning their backs on forms of identity, particularly national identities, that can bond citizens together in a single community, advocates of identity politics would destroy the conditions under which disparate groups in a culturally plural society can work together to achieve social justice for all groups. Minority groups are likely to have little bargaining power, so they must rely on appeals to the majority's sense of justice and fairness, and these will be effective only to the extent that majority and minorities sympathise and identify with each other".<sup>59</sup> Multiculturalism prevents the forging of a common public space which sustains democratic life. It questions the idea of shared moral values that exists among human beings despite their differences due to cultural backgrounds. Culture is fundamental as it is an important source of legitimacy and political power. For authority to be effective it has to be rooted in people's experiences and identity. Only then it would win the loyalty of its people. However, power aims at unity while culture is diverse. By emphasising cultural diversity and overlooking the mechanisms of promoting cultural consensus multicultural politics would be divisive.

Multiculturalism alleges that democratic procedures in Western democracies are not neutral but biased in favour of white, middle class males and against women and disadvantaged minorities. They maintain that the interests of these groups are best served not through existing forms of rational deliberation but by adopting new forms of political communication- greeting, rhetoric and story telling. Their call for encouraging the use of native tongues rather than the official language is fraught with dangers as can be seen from the following incident. Sir William Jones, as the judge of Supreme Court of Calcutta from 1783 for the next 11 years, felt the need to have the knowledge of Persian and other Indian languages as he realized that the court orders based on translations from Indian languages which often were wrongly translated and that led to denial of justice. While many see the idea of English as the common lingua franca in colonial and independent India as

privileging the elite but what is overlooked is the continued discrimination and unfairness faced by those who are well versed only in their mother tongues. A common language is necessary for justice and to ensure minimal mischief, apart from the fact that such knowledge would help in career advancement creating a climate of mutual respect which exclusivity denies and allows greater flowering of talent as the recent Indian writing in English prove.

Liberalism accommodates cultural plurality and stresses on the need for shared identity. Multiculturalism by stressing on cultural difference and cultural exclusivity underestimates the safety values that exist within traditional liberal political theory for answering satisfactorily its concerns

### Notes and References

1. At the core of the arguments for recognising cultural diversity is the contention that individual identity is a social construct, taking off from where the communitarians left in their debate with the liberals in the late 1970s and early 1980s within Anglo American political theory. The publications of Rawls A Theory of Justice (1971) and Nozick's Anarchy, State and Utopia (1974) led Charles Taylor, Alasdair MacIntyre and Michael Walzer to criticize the individualist underpinnings of their theories. However, by the middle of the 1980s, communitarianism peaked off mainly because its main theorists had either failed to come up with persuasive alternative conception of moral and political community (MacIntyre) or had conceded much of the normative terrain to the liberals while turning their attention to other issues of social ontology, history and interpretation (Taylor). Out of this stalemate emerged the sudden growth of interest in multiculturalism' (Kelly, 2006, pp. 9, 10).
2. Those who claim themselves to be 'different' from the mainstream are broadly of two types. For some groups- the poor, women, ethnic minorities and immigrants, the demand for group rights is a demand for greater inclusion and participation in the mainstream society, as they feel excluded, under-represented or un-represented. Or, they might seek exemption from laws that disadvantage them economically or they want school curriculum to recognise their contributions to society's culture and history. These groups accept the goal of national integration, for they desire to be part of mainstream society as full and equal members but only insist that recognition and accommodation of their 'difference' is needed to bring about national integration. The other group demanding differentiated citizenship reject the goal of national integration and wish to be self-governing, to freely develop their culture and are usually national minorities or distinct historical communities occupying their own territory with a distinct language and history. They do not want greater representation in the central government but transfer of power from the central government to their communities, often through some kind of federalism

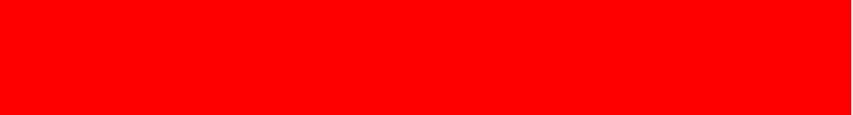
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# **Perspective Section**

## Political Mediation - A Perspective

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Politics now a day has got transformed from an ideological vocation to a strategic mix of marketing. The mainstream media namely newspaper, television, film and radio help the political parties in advertising their policies, branding the parties' ideology and honing the images of the politicians. The media has created political role models for the masses. Politicians are made celebrities and celebrities like persona from the film and sports world are becoming politicians. Each and every political party seeks to build an identity of its own and this quest is exploited by the marketing strategies through the media. The "ideology" of a particular party is no longer an indicator of political principle; rather it has emerged as a "brand" and politicians work as the "brand-ambassadors". They are now using social media to overcome the barriers of the mass-media and to have a direct contact with the people. Do all these efforts transform a serious pursuit like politics into a show-business? Does the excessive coverage of political news by the media help in enhancing the accountability of the politicians to the public? Or does it take away the substance from the politics and replace it with limelight and glamour? The article looks at the issue that how both the mainstream and the new media have gained power to work as a new-age political tool and how they have reshaped the political communication.

The dictionary meaning of Politics is the activities associated with governing a country or area and with the political relations between states. It also means activities concerned with gaining and using power within an organization or group. In this power equation issues like planning, propaganda, promotion, and self-projection take instrumental roles. Proliferation of mainstream media especially newspaper and television benefitted the operation of politics through showcasing the argument and counter argument. The advent of corporate ownership of the media has provided another opportunity for publicity and advertising. In this way politics has come under the periphery of marketing.

