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# **Special Paper Section**

# Crime and Punishment - The Problem of Willful Default in Indian Scenario and Its Resolution

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## **Abstract**

*The paper seeks to contribute to the current debate on how to resolve the issue of willful default in Public Sector Banks (PSBs). Should default be treated as a civil or a criminal offence? It develops a theoretical framework drawing from the theories of banking and of Institutional Economics to address the above issue. The authors appreciate the fact both the borrowers and the lenders have to be held accountable for the current situation and that measures to reduce the incidence of willful default must involve strengthening institutions which help in making both the parties responsible. It is argued that the viewpoint of the banks to treat willful default as a criminal offence is one-sided and is a one-size-fits-all approach. Policy makers must adopt a more sector-specific and borrower-specific policy as the nature, size and purpose of loan varies for different category of borrowers. Moreover, the banks need to concentrate on their job of countering adverse selection and moral hazard by appropriate screening and monitoring. All this will deliver if legal institutions are made effective, if institutional capture is curtailed, the existing laws relating to bankruptcy and loan recovery are overhauled and the judicial process is tightened.*

**Key words:** Banking, Non-performing Assets, willful defaulter, Law and Economics

**JEL Codes:** G21

## **Introduction**

Significant accumulation of Non-performing Assets (NPA) by the Public Sector Banks<sup>1</sup>(PSBs) and the massive scale of loan default has forced the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to intervene in the matter. The RBI governor, in a hard-hitting speech<sup>2</sup> castigated PSBs for creating the NPA crisis. The Finance Minister met the chiefs of PSBs to explore the possible causes of a rise in the NPAs.<sup>3</sup> The problem is critical because with burgeoning NPAs, role of banks gets undermined. It is because they can no longer function as "the gate-keeper of capitalism." The scenario of resolution of NPAs has taken an interesting turn with willful defaulters arguing against making their details public and approaching the court on the one hand and bankers keen to classify willful default as a criminal offence, on the other. The paper seeks to contribute to this ongoing debate.

Plan of the paper: Section II develops a theoretical framework to locate the problem. Section III conceptualizes willful default and examines the pros and cons of treating willful default as a crime. Section IV analyses the bankruptcy law in India and recommends changes. Section V concludes.

### **Theoretical framework**

We develop a theoretical framework in the realm of banking and Institutional Economics to explain systemic formation and perpetuation of NPAs in banks. Institutions are defined as humanly devised constraints that structure political, economic and social interaction.<sup>4</sup> Institutions comprise both the formal rules and informal constraints. Formal rules include constitutions, laws and property rights. Informal constraints include sanctions, taboos, customs, traditions and codes of conduct. It is argued that throughout history institutions have been devised by humans to create order and reduce uncertainty in exchange<sup>5</sup>. Alongside the standard constraints of economics they define the choice set and determine transaction and production costs and the profitability and feasibility of economic activity. The first-order economic principles include protection of property, rights, contract enforcement, market-based competition, appropriate incentives, sound money and debt sustainability.<sup>6</sup> Good institutions are supposed to deliver these first-order principles effectively.

Three institutions define a market economy: private property, markets and law. Property rights are essential to write contracts and bankruptcy laws and courts to enforce the contracts in the context of impersonal exchange. The market coordinates the decisions regarding investment, production and distribution. Rule of law is defined by the presence of a centralized authority capable of exacting coercive penalties for violations of legal rules.<sup>7</sup>

Rule of law determines the functioning of the other two institutions. For markets to serve as the principal mechanism for production and distribution of wealth, clearly defined laws must be in place. Law provides for a standard way of interactions between market agents, seeking to maximize their welfare. Laws governing market transactions are stated in legally binding contracts. This part of the law reveals the basic principles of their economic arrangements. It deals with elementary regulation of such basic economic institutions like sale of goods, employment relations, arrangements for credit etc. The law of contract supports these practices by making transactions legally enforceable. At the same time, it places restrictions on conduct, shapes types of obligations that can be created, and limits the extent to which parties may enforce their agreement by means of self-help or coercion from legal institutions. The law of contract focuses on the practices of entering transactions or exchange and making binding commitment with respect to economic behaviour. If such laws are ambiguous opportunism will mar the outcome of an economic transaction and scarce resources which have a huge opportunity cost in fighting legal battles to determine the outcome of numerous economic exchanges. The rule of law, a characteristic of the political sovereignty of the state, is indispensable to the success of a capitalist system.



Information asymmetry manifesting in adverse selection along with moral hazard on part of banks and borrowers are typical features of a financial market. Banks exist because they have superior ability to screen the borrowers and monitor the use of loanable funds relative to an ordinary lender. Depositors delegate the task of monitoring to the banks which has a cost. Given the ability of banks to monitor the borrowers and if the banks perform their duty diligently, then the NPAs of banks should lie within manageable limits. If the generation of NPAs goes beyond such limits it becomes a point of contention for policy makers and the banks and is a pointer that the banks have failed to discharge their duty properly.

If long term perpetuation of NPAs needs to be explained, one has to look beyond banking theory and critically examine the implicit assumptions of banking theory.. For the functioning of banks in a market economy the debt-market has to be in place along with the requisite bankruptcy provisions so that property hypothecated by the borrower is attached and sold in the market. The accumulation of NPAs over time may arise from non-existing or non-functioning bankruptcy laws. But if banks survive despite accumulating NPAs over time it is clear that they are subject to 'soft budget' at the instance of state and are not subject to the rigour of a market economy. This entails recapitalization of banks even when they may not be viable. The possibility of being bailed out by the government breeds moral hazard on part of the banks. Quite clearly, long term systematic accumulation of NPAs cannot be explained in the context of a market economy where banks operate for profit and the institutions of debt-market and bankruptcy are in place. Rise of NPAs can be curtailed or controlled only if these institutions are allowed to function independently of political interference and regulatory capture by the private sector especially the corporate sector for its own interest. However, institutions being in place may be only a necessary but not a sufficient condition to curb the continuous rise in NPAs. Elements of political economy and the nexus of vested interests of the banks and the borrowers may interfere with the working of these institutions. In the short run, an increase in the NPAs is due to the failure of the banks to deal with adverse selection which is due to lapses in the screening of loan applicants. Further, lacunae in the monitoring of borrowers promotes moral hazard on their part. In the medium and long term NPAs increase due primarily to the absence of a requisite bankruptcy law and possibly the collusion of the state, the banking bureaucracy and the borrowers. Moreover public sector banks with high NPAs continue to be financed by the exchequer. Without bankruptcy laws in place, public sector banks have to be regularly bailed out via recapitalization. Subsequently the beneficiary agents develop expectations regarding further recapitalization and create pressure on the government to continue to rescue them.

Bankruptcy is a legal process through which financially distressed firms, individuals and even governments resolve their issues relating to debts.<sup>8</sup> The main function of corporate bankruptcy is to reduce the cost of default by having a government-sponsored procedure that resolves all debts simultaneously. The main economic function of personal bankruptcy is to provide partial consumption insurance to individual debtors and therefore reduce the social cost of debt. In such a case, state steps in the favour of the borrower using its resources. It is assumed that competition will drive inefficient firms out of business raising the average efficiency level of the remaining

firms. The bankruptcy option for firms plays a central role in a market economy in weeding out inefficient firms.

### **The phenomenon of willful default.**

Before nationalization of banks in 1969, major banks in India were either directly or indirectly owned or controlled by big business houses. They had been using the huge volume of deposits collected from the general public as captive funds to cater to their own business needs. Hence, the major objective of nationalization of banks was to release huge amounts of funds held by the private banks by way of deposits from general public to facilitate easy access to credit for common people for their various needs. However, after nationalization the public sector banks accumulated large NPAs which remained concealed for a long time.

Things became less opaque after the implementation of the Narasimham Committee Report of 1991.<sup>9</sup> Over time the role of willful defaulters in the creation of NPAs emerged as a significant issue.<sup>10</sup> Willful default means 'intentionally making away with the trust property and a willful neglect means such reckless indifference to true interests of the trust as to amount to or partake of a willful violation of duty.'<sup>11</sup> The number of willful default cases of the PSBs rose from 854 at the end of March 2011 to 1311 at the end of December, 2013. In December 2014 the percentage share of NPAs in total advances of the PSBs stood at a ten-year high of 5.64 per cent.

From the above data, it appears that the problem of NPA kept on rising during the period of globalization. However, recapitalization of PSBs, which is indicative of malfunctioning of PSBs, started as early as 1985-86. The problems of NPAs thus started much before the Narasimham Committee's recognition of the problem and the problem continued throughout the 1990s. There was no concept of 'NPA' in the pre-Narasimham phase but it is clear that formation of NPAs called for recapitalization.

Prior to the reforms of 1991 the PSBs were more of a subsidiary of the government than independent organizations. The PSBs were expected to hold part of their liquidity in government securities. Given a large share of development expenditure of the states the PSBs provided the much needed finance to the government.<sup>12</sup> The RBI mediated between the banks and the state and determined the share of bank funds to be shared by the state and the private sector. However, the banks did not have the freedom to even determine the interest rate to cover the risk of lending especially to the private borrowers. This also did not allow the banks to distinguish among various private borrowers. In a scenario, where rate of interest fixed by the RBI for borrowers did not get adjusted for inflation, the real interest rates were negative, nexus of vested interests of politicians and private borrowers developed to adversely influence allocation of funds. This way they managed to extract the surplus in the system defined as the difference between the opportunity cost and the actual cost of borrowing. Moreover, there seemed to be no pressure on banks to recover bad debts or NPAs. This arrangement fulfilled the RBI's objective of providing funds to the government to meet its expenses. This was also true of private sector lending. Profit

maximization and accountability towards depositors thus became relatively a less important objective for the PSBs. This arrangement of disbursement of bank funds led more to non-priority lending and in case of lending to the priority sector the middlemen and the brokers appropriated a substantial share for themselves. The former were neither in a position to repay the loans nor had the inclination to do so. The middle men managed to manipulate the system such that the borrowers escaped any penalties and instead managed to get more loans to roll on the debt. This was termed as the 'ever-greening of the accounts'. In the process a few bank managers managed to extract some surplus for themselves.

Banks evolved into a degenerate institution with a rapacious nexus between bank personnel, brokers and borrowers who wanted to manipulate the system to siphon off public funds backed by political favours. In the banks' balance sheets the amount of such rolling loans supported by more loans was shown as normal interest earning assets. All this was inimical to the growth of a healthy banking system accountable to the interests of their depositors.

A conceptual framework for analyzing willful default has been used here has been developed elsewhere.<sup>13</sup> There exists one view point which argues that default is a civil offence and the details of the borrowers should not be publicized.<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, Deepak Narang, a bank manager favours treating willful default as a crime. He presents a rough estimate of the loss to the nation as a result of willful defaulter to argue that categorization of willful default as a criminal offence is not a disproportionate remedy to the problem. In his article published in Business Line on March 14, 2015, he states that the NPAs of public. sector. banks stand roughly at a total of Rs 2.24 lakh crore. If it may be safely assumed that 60 per cent of NPA is due to willful default and diversion of funds the loss to the exchequer is around Rs1.34 lakh crore. The Parliament was informed that the PSBs had written off R1.06 lakh crore in the last 5 years. This is a loss to the exchequer with less than 10 per cent recovery and an addition to this category is even higher every year.

Let us examine the arguments from the viewpoint of banking theory without going into intricacies of treating willful default as a crime. A default may not necessarily be willful in nature. A willful default may be pre-empted if the banker is smart enough to reject the loan application by overriding information asymmetry. Banks must tighten their screening procedure to avoid an outcome of adverse selection. Willful default may also result from political pressure on the bank and the connivance between the prospective cheat and the bank officers.

To treat willful default as a crime, criminal intent must exist prior to or simultaneous to the act.<sup>15</sup> That is the person 'intends' the natural and the probable consequences of his act. Proof of a criminal intent is thus necessary to regard an act as a crime. In most crimes 'general intent' is subsumed and need not be proven. However in case of 'specific intent' the criminal intent needs to be proved. Moreover, some acts can be treated as criminal irrespective of the intent. In the context of the PSBs it must be kept in mind that all borrowers are not the same farmers, small entrepreneurs, MSMEs, housing and education loans versus a large or big business house taking institutional credit. A farmer with a small loan cannot be compared to a medium-sized borrower

who wants to either fund a home or education or to a big politically influential borrower like a business magnate. A small farmer often borrows for his subsistence whereas a businessman may use the funds for financing an expensive car. Although the large borrower is in a better position to furnish high-value collateral it is not necessary that on the assumption of this collateral the banks are better off in case of a default. If the collateral is a paper security whose value is market linked then the value of the collateral is itself uncertain. In the case of housing used as collateral the sub-prime crisis in the US in 2008 proves the contrary. The social difference between different kinds of borrowers calls for a nuanced approach to loan default.

Evidence from other countries suggests use of varied approaches to deal with the problem of NPAs and default.<sup>16</sup> In China, special recovery teams are used along with post-lending supervision of the borrowing company. In Czech Republic, the NPAs of three large state-owned banks have been transferred to KOB, a facility created to manage and recover bad-debts. Alongside, legal reforms including bankruptcy law and state revitalization agency have been put in place for tackling default and ensuring turnaround of the companies. Japan relies on self assessment of assets by banks. In Kenya, a credit reference agency keeps a tab on borrowers. A NPA recovery trust is also set up. In Korea, asset management companies are in place and corporate restructuring is undertaken. Similarly, US also uses asset management companies to deal with NPAs. In Mexico, large shares of NPAs are transferred to Central Bank in exchange for government bonds. Corporate and industrial Restructuring Corporation restructures NPAs of PSBs in Pakistan. In Thailand, Bankruptcy act has been amended and a corporate debt restructuring agency has been put in place. All these approaches need to be examined in detail in order to assess their pros and cons and draw lessons for a policy in the Indian context.

### **Status of bankruptcy law in India**

India does not have an unambiguous legal provision on corporate bankruptcy law even when individual bankruptcy laws have been in existence since 1874.<sup>17</sup> The legal definition of bankruptcy, insolvency, liquidation and dissolution is vital any bankruptcy law in a legal system. In India there is no regulation or statute legislated on bankruptcy which describes a condition of inability to meet a demand of a creditor. Winding up of companies is in the jurisdiction of the courts. But it can take a decade even after the company has actually been declared insolvent. On the other side, supervisory restructuring at the instance of the Board of Industrial and Financial Reconstruction. (BIFR)<sup>18</sup> is generally undertaken using receivership by a public entity. Bankers have sought to do away with the BIFR set up to revive sick units because promoters approach the board only to delay recovery of loans.