Previously every political party used to have an ideology within which the members used to establish their identity and develop their career as a politician. Today every politician seeks to build his/her own identity within the party and this identity is exerted on the masses through the media. We can take the example of the projection of Anna Hazare by the news media especially television. Recent instance can be taken of Congress party's vice-president Rahul Gandhi's contradictory comment at a press "meet" on the ordinance that was passed by his own party. The same can be noticed in case of Gujrat's Chief Minister Narendra Modi who has built his own identity as a pro-business, tech-savvy politician going beyond his party's identity. The identity of a politician as a person of certain quality is also gets publicized by the media (for example: the youthful, the thoughtful, the chauvinist, the funny and so on). Not only are the qualities highlighted the attitude of the politicians are emphatically presented (for example: whether the politician is

pro-USA or anti-USA). The politicians on the other hand use this platform of self projection quite efficiently. They are becoming increasingly concerned with how they look and sound. Image construction and communication has assumed a significant role in modern day politics. The politicians are found at the launching of products, fashion-shows, with the stars from the entertainment world and so on. They make their appearances in serious political debate on the television as well as in the popular programmes (as special guests in various entertainment programmes on the television, in the inauguration of cultural programmes, in the guest appearances for the movies etc.).

Citizen's rising dissatisfaction with the nation states, governments, parties and electoral process has given birth to a cynicism which is heightened by the excessive media dependency of the parties in political communication. One of the powerful mass medium, television deals mainly with illusions and when appearance and presentation take the front seat in political communication the questions regarding the authenticity and accountability come naturally. Many are of the opinion that while the essence of political communication lies in designing the message to inform the public about the organization, candidates, and leaders and to guide the voters in taking voting decision, the excessive focus on the image trivializes the whole issue by replacing substance with the superficial. As a result people are left with no choices than to respond to the images than to the actual actions or experiences.

A key function of every communication is to make the receiver think in the same way of the sender. It is particularly true in case of political communication. The tools that are chiefly employed by the politicians to influence the public through the media are "interviews and advertisements mainly. As interview is regarded as one of the primary "news-source" for any kind of news and it imparts credibility (as interviews are taken mostly of the official spoke-person of any organization, govt. department or the person who is well-known to the public) both the print and electronic media offer its lion's share of space and time for the interviews focusing on a particular issue or a particular politician. These interviews are quite tactfully used for promotional purposes. Another tool that is used for publicizing the policies is advertisement. These advertisements though are not same as the commercial advertising of the merchandises but the construction of persuasive message, its repetition, and the identification of the target audience call for obvious parallelism between the two. Political advertising are mostly advocacy advertising that shows the public the developmental works the party has done, the benefits of adopting certain policies etc.

This political marketing of the media fares well as the post-modern society is fragmented and the ties within the civil society is not strong enough. The individuals have a varied source of information (as the number of media is increasing day by day), wide range of choices (presence of too many parties in the Indian politics), and the freedom to express those choices (the extreme example of the freedom of choice for the citizen could be the Supreme Court's direction to introduce a None of the Above button in electronic voting machine in the coming election and also in the ballot papers to empower the voters to exercise their right to reject undeserving candidates). The more people are advancing economically and technologically two-step theory of mass-

communication or even its later modification multi-step theory has become obscure. Though one can argue that the process has become more democratic in a sense that the mass media is performing its duty that is to inform the people and the citizens are taking their decisions independently without getting influenced by the "opinion leaders". But the question remains does the plurality of information sources make an informed citizen? Or the citizens are confused with such a vast range of choices, huge amount of information flow and free-wheeling of individual decision?, Doesn't this actually turn the people away from the politics and make them passive, disengaged? What about the polarization of the media in spotlighting one party or certain politician and the media's manipulative role in performing its one of the basic responsibilities that is "to form public opinion" ?

Communication in the mass media has certain barriers (for example, the feedback from the receiver is delayed; the media works as a "gate-keeper" in the communication process between the source [politician or the political party] and the receiver [the people or the voters], media does the job of agenda-setting [every media organization has its own agenda, preferences and prejudices regarding choosing the news items, its presentation etc.], the identification of the target audience is very difficult [as mass media caters for the mass audience]) which the social media, popularly known as "new media" can overcome. Since the process of filtration is not present in this medium the communication can be more direct, intimate and two-way [source-receiver and receiver-source]. In today's scenario when it is found that the youths are taking interest in the politics putting aside all the inhibitions, political parties and leaders are using social media to reach this significant portion of the population. Almost every major party has a Twitter account where they post information about press release, political campaigns and news about them. Politicians ranging from well known to not-so-famous are active on Twitter and Facebook where they "tweet" or "post" their remarks on certain issues, personal views, latest pictures etc. and are commanding a huge number of followers. Some of them are having personal websites and blog sites too. The greatest example of using social media for political communication could be US Presidential campaign 2012 where Barak Obama spent profusely for digital campaigning.