In complete absence of a separate Act for corporate insolvency, one needs to fall back on the Companies Act (1956), that states 'a company shall be deemed to be unable to pay its debts if a creditor to whom the company is indebted in a sum exceeding five hundred rupees neglects to take action in three weeks from the date of notice received'. The Companies Act 2013 has raised this threshold to Rs. 1 lakh. The 2013 Act provides life to still-born provisions of the amendments of

2002 while clearly addressing 'insolvency' under Section 269 on 'Rehabilitation and Insolvency Fund'. This relates to rehabilitation, revival and liquidation of sick companies based on a balance sheet threshold, as it integrates provisions of Sick Industrial Companies Act, 1985 into the Companies Act. Separately, secured creditors alone have been privileged with a series of enactments under Recovery of Debts due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act (RDDB), 1993, the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (SARFAESI), 2002 and Corporate Debt Restructuring (CDR) guidelines of 2008 that significantly secure their interests. For borrowers in India, to benefit from credit through NBFCs, an appropriate law for efficient bankruptcy and revival arrangements between unsecured creditors and debtors is a must. It is interesting to note that Budget 2014-15 has an important piece for modernization of financial markets with a proposed bankruptcy-friendly regime for SMEs.

In this context the Interim Report of the Bankruptcy Law Reform Committee released in February 2015 is well-timed.<sup>19</sup> The Committee, set up by the Ministry of Finance in August 2014, appears to be crucial to the new legislation promised in the Budget. The Committee looks at the early recognition of financial distress and timely intervention as basic features of efficient rescue regimes. It derives its inspiration from two cardinal principles. First, the degree of viability of a company must be the central consideration for allowing it to be rescued. Secondly, an unviable company should be liquidated as soon as possible in order to minimize losses for stakeholders.

The committee suggests that secured creditors be allowed to file an application for the rescue of a company at a sufficiently early date instead of waiting for the company to default on 50 per cent of its outstanding debt, in line with the Companies Act, 2013. The Committee recommends that unsecured creditors representing 25 per cent of the debt be allowed to initiate rescue proceedings against the debtor company. Even more, the report also looks at individual insolvency, a crucial area covering sole proprietorships and small and medium enterprises in India. A new bankruptcy law is urgently needed to clean up the system. Over the past one-and-a-half decade the banking system has devised ways to penalize recalcitrant borrowers. The SARFAESI Act (2002), the debt recovery tribunals and asset reconstruction companies have been created but the companies may find ways to get round these controls. There are two suggested ways to address the problem - a tighter loan sanctioning process and a bankruptcy law to deal with failed companies. The good news is that India may have a bankruptcy code for faster winding-up of insolvent companies before the end of the current fiscal year.

## **Conclusion**

The phenomenon of willful default has emerged as a critical problem in the Indian context. It needs to be resolved so that market economy in India is able to function properly. Post 1991, the problem has been formally recognized and a partial framework has been created to deal with the problem. These efforts need to be complemented with an apposite bankruptcy law. It is too early to say whether willful should be treated as a criminal offence or not. Further research on other country

experiences in dealing with NPA / willful default shall provide lessons for devising a suitable policy to deal with the problem.

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resolving insolvencies. The average time taken for insolvency proceedings in India is about 4.3 years, while it is only 1.7 years in high-income OECD countries. The recovery rate (cents on the dollar) is 71.9 in high-income OECD countries as opposed to 25.7 in India.

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## **A Measure of Courage: Towards a Dispassionate, Balanced and Critical Appraisal of The Indian National Army's Military History<sup>1</sup>**

**Chandar S. Sundaram**

As the disgraceful and pusillanimous pulling from Indian shelves of the American scholar Wendy Doniger's alternate history of the Hindus in 2014, and the moves, that same year, by, a Dalit Committee Against the Appropriation of Ambedkar Writings (CAAAW) to censure the author and activist Arundhati Roy for her introduction to a volume on the Dalit jurist and activist B.R. Ambedkar demonstrate, certain sections of the Indian public and Indian authorities like their shibboleths, about which they will brook not even reasonable debate, citing antediluvian and colonial penal code legislation in their defence, while, in the same breath, loudly reviling colonialism.<sup>2</sup> One of these shibboleths is the Indian National Army (INA), which rouses strong passions to this day, within India and outside. It was a force composed of expatriate Indians in Southeast Asia and the approximately 45,000 strong Indian personnel of the Indian Army whom the Japanese had captured during their lightning conquest of British Malaya in late 1941-early 1942.<sup>3</sup> Formed during Feb-Sept 1942 by a Japanese Army intelligence officer - Major Fujiwara Iwaichi- and a captured Sikh Captain of the Indian Army - Mohan Singh - its main purpose was to expel the British from India.<sup>4</sup> It was thus an army of national liberation in exile.

The INA has been dealt with from a variety of angles. Hugh Toye's *The Springing Tiger* (1959), looks at it through the life of Subhas Chandra Bose. Kalyan Ghosh's *The Indian National Army* (1969) conceptualises it politically, as the second front of the Indian nationalist struggle. Joyce Lebra's *Jungle Alliance* (1971) examines the INA's sometimes fraught relations with the Japanese. Peter Fay's *The Forgotten Army* (1993) sees the INA through two of its high level members, who later married. The last mentioned work looks briefly at the INA's military side, but tends to accept the hagiography generated in India uncritically.<sup>5</sup> This is echoed by a recent history of "the fall of British Asia, 1941-1945" which portrays Bose as "the greatest military hero of India's modern history."<sup>6</sup> There are, at present, only three works that present a balanced critical view of the INA's military aspects. Probably because two are articles, and the other a Master's thesis with very limited circulation, they have been largely ignored by scholars within and outside India.<sup>7</sup>

The INA fell apart in Dec 1942, when Mohan Singh was arrested for not "cooperating" with the Japanese and the civilian Indian expatriate leadership in Southeast Asia. Actually, Mohan Singh - whom the present author was lucky enough to interview back in 1984 - showed a lot of grit in dissolving the INA, and in standing up to Japanese attempts to bypass his authority as Commander-in-Chief of the INA. A trained army officer, he took seriously his oath to look after his men, although, it must be said, he did not abide by other elements of his officer's oath.<sup>8</sup> This has to do with the peculiar Indian reading of "loyalty". Essentially, it seems to have been conditional. As early as the 1840s, a British official of the Indian military - who later died "heroically" in the



1857 Uprising - opined that sepoys were "edged tools, to be handled with care" .<sup>9</sup> A wartime British intelligence report, written after the disastrous-to-the-British Malayan campaign of World War II, echoed this point, stating that "loyalty [among Indian troops] is not as general as is believed by senior British officers. A number of...[them]...are loyal but will only remain so as long as it suits them." According to the writer of this report, "every Indian (soldiers included) desires a higher political status for India. The difference is only in degree".<sup>10</sup> This is further buttressed by the remark of a young Indian officer: "[I am not] ...fighting to maintain British rule in India, only to ensure it...[is not] replaced by Germany's." <sup>11</sup> As "edged tools," military disasters, or even perceived slights to their religious traditions, would, because of the social construction of Indian regiments, cause some Indian soldiery to question the Raj's good faith, especially in its dying days. Witness what a 1941 report by Army Headquarters India had to say about a mutiny of Sikh gunners in Hong Kong in late 1940: "So long as an order exists compelling Sikhs to carry steel helmets, a potential grievance also exists, and a grievance is the subversive agitator's best weapon. If there are no grievances, there will be no ear for the agitator's fulminations." <sup>12</sup>

The Japanese did not recognize Mohan Singh's dissolution of the INA. With the aid of the Indian expatriate community in Southeast Asia, which was led by Rash Behari Bose, they kept the INA alive and brought in a new leader, the well-known fiery Bengali nationalist Subhas Chandra Bose. In 1940, Bose had escaped British custody in Calcutta and had travelled to Germany, where he hoped to enlist Nazi support to drive the British from India, by creating an "Indian Legion" composed of Indian Prisoners of War, who had been captured in North Africa.<sup>13</sup> By the time he realized that this was a non-starter, South East Asia, which was much closer to India, was in Japanese hands. He now tried frantically to move east, which he finally did in mid - 1943.<sup>14</sup> During his time in Germany, Bose did not comment on the German holocaust of European Jewry, nor the Nazi treatment of "subject peoples" .<sup>15</sup> He was clearly being tactical, much as Nehru, in 1956, decried the British/French/Israeli attack on Egypt during the Suez crisis, but was less than critical on the brutal Soviet crackdown in Hungary. In fact, India abstained on the critical United Nations resolution calling for an immediate Soviet withdrawal from Hungary and the holding of free and fair elections there.<sup>16</sup>

Bose was, and still is, a charismatic figure. The enduring nature of Bose's charisma in India is demonstrated by a crude (some would say folk) painting of Indian freedom-struggle leaders. Besides Gandhi and Nehru is Bose, bespectacled, slightly pudgy, and wearing a military uniform as the Commander-in-Chief of the INA - though the uniform itself is inaccurately and anachronistically painted olive green, instead of the khaki drill that it actually was. The painting was drawn on the roadside wall of a house in the rural Karnataka village of Jadigenahalli, far, far away from either Bengal or northeastern India, which the author viewed in 2010 - a full 65 years after Bose's exploits with the INA.<sup>17</sup>

Once he reached Southeast Asia, Bose reinvigorated and expanded the INA, and formed the Provisional Government of Free India. He was also very arrogant. A recent hagiography of Bose states that "Indians admired the haughtiness bordering on arrogance that he displayed in dealing

with the Japanese." <sup>18</sup> This might well have been the case, but was Bose's attitude wise and statesman-like, especially as it alienated the Japanese, upon whose continued goodwill his whole movement depended? Even the best biography of the man, which is broadly sympathetic towards its subject, pinpoints this as a major problem, stating that "it required tremendous negotiating powers to convince Bose about anything".<sup>19</sup> And a Japanese Army report of the day expresses frustration with Bose in this way:

It is quite unreasonable...[for Bose to opine on] strategy and military affairs and operations.... he ha[s] no knowledge of such things. The fact that he behaved in a conceited way in matters he knew nothing about may be because of his over-confidence, especially since he...[is]...the political and military head [of the Provisional Government of Free India] and there were no outstanding persons around him...this tendency might have gone a little too far.<sup>20</sup>

By "outstanding persons" , the Japanese writer clearly meant people of equal stature to Bose, who could actually debate policy with him on equal terms. Given the proclivity of most politicians nowadays to surround themselves with "yes-men" , it is not unreasonable that a politician like Bose would have done the same. Then again, it is accurate that there was no other Indian in Japanese-held Southeast Asia who could have engaged with him on equal terms.<sup>21</sup>

Bose wanted the INA to be at the vanguard of a "March on Delhi", and play a prominent combat role. He had the rather fantastic notion that, upon encountering the INA, Indian soldiers of the British-Indian Army would immediately go over to the INA, much as the French forces sent to arrest Napoleon at the beginning of the 100 days - The period between Napoleon's return to France from Elba and his defeat at Waterloo, in 1815 - had done.<sup>22</sup> But there were important differences, which Bose either overlooked, or was unaware of. First, Napoleon was a major commander who showed real military talent, and was one whom the troops sent to arrest him had served under. Bose was neither of these. Second, the Indian Army opposing the INA in 1944-5 was a vastly improved force than the one that the Japanese had over-run in 1941-2, superior in training, equipment, morale and logistics.<sup>23</sup> And while Havers has argued that Bose did not really expect any real battlefield success for the INA, this still does not excuse "Netaji" for insisting on INA combat deployment, in which his men would almost surely suffer a great deal.<sup>24</sup>

The Japanese saw their forthcoming offensive into northeastern India, not as a "March on Delhi," but as a move to secure the western perimeter of their empire, and to pre-empt the Allied offensive there that their intelligence had correctly surmised was in the offing. A collateral motive of a Japanese victory in Manipur and Assam was the destabilization of India as an Allied base, and one from which Japan's Chinese foes were supplied.<sup>25</sup> To the Japanese, the INA was a not a battle-ready force, but a propaganda tool.<sup>26</sup> Eventually, a modest INA, force was deployed, not - as hagiographies state<sup>27</sup>- in frontline positions, but in support roles, far from the main battles. Called the Bose brigade - yet another example of the Bose hubris - it was inducted on a trial basis: if it performed well, then the Japanese promised the deployment of more INA units.<sup>28</sup>

However, its chances for success were handicapped from the start. Structurally, an inherent weakness of the INA was a chronic shortage of trained officers. Because the Indianization of the Indian Army's officer corps had only just begun to gather steam by 1941 after a long period of official British foot-dragging,<sup>29</sup> not that many Sandhurst-trained King's Commissioned Indian Officers (KCIOs) and Indian Commissioned Officers (ICOs), who had passed out from the Indian military academy, Dehra Dun, were captured by the Japanese, and many of these resigned during the Mohan Singh crisis. Initially, the shortfall was met by the promotion of Viceroy Commissioned Officers (VCOs). Roughly the equivalent of warrant officers, VCOs were the crucial link between the ordinary sepoy and the British officers. They rose from the ranks, and stayed with the same unit for the entirety of their careers, and had little or no training in higher command. Because of this, the INA discontinued the blanket promotion of VCOs in 1943. Henceforward, all officer candidates, who were either VCOs or Indian other ranks, had to undergo a course at an officer training school. However, the training course was based on prewar Indian Army doctrine, and did not have the benefit of the new Indian Army Jungle Books.<sup>30</sup> Since even the reconstituted 2nd, INA comprised many trained ex-Indian Army jawans, the Japanese military does not seem to have supervised or intervened in the INA's military training. The one exception was guerrilla warfare, at which the Japanese army had proved itself so adept in 1941-2. It is little wonder then, that as it went into battle in 1944, the INA had four guerrilla regiments.<sup>31</sup> Because of the INA's self-image as a 'revolutionary' liberation army, there was an undue emphasis on political factors, to the detriment of strictly military training.<sup>32</sup>

Tactically, INA units were lightly armed and equipped, and their attacks usually came a-cropper, either because they lacked the necessary fire-discipline, or simply ran out of ammunition.<sup>33</sup> Meagrely supplied, INA, troops suffered greatly from, disease and starvation, as did the Japanese, to whom the British handed their worst land defeats of the whole war at Imphal and Kohima.<sup>34</sup> However, one INA unit - the 1st battalion of the Bose brigade, commanded by Major P.S. Raturi - managed to fight its way onto Indian soil, where it raised the flag of Bose's Provisional Government in the tiny village of Mowdok. The Japanese defeat, however, necessitated the withdrawal of this unit.<sup>35</sup>

Whereas a trained and responsible military commander would have now become leery of contact with the Japanese and their military, in the interests of protecting his men, Bose now campaigned - or pestered - them for a greater combat role for the INA. The INA's role in the Japanese defence of central Burma (Feb-Mar 1945) was a disaster. Mostly deployed as glorified coolies, INA personnel began deserting wholesale to the British.<sup>36</sup> Yet, according to one report, some - mainly those recruited from the Tamil population of Malaya - fought well, before being overwhelmed.<sup>37</sup> As one British report put it, one could not deny them "a measure of courage...[since]...they faced...British equipment, tanks, guns, and aircraft with rifles and bullock-carts and empty stomachs." <sup>38</sup> Bose now deserted his men, attempting to reach the USSR. Some claim he foresaw the Cold War, and sought to exploit divisions between the Soviets and the West,<sup>39</sup> but all this was cold comfort to the troops he left behind. But he never reached his destination, dying en route in a plane crash in Taiwan. The Indian, and especially the Bengali,

public psyche has refused to entirely accept Bose's death, and there were numerous Elvis Presley-like sightings of the man.<sup>40</sup> As recently as 2006, an Indian commission of inquiry ruled that Bose did not die in the plane crash. This was obviously buttressed by the Taiwanese Government's denial that no plane crashed at Taipei airport between 14 August and 20 September 1945.<sup>41</sup> But had he survived, Bose - a political animal to the core - would have surely found a way to re-insert himself into Indian politics. The fact that he did not leads the present author to conclude that he met a fiery end in the plane-crash.

Because Bose was a Bengali, he is hero-worshipped there, and in India generally, as "Netaji" - revered leader - and even mildly critical and even-handed treatments will generate violent and indignant protests from Indians and Bengalis. The present author was quite surprised when he was warned, in a sober tone, not to go to Bengal by an eminent Indian historian,<sup>42</sup> who had read his work on the INA in battle, which was critical of Bose's leadership. Generally in India there is a mindless and hagiographical glorification of the INA. Mythic accounts of its exploits - often bearing no relation to historical reality - abound.<sup>43</sup> This can be seen as an attempt by the Hindu right to assert its masculinity, to oppose "feminine" Gandhian values.<sup>44</sup> Some writers and Indian Army types tend to view the INA as traitors, who blotted the Indian Army's otherwise "glorious" copybook.<sup>45</sup> Most Indian history textbooks in India and in the West mention Bose, while totally ignoring Mohan Singh's role.<sup>46</sup> Even when Mohan Singh is acknowledged, his agency is sometimes exaggerated. For example, B.L. Grover and Alka Mehta, in the 27th revised edition of their *A New Look at Modern Indian History, from 1707 to Modern Times* state that in December 1941, Mohan Singh "refused to retreat...and instead contacted Japanese authorities."<sup>47</sup> What actually happened was that Mohan Singh's unit, 1/14 Punjab, was overrun and cut-off by the Japanese. It was thus Fujiwara who approached him.<sup>48</sup> Grover and Mehta also completely ignore the December 1942 crisis of the first INA.<sup>49</sup> Indeed, the only general undergraduate survey textbook to accurately depict Mohan Singh and the crisis of December 1942 is Sekhar Bandyopadhyay's, outstanding, *From Plassey to Partition: a History of Modern India*, which, in this author's humble opinion, beats all its competitors by a couple of country miles, at the very least.<sup>50</sup>

Bose displayed faulty and impulsive decision-making throughout. By "escaping" to Germany, he deliberately took himself out of the critical phase of the Indian nationalist struggle in the arena where it mattered the most - India itself. He was also a bit naïve in, thinking that he could effectively sway the Germans and the Japanese, who certainly did not play by the relatively polite and parliamentary ground-rules of the British. He was not that keen a student of military affairs; otherwise, he would have known that, as the British had deployed their Indian forces mostly in the Far East, that it was the place to be if he wanted to raise a PoW-based liberation army. In the end, he comes across as a misguided, tragic figure, diplomatically and militarily out of his depth. Although he did have some progressive ideas, such as the all-female Rani of Jhansi Regiment,<sup>51</sup> both the Germans and the Japanese regarded Bose as a puppet, a characterisation he was never able to overcome. Had he never left India, he would surely have played a pivotal role in the endgame of empire there. Had he actually survived after leading the INA, he would have

proved quite embarrassing to the Indian Nationalist Congress, perhaps checking some of the unwarranted triumphalism of the Nehru years, and effectively challenging the Nehru family's dynastic monopoly on government, the ill-effects of which India is only now overcoming.

The INA's real impact lay in the INA trials which were held after the war, in 1945-1946. Nationalists of the Indian National Congress Party, though they had previously opposed Bose and the INA, now whipped up public support for the INA.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, the British felt that they could not rely on the Indian Army, which now had a large number of Indian officers who were not averse, shall we say, to seeing a British exit. Recent research has shown that this fear was somewhat overblown.<sup>53</sup> But perception mattered, and this paper contends that the INA - which was the largest Indian military challenge the British faced since the 1857 uprising - contributed more to the British withdrawal than any of Gandhi's campaigns - witness their swift and effective military crackdown on Gandhi's Quit India campaign of 1942.<sup>54</sup> It was the British fear, once wartime conditions were over, that they could no longer call upon the armed forces - British or Indian - to "aid the civil" , that lent urgency to their indecently hasty, withdrawal from India.

This article, which will form the basis of a much larger work, is an attempt to lay down some preliminary observations on the state of the historiography of the INA, and additionally, on the INA's military history, which, because it is not perceived as positive or praiseworthy, except in the hands of sundry apologists, has seemed to elude sustained, accurate and balanced historical scrutiny. Only through such empirical historical scrutiny that one can arrive at a clear, even-handed appreciation of the INA, and lay to rest the hagiographies and vilifications now extant in the majority of the secondary literature., Much as the author Paul Scott wrote that the INA marked the movement of India from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, its dispassionate, balanced, critical, non-polemical and rigorously historical treatment, especially in India, will mark that country's passage from the twentieth century to the twenty- first.<sup>55</sup>

## Notes

1. I wish to thank Raymond Callahan, Pradeep Gautam, Roger Buckley, Rana Chhina,, Stephen Cohen, Anirudh Deshpande, , David Lloyd Smith and , Cat Wilson for commenting on an earlier version of this article. I dedicate this article to the memory of the few thousand, INA jawans who gave their lives in the fight for Indian independence, and were ill-served, both by their leadership and by history.
2. Mukul Kesavan, "Penguin's Day in Court - Pulping the Hindus" , The Telegraph (Kolkata), 13 Feb.2014; Anirudh Deshpande, "The Problematic of Social Representation: Who Must Write on Ambedkar, Dalit History, and Politics?" in Inclusive, 1(6), January 2015. [<http://theinclusive.org/the-problematic-of-social-representation-who-must-write-on-ambedkar-dalit-history-and-politics>; accessed 15 Jun. 2015]
3. The political world-view of the latter group has been explored in: Chandar S. Sundaram, "Seditious Letters and Steel Helmets: Disaffection among Indian Troops in Hong Kong

and Singapore 1940-1, and the Formation of the Indian National Army' , in Kaushik Roy, ed., War and Society in Colonial India, 1807-1945, New Delhi: Oxford University Press. 2006.

4. Fujiwara, Iwaichi, F. Kikan: Japanese Army Intelligence Operations in Southeast Asia Hong Kong: Heinemann Asia, 1983, pp. 1-50.
5. Hugh Toye, The Springing Tiger, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959; K.K. Ghosh, The Indian National Army, Meerut: Meenakshi Prakashan, 1969; Joyce Lebra, Jungle Alliance, Singapore: Asia-Pacific Press, 1971; Peter W. Fay, The Forgotten Army, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993.
6. Christopher Bayly and Tim Harper, Forgotten, Armies. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, 2005, p. 29.
7. Chandar S. Sundaram, "A Paper Tiger: the Indian National Army in Battle, 1944-1945' , in War & Society, 13(1), 1995; Robin Havers, "Jai Hind!: The Indian National Army, 1942-1945' , in Matthew Hughes and Paul Latawski, eds., Exile Armies, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005; Chandar S. Sundaram, "The Indian National Army: a Preliminary Study of its Formation and Campaigns' , Montreal: unpub. MA thesis, McGill University, 1985. So far, only one secondary work has cited the thesis cited above, but this author cannot fathom why, as the work in question is not about the INA. See: S. Hyson and A. Lester, "British India on Trial: Brighton Military Hospitals and the Politics of Empire in World War I' , Journal of Historical Geography, 38(1), 2012, p. 20, n. 16. Kaushik Roy, "Axis Satellite Armies of World War II: a Case Study of the Azad Hind Fauj, 1942-45' , Indian Historical Review, 35(1), Jan. 2008 is a general survey which adds little not already known, and Kevin Noles, "Waging War against the King: Recruitment and Motivation of the Indian National Army' , British Empire at War Research Group, Research Paper 6 (2014) makes some questionable judgement calls. For example, Noles criticizes Sundaram for lacking perspective in calling the INA, a paper tiger, without taking into account that Sundaram was only examining the INA's combat performance. Did the INA successfully achieve its twin battlefield aims, which were to suborn the loyalty of Indian Army jawans it encountered, and to foment anti-British risings in Bengal and Assam? No. Did it even manage to defeat Allied army units? With the exception of one or two instances, which Sundaram details, again no. Therefore , Sundaram is fully justified in his characterisation of the INA'S combat operations. Noles also relies overmuch on memoirs of INA veterans, without sufficient corroboration.
8. Mohan Singh, Soldiers' Contribution to Indian Independence, New Delhi: Army Educational Stores, 1974; Lebra, pp. 75-101; Ghosh, pp. 93-121; Havers, p. 60.
9. Henry M. Lawrence, Essays, Political and Military, Written in India, London:, W.H. Allen, 1859, p. 154.

10. Tarak Barkawi, "Culture and Combat in the Colonies: the Indian Army in the Second World War' , in *Journal of Contemporary History*, 41(2), 2006, p. 336.
11. John Masters, *Bugles and a Tiger*, London: Viking, 1956, p. 25.
12. Letter [Most Secret]: Army Headquarters India General Staff Branch, to War Office, Whitehall London, 2 May 1941, in The [British] National Archives, [hereafter TNA]WO 208/763.
13. The Free India Legion is dealt with in: Rudolf Hartog, *The Sign of the Tiger*, New Delhi: Heinemann, 2009.
14. See: Milan Hauner, *India in Axis Strategy*, Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1981; Leonard Gordon, *Brothers Against the Raj*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1990. It is interesting to note
15. Gerhard Weinberg, *A World at Arms: a Global History of World War II*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, p. 232.
16. For an apologist's perspective, which blames Indian defense minister V.K. Krishna Menon's influence on Nehru for India's abstention, see: N. Dhanesha, "Friends in High Places' in *IR Review*, 5 May 2014, in <http://irr.buiaa.org/2014/125/friends-in-high-places/> (accessed 23 April 2015)
17. Personal recollection of author.
18. Sugata Bose, *His Majesty's Enemy*, Cambridge Mass.: Belknap, 2011, p. 272. During his stay in India, from 2007 to 2010, the author observed many instances of arrogance among upper-class and upper-caste Indians of the kind Bose would have encountered, and indeed exhibited, in Southeast Asia. Given the fact that 600 million of their compatriots still have no access to potable drinking water, or toilets, and therefore have to defecate in public, present-day Indians might want to adopt a bit of humility.
19. Gordon, p., 517.
20. *ibid.*
21. See: Ghosh, *passim*. for an even-handed treatment.
22. For a capable account, see: Albert Nofi, *The Waterloo Campaign*, Conshohocken, PA: Combined Books, 1993, ch. 2.
23. For an outstanding treatment, see: Daniel P. Marston, *Phoenix from the Ashes*, Westport: Praeger, 2003.
24. Havers, p. 66.
25. Louis Allen, *Burma: the Longest War, 1941-45*, London: Dent, 1985, pp. 153-155.
26. Sundaram, *Paper Tiger*, pp. 40, 35; Lebra, pp. 102-128.
27. T.R. Sareen, *Japan and the Indian National Army*, Delhi: Agam, Prakashan, 1986; and Bose, *His Majesty's Enemy*, Cambridge Mass.: Belknap, 2011.
28. Sundaram, *Paper Tiger*, pp. 40-41; Sundaram, "Preliminary' , pp. 145-148.

29. Chandar S. Sundaram, "The Officer Corps and its Indianization' , in D.P. Marston and C.S. Sundaram, eds., A Military History of India and South Asia from the East India Company to the Nuclear Era, Westport: Praeger, 2007, pp. 94-100; also, Sundaram, The Other August Declaration, epilogue.
30. Marston, Phoenix, pp. 80, 104-110.
31. Joyce Lebra-Chapman, Japanese Trained Armies in Southeast Asia, Hong Kong: Heinemann Asia, 1977, pp. 19,30; Ghosh, p. 332.
32. Lt. Col. G.D. Anderson, "Training of Officers for the INA' , Monograph 4 in A Brief Chronological and Factual Account of the INA, Combined Services Detailed Interrogation Centre (India), Red Fort, Delhi, 16 May 1946, in British Library, Asia, Pacific, and Africa Collection, L/WS/2/45. For a good discussion of the Indian meanings of "revolutionary' , see: Kama Maclean, A Revolutionary History of Interwar India, London: Hurst, 2015
33. Sundaram, "Paper Tiger' , pp. 41-45.
34. For a recent, very readable, account by a journalist who, nevertheless, has done his research, see: Fergal Keane, Road of Bones London: Harper Press, 2010
35. Sundaram, "Paper Tiger' , pp. 45-46.
36. Ibid., p. 53; Havers, p. 64.
37. Captain Izumi, Lessons to be Learned from the Guerilla Operations of 4th INA Regiment, 8 August 1945, inTNA, WO 203/1194.
38. Lt-Col. G.D. Anderson, "The Q Side of the INA' , Monograph 8 in A Brief Chronological and Factual Account of the INA, Combined Services Detailed Interrogation Centre (India), Red Fort, Delhi, 16 May 1946, in BL APAC L/WS/2/45.
39. Back in the 1980s, the author was shown the tall filing cabinet at the Netaji Research Bureau , Calcutta, wholly filled with reports of such sightings. A monograph could be witten detailing these, and on Bose's impact on Indian popular culture.
40. BBC News, 17 May 2006: "Mystery over Indian Freedom Hero' , [http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pt/ft/-/2/hi/south\_asia/498986. (accessed 18 May 2006).]
41. The late Professor Partha Sarathi Gupta, of Delhi University. Professor Gupta was Bengali.
42. See, for example, T.R. Sareen, Japan and the Indian National Army, Delhi: Agam Prakashan, 1986; Mohammad ZamanKiani, India's Freedom Struggle and the Great INA, New Delhi: Reliance, 1994.
43. A recent re-evaluation of Gandhi's nonviolence is Maria Misra, "Sergeant-Major Gandhi; Indian Nationalism and Non-Violent "Martiality" , in, Journal of Asian Studies, 73(3), 2014.