The way social media is used by the political parties and politicians to connect with their voters, it is also used for political communication among the citizens even beyond the national boundaries. It is generally accepted that in 2009 social media was used for the first time in raising a mass protest in Moldova. Facebook, LiveJournal, and Twitter were the instruments of the activists to mobilize the people. Although their protest failed to bring any imminent change, it showed the world a new - age weapon to bring together a huge number of populace for a common cause through the uncensored dissemination of information over these social networking sites. In Iran Agha-Soltan's death video was first posted on YouTube, Facebook and Twitter and then it became news in the mainstream media. In December 2010, a person named Tarek al-Tayeb Mohamed Bouazizi set fire to himself and the scenes of his self-immolation as well as those of the mass protests that followed his funeral was quickly circulated in Tunisia and beyond using YouTube. Egypt's 2011 unrest was sparked by Facebook and Twitter. Protestors gathered in Cairo's Tahrir Square and after 18 days of protests Prime Minister Hosni Mubarak resigned on February 11, 2011

in the face of increasing domestic and international pressure. In other countries of the "Arab Spring" like Libya, Syria, Yemen, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan social media motivated and organized people for the leaderless protests against the dictatorial regimes and corrupt leaders. Social networks helped in breaking the psychological barrier of the people as they were allowed to connect and share information with others. It gave them the fellow "feeling and the knowledge that same hardships, brutality and injustice were being inflicted upon the citizens of the neighbouring countries as well.

Some are of the opinion that the increasing autonomy of the media has reduced the political discourse from a serious pursuit to a show-business especially when the same business technique i.e. advertising and promotion is followed by the carriers of democracy to allure the voters. The way business organizations are driven by Management by Result philosophy, the political parties are also following the same path. They try to win the voters in every possible manner -from disseminating mediated messages via mass media to conducting non-mediated communication (wishing people on all the major occasions through SMS, greeting cards and so on). There seems to exist a vicious cycle "The politicians in order to connect with the public must talk in a language that the public understand, the media's market orientation enforces it to emphasize on personality, scandal which in turn has led political communicators to go for favourable press-releases and promotional activities.

Public image, reputation of a politician etc. are the currency in political communication. Internal conflicts within the party mar its public image and ultimately result in losing of the voters. So the politicians try to project the "no-issue" image over the media whenever any chance of adverse publicity crops up. Parties and the politicians compete among themselves fiercely and the people are asked to judge between the competing "brands" (parties). The question comes does the whole endeavour call for an activism on the part of the political parties and leaders? Doesn't excessive media coverage of political news and sheer competition among the various media (newspaper, magazine, television news channels) lead to the unveiling of various misdeeds of the politicians? It should be noticed that individuals are now seen as the prime unit of politics and are communicated via most appropriate media using appropriate messages in appropriate languages. Media's focus on personality has also helped the voters to judge a politician on his/her human merit-what sort of a man he/she is, what background he/she has and how he/she represents the man in the street. The older method of appearing in front of the public before the election and getting disappeared isn't paying off anymore. The way customers' delight is the final word in the business and permanent campaign is needed to ensure customers' loyalty, in electoral process also the same approach is becoming necessary to succeed. Those who remain disconnected from the public are quite likely to fail to ensure the support of the masses. The glaring eyes of the mainstream media (as Watchdog) and interactivity of the social media keep on questioning if the politicians fail to deliver their promises. This establishes a relationship with the citizens and the open dialogue makes the citizens more enlightened, responsible. The true spirit of democracy lies in ensuring this plurality of voices..

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# **Commentary Section**

## On Global Greed and Global Good

Mazin Qumsiyeh

In March 1992, the US Defense Policy Guidance formulated by Paul Wolfowitz and Lewis Libby (two neoconservatives with Israeli ties) was leaked to The New York Times and caused a stir (including a rebuke from then Senator Biden, now vice-president). Its Machiavellian/ Straussian tone of world domination was shocking. The document as revised by its release on 16 April 1992 was far milder, or at least careful in its language. By way of a price, the revised document included for the first time support for Zionism as a key to defense policy: "In the Middle East and Persian Gulf, we seek to foster regional stability, deter aggression against our friends and interests in the region, protect US nationals and property, and safeguard our access to international air and seaways and to the region's oil. The United States is committed to the security of Israel and to maintaining the qualitative edge that is critical to Israel's security..'. The same American Zionists wrote a letter to Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu in 1996 entitled "A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm." They called for regime change in Iraq, led by the US, followed by acts directed at Iran and Syria to secure US (read US-Israeli) dominance.

In 1997, these Zionists launched the Project for New American Century (PNAC) calling for US world hegemony and proclaimed ominously: " no moment in international politics can be frozen in time: even a global Pax Americana will not preserve itself ... [the new world order] must have a secure foundation on unquestioned US military preeminence ... The process of transformation is likely to be a long one, absent some catastrophic and catalyzing event -- like a new Pearl Harbor." I was living near New York when they got the 'œnew Pearly Harbor' on 11 September 2001. Â The horror was felt first because friends and relatives were in New York City and we were very worried for them and for the country as a whole. The 'œWar on Terrorism' like the 'œWar on Poverty' before it commenced but produced the opposite effects to what the propaganda tried to show.

One of the reasons is simply that fighting terrorism with terrorism is like curing virginity with sex. Â The US government defined terrorism as an activity that: (i) involves a violent act or an act dangerous to human life, property, or infrastructure; and (ii) appears to be intended "' (A) to intimidate or coerce a civilian population; (B) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or (C) to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, kidnapping, or hostage taking.

If taken literally, under this law, we would classify as terrorism the United States nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We would classify as terrorism the US-led sanctions that killed over one million Iraqis in 11 years according to the United Nations, as well as the bombing done in 1991 that decimated the infrastructure in Iraq. We would describe as terrorism the siege of Palestinian towns and villages by the Israeli Army and its intentional shelling of infrastructure and neighborhoods. Before the Arab countries engaged in the Palestine/Israel conflict, Zionist forces had already committed 33 massacres including the infamous one at Deir Yassin in April 9, 1948. More than half of the 531 Palestinian villages and towns were depopulated by Israeli military actions before Israel was established in May 15, 1948. And we certainly would describe as terrorism the recent US military actions in places like Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, and Somalia and the Israeli military actions in Lebanon in 2006 and Gaza in 2008.