44. Ravi Rikhye, Review of Daniel P. Marston and Chandar S. Sundaram, eds., *A Military History of India and South Asia from the East India Company to the Nuclear Era*, Bloomington IN, 2008, in *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies*, 12(1), 2009.
45. Hermann Kulke and Dietmar Rothermund, *A History of India*, 3rd ed., London: Routledge, 2003, pp. 281; Sugata Bose, and Ayesha Jalal, *Modern South Asia*, 2nd ed., London: Routledge, 2004, p. 133; Ian Copland,, *India 1885-1947: the Unmaking of an Empire*, London: Pearson Education, 2001, p. 65; Burton Stein, *A History of India*, Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 1998, p. 356; T.R. and B. Metcalf, *A History of India*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp. 206-207. Sunil Khilnani and Tariq Ali anachronistically have Bose founding the INA in 1942. See: Sunil Khilnani, *The Idea of India*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 2002, p. 245; and Tariq Ali, *The Nehrus and the Gandhis: an Indian Dynasty*, London: Pan, 1985,, front matter. Throughout 1942, Bose was still in Germany, or German- occupied Europe..
46. B.L. Grover and Alka Mehta., *A New Look at Modern Indian History, from 1707 to Modern Times*, 27thed. New Delhi: S. Chand, 2010, 532-533.
47. Hugh Toye, "The Indian National Army, 1941-1945" , in , *Indo-British Review*, 16(1), 1989, p. 71; Fujiwara, F. Kikan, pp. 79-80.
48. Grover and Mehta, p. 533.
49. Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, *From Plassey to Partition: a History of Modern India*, New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2004, pp. 425-426.
50. See: Carol Hills, and Daniel C. Silverman, "Nationalism and Feminism in Late Colonial India: the Rani of Jhansi Regiment, 1943-1945', in *Modern Asian Studies*, 27(4), 1993.
51. See: William F. Kuracina, "Sentiments and Patriotism: the Indian Army, General Elections, and the Congress's Appropriation of the INA Legacy' , in *Modern Asian Studies*, 44(4), 2010.
52. See: Daniel P. Marston, *The Indian Army and the End of the Raj*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
53. Copland,, p.67
54. Robin Moore, *Paul Scott's Raj*, London: Heinemann, 1990, p. 106.

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## The Armenian Genocide: Pope Benedict XV and Ottoman Relations

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### **Abstract**

*Abstract: The disruption of our nocturnal patterns has led to many economic benefits like uninterrupted innovation and production of goods and services, and has allowed our culture free time to socialize as we fill more and more of our days with preoccupation of busyness. However, light pollution, unconstrained and seeping across our horizons is also correlated to having negative effects on human health both physically and psychologically. More than that, losing access to the stars and complete darkness has corrupted our sense of unknowing and has reduced our transcendentalism to being earth-bound 'it is at night when we have the time or desire to look up, and it is then that we see a world dimly lit by us, and no longer lit by More. Throughout all of human history, philosophers, spiritualists, explorers, and religious practitioners of all sorts have used the stars as dots of light, navigating themselves through natural, cerebral, and visceral worlds. Seemingly forever, stars have acted as a vista for thinking beyond ourselves, or to build comfort with community and loved ones. Coincidentally, as we have lost sight of stars in many places our spirituality has shifted to rationality; societies have become more technologically and mechanistically complex, and our lives more detached from one another. This paper investigates the historical roles that stars and darkness has had in our lives and how their loss has affected our development both personally and socially, suggesting that if we want to improve our human-Earth relationship we must ensure individuals are able to perceive there is more beyond our atmosphere.*

**Introduction:** Many people, at or from some point in their lives have an experience of laying down staring up at the stars. Not just looking up at them in wonder, but finding themselves wondering.

Focused at this same night sky, our ancestors looked to these lights as gods. Stories were created: folklore, fable, and the heavens. Lives were built around them and lives continued on within them. Civilizations observed them, and through this wonder philosophy was born; thereafter one of the oldest forms of science created. The Babylonians, Chinese, Indians, Mayans, Native Americans, and great Greek Philosophers all studied and pondered these luminaries. Throughout history people, every day 'every night perceived More:something greater, something beyond ourselves.

Truly commonplace for eternity, stars have risen and fallen both in our sky and in our curiosity. But recently there has been a resurgence of discussion about the night sky. In 2011 Ian Cheney released a film about this dark vista. Instead of documenting planetary science or speaking about wonder, this movie shared a more peculiar message: our hyperactive lifestyles have disrupted our

circadian rhythms; our choice to banish darkness has resulted in changes to our health and behavior; and the loss of pitch black is changing how many other species experience their own environments as well.

We have changed the world by filling the darkness with our synthetic brilliance, with light. But it is with this same light that we were able to evolve socially and intellectually, first commandeering our lives from the control of nature. No longer blinded for half the day, light gave us opportunity to read and write during periods of rest, protect ourselves from the creatures of the dark, and spotlight each other for social interaction and evening play.

Now, however, with so much light we have become distracted by it. Blinking and flashing and bleeding it has become wasted and misused, taken for granted and allowed to spill over time and space. This light now pollutes; it masks our night and blocks our wonder.

We look down at our phones, our dim-light computer screens. Our questions are answered by search engines and curiosity satisfied by vacuous technology. We have no incentive to look up and think there is more than us, or more to us. So naturally our decisions are selfish. And now with light pollution spreading far across our continents that behavior has become difficult to avoid.

Yet stars ignite creative processes in space and ourselves. They excite feeling in us as we contemplate their company. Our night sky has a powerful presence of great importance which we have now dimmed.

Capable of intelligent decision making, have we thought through the internal- and externalities that we might be inflicting upon ourselves from the decision to illuminate all in our vicinity? Are there repercussions to this miraculous technology? The sections throughout this paper provide a brief introduction to the path that our man-made light is taking us on. Beginning with an orientation to light and darkness, the ecological effects, human health effects, and effects to humanity are then reviewed in an attempt to make the discussion about the loss of the night sky as diffuse as the artificial technology itself.

Light and Dark: Daylight, provided by the sun, is all around us. To humans, only part of the spectrum that the sun glares onto us is visible. But for us, the wavelengths that we can see paint a vibrant and beautiful world.

Planetary processes, our elevation and latitude, seasons, and the time of day all influence how that light illuminates the objects and space around us. Yet this radiation is not constant 'globally our lives are shared between sunshine and moonlight.<sup>1</sup>

At night, when the daylight is not upon us, the rotation of our planet places us under a period of darkness that gives other more distant stars a chance to shine. When the sun is hidden a different

form of radiation softly illuminates the darkened space. We call this black speckled vista the night sky.

It has been treated with admiration and awe throughout the time of man. And indeed it is deserving of so 'we have a privileged and unique location in the universe. Outside of our galaxy any observer with organs of vision like our own would not see what we can: few individual stars would be visible, just faint galaxies shimmering in the far away distance.<sup>2</sup>

As a terrestrial animal with our position in space, subject to the laws of physics that drive our systems of rotation, we are fortunate. With just the right amount of interstellar dust, our angle of vision, and not too much competition from the night glow of other celestial formations, we are able to look up at the night sky in comfort and curiosity.<sup>3</sup> It is not too bright for our gaze; and for some time it was not so dim. Connecting any combination of points and polygons together, we identified constellations, created myth, and imbued space with sacred narrative.

For 50 thousand years we were these fortunate organisms. Until last century in fact, the daily lives of all humans were patterned by these phases of sun and moon. People all over the world pursued amateur hobbies of observation using their naked eye to see a vast black mat of stars, or their glass lenses to investigate this curious skyscape.<sup>4</sup> The night sky was art, science, and imagination.

But we also grew fond of the lumination that daylight provided. We learned how to harness resources and innovate ways to use them for artificial light. We invented different sizes and shapes and fuels for our lights, helping them to shine brighter, further, and for longer. These lights were tools and treasures giving us the opportunity for security, decoration, nighttime engagement, and sensory stimulation. Artificial light became a symbol for enlightenment, economic development, safety, sophistication, and modernity.<sup>5</sup> It improved the quality of life for humans across the planet.

Artificial light brought us freedom of time from daily planetary phases. It changed our urban lives and infrastructural planning forever. Integral to advanced development, we began to perceive less of a difference between day and night. We now had more time for ourselves, for manufacturing, marketing, and pleasure. Our suburban and urban environments quickly grew accustomed to night lighting, installing lights on streets and paths, into buildings and onto billboards, in venues and on vessels, lighting everywhere that seemed suspicious or every spot appearing useful.<sup>6</sup>

But so fond we became of this light and these lifestyles that we have found ourselves in a 24 hour society. Now artificial light is so prevalent in our lives that it accounts for more than 20 percent of global electricity use, emitting vast amounts of greenhouse gases and fueling an incessant glow, growing to shut out the nighttime for good.<sup>7</sup>

Our use has gone too far. What was once a candelabra has become chandelier; an addiction to the decadence of light, a way to flaunt our freedom from the environment and our power even over planetary features. Today nearly 20 percent of the Earth's terrestrial surface is covered in light

pollution. In America little more than a third of the population lives somewhere dark enough for their eyes to fully adapt to darkness, something our bodies have done for thousands of years.<sup>8</sup> And still the ambience of artificial light continues to seep over the darkness as light emissions are increased by up to 20 percent per year in communities across the planet.<sup>9</sup>

This by-product of industrial civilization comes with hidden costs. Not only do we lose the pleasure of viewing the aesthetic miracle that is our night sky, but our physical health and social wellbeing face consequences, and the stability of organic processes and organisms are themselves at risk.<sup>10</sup> As we turn all of our focus to the ecological system services that give us an apparent good or service, this environmental impact has gone unnoticed, hidden in plain sight. We, and all living things need the night sky.

**Nature:**The light of a burning fire kept some creatures away while allowing us to cook and consume others. But this discovery eventually brought us to the creation of electric lights which are now covering substantial portions of our terrestrial surface. More than keeping dangers away, light is has become a stalker of its own, creeping into space and time it never before belonged.

#### Figure 1: Astronomical and Ecological Light Pollution

Artificial light does more than mask our stars with skyward glow. Light pollution has substantial effects on biological and ecological systems as well. Now just an emerging area of study, astronomical light pollution is washing out the clarity of stars at night and causing consequential effects to wildlife and natural patterns.<sup>11</sup>

But we are only beginning to understand the full range of environmental impacts from light pollution and the loss of the night sky. The global spread of chronically-increasing artificial light is still an emission of rare concern. It seems to be the case that many scientists have neglected to consider the effects of night-lighting as an environmental stressor of significance. Nonetheless, it is a very serious one. It may not be that any other organisms have lost the capacity to wonder at the brilliance of the night sky, but it affects behavior and population ecology in very measurable ways. Animals make seasonal adjustments to their behavior based on the cycles of darkness that they have evolved into over millions of years. We are taking that away.

Attracting and repulsing, orienting and disorienting, the artificial light has begun to change when some animals sing and chirp, or whirr and howl. Artificial light has changed when and where animals lay their eggs, and what their offspring does upon birth. Where animals hunt, and how they hunt. It has made some species more vulnerable prey, some hunters better at their skill, and others less successful.

Like us, some species become more efficient as light becomes more available spatially and temporally. But for the ones that depend on light to communicate, pollinate, or reproduce, that distraction threatens their survival. The light we pour onto their habitat confuses the internal map

that many species require in order to navigate seasons and their space. Our installation of entrancing lights and luring beacons has created problems that are cascading through trophic systems, affecting plants and animals in serious ways.<sup>12</sup>

**Human Health:** The more we learn about these ecological ramifications of light pollution the more we begin to learn about the consequences artificial light patterns have on our species as well. Over-illumination and glare has become more than a nuisance 'we have discovered for humans there are also a number of serious correlating health effects of overexposure.

Indirectly we are harming ourselves through unnecessary resource consumption and greenhouse-gas emissions. Often illuminating unoccupied rooms, on average residential lighting accounts for nearly 15% of our household energy use,<sup>13</sup> much of which is wasted as energy through heat.<sup>14</sup> Even more inefficient when applied outdoors, it is estimated that 50 percent of the light from a typical fixture outside is wasted, resulting in the emission of 21 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> annually.<sup>15</sup> More directly through the emission of light however, very persuasive evidence of its effect on us shows that consistent over-exposure to artificial light corresponds to disease.

Almost all of us awaken during periods of the night. Normal to our sleep patterns, now what is different is that we wake in company of electric lighting coming through our shades or peeking around our door frames.

The artificial light we cast on ourselves at night disrupts our circadian clocks and endocrine systems. Controlling ten to fifteen percent of our genes, manipulating our circadian cycles is presumed to have substantial health consequences. Public health studies are finding evidence that chronic settings of light at night is associated to prostate cancer, breast cancer, sleep disorders, mood fluctuations, and diabetes. Medical studies suggest that excessive exposure in stages of early childhood development can even contribute to chronic depression and other adolescent psychological disorders.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, disrupting our normal circadian cycles results in small changes to our behavior which have large influences on our nutritional health: in these artificially lighted settings our habits of food consumption stay the same while our bodies are actually in lower physical and metabolic activity states, leading to weight gain and contributing to the rise in obesity.<sup>17</sup>

Though the loss of the night sky can't be blamed for these health effects, it is the normalcy of irregular contact with lighting created by artificial indoor and outdoor lights that has led to overlooking the significant impacts of light pollution. It will not be until we account for the physical health effects that we acknowledge the need to micromanage lighting for humans and society.

**Humanity:** For humanity and the environment we are coming to find the impacts of light pollution are as sophisticated and widespread in effect as any other stock pollutant 'it remains at ambient levels, is growing in emission, and influences the biological and physical elements of this planet.

And like other pollutants, it changes how we experience our environment, affecting our behavior and shifting our values.

Suffering from a 'baseline syndrome' of generational and personal amnesia, the loss of the night sky is becoming 'the lack of a night sky,' and a constant presence of artificial lights.<sup>18</sup> So instead we turn to planetariums that use complicated lamps to project on a ceiling what is missing from the night sky, to reveal lessons that the night sky could have imbued on us such as cultural sensitivity, knowledge, and global citizenry.<sup>19</sup>

But it is not the same. Peering into the sky is not just looking at cosmic energy or out towards a distant realm. The twinkle from many stars we gaze at was emitted at a time when dinosaurs roamed the planet. To see a star is to literally stare 'back to a time before humanity existed,' and into every generation before now.<sup>20</sup> Losing witness of this astronomy dismantles a profound connection to a past history of civilization and deep time.<sup>21</sup> The loss of the night sky becomes a loss of creativity, of opportunity to think beyond one's place and time. It is a loss of cultural heritage and a disappearance of imagination.

As artificial light is installed and distributed haphazardly we create places where "there is no darkness, into which thought can withdraw... [where] there are no shadowy corners in which the imagination can indulge its dreams."<sup>22</sup> We are diminishing a very powerful source of tranquility;<sup>23</sup> a beautiful and valuable scientific, cultural, and recreational asset; "a universal object of inspiration and spiritual import."<sup>24</sup>

Now people in developed countries are born and raised into worlds completely illuminated by artificial light at all times. And because of cultural stigmas and scary movies, and the feeling that dark areas are foreboding, people believe natural darkness is unpleasant and unsafe. We are forgetting that 'in the heavens we find predictability coupled with spontaneity, and timeless constancy coupled with surprise.'<sup>25</sup> Less often can we appreciate the inward dialog that comes from sitting under the brilliant glow of a full moon; that moment we get to wish on a shooting star; or that lingering kiss we have all shared with a loved one. And slowly the ability for the night sky to impart fond memories on each of us is being lost.

**Conclusion:** We have invented a magnificent luminescence that allows us to break from natural rhythms of the Earth. But in our liberal application of this technology we have developed a world in which artificial light is so profuse that we can't go back to the darkness that gave everyone the opportunity to gaze into the night with wonder and reflection. Rarely in the line of sight of future generations ahead, we are at risk of losing the introspection, invocation, and the inward joy the night provides. And in the absence of night we find ourselves undervaluing the natural processes and patterns of our planet. Without experiences like stars we forget how to enjoy the passive beauty of nature. If we have any intention of restoring human/nature relationships, we must realize when some glow turns to too much.

Certainly the world is intimidating, darkness often scary. And we will always be uncertain of our place on Earth. "Absorbing the significance of living within such a vast enduring universe is an ongoing challenge."<sup>26</sup> Artificial light comforts us and impresses us with the idea that we can control our space. It makes us feel less insignificant. But that is the power and importance of the night sky: immense and spectacular, the stars grace us with humility and an awareness that goes beyond anthropocentrism. Ensuring we can look up and wonder more easily than we can look down in distraction will be necessary if we hope to think beyond ourselves.

An important technology for equity, safety, and education, and at times even a tool for conservation, the significance of man-made light is obvious. It is not that we must eliminate artificial light, rather improve how we use it. With light pollution trespassing across our geography we must recognize many of its applications do not provide us service. So how can we equip our modernity with the light it needs while avoiding the glowing pollution and the psychological, physiological, and ecological consequences that occur from a lighted night sky?

'Our universal need [in] the present time is a reorientation of the human venture toward such intimate experience of the world around us...' such as by 'see[ing] the stars splashed across the heavens at night.'<sup>27</sup> With plenty of evidence that our artificial light does have the power to orient and disorient life on this planet, redressing this loss of the night sky is an important step towards recreating relationships between ourselves and the biotic kingdoms of this world. It is crucial to a creating a collective spirituality. We need to find ways to realize our impacts and perceive global humanity more clearly. Controlling light pollution would be a simple and significant opportunity to remind ourselves to think big, but to live lighter on this planet.

Figure 2: Hypothetical Impacts of Exposure

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Syed Uddin-Ahmed

# Revisiting Ancient Sanskrit Texts: A Modern Interpretation

Rima Bhattacharya

## I

### Introduction

Often ancient texts of India are read without much critical intervention. Literary theories predominantly originating in the West have been frequently used as tools to re-read and re-interpret several Western ancient texts, including several Greek and Roman dramas. For a long period of time ancient Indian texts were read and understood on the surface. However with the advent of literary theories like New Historicism in the Western world during the 1980s, the text-only approach pursued by formalist New Critics became obsolete. New Historicism is a literary theory based on the idea that literature should be studied and interpreted within the context of both the history of the author and the history of the society in which it had flourished. New historicists, like formalists and their critics, acknowledge the importance of the literary text, but they also analyze the text with an eye to history. The New historicists focused on a particular text's historical content and based their interpretations on the interplay between the text and its historical contexts. This theory although 'new' was heavily influenced by the poststructuralist and reader-response theory of the 1970s, as well as by the thoughts of feminist, cultural, and Marxist critics of the 1980s. Therefore, while interpreting ancient Indian texts in the 21st century, one should remember that the entire super-structural scenario of the socio-political discourses of that particular age have manipulated and restructured a lot of ideas as well as perceptions of the author who has written that text. Further the application of Western literary theory on ancient Indian text can open up the text to new ways of reading and interpretation. Taking up a New historicist approach, in this paper I have tried to provide a glimpse of the various discoveries that can result from such an application. In the first half of the paper I have looked at Kalidasa's *Abhijanasakuntalam* in order to comment on the social structure of India during that period. The text indeed provides a fair idea of not only the social or caste system of India but also of gender discrimination and gender roles of that age. In the second half of the paper I have analyzed the ancient text called '*Mudrarakshasa*' by Vishakhadatta in order to re-interpret it as a post-modern play.

## II

### Kalidasa's *Abhijanasakuntalam*

*Abhijanasakuntalam* rearticulates an inherited story. It appears for the first time possibly in the *Satapatha Brahmana* (about 900 B.C) in a brief reference. The epic *Mahabharata* which took shape

between 400 BC and AD 400 presents a lengthier version of the Sakuntala story. Scholars agree that Kalidasa's *Snataka* was inspired by the Sakuntala episode of the epic *Mahabharata*.

Kalidasa's dates have not been conclusively proved but it is accepted that he was writing between AD 400 TO AD 500 during the Gupta period, which is commonly thought of as a 'golden age' in Indian history much like Periclean Athens and Elizabethan England. Yet, it is also a period which attempts to restructure the agrarian economy by drawing in peripheral areas under brahmanical supervision, converts communal property into feudal property, harnesses local cults to Vedic brahmanism under state patronage and strengthens caste patriarchy in many ways. Kalidasa's inherited story of Sakuntala and Raja Dusyanta plays out within these matrices which shape that complex process called social relation.<sup>1</sup>

Kalidasa's Dusyanta is introduced as a hunter. The Sutradhara of *Abhijanasakuntalam* sings: 'The mood of your song's melody/carried me off by force,/ just as the swift dark antelope/ enchanted King Dusyanta'.<sup>2</sup> The celebration of this aesthetic representation of the hunt is however at odds with the lowly position in the caste hierarchy of those for whom hunting was an occupation such as *Vyadhas* and *Kiratas*. The ideological representation of the hunter in the *Manusmṛiti*, considered one of the earliest text of the *Dharmasastra* category, is as one 'born from the priest in a daughter of a servant'—traditionally regarded as an outcaste and engaging in a 'reviled' occupation'.<sup>3</sup>

However in *Abhijanasakuntalam* hunt is recognized as a sport. The association of the hunting and the deer suggests the sanctioning of the hunting as a fair game for royal pleasure. The further association of the deer and Sakuntala, both reared by foster parents and 'belonging to the hermitage' suggests yet another predatory pastime of royal men. The hunt is often seen as a metaphor of courtly love and the chase within the plot of the play represents a conflict between *sringara rasa* and *vira rasa*.<sup>4</sup>

The King probably had the highest position within the social ladder during those times. In the first act of *Abhijanasakuntalam* we notice that the king is equated to God, where for instance the charioteer of Dusyanta compares him to the bow-wielding form of Siva, *Pinakin*, as he watches the king engrossed in chasing the deer: 'I see this black buck move/ as you draw your bow/ and I see the wild bowman Siva/ hunting the dark antelope'.<sup>5</sup>

There is also an element of irony in the way Dusyanta is introduced within the sacral domain of the hermitage. In the second act, two young ascetics compare the king with a muni or sage stating, 'his perfect self-control/ adding the royal word 'king' / to 'sage', his sacred title'.<sup>6</sup> This is sure to amuse the spectators who are by then aware of Dusyanta's erotic desires and impulses graphically described in the earlier part of the text.

When Dusyanta sees Sakuntala for the first time, he is for a moment anxious that she may not belong to the same varna and we find him wondering, 'Could her social class be different from her father's? There is no doubt!'<sup>7</sup> However, he almost immediately convinces himself that the very

fact that he is attracted to her is a sign that she must be worthy of him: 'She was born to be a warrior's bride/ for my noble heart desires her' when good men face doubt, inner feelings are truth's only measure'.<sup>8</sup> Further communication with her friends reveals that she is to be given away to a suitable groom by her foster father. This converts her, in Dusyanta's eyes from a 'fire' to be avoided to a 'jewel' that can be legitimately touched: 'Heart, indulge your desires' now that doubt is dispelled/ the fire you feared to touch/ is a jewel in your hands'.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, the king is represented as functioning within the framework of the varna order, and accepting the necessity of choosing a woman from an identical social background, aware of the ways in which the maintenance of the varna order rests on appropriate marital alliance.<sup>10</sup>

While maintaining the order of the varna was central to the brahmanical understanding of kingship, there are other elements as well. As in the case of *Abhijanasakuntalam*, these ideals of kingship are treated somewhat casually. For instance, Dusyanta at times simply takes on the kingly role as an excuse to stay near Sakuntala. For instance in the first act, when he springs to the defence of Sakuntala, who is tormented by a bee, the notions of valour, protection and justice provided by the king seem to be subservient to his erotic desires. To an extent then, the playwright seems to subvert the notion of the heroic king or even the king as protector, by indicating that in this instance the zealous king is pursuing his love no less assiduously than the bee, and is perhaps as much a predator as the lowly insect: 'Bee, you touch the quivering corners of her frightened eyes; you drink her lip's treasure; you are truly blessed'.<sup>11</sup> Later, the decision taken by the king to stay back in the hermitage, in spite of receiving the commands of his mother, is formulated much more due to his intentions of staying near Sakuntala than of actually protecting the ascetics from the demons.

One of the most pivotal episodes of *Abhijanasakuntalam* that depicts the social dynamics is that of the fisherman, who finds the signet ring, the loss of which causes the loss of memory on the part of Dusyanta, resulting in his desertion of Sakuntala. What is interesting, in terms of varna hierarchy is that this crucial role is assigned to the lowly fisherman. Further when the Magistrate mockingly refers to his livelihood as a 'pure profession', the fisherman responds with a verse in Prakrit pointing out that the priest is also someone who kills, supposedly with compassion, while performing sacrifices: 'The Work I do may be vile/ but I won't deny my birthright' a priest doing his holy rites/ pities the animal he kills'.<sup>12</sup> Interestingly as soon as the fisherman is rewarded by the king for giving back the ring the Magistrate who was mocking him earlier claims to be his friend and gives the suggestion of celebrating the occasion in a wine-shop. This depicts the falsity associated with the hierarchy of the caste system which can be modified anytime according to one's wish and profit. At another level it depicts that the disease of corruption was rampant even in the ancient Indian society.

The *Abhijanasakuntalam* has always been famous as a romance and has exercised lasting influence on generations of scholars. However, what is interesting is that beneath this ornamented veil of imagery of two lovers being attracted to each other, united and then separated through the forces of circumstances to meet once again, lurks a more mundane set of concerns.<sup>13</sup> The status of a woman in the society of that period comes out quite clearly through the treatment meted out to

Sakuntala both by Dusyanta and her family. Dusyanta deploys a somewhat circular logic to argue that since he is attracted to Sakuntala, she must belong to an appropriate lineage. So, practically Dusyanta's feelings are enough to decide Sakuntala's lineage. He is specifically enamoured by her virginal beauty, comparing her to a flower that has not been smelt and an unperforated jewel: 'A flower no one has smelled,/ a bud no fingers have plucked,/ an uncut Jewel, honey untasted'.<sup>14</sup> This stresses on the fact that the worth of a girl was often determined by her purity or chastity. In fact a little later it is revealed that being a virgin is also not enough to please men of those times. We find the king's companion, the vidusaka, voicing his concern that she is like 'tamarind' as compared to the luscious dates, the women in Dusyanta's palace.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, it is clearly expressed that Sakuntala is no one special, she is one among many, a mere addition to the king's collection of beautiful women and might even be considered to be inferior due to her rustic background.

As the play progresses it creates the picture of a typical patriarchal society and highlights the subservient role of a woman in the society of that time. While Sakuntala and Dusyanta choose one another, the message she receives as she makes her way to her marital home is that she should be fruitful and subservient. Kanva, her foster father, explicitly advises her to serve her elders, never go against her husband, to treat her co-wives as friends, and to be gentle with servants.<sup>16</sup> Thus, the role of an ideal grihini (housewife) is clearly mentioned in the fatherly advice. One should also pay attention to the depiction of the sastric model of the daughter as another's wealth with Kanva expressing great relief at being able to hand her over to her husband: 'A daughter belongs to another man /by sending her to husband today/ I feel the satisfaction/ one has on repaying a loan'.<sup>17</sup> Thus, Sakuntala is reduced almost to a possession or burden to be transferred from one household to another.

Further, as if this was not insulting enough when Sakuntala asks her father about whether she would visit the grove again, he clearly indicates that she will not be entertained or allowed to return to the hermitage until she is the sole queen of king Dusyanta and her son is established on the throne.<sup>18</sup> The same message is reiterated again and again by the women ascetics of the hermitage. One of the woman ascetics hope that Sakuntala would turn out to be the 'Chief Queen'; another hopes that she will give birth to a son whereas the third hopes that she will be held in high esteem by her husband.<sup>19</sup> Kanva too in his blessings hopes she will produce an heir who will be a Samrat: 'May you bear an imperial prince'.<sup>20</sup> These blessings clearly depict a society that believes that the primary goals of a woman's life should be to bear a promising son and gain importance or prominence in the eyes of the husband. It also definitely indicates the preference for a male child compared to a female child who would be mostly thought to be a burden once again.

The family members and disciples of the hermitage continue to treat Sakuntala as a burden even when they accompany her to king Dusyanta's court. When in spite of her entreaties Sakuntala is unsuccessful in winning the trust of her husband, Gautami and both Sarngarava and Saradvata desert her in the court of the king, leaving her in the hands of her fate. Saradvata further asserts the power of the husband within the patriarchal setup by stating clearly, 'Since you married her,

abandon her or take her – absolute is the power a husband has over his wife'.<sup>21</sup> In fact when the helpless Sakuntala tries to follow her fellow ascetics, Sarnagarava retorts back at her harshly calling her 'bold woman' and stating: 'If you are what the king says you are/ you don't belong in father Kanva's family/ if you know that your marriage vow is pure/ you can bear slavery in your husband's house'.<sup>22</sup> Thus, at one blow she is rendered completely homeless and is demeaned to the position of a slave.