In my upcoming book about my life in the US before and after 2001, I devote some pages to describe both the kindness and curiosity of average US citizens and the attacks carried on us by those in the political Zionist camp. We were subjected to email spams, computer hacking, mail fraud, FBI investigations that came from Zionist sources, physical and verbal attacks, and to deluge of letters calling us names (from terrorists to anti-Semites) sent to media, politicians, and even our academic colleagues. But the US public became more aware of how the US government toppled elected governments like those in Iran installing the brutal Shah in 1953 and in Chile installing Pinochet (ironically 11 September 1973). They learned from declassified documents about false flag operations done both by the US and Israeli intelligence agents. Sometimes things worked out in a different direction. The US/Israeli miscalculations and stupidity in attacking Iraq backfired and Iran became stronger than ever as a regional power. The dictatorial governments of the friends of Israel were toppled by popular revolt in Egypt, Tunisia, and Yemen. The US policy tried to balance things by working to remove dictators who are less friendly to it succeeding in Libya but seemingly failing in Syria. Israel-first lobbyists took US policy in directions that strengthened adversaries, promoted war, wrecked the American economy, and destroyed the sympathy and solidarity shown by people around the world to the US.

Governments and special interests scheme to bolster their positions while people resist and put limits on the greed of politicians and business people. The arrogance of those in power sometimes helps us because they make mistakes based on their feeling of unchecked power. But always, the power of the people makes a difference. I wrote a book published in 2010 titled 'œPopular Resistance in Palestine: A history of hope and empowerment' in which I explained the amazingly rich history of success of nonviolent resistance in Palestine. Howard Zinn had written a book titled 'œA people's history of the United States' in which he similarly articulates the centrality of people movement to all the good things that happened in America (women's right

to vote, civil rights, ending the war on Vietnam, ending US support for Apartheid South Africa etc).

In a recent visit to Mumbai, I was reminded again of what a leader of such people movement, Mahatma Gandhi, stated in an article in the Harijan 26 November 1938: 'œThe cry for the national home for the Jews does not make much appeal to me'. Palestine belongs to the Arabs in the same sense that England belongs to the English or France to the French. It is wrong and inhuman to impose the Jews on the Arabs. What is going on in Palestine today cannot be justified by any moral code of conduct'. The nobler course would be to insist on a just treatment of the Jews wherever they are born and bred. The Jews born in France are French in precisely the same sense that Christians born in France are French.'

Martin Luther King who opposed American imperialism and exceptionalism gave his last speech in 1968 stating: 'œGod didn't call America to do what she's doing in the world now. God didn't call America to engage in a senseless, unjust war'. We have committed more war crimes almost than any nation in the world.' King went on to talk about peace and economic justice saying: 'œWhat I'm saying to you this morning is that communism forgets that life is individual. Capitalism forgets that life is social, and the kingdom of brotherhood is found neither in the thesis of communism nor the antithesis of capitalism but in a higher synthesis. It is found in a higher synthesis that combines the truths of both. Now, when I say question the whole society, it means ultimately coming to see that the problems of racism, the problem of economic exploitation, and the problem of war are all tied together.'

Archbishop Desmond Tutu was a key leader of popular resistance to South African Apartheid. He stated that there is apartheid in Palestine and that we should resist it with boycotts, divestments and sanctions (BDS) in the same way we did against apartheid in South Africa. King, Gandhi, and Tutu identified the key problems facing us from state terror (British, American, and Israeli). Our histories are intertwined in more ways than can be measured. For example it was the same British who caused much of the problems in India (including division of Pakistan) and about the same time as they caused the problems in Palestine. The Israeli military industrial complex has built a close working relation with the Indian military since the first visit by an Israeli prime minister to India (war criminal Ariel Sharon in 2003). Israel is now the second largest military supplier to India adding billions of dollars to the apartheid Israeli economy. By contrast, the Indian people have always instinctively stood-up against imperialist and Zionist designs on the Middle East.

Seven million of us Palestinians are refugees or displaced people. The remaining Palestinians in the land have been squeezed to a few open air prisons. Gaza for example is 1.6 million Palestinians, 1.2 million of whom are refugees, and all are squeezed into a desert strip of land besieged by Israel with the help of an Egyptian government pressured by the US. But we Palestinians continue our struggle aided by millions of people around the world. The activists who invited me to India and to South Africa and to 32 other countries showed me the meaning of global solidarity. They understood how Israel pushed for a war on Iraq and is now pushing for conflict with Iran. They understand that fostering 'terrorism' helps detract attention from the fundamental political and economic injustice. They understand that addressing human rights of the Palestinians (including refugees' right to return) provides a key to transform Western Asia from an area of Western fomented divisions and mayhem to an area and an era of peace with justice. They understand that global economic power is shifting from the North (Europe and North America) to the BRICS countries. They understand that imperial military power is being used to delay such a shift and such use of conflict is spearheaded by Israel. They understand that peace is good for people and bad for those who profit from war.

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# **Review Section**

## The Flickering of Hope

Amajit Basu

### The Price of Inequality

*by Joseph E. Stiglitz (Allen Lane/Penguin India), 2012; pp (xxxiv)+414, Rs. 599 (UK £14.99)*

After the fall of the Soviet, there was a prejudiced conviction that the ideological war ended. The reign of capitalism riding on democracy and free-market ideologue appeared having no immediate challenge. But, then, with successive failures, it created its own challenges. Old questions started appearing again in the forefront. Twenty years later, we are back to the old debates with same excitement.