Interestingly Dusyanta once he forgets about Sakuntala is not even ready to look at her, despite her obvious charms, regarding her as the wife of another. This harsh demeanour is lauded by even by the king's doorkeeper who states: 'Our king has a strong sense of justice. Who else would hesitate when beauty like this is handed to him?' .<sup>23</sup> It is funny that even such a harsh attitude shown towards one's love can win appreciation just because, the person to show it is a king and a male. It is more funny that the ability to abstain oneself from touching a beautiful woman (who is thought to be someone else's wife) is considered to be a virtue worthy of appreciation in a man and especially in a king.

Thus Dusyanta's repudiation of Sakuntala is justified in *Abhijanasakuntalam* not only by the curse of forgetfulness and the accident of the lost ring, but as an exemplary show of restraint. The just king refuses to appropriate the property of another, even if the woman he sees is the most beautiful woman he has ever seen. However, at the same time when the chief priest suggests a pragmatic solution, offering to keep the pregnant Sakuntala with him till her delivery, just in case the son turns out to be the much sought after cakravartin, Dusyanta is willing to accept the proposal. It is Sakuntala's prayers to her mother that prevents this from happening. Here we find the patrilineal concerns coming to the forefront. This obsession with the continuity of lineage highlights the fact that the value of a woman is dependant to a large extent on her reproductive power. She is thought to be worthy only when she can give birth, that also to a son.

Right at the beginning of the play *Abhijanasakuntalam* we get to hear the voice of a Brahmana who stops the king from killing an antelope saying: 'King, the antelope belongs to our hermitage/ Withdraw your well-aimed arrow! Your weapons should rescue victims, not destroy the innocent'.<sup>24</sup> We find the King obeying immediately saying, 'I withdraw it'.<sup>25</sup> Dusyanta's opening action thus represents a king who recognizes the superiority of the Brahmanas within the varna. This recognition of Brahmanical authority earns for the childless king the blessing of a son, 'who will turn the wheel of empire'.<sup>26</sup> Brahmanical power thus appears to be controlling the overall plot of the King's life as a prophecy that sets in motion the romantic affair between king Dusyanta and Sakuntala.

In *Abhijanasakuntalam* the relation between the king and the Brahmanas is one of reciprocity. The king admits that through the Brahmana's articulation of power his title becomes 'more meaningful'<sup>27</sup> and in return he is ready to assure that the Brahmanas can perform their austerities without any hindrance from the demons. However, it is not clearly understood as to why a powerful king should be blessed by Brahmanas who cannot even protect their own space. The hierarchical

difference between the King and the Brahmanas is brought out in terms of oppositional spaces: the court being the space under the king's jurisdiction and the ashrama belonging to the Brahmanas located at the margins. The 'holiness' of the ashrama is respected by the king while the ascetics trained in the power of detachment dismiss the luxury of the king's court. This spatial location of the king as separated from the ashramas complicate the exercise of monarchy at one level.

Among the ancient Indian texts, the dharma-sastras, inform us of the rules of varna. It is assumed that at least the members of the higher varna would observe these rules. However, from the earliest times certain discrepancies have been observed. The Vedic texts refer to various important Vedic rsis as Dasiputrah, being born of dasis. Dirghatamas who is described as the son of a dasi in turn married a dasi whom he found, it is said, among strange people in the east and she was mother to his son, the respected rsi Kaksivant.<sup>28</sup> Evidently these Brahmanas observed the rule of exogamy literally and married far out. But equally intriguing is the origin of the compiler of the Mahabharata, the learned Veda Vyasa. His father, the rsi Parasara became enamoured of girl of the fisherman's community as she rowed him across the river. In spite of her fishy odour he made his intentions clear. She resisted him at first but finally accepted his advances when he promised that she would be rid of the odour of fish and eventually gave birth to Veda Vyasa. The ambiguities of his mother's origins are further complicated by the story that she had been an apsara's daughter abandoned as a foundling among the fisher folk.

According to Romila Thapar few interesting observations can be made from such stories. First of all these stories inform us about the lapses from the normative perspective of even those whom are highly revered. This makes us aware of the myth related to the origin of a variety of royal families claiming the ksatriya status in the post-Gupta period. Prior to the Gupta dynasty the Puranas refer to such families being of brahman and even sudra origin. In fact very few were ksatriyas in spite of the insistence of the normative texts on ksatriya origins of ruling families. Therefore in shying away from coming to terms with this divergence we blind ourselves to the possible existence of a once flexible society.<sup>29</sup> We thereby provide a simplistic explanation for a complex arrangement.

Therefore, Kalidasa through *Abhijanasakuntalam* was himself taking an existing tradition and transforming it into something new and in keeping with his own time and place. There were two versions of the Sakuntala story in circulation with two different audiences. The earlier version occurs in the Mahabharata where the origin myth of the founder of the Puru lineage Bharata is being recited. The story begins with a massive hunt led by the Raja Dusyanta where we are told that many families of tigers were laid low and many hundreds of deer were killed. The king progresses almost causing havoc and destruction all round him. Arriving at the hermitage of Kanva, Dusyanta is welcomed in the absence of the rsi by Sakuntala who happily converses with him without any reservation. When asked about her parentage she explains that she is the natural child of the apsara Menaka and the rsi Visvamitra and was left a foundling at the hermitage of Kanva. When Dusyanta attracted by her beauty proposes a Gandharva marriage she replies in a spirited fashion that she will agree only on condition that her son is declared the yuvaraja, a condition Dusyanta accepts. The king leaves, and Kanva is not displeased when he finds out about



the marriage. But when six years passed and Dusyanta makes no move to claim his wife and son, Kanva sends them to the court. The king recognizes Sakuntala but refuses to acknowledge her or her son. She is furious at the king's behaviour, but she controls her anger and speaks out at length for herself as his wife, and for their son and his rights. When the king taunts her with her ancestry, she makes it very clear that she considers her birth far superior to his. She decides to leave him and at this point a divine voice intervenes and tells the king to acknowledge Sakuntala as his wife and their son as his heir.

Kalidasa introduces the sub-plot of the signet ring which drops off Sakuntala's finger and Dusyanta loses his memory owing to a curse and does not remember the association with Sakuntala until he sees the signet ring. In effect the feel of the play is completely different from the epic version of the story. Kalidasa took this basic plot and made some interesting changes. These changes are responsible for a more dramatic story, and a justification for Dusyanta's behaviour.

It is tempting to generalize about the women characters, especially the heroines, of Sanskrit literature. Most of them possess two common characteristics. They are beautiful, according to the conventions set down and followed by the literature in which they appear, and they seem to play passive role in the events which take place around them. But a closer look at the important women in Sanskrit literature reveals qualities which go beyond conventional beauty and traditional feminine passivity.<sup>30</sup> Sakuntala of *Abhijanasakuntalam* is very much different from the Sakuntala of *Mahabharata*.

Those familiar only with Kalidasa's heroine are usually quite surprised at the forthright manner and complete lack of coyness displayed by the Sakuntala of the epic. The latter deals with a world on her own, without any support from other characters. She appears alone as a simple yet unabashed young ascetic when she first meets the king. When she arrives at Dusyanta's court with her son, her attendants are not visible. She drives her first shrewd bargain with the king, and later fights her battle with him, independently. Yet the constant appearance of Sakuntala, unattended and unaided by anyone as she seeks a place for herself, emphasizes her unconventional qualities. Kalidasa's Sakuntala on the other hand is nearly always surrounded by people. She is accompanied by Anasuya and Priyamvada when she first appears on the stage, and they are constantly by her side until she leaves for Dusyanta's, court. When Kanva sends her to the king, her son is not yet born, and she is suitably accompanied by the hermits Sarnagarava and Sharadvata, and Mother Gautami. Interestingly, the two scenes in which she does meet the king, without any friends or guardians around her, are very important in the development of both their plot and the main characters. In Act III of *Abhijanasakuntalam* there is a brief love scene between the timid young Shakuntala and the more experienced king. Shakuntala's two friends disappear after preparing the setting for the lovers. This young and innocent Shakuntala of *Abhijanasakuntalam*, reminds one more of a gently reared princess than of the earlier Shakuntala. She is genuinely terrified when left alone by her friends to face the king and his confession of love, and when abandoned by the self-righteous young hermits and the sad Gautami at the king's court. The *Mahabharata* Shakuntala never shows signs of fear.<sup>31</sup> However, many critics have deemed such innocence and coyness as

strategies developed for seduction of king Dusyanta. In Act I of Kalidasa's play, Shakuntala explains to her friends that her dress is tight, and asks them to loosen it, in the process allowing King Dusyanta to have one last lingering glance at her.<sup>32</sup> The king by then has already noticed the "budding charms" that caused the guileless Shakuntala to complain petulantly that her dark dress was fastened so tightly that it hurt.

Quite a few people today have accepted Kalidasa's depiction of the submissive woman and have ignored the far more independent characterisation of the epic version in order to justify the subservience of women with an appeal to what is still regarded as 'our tradition'.<sup>33</sup> It is interesting to note that although Kalidasa's Shakuntala lacked the confidence and independence of the Mahabharata's Shakuntala, she does not accept her rejection silently and retorts back at the King in anger stating, 'Evil man! you see everything distorted by your own ignoble heart'.<sup>34</sup> This proves that the women of those times were not as powerless as they were depicted or thought to be.

Abhijanasakuntalam, the play focuses on the contrast between two backgrounds, that of the forest and the court. This contrast is a repeated theme in early Indian writing. The dichotomy of the grama and the aranya represent the two poles of the settlement and the wilderness, of order and disorder, of the known and the unknown.<sup>35</sup> The males of the upper caste of the Indian society are required to follow a life cycle which covers the well-known four stages of studentship, householder, renouncer and ascetic. Generally descriptions of the asrama from creative literature tend to be forest retreats set in sylvan surroundings with an emphasis on empathy with nature. That hermits had technically broken away from social obligations meant that they had nothing to do with the grama and were at one with the aranya. But somehow this did not preclude them from observing social regulations when required to do so. Above all the renouncer through the act of renunciation and the practice of yoga, tapasya and dhyana, was believed to acquire supernatural powers. Gradually the supernormal powers became an asset on which the power of the ascetic was based. It was this which enabled the rsi to acquire extra-sensory knowledge, to fly through the air, to destroy through a curse or to grant boons. Many times the rsi acquire the same powers as the gods and frequently the gods fear the power of the rsi and try to break their meditation.Â Therefore at one level renunciation and the renouncer became an alternative avenue of authority in the popular mind which even the kings had to accept. It is important to examine more analytically the many dimensions to the role of the renouncer in society. That is why a sage like Durvasa can curse Kalidasa's Shakuntala because she is engrossed in her thought of the king Dusyanta.

### III

Vishakhadatta's Mudrarakshasa

The Mudrarakshasa, unlike the majority of Sanskrit plays, is purely a political drama. It has for its theme, besides elevation of Chandragupta to the throne of Magadha, wining over of Rakshasa, the

hostile minister of the Nanda dynasty to the side of Chandragupta and adoption of measures to strengthen the rule by Chanakya, the renowned politician of his times. However winning over Rakshasa was not an easy task, since he was a former minister of the Nandas, by whose destruction Chanakya had secured the throne for Chandragupta and to whom Chandragupta still professed loyalty. It is a historical or political drama and represents a curious state of public morals, in which fraud and assassination are the simple means by which inconvenient obligations are acquitted and troublesome friends or open enemies removed.<sup>36</sup> It is not however, that such acts are not held in themselves as crimes or that their perpetrators are not condemned as culprits, it is only when the commission of the crime proposes a political end that it is represented as venial and compatible to the state of affairs.

The city of Pataliputra or Palibothra, the capital of the Nandas, was situated not far from the confluence of the Ganges and the Sone; and was on the southern side of the rivers. Nanda, the last king of the Nanda line, had for his minister the able and experienced Rakshasa. Chandragupta also called Vrishala and Maurya is identical with Sandrakottus represented by the Greek writers as the Emperor of India at the time of Alexander the Great's death.

He had a high respect for his minister Chanakya, the Indian Machiavelli, who was a crafty, clearheaded, self-confident, and intriguing politician. This minister, also called Vishnugupta, is famous as a writer on Nitya or 'rules of government and polity', and the reputed author of numerous moral and political precepts like Arthashastra. Nanda is slain by the contrivances of this crafty Brahman, who thus assists Chandragupta to the throne, and becomes his minister. Rakshasa refuses to recognise the usurper and endeavours to be avenged on him for the ruin of his late master.

In this play two masterminds Kautilya (Chanakya) and Rakshasa, are pitted against one another. Kautilya has succeeded in installing the young Mauryan prince, Chandragupta, on the throne, but the structure of authority is still shaky. Stability evidently depends on harnessing the talents of Rakshasa to the service of the Emperor. The schemes employed by Kautilya are elaborate, subtle and amoral and they give a good idea of Mauryan-Gupta diplomatic intrigue. According to R. K. Pruthi, 'This purely political play is anything but politically pure and the nuances of the more delicate sentiments of love find almost no place in the work'.<sup>37</sup> The plot is contrived and complex, but the dialectical development of the play is absorbing and the dialogue has a clarity and vigour befitting its theme. The ironic nature of the ultimate choice that confronts Rakshasa can be readily appreciated today as it was in the day of Gupta court.

Although the play lacks much action, the plot of the play develops as follows: after the assassination of Nanda, Servarthisiddhi is placed on the throne by Rakshasa but he retires to a life of devotion. Saileswara or Parvataka, the king of the Mountains, at first the ally of Chandragupta, afterwards befriended his opponents and is therefore slain by Chanakya. Vairodhaka, the brother of Parvataka, and his driver Varvaraka is killed by Rakshasa's emissaries mistaking him for Chandragupta.

Chanakya, whose ability and diplomatic skills are of a high order, lays out various traps and machinations to make Chandragupta the supreme sovereign in India, by winning over the noble Rakshasa to his master's cause. He tries successfully to effect reconciliation between his protégé, and Rakshasa. With this view Rakshasa who is a brave soldier but a blundering and somewhat soft-natured politician, is rendered by the contrivances of Chanakya an object of suspicion to the prince Malyaketu with whom he has taken refuge and is consequently dismissed by him. Malyaketu, the son of Parvataka, a prince whose confidence and distrust are alike misplaced, is suspicious of Rakshasa and leads an army against Chandragupta but without success. He is so rash and inconsiderate in his suspicion that he hastily declares war against five foreign kings all at a time and kills them. In this deserted condition Rakshasa learns the imminent danger of a dear friend Chandandasa whom Chanakya is about to put to death, and in order to bring about his liberation surrenders himself to his enemies. They offer him, contrary to his expectations, the rank and position of the Minister, and the parties are finally friends.

In the field of postmodernism nothing is perfectly ordered. In fact, the world is an irrational place where things happen randomly. There is no well-crafted plan, nor a scheme of justice by which the universe operates, or for that matter, even humans function. Consequently the postmodern characteristics of insecurity, uncertainty and scepticism are inadvertently reflected in the creative works of men including literature. Some of the basic features of postmodern literature are: ambiguity, complexity, decentrement, fragmentation in dialogue, pastiche, irony, parody, black humour, and allegory. As a play *Mudrarakshasa* abound in such postmodern features. Right at the beginning of the play the Director or the Sutradhara enters the stage to make the audience aware of the fact that they are actually watching a play and takes them into his confidence by praising them: 'It gives me the greatest pleasure to perform before so discriminating a public. For, even a fool can farm/ When he lights on fertile ground./ Rich crops have no need/ Of merit in the sower'.<sup>38</sup> This is a postmodern technique of the performative theatre to completely do away with the audience's 'willing suspension of disbelief'. There are instances of irony in the play. For example in Act III, when the Emperor refers to the doings of destiny, Kautilya retorts back saying, 'The stupid always appeal to Destiny'.<sup>39</sup> On hearing this, the Emperor's reply, 'While the wise are duly modest', indicates the lack of modesty in Kautilya.<sup>40</sup> There are also several instances of parodies working within the play. In Act I, Kautilya parodies the Emperor's servants who lack the unique combination of brain, courage and devotion, stating that the rest were all 'concubines'.<sup>41</sup> Later in the same act Chandanadasa parodies Kautilya stating, 'When the ruthless Kautilya/ Sends an urgent summons/ Even the innocents are worried, Let alone the guilty'.<sup>42</sup> In Act I, one finds a spy carrying a canvas depicting the God of death using allegory to express oneself in front of Kautilya in the following manner: 'The lotuses, fair though they be,/ Belie their looks by their behaviour./ For they are the enemy/ Of the full-orbed splendour of the moon'.<sup>43</sup> Kautilya, intelligent as he is immediately understands that he knows of men disloyal to Chandragupta. Complexity and ambiguity is the very nature of this play where there is a total lack of trust. This is indeed a postmodern world where truth and false hardly have any distinction. There are frequent uses of 'to himself' within parentheses and the characters speak more to themselves than to others. There is no sense of truth in this postmodern world as often what the characters think themselves and what

is spoken 'aloud' on the stage are quite different from each other. For instance in Act I while conversing with the spy Kautilya, in spite of being completely aware of the agents he was talking about does not reveal these facts in front of the spy.<sup>44</sup> There are numerous instances of plotting and scheming within the play that increases its complexity. Apart from big episodes where Rakshasa's letter and seal is forged; where Kautilya and Chandragupta pretend to fight with each other, small episodes like in Act I where Kautilya decides not to arrest Malaya-ketu, so that people continue blaming Rakshasa for King Parvataka's murder and where he orders Siddharthaka to go to the execution grounds and release Shakata-dasa in order to earn Rakshasa's favour, adds to the complexity of the play. There are also examples related to the fragmentation of dialogues. For instance in Act II Rakshasa's dialogue breaks on the verge of reality and pretence on seeing Viradha-Gupta, controlling his impulse to call out his real name: "Why, good Vi" (breaking off) good vigorous growth of beard you've got there, my man!<sup>45</sup>

There are other postmodern references in the play which focus on the popularity of characters like Kautilya who was famous for writing Arthasatra. In Act III, Kautilya himself refers back to his own text, supposedly written in real life, in order to explain to Chandragupta the three different types of government. This is a typical postmodern device, again at one level to make the audience aware that they are watching a historical play about real historical characters. The postmodern philosophy comes out very clearly in the pretended fight scene that takes place between Chandragupta and Kautilya. On being asked by the Emperor about why he had not taken any action against the defected allies, Kautilya indirectly provides a treatise on the matter of making a choice. His explanations seem to suggest that if there are two choices, the result of each choice would be different but equally inadequate and incomplete. Nothing can be more postmodern than such an explanation. This whole episode of a pretended fight is a device in itself. This episode can be seen as an example of a play within a play and at one level it breaks or fragments the 'grand narrative' of the play. This reminds one of Lyotard who defined postmodernism as 'incredulity towards meta-narratives'.<sup>46</sup> Lyotard and other poststructuralist thinkers view this condition as a broadly positive development for a number of reasons. First, attempts to construct grand theories tend to unduly dismiss the naturally existing chaos and disorder of the universe, the power of the individual event. Second, as well as ignoring the heterogeneity or variety of human existence, metanarratives are created and reinforced by power structures and are therefore untrustworthy. Instead, Lyotard proposed that metanarratives should give way to *petits récits*, or more modest and 'localized' narratives, which can 'throw off' the grand narrative by bringing into focus the singular event. This episode is nothing but an example of such a 'localized' narrative.

The *Mudrarakshasa* as a play is often objected to on the ground of its bad moral or lack of moral. A good drama ought to teach a moral lesson. Virtue should always succeed in the long run, and vice or cruelty be punished, as they deserve. But here the order seem to have been reversed, in as much as vice is represented as gaining the upper hand over virtue. One also comes across fraud triumphing over honesty of purpose. However, things might appear so only to the audience who would look upon Kautilya as a scheming villain and Rakshasa as a purely blameless and innocent character.

However another kind of reading is also possible for people who would not look upon Kautilya as an anti-hero but rather as a worthy and clever politician who was true to his Emperor and the people. If seen from such a viewpoint then one would find that of course fraud is used, but it is used only as a means to achieve a noble end. Kautilya has used several stratagems to win over Rakshasa to Chandragupta's side. One could justify his actions by saying that did this because he knew that Rakshasa was a firm and devoted minister of his master "a man of sterling virtue and high administrative talent. He also knew that Rakshasa was the champion of a lost cause. To allow him to have his own way would have entailed needless and untold suffering and misery not only on him but also on the innocent people. Therefore to avoid all this and to see that the virtue of Rakshasa is properly rewarded and utilized Kautilya had to do this. In addition to this the fact that Kautilya offers the position and office of the Prime Minister to Rakshasa instead of thinking about his own elevation further removes all blames and doubt from his character.

M. R. Kale in his 'introduction' to his translation of Mudrarakshasa tries to justify the actions of Kautilya in the following words: 'The course of policy followed by Chanakya is that of crookedness, no doubt. But then he was driven to adopt such a course by the exceptional circumstances of the time. The Nandas had become unpopular and a political revolution had threatened Magadha. Chandragupta had appealed to him for help. Now the question before him was "how to accomplish this object with the least possible blood-shed or trouble to the people" whether to be guilty of innocent fraud and the adoption of extreme means for the removal of a few political adversaries or to plunge the country into general warfare and carnage; and he choose the lesser of two evils'.<sup>47</sup> By the end of the play one comes across a sense of poetic justice being reflected in the fate of the character Chandanadasa whose fidelity to his friend is adequately rewarded by granting him the title of the Chief Merchant of all the cities of the world.

At this point it must also be remembered that although Rakshasa appears to be a naïve, innocent and a loyal character he is definitely not without faults. He is also a politician like Kautilya. He too plans like Kautilya, the only difference being his lack of expertise in the execution of that plan. In fact his schemes to kill Chandragupta cost quite a few innocent lives like that of Vairodhaka, Varvaraka, Abhaya-datta and Pramodaka. Therefore in such a situation it is extremely difficult to decide on the propriety of the actions of both Rakshasa and Kautilya and by implication the morality of the play which makes it highly postmodern in nature.

It is difficult to determine a single main protagonist of the play. The two characters Rakshasa and Kautilya who have been given the maximum focus are both capable of claiming the position of the main protagonist and are interestingly pitted against one another. Rakshasa, the exiled Chief Minister of the deposed dynasty of the Nandas, is a man who is equally experienced, intelligent, courageous and loyal. However his political opponent Kautilya, appears to be more of a superhero than a villain. He was the brain working behind the destruction of the Nandas. In this play he is presented almost as a superhuman, having no human weakness. His actions are not guided by any kind of selfish requirements and he seems to be the idealized embodiment of the Arthashastra, statecraft itself. In his 1919 essay 'Politics as a Vocation', Max Weber characterises the Kautilya's

Arthashastra as a classic text of statecraft.<sup>48</sup> In fact, it cannot be seriously disputed that in the history of political theory Kautilya has the status of a classic on a par with Thucydides, Aristotle, Machiavelli or Sun Tzu. Rakshasa, his adversary is outwitted because of the poor quality and treachery of his associates, the undisciplined warmth of his human feelings, and ultimately his unswerving loyalty to the Nandas. Surprisingly it is this very quality for which Kautilya values him. Therefore even if one considers Kautilya to be a villain, one could say that he is created as a post-modern villain or an anti-hero who in his glamour, style and motives, verges on the boundary of being converted into a hero, very much like Milton's Satan. The fact that he values the qualities of his adversary indicates the complexity of the postmodern human situation where such straight forward and simple demarcations between like and dislike, love and hatred, hero and anti-hero cannot be made.

In their book entitled 'The Sense of Isolation in Arthur Miller's All My Sons: A Postmodernist Study', Hooti and Azizpour enlist some elemental notions of postmodernism: (1) There exists no absolute truth. As a matter of fact, truth is viewed as an illusion, abused by those who want to gain control over others. (2) Truth and fallacy are synonyms. Facts and falsehoods can be used interchangeably and what is right today may appear to be wrong tomorrow. (3) Traditional thinking and rationality are absolutely spurned by postmodernism. There is no determined rule to designate rationality or irrationality. It is all just up to the people's standpoint. (4) Morality is personal. In general postmodernists subject morality to personal opinion. They define morality as to be followed by each person's code of ethics, rather than any secular or traditional rules. (5) Modernism considered the fragmented view of the human life as bad or tragic; however, postmodernists rather celebrate this seemingly meaningless view of the world. (6) Disillusionment with modernism – postmodernists rue the unfulfilled promises of the science, technology, government and religion.<sup>49</sup>

By the time one reaches the end of the play one would find that almost all the characteristics of postmodernity enlisted above are actually found in Mudrarakshasa. The frequent use of aside and taking recourse to pretence deny the existence of absolute truth, where true facts like writing of a letter or providing a seal are manipulated according to the design of the powerful. With the introduction of scenes where a pretentious fight takes place between the King and Kautilya, truth and fallacy does become synonymous as Rakshasa gradually discovers that he has been tricked and what he thought to be true yesterday is actually false. The fact that Kautilya at one level appreciates his adversary Rakshasa, and is not interested in hoarding any kind of benefits for himself drives away the rationality working behind his actions. At times he seems to be a villain without adequate reason for villainy. Morality of course becomes personal in the play as the playwright Visakhadatta does not make it clear anywhere who is right and who is wrong. As audience one does not see him taking sides. Passing a moral judgement on such a play is almost impossible as both Kautilya and Rakshasa are both right and wrong in their respective positions and actions. Therefore morality becomes personal depending on the taste of the audience regarding the choice of hero and anti-hero between two eligible characters. Lastly one might say that the play also celebrates or rather ends with a fragmented view of life. Rakshasa who is famous for his loyalty to the Nandas is torn apart from his allegiance to the Nandas and is almost forced to serve

Chandragupta. This undoubtedly leaves him fragmented with his heart somewhere else and his body somewhere else. The question remains unanswered as to whether Rakshasa would be able to show his loyalty to the Emperor at all with his fragmented self. This is again a postmodern way to end a play.

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## Mothers' Perceptions and Impact on Education: A Study of Rural China

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### *Abstract*

*Education influences gender attitudes in multiple ways at both the micro-and macro levels. Better-educated individuals hold more egalitarian gender attitudes, and this positive effect of individual education is larger for women than for men, indicating a strong empowerment effect for women. Egalitarian gender attitudes trickle down through education, as individuals in communities with high education are socialized toward more egalitarian attitudes. Though the International organizations recognize education as the basic agent of change in the status of women, gender inequalities persist in education. This paper is an attempt to explore the socio-cultural and physical processes which create barriers to girls' education and hence to development. Existing research on children's schooling in developing countries has focused on the outcomes of children's enrollment and attainment. However there is a need to highlight the role of culture in conditioning rational strategies for families. A dominant patrilineal family structure links sons to their families of origin and serves as the social foundation for cultural norms which, under economic constraints, make it less rational for families to invest in the education of daughters as compared with the education of sons. In this paper I have focused on a poor rural area in N. W. China and investigate whether the attitudes of mothers are linked to their plans for educating their children in future. Using recent longitudinal data from the Gansu Survey of Children and the Families(GSCF) a survey of 9-12 year old rural children ,families and schools in Gansu province an attempt has been made to explore the prevalence of son preference in the mother's educational aspirations for children and the impact of mother's aspirations on children's school persistence .*

If Asia's destiny is to be decided increasingly by Asians, it must be by India and China. Indeed, two-thirds of their people still live in farm villages not far above traditional levels of poverty. Nevertheless, the size and resources of the two continental giants together comprise a third of the human race as well as the human capacities manifest in their long cultural heritage. China like India has a marked rural-urban divide in gender inequality. Rural women have limited access to education, particularly secondary education. Changes in attitudes and public opinion appear to diffuse from metropolitan centers to smaller communities .In urban China, patriarchal family control on women diminished greatly after large-scale industrialization granted women high labor-force participation and the nuclear family became the dominant family type. However, peasants continued their long-standing traditions.

China is an important and interesting case for evaluating the relationship between education and gender egalitarianism. First, few societies in history have prescribed a lower status for women than traditional Confucian China. In all stages of life, women were sub-ordinate to men-obeying fathers

when young, husbands when married, and adult sons when widowed. Most women had no access to schooling and lacked economic roles outside the home. Once married, women were not allowed to divorce or remarry. Elite ideals encouraged suicide as an honorable response to a violation of chastity. Female foot binding was widely practiced. This pattern of male domination extended well into the first half of the 20th century, and some of these patriarchal beliefs and practices continued into the 1980s. Second, despite extensive knowledge about the determinants of gender attitudes at the micro level in advanced industrialized societies, little is known about the development of gender attitudes in a fast-developing country like China or about the mechanisms by which micro and macro-level social forces influence these attitudes. In this paper I address these gaps in knowledge by analyzing educational influences on egalitarian gender attitudes in China at both the micro and macro levels, identifying societal influences that produce change in gender attitudes at the macro-level via their effects on individual attitudes at the microlevel. Sociological research on attitudes has argued that education is the most likely harbinger of changes in values. In traditional societies, family or kin informally educate succeeding generations, providing economic skills and introducing appropriate social conduct and values.