Confronting these debates in the arena of Economics, there are, as always, more than two sides. The Marxian economists (e.g. Fred Magdoff and John B. Foster as in *The Great Financial Crisis: Causes and Consequences*, Monthly Review Press, 2009) are back with renewed vigor providing their solutions focusing primarily up on a paradigmatic shift in the perception of policy-makers following a radical change in the society. In the capitalist bloc, in one hand, there are the stark Classical supply-side economists who believe in the dictatorship of the free-market-economy as it is going on, and on the other hand, there are the Keynesian demand-side economists who propose government intervention in several fronts of the economy to make the capitalism work. This second set comprising Keynesian economists is sometimes not easily distinguishable from the socialists. Stiglitz is somewhere in between the Marxian Socialism and Keynesianism but evidently much nearer to Keynesianism. When he points out the problems and analyzes their sources and impacts, he is no different from a radical socialist thinker; his words sometimes become almost an echo of the Communist Manifesto. But, when he proposes the solutions, he deliberately keeps distance from the Marxist ideas of change and argues in favor of making the present system work by incorporating radical changes into it rather than changing the system itself. Again, the world Stiglitz desires for all (as found in his *Whither Socialism?*, 1994) has many socialist elements. So, Stiglitz may be taken as a Social Democrat.

Understanding the political alignment of Stiglitz is important because *The Price of Inequality* (POI) is a book in political economy, politics and economics, i.e. it is inter-disciplinary, and Stiglitz never tries to take the seat of an impassionate, neutral, academic-interest-centered observer. In this book, Stiglitz, centering the issue of inequality, draws attention of his readers to a wide spectrum of socio-political-economic issues which are all indeed very much interlinked with the problem of inequality. In each of those issues, his observations, findings and opinions deserve separate attention. He is addressing the problem of inequality in a net of relations and happenstances and is

showing that it can neither be understood nor solved by the application of knowledge of any one branch of social science.

In *Price of Inequality* (POI), Stiglitz picks his threads from the observations on the social upheavals of Arab Spring and the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) Movement and then investigates deeper into the source of the OWS movement limiting his discussion on the US economy. This is a book on the 1 percent problem. Stiglitz starts his preface with the following words “

There are moments in history when people all over the world seem to rise up, to say that something is wrong, to ask for change. This is what happened in the tumultuous years 1848 and 1968. Each of these years of upheaval marked the beginning of a new era. The year 2011 may prove to be another such moment.”<sup>TM1</sup>

The main argument of Stiglitz in this book is that inequality in US, in presence of the malfunctioning democracy, is accentuating inequality, lowering quality of life, limiting growth and raising inefficiency; if some interventions are not made timely, the already broken society cannot sustain very long. In presence of inequality in income and wealth distribution, democracy in US has been hijacked by the wealthiest 1 percent. As a result of this, policies are being framed to secure and develop the welfare of the 1 percent at the cost of the same of the other 99 percent. This argument is no different from the OWS argument. But, the importance of this book lies in three major aspects. First, it describes the process of how the existing inequality is tolling on the economy. Second, this book lucidly clarifies why the arguments and practices favouring free market economy are flawed. This book connects the 1 percent problem with the problems of the reckless free market economy patronized by the wealthiest 1 percent. Thirdly, it suggests some policies to heal the economy, politics and society of the US. In words of Stiglitz “

Three themes resonated around the world: the markets weren’t working the way they were supposed to, for they were obviously neither efficient nor stable; that the political system hadn’t corrected the market failures; and that the economic and political systems are fundamentally unfair. While this book focuses on the excessive inequality that marks the United States and some other advanced industrial countries today, it explains how the three themes are intimately interlinked: the inequality is cause and consequence of the failure of the political system, and it contributes to the instability of our economic system, which in turn contributes to increased inequality “ a vicious downward spiral into which we have descended, and from which we can emerge only through concerted policies”<sup>TM2</sup>

The main text of this 414 pages long book is spread over 290 pages. It is followed by a 107 pages long section of well-organized notes. The main text consists of 10 chapters. Each chapter is further divided, as usual in Stiglitz books, in a few sections which are again divided in a number of subsections.

In the following paragraphs, the main contents of different chapters are mentioned. This will show how the problem of inequality is being addressed in this interdisciplinary study. This should not be taken as a summary as the facts, figures and the logical arguments are not presented here.

## Chapter 1

### Â America<sup>TM</sup>s 1 Percent Problem

It deals with recent facts, figures, arguments and counter-arguments. Stiglitz himself provides a summary of his findings at the end of the chapter “

- (a) Recent U. S. income Growth primarily occurs at the top 1 percent of the income distribution.
- (b) As a result, there is growing inequality.
- (c) And those at the bottom and in the middle are actually worse-off today than they were at the beginning of the century.
- (d) Inequalities in wealth are even greater than inequalities in income.
- (e) Inequalities are apparent not just in income but in a variety of other variables that reflect standards of living, such as insecurity and health.
- (f) Life is particularly harsh at the bottom “ and the recession made it much worse.
- (g) There has been a hollowing out of the middle class [polarization of labor].
- (h) There is little income mobility “ the notion of America as a land of opportunity is a myth.
- (i) And America has more inequality than any other advanced industrialized country, it does less to correct these inequalities, and inequality is growing more than in many other countries.<sup>3</sup>

That US is no more a land of opportunity has been shown and mentioned by Stiglitz in the following chapters again and again. Stiglitz shows in this context that, in US, major determinant of an individual<sup>TM</sup>s success has been his initial conditions “ the income and education of his parents.

## Chapter 2

### Rent Seeking and the Making of an Unequal Society

Stiglitz claims

American inequality didn't just happen, it was created.<sup>4</sup>

The major tool that created this inequality has been rent seeking. In economic theory, to retain a factor of production in its present occupation, certain minimum amount has to be paid to it by the entrepreneur. This is called Transfer Earning of that factor of production. If any sum higher than the transfer earning is obtained by the factor by creation of new wealth in due process of its employment, it is called Economic Rent. Now, when the factor earns this extra income by manipulating social or political environment rather than creating new wealth, this is called the act of Rent Seeking. In harsher but more comprehensible words, rent seeking is earning extra profit by receiving exclusive benefits by corrupting the government or by using loopholes of the legal system.

Stiglitz stresses on the rent seeking activities of the financial sector in particular because it has been this sector that worked most egregiously in moving the money from the bottom to the top of the pyramid and partly because it has been the main culprit in bringing in the last recession. Stiglitz also provides ample examples to show that the richest people of today's world have all enjoyed monopoly power and undergone the act of rent seeking in different countries in order to reach the top. The rich corporations have been spending huge amount in lobbying to gain in tax-cut, or some indirect subsidy, or to make lawmakers rewrite the laws which favour their profit-generating operations at the cost of the well-being of the other 99 percent.

### Chapter 3

#### Markets and Inequality

It discusses

how changes in social norms<sup>5</sup> and in institutions, like unions, have helped shape America's distribution of income and wealth. But these social norms and institutions, like markets, don't exist in a vacuum: they too are shaped, in part, by the 1 percent.<sup>5</sup>

Stiglitz here points to two structural changes in the US economy in the background of the global financial crisis. First is the destruction of millions of jobs in manufacturing in last twenty years which was not apparent due to stock market boom and housing bubble. Second is the replacement of many unskilled workers with skilled workers due to technological advancement. These resulted in polarization of labor leading to further increase in inequality. In this scenario, government has ignored the redistributive consequences of its laws and policies.

Stiglitz also revisits (in same tune with his *Globalization and Its Discontents*, 2002) the globalization issue and emphasizes that financial liberalization or integrity has increased volatility of the domestic financial markets to international shocks and a race to the bottom has occurred. Trade liberalization has increased inequality. Stiglitz is not against globalization but he is against

globalization as it has been managed (in tune with his Making Globalization Work, 2006). Stiglitz then focuses on the consequences of these happenstances on the US society. He challenges the view that labor unions cause market inefficiency “

strong worker protections correct what would otherwise be an imbalance of economic power. Such protection leads to a higher-quality of labor force with workers who are more loyal to their firms and more willing to invest in themselves and in their jobs. It also makes for a more cohesive society and better workplaces.”<sup>6</sup>

Stiglitz further warns that

Inequality may be at once cause and consequence of a breakdown in social cohesion over the past four decades.<sup>7</sup>

In this context, he discusses the fat cat issue and questions the norm of fairness. More importantly, he draws our attention to the problem of discrimination “ against women, African-Americans, Hispanics. People are found discriminating consciously or implicitly and a competitive equilibrium can be achieved in presence of such discriminations. There has been lending and housing discriminations. And these discriminations have further weakened the already weaker sections.

Then, Stiglitz again elaborates how the government has eventually helped in increasing inequality by building up unfair tax-structure and tax reforms “

Government today plays a double role in our current inequality: it is partly responsible for the inequality in before-tax distribution of income, and it has taken a diminished role in correcting

this inequality through progressive tax and expenditure policies.<sup>8</sup>

Stiglitz also asserts that in name of giving incentives, any level of inequality cannot be tolerated; level of inequality must be minimal.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Why It Matters**

It explains how inequality leads to instability and how that instability again accentuates inequality. According to Stiglitz, that the Fed chaired by Alan Greenspan failed to check the housing bubble although learning a few lessons from the tech bubble was due to the politics of inequality which propagates from the free-market dogmatism. For the housing bubble, he also accuses financial deregulation which has been there to serve the shortsighted interests of the wealthy. Then, he shows how US inequality gives rise to a less efficient and less productive economy. There has

been reduction in broadly beneficial public investment and support for public education. Democrats and Republics both show a commitment to stick to this line in future. In drive to reduce deficits “

the well from which the private sector can draw “ for the next generation of transformational investments “ is drying up. | It is the end result of a lopsided wealth distribution in society.â9

There has also been a massive distortion in the economy, especially associated with rent seeking (most importantly in hi-tech sector, health care and telecommunications), in law and in regulations. The talents are being encouraged to end up in devising complex financial tools to help the wealthy to profit more or in becoming lawyers who will be trying to find out loopholes of the laws and regulations to help rent seeking.

There have also been adverse effects on workers<sup>TM</sup> morale. When the workers see that they are being treated in an unfair manner in comparison to the fat cats and when they suffer from anxiety about job-security and in the other matters of day to day living, they feel alienated from their workplace and this reduces their productivity and the quality of their products falls significantly.

Besides, there is consumerism. People of a particular income stratum try to match their consumption pattern with that of the immediately upper income echelon. To do it, they work harder spending less time for family and family life deteriorates. This adds to the general feel of anguish.

Stiglitz then contradicts the alleged inequality-efficiency trade off that says that to ensure efficiency inequality has to be tolerated and if inequality is to be reduced, inefficiency would arise. He argues that if markets are made to work better by reducing the scope of rent seeking and by correcting market failures, both inefficiency and inequality can simultaneously be reduced. He clarifies that the Right tends to overestimate the benefits and underestimate the costs of incentive pay while overestimating the costs and underestimating the benefits of more-progressive taxation. He remarks at the end “

Of all the costs imposed on our society by the top 1 percent, perhaps the greatest is this: the erosion of our sense of identity in which fair play, equality of opportunity, and a sense of community are so important.<sup>10</sup>

## Chapter 5

### Democracy at Peril

It is a chapter on economics and politics of voting. The voters elect a government to solve nation<sup>TM</sup>s problems. But, if the government works to serve the interest of the 1 percent at the cost of the well-being of the other 99 percent, there will be and there is lowering of trust. Voters feel that they are unfairly treated and they become disillusioned about the democratic system. It is

evident in the low polling turn outs in the US elections at different levels. Added to this problem is disenfranchisement which may follow as a consequence if the Republicans can apply some of their schemes of registration of voters. The tedious process will eliminate a large number of voters from the poor and less connected population. Besides, some Court verdicts have worked for disempowerment of people, the system has turned to be one dollar one vote where it should have been one person one vote. There are also threats of gerrymandering and filibuster, which, within the rules of law, nullify the significance of voting or the attempts of passing some legislation.

Then, Stiglitz moves his focus to the world scenario and sees that the 1 percent problem has been spread over the world by IMF and other similar bodies whose mandates serve not the democracies but the financial market moguls. The discussion in this part was elaborated in his *Globalization and Its Discontents*.

## Chapter 6

1984 is upon Us

The name of this chapter refers to the famous novel by George Orwell, 1984. This chapter is about brainwashing by media. Stiglitz here reinstates the former finding that the mass media of the US

are effective and powerful ideological institutions that carry out a system-supportive propaganda function by reliance on market forces, internalized assumptions, and self-censorship, and without overt coercion.<sup>TM11</sup>

Stiglitz here makes a brief review of basic psychology, economics and behavioural economics. He explains how beliefs and perceptions are framed or persuaded. This discussion clarifies

why many Americans still believe in the unfettered globalization or reckless free market economy although they have been suffering from its perils. He shows how the Right has shaped our educational system as well and tried to influence the law schools with conservative economic ideas which support free market economy dogmatically. Stiglitz calls all these attempts battle of ideas. He further elucidates that since the label Socialist carries a negative connotation to most of the Americans, anything that goes against the 1 percent is sometimes labeled "Socialist"<sup>TM</sup> and this single blow ends the counter-argument.

Shaping perceptions in general, the Right has won many battles. Stiglitz gives three examples where the Right won temporarily. First, for a brief moment in 2010, they were successful in repealing the Estate Tax completely. It was affecting the 1 percent, but a perception was framed that it was problematic to the small business owners as well. Second, before the bank bailouts, it was being said that US had to save the banks in order to save the US economy. Accordingly, money was given to the banks that went to pay bonuses whereas, by law, the money was supposed to recapitalize the banks and recapitalizing the banks was supposed to lead to more lending and

this would have been healthier in and fairer for the economy. In the long run, people changed their perception and the Right lost. The third case is about mortgage restructuring. A perception was built up that it would lead to moral hazards in future from part of the homeowners whereas as if there was no moral hazard from part of the bankers when they engaged in predatory lending knowing that they were too big to fail and so government would have no choice but to save them. This framed perception has also changed in the long run.

Stiglitz further criticizes the drives for liberalization and privatization. He accuses the private sector for bribing the public officials and remarks that they have been the culprits for government inefficiencies. He shows a simple reason for the failure of liberalization “

when social returns and private awards are misaligned, all economic activity gets distorted, including innovation. The innovation of the financial sector was directed not to improving the well-being of Americans but to improving the well-being of bankers.”<sup>TM12</sup>

Stiglitz ends the chapter with discussion on three cases where he thinks that the tide has been turning “ (a) over corporate welfare, (b) over the IMF, its governance, and some of the policies that it used to pursue, and (c) over the ultimate objectives of public policy.

Chapters 7, 8 & 9 explore three battlefields. The seventh chapter named Justice for All? How Inequality is Eroding The Rule of Law explores the battle over the laws and regulations that govern the US economy and how they are enforced. Chapter 8 named Battle of The Budget explores what it is named. Chapter 9 named A Macroeconomic Policy by and for The 1 percent examines the conduct of monetary policy and macroeconomics.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Justice for All? How Inequality is Eroding the Rule of Law**

Stiglitz argues that a rule of law is needed. In any litigation against a corporation, a common American citizen or a group of such citizens, who are the sufferers, cannot hold out for adequate compensation nor can they afford lawyers to match those of the company. The government must be there to rebalance the scales of justice. Stiglitz cites three examples to elucidate his point. First is the case of predatory lending. When the fraudulent lending practices were first observed, there were attempts to halt it by consumer protection law. But, the threats of the rating agencies worked and the steps which were meant to protect the consumers of financial instruments including insurance were not taken. When a consumer protection agency was formed later, the best candidate was not chosen to head it due to the campaigns of the financial institutions. Second is the case of change in Bankruptcy Law. Under the new law, the debtor has to face dire consequences if he cannot somehow pay the debt in time. This favored the bankers. Third is the case of foreclosure process. Banks failed to maintain records of debt repayments. They made fake documents, lied to the courts, and threw many people out of home who actually did not owe any money. The big-

income debtors came under the process over a longer period of time because they could borrow better lawyers and so the banks needed better background works.

## Chapter 8

### Battle of The Budget

Stiglitz proposes alternative measures for budgetary reforms. Instead of Austerity, the government can reduce deficits by tax reforms “

making the tax system more progressive not only reduces inequality but stimulates the economy as well. Trickle-up economics can work, even when trickle-down economics doesnât.13

He explains this proposition with help of multiplier theory. His further proposals for deficit reduction contain mainly the idea of stopping giving benefits to the 1 percent. He additionally explains why the claim that the fiscal stimulus had failed was wrong and how government spending can be very effective in stimulating the economy.

## Chapter 9

### A Macroeconomic Policy by and for The 1 percent

While chapter 8 brings macroeconomic issues in common man<sup>TM</sup>s parlance, chapter 9 gets deeper into hardcore macroeconomics but the discussion can still be followed by readers without any background in economics. Stiglitz here discusses monetary policy centering inflation, unemployment and growth. As Stiglitz puts it “ whenever wages start to rise, the central bankers raise the specter of inflation and tighten credit. As inflation falls, unemployment rises. In response to the rise of unemployment, these bankers recommend labor market flexibility meaning abolition of unions or lowering of minimum wage. Thus, in one hand, the unemployment problem sustains, and on the other hand, the wage never increases although productivity has increased multiple times. This way, the monetary policy hurts the 99 percent. To the central bankers, unemployment is not a problem, but to the poor and middle class Americans, it is. The monetary policy-makers have not considered the distributional aspects of their policies and thus lowering the well-being of the 99 percent and helping the 1 percent.

Deregulation in the financial market implied increased financialization of the economy that has made the greatest contribution to inequality “

“First, it led to the increasing financialization of the economy “ with all the associated distortions and inequalities. Second, it allowed the banks to exploit the rest of the society “ through predatory lending, abusive credit card fees, and other practices. The banks shifted risk toward the poor and toward the taxpayer”.<sup>TM</sup>14

Stiglitz argues for a more democratic central bank. He argues that the central banks of Europe and US were captured by the financial sector “

Capture occurs partially as a result of revolving doors, where the regulators come from regulated sector and, after their brief stint in the government, return to it. 'œCapture' is partly what is called cognitive capture “ in which the regulator comes to adopt the mindset of the regulated.”<sup>TM15</sup>

He cites examples how Wall Street weighed in strongly on potential appointees to the central bank. He points to a growing lack of faith in democracy citing the case of Ben Bernanke under whose chairmanship Fed appeared lacking transparency and then was found guilty of extending secret support to the financial sector. He remarks that monetary policy is a political matter and so it cannot be left to technocrats, especially to those who have vested interest. Stiglitz then criticizes the approach of Friedman and questions the ongoing obsession with inflation. He argues further that in the name of “Natural”<sup>TM</sup> Rate of Unemployment, a high rate of unemployment cannot be tolerated.

## Chapter 10

The Way Forward: Another World is Possible

It consists of numerous recommendations of alternative measures “ economic, political and social. It also expresses hope “

I believe it is still not too late for this country to change course, and to recover the fundamental principles of fairness and opportunity on which it was founded. Time, however, may be running out.

Four years ago there was a moment where most Americans had the audacity of hope. Trends more than a quarter of the century in the making might have been reversed. Instead, they have worsened. Today that hope is flickering.”<sup>TM16</sup>

This book can be read by people without a background in economics, but indeed an economist can follow the arguments and catch the implications of his comments in a wider spectrum.Â POI

may have different importance to different kind of readers. An OWS activist besides being firmer on his convictions will find in it catchy comments and phrases which he can use in banners or social networking posters. A non-activist interested person without such background will find in it a detailed and thorough understanding of the inequality problem in US. Economists will find in it strong Keynesian arguments. S

ome critiques say that Stiglitz is too opinionated. There is no doubt that there are plenty of opinions of Stiglitz in POI. But, he asserts his opinions clearly saying that he believes this or that. When he

tries to prove something with facts, figures and logic, he wisely keeps aside his own opinions or beliefs. One has the freedom of not taking his opinions or beliefs but taking his analyses and findings which stand firm on unprejudiced researches. One can take his results and may prefer a different set of policy measures.

This book has revitalized the ideological war that was apparently subdued in the last twenty years or so. It has been so successful in doing this because its timing of publication has been very critical. The OWS movement started in September 2011. This book was published in June 11, 2012.<sup>17</sup> In a few months, it hit the New York Times Best Sellers list.<sup>18</sup> The rage behind the OWS movement can find a direction from this groundbreaking work. In different countries, the OWS movement was turning to become anti-capitalist movement. Stiglitz shows that OWS needs not necessarily be marked as anti-capitalist or socialist in nature. He clarifies that the origin of dissatisfaction centering widespread inequality has been due to unfettered globalization, reckless practice of free market economy principles and corruption of the public officials to benefit the private players. In Keynesian style, being within the paradigm of capitalism, he shows the way to get rid of these problems. Now, the question is “ who is going to listen to Stiglitz? Will the 1 percent listen to his arguments and move away their greedy hands from over the economy? Will they stop practicing rent seeking? Will they not counter his arguments in popular media and invalidate his arguments with more lies and deceptions? Will there be a nationwide consensus so strong that the government would be compelled to become pro-people than being pro-1 percent? This book indeed tries to build up the consensus.

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