### Missing Women

China like India is grappling with the declining female ratio. The international discussion about 'missing women' should be seen from the framework of Amartya Sen's capability approach. Sen argues that what is important normatively for a person's well-being is what she is 'able to do or to be,' not just what possessions or income she holds. While economists acknowledge that income alone does not capture all aspects of well-being, they tend to evaluate development in terms of income and growth of income. One of the principal innovations of Sen's capability approach is to widen the scope of what counts in the determination of societal development and individuals' well-being. He rejects any exclusive focus on money and commodities and he problematizes the commitment to utility as a metric of well-being. 1 In 2000 there were over 655 million males but only 619 million females living in China. 2 Considering the world as a whole, more males than females are alive today. With adequate basic healthcare and social opportunities, girls and women have a lower mortality rate at every age in the life cycle. As of 2000, China's figure was 52 million women; India was missing 44 million. 3 Sen has acknowledged that the number of 'missing women' is not as important as the massive scale of 'disadvantages to women,' which he calls 'clearly one of the more momentous, and neglected, problems facing the world today.' 4

While sensational causes such as female infanticide have some effect on the number of 'missing women,' even more significant are the commonplace privileges and preferences afforded to boys and men in everyday life. Sen has contributed to a literature showing sex bias in daily portions of the family's food (boys get greater and more frequent second servings than do girls); sex bias in the 'threshold' of the health problem needed to seek professional medical attention (boys are taken to emergency rooms for less severe conditions on average than are girls); and sex bias in

educational opportunities (male enrollments as well as literacy rates outpace the female figures) .

5

Women's Agency Achieving greater equality of basic capability will require increasing the level of well-being and the freedoms enjoyed by girls and women .Sen defines agency freedom as 'what the person is free to do and achieve in pursuit of whatever goals or values he or she regards as important'.<sup>6</sup> While acknowledging that the increased moral and social agency of women is intrinsically important, Sen has also argued that increasing women's agency can have significantly positive impacts on the well-being of all persons especially children. Sen's book, 'Development as Freedom', focuses especially on the centrality of women's agency for positive social change .The capability approach asserts that the well-being of a person is fundamentally dependent upon her or his ability to be an active participant in society. Freedom in its various forms requires persons to be able to exercise their agency.

The paper has been divided into three parts .The first section deals with the review of earlier research on educational aspirations, the second section deals with the cultural and social contexts of rural China and of Gansu in particular, the third section deals with the overview of data and the analysis.

### **Gender Equality in Education – a Universal Value**

It appears that there is an increasing challenge to the principle of gender equality not only from religious fundamentalists but also from a broader current, particularly in Asia, that questions the universality of the principle, The complex nature of women's education needs to be examined from sociological, political, economic, ethnographic and comparative perspectives and are rooted in the socio cultural,, political, economic, ethnographic and political structures of Indian society.

The issue of gender is central to the practice of development. Since women constitute half the population in any given society, this potential remains unutilized by inequality and discrimination. Gender equality and development goals are intrinsically linked to education. In 1948, the UN adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which stated that the access to quality basic education was a fundamental human right. In March, 1990, the World Conference on education for all (WCEFA) reaffirmed the right to education. Considering the goals of equity, the Indian Constitution guarantees equality to women in all the fields which include education as well. In 1975, the report, 'Towards Equality' discussed the strategies for women empowerment. In 1986, the NPE Programme of Action, 1992 outlined the importance of education for women's equality, equity and social justice.

Though the Chinese and Indian state and the International organizations recognize education as the basic agent of change in the status of women, gender inequalities persist in education. I would

like to explore the socio-cultural and physical processes which create barriers to girls' education and hence to development. To address this contradiction it becomes pertinent to answer some questions like –whether a rise in the personal income family income, living standard also granted women freedom in personal or family matters and helped them achieve social aims of education. It is imperative to outline here that women cannot be studied as members of homogeneous group but as members of different sections of population. Women's education has to be understood in terms of various variables like –region, caste, religion, class, etc. Patriarchal ideology is further compounded by economic deprivation and social oppression.

Educational research in developing countries is generally grounded in economic frameworks. Decisions about the schooling of children are perceived as family strategies to maximize returns to the family as a unit. 7 However, this is a myopic view as it overlooks psychological motivations for a child's future educational attainments. Scholars have studied how labour markets and family systems have traditionally differentiated benefited boys. There is a need to draw a distinction between discrimination that arises primarily due to economic considerations and discrimination that arises due to combination of incentives and traditional attitudes. In the educational stratification literature in China, there are few empirical studies of parents' gender attitudes and how these attitudes influence family decisions on children's education. This paper is an attempt to analyse the patrilineal family structures that characterize many rural areas reinforcement of a traditional norm that parents should rely on their sons for old age support A useful contribution is made by Hill and King in analyzing why gender inequality exists in education? They have shown that the gender equality in education results in higher per capita national income, life expectancy, lower infant mortality and fertility rates. 8 Regarding the effects of gender inequality in education on growth, Klasen showed that gender inequality in education negatively affected growth in the long run. Schultz showed that education is an investment in human capital while Tilak shows that investment in education yields a higher rate of return than investment in physical capital. Baro and Lee suggested in 1994 that larger the gap between male and female schooling more the economic backwardness. Measham and Chatterjee in their analysis of malnutrition in India in 1999 have pointed to poverty and maternal education as the prime factors. Subbarao and Raney find negative effects of female enrollment rates in 1999 on fertility while Schultz has shown that a one year increase in the adult female years of schooling reduces fertility by 8 per cent .Regarding child mortality, Klasen found that the ratio of female to male total years of schooling has a negative impact on the child mortality rate (under 5 years) Schultz in 1994 has shown that a one year increase in female educational attainment would increase child survival by 1.5 per cent. 9

Studies that have been based on national samples have generally focused on gender inequalities in education, the labor market, and the division of household labor. Little is known about the ideologies that buttress the Chinese system of gender social stratification More education provides individuals with better occupational opportunities and income in both rural and urban China, and this beneficial effect has also been found to be larger for women than for men for each additional year of education, the increase in earnings is larger for women than for men. 10

## Evolution of Female Education in China

Historical and sociopolitical factors such as the legacy of Marxism state/party control, economic reform, political upheavals, local conditions, and global influences have greatly shaped education in China.

Data from Chinese censuses indicates that more than 95 per cent of rural women who were born between 1910 and 1930 were illiterate. The bulk of rural women's work consisted of housework and child rearing women participated only minimally in remunerative farm work and subsidiary production, and then only during the busy seasons. Women were also handicapped by continuous pregnancies and had limited economic power. When the Communists came to power in 1949, China's educational system expanded rapidly. Between 1949 and 1976, the number of elementary schools tripled, and the number of middle schools increased by more than 36 fold; enrollment levels tripled in elementary schools and increased 45 fold in middle schools. Colleges almost doubled, and the number of college students grew by a factor of greater than 6 between 1949 and 1965, the year before the Cultural Revolution, which completely dismantled the system of higher education. The number of middle schools and their students grew the fastest in rural China. To augment its political power, the Communist Party consistently nursed the development of the women's movement. The Party strongly promoted women's labor-force participation and equal marriage rights, believing that women's limitations in these areas were sources of gender inequality. In 1950-a year after the Communist Party officially came to power - the Trade Union Law mandated equal pay for equal work and provided paid maternity leave and the right to nurse babies at work. In the same year, the Marriage Law declared that husbands and wives enjoy equal status and have the same rights to property after divorce. The Communist Party valued schools as an important tool for indoctrinating young people to communist ideology and ethics. In 1950, the Department of Education instructed middle schools and universities to pro-mote a 'revolutionary attitude toward life' among students and to devalue old feudal ideas and values. Both regular classes and extracurricular activities included political education. 11 In 1979, the Department of Education further instructed schools at various levels to foster great revolutionary expectations in young people. The educational system served as an apparatus for mobilizing women into the labor force. In rural China, fundamental transformations in social and economic structures also changed women's status, but the change was more modest. The expansion of the educational system reached rural China much later and at a slower pace than in the cities. Data from the 1982 third Census show that the overall illiteracy rate for rural China in 1982 remained as high as 35 per cent, with the rates for those born in the 1950s ranging from 25 per cent to 29 per cent and for those born in the 1960s ranging from 11 per cent to 17 per cent. The open-door policy that was endorsed by the new leadership in the early 1980s initiated a wave of extensive cultural exchange with foreign institutions of higher education.

The Communist Party has long recognized the socializing effects of schools and has used schools to promote gender equality, socializing young people to new values and attitudes toward women. It instructed schools to 'make an effort to strengthen revolutionary order and discipline, bring up a new generation with socialist consciousness and help to revolutionize the moral tone of our society'. Through school-based peer groups, such as the Young Pioneers and the Communist Youth Leagues ( CYL ), whose membership is 'irrespective of sex'. As part of its agenda to promote gender equality, the Communist Party instructed schools to provide a setting for girls and boys to internalize the principle of gender equality by confronting both sexes with similar tasks and giving them similar treatment in both academic and extracurricular. It was not until the 1980s that the Party tackled the traditional preference for having boys and passed the Succession Law, which gives women rights in the disposal of property, to further its family planning policy. Schools taught students that girls are as good as boys and that women can fulfill familial obligations as well as can young men.

A focus on mothers is especially appropriate the context of rural China as in most families, it is primarily the mothers who are the child care providers. This is all the more true for rural Gansu, where many of the fathers are full time or part time labour migrants. It is the mother who works on the land and takes care of the families. They play the most important role in socializing the children into gender roles. A mother's educational aspiration for her child not only influences parenting practices at home but they also have an impact on the child's school persistence.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

- To study the impact of female education on the individual, the household, the economy and the society.
- To assess the impact of gender inequality in education on economic growth, investment and population growth, the quality of human capital. To study how non market factors like health, nutrition and children's education are related to human resource development.
- To study how education invests women with an increased income earning potential and a key input of poverty reduction.
- To examine the close linkages between women education and children's health, family size mortality rate etc. As much as half of the reduction in child underweight rates in 90 per cent of the developing countries population between 1970 and 1995 is accounted for by the increases in women's education and status within the household.
- To explore the linkages between women education and political consciousness, social awareness, and scientific temper.
- To study the process of modern education in the socialization context that encourages women's dependency, submissiveness, conformity and passivity. By using the Time Use

Survey, the impact of the educational attainment on time use in household chores can be assessed. In developing countries, almost three-fourths of men's activities come under the paid category while most of women's work remains unpaid and undervalued.

### Research Questions

- Are the maternal educational aspirations for sampled boys and girls more similar among mothers who hold egalitarian attitudes than among the mothers who do not?
- Is the difference in the maternal aspirations between mothers of sample boys and girls greater among mothers who believe that parents should rely on sons for old age support?
- Is mothers' education correlated with maternal educational aspirations for children?
- Does gender composition affect the likelihood of a household running a small business, and
- Does gender affect the allocation of labor in households with business based economy

### Data and Methods

The GSCF data came from Gansu province which has a large rural population. GSCF consists of a sample of 2000 rural children aged 9-12 in the year 2000. A multi-stage cluster sampling approach was used with random selection procedures at each stage. The various stages included the counties, then at the final stage, 20 children were sampled from 9-12 year olds in each of the 100 selected villages to make an analysis of the enrollment patterns the longitudinal data can be used by consulting the second wave of data that was collected in 2004. The longitudinal data can help correlate mother's educational aspirations in 2000 and the actual school attainment of the child four years later, i.e. in 2004. Townships, then villages and then finally the children were selected. Data for the study also came from the first wave of the China Health and Nutrition Survey (CHNS), fielded in the fall of 1989. The impetus for this survey was the desire to study the consequences of social and economic change for nutrition and health, but the data are rich and can serve a variety of purposes. Data were gathered using instruments at the individual, household, and community levels. The present study draws on the household questionnaire, which includes extensive information about income-generating activities and time use as well as topics relevant to nutrition and health, and a survey of community infrastructure. The risk of being out of school as 39 per cent more for girls as compared to boys. The data also reflected difference in the educational aspirations of the boys and girls as 37 per cent of girls' mothers aspired for senior high school for their daughters while 46 per cent boys mothers aspired the same for their sons. While 29 per cent mothers wanted college education for their sons only 10 per cent wanted that for their daughters.



## Interpretation of Data

The economic reforms have promoted industrial development and the expansion of markets, while fostering a return to the household as the key decision-making unit. The household has regained control over production just as labour is shifting out of agri-culture. Potentially contradictory processes of social change are underway in rural China, inter-secting most dramatically in the small house-hold-run businesses (geti hu). What are the consequences of the rise of small businesses for gender and labor allocation in rural households? Is gender is becoming less important in household decision-making as rural areas experience economic reforms? Gender discrimination would not necessarily disappear. Alternatively, it may be that the shift to household-based production reemphasizes gender as a factor in labour allocation, with potential effects at either the household or individual level. Gender composition may influence household strategies, particularly the decision to operate a household business. Because domestic sideline production was traditionally women's work, the household's access to labour-especially women's labour influences the amount of domestic sideline production and overall household income. Gender may also affect the division of labour within households. We do not expect the economic reforms to initiate a return to traditional gender roles as they existed prior to the 1949 Revolution. Owned, operated, and in many cases based in the household, these small businesses may offer rural women the chance to earn additional income while also meeting their traditional obligations. There are reports that, especially in poor and inland regions of China, instead of the men and women both earning as was the case under collective agriculture, men have continued with field cultivation while women have expanded or developed domestic sidelines.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, historically, women were in charge of sideline production in rural China a fact that should reinforce these tendencies. She argued that because of women's fewer alternative earning opportunities and the compatibility of farm work with other household responsibilities, women remain 'down on the farm.' Land is an asset that cannot be liquidated; someone must work the land to retain the claim. This is not the traditional division of labour (men in the fields; women in house-work and domestic sidelines). On the other hand, it is not an entirely new form. The 1950s saw a major increase in the numbers of women engaged in agricultural production, and during the Great Leap Forward, rural men moved out of agriculture and into large and small-scale projects to develop infrastructure and an industrial base. The family production unit did not disappear during the collectivized years although it diminished considerably in importance.

## Findings

- Family economic situation has little effect on girls' school persistence (as mothers' attitude and educational aspirations are a far more important a deciding factor in the case of girls) while families keep their sons in school as long as they can afford to.
- Boys' previous school achievements do not significantly predict future school attainment. Besides the mother's influence, it is the grades and good performance of the girls which are the deciding factors behind girls' continuation in schools.

- Girls benefit both from mother's egalitarian and higher aspirations and from mother's own education.
- Gender bias in aspirations is most pronounced among mothers who hold traditional gender values.
- While most mothers believe in the importance of education for their daughter's future they are more concerned about their own future as senior citizens. (As daughters are going to get married into other households).

### **Rural India and China –Similar Story**

The education of girls in both countries remains largely neglected. Poor and rural girls are the most disadvantaged in terms of participation in education. There is a marked gender gap in primary school **enrollment**. Estimates suggest that 2.5 million girls, between the ages of 7 and 11 years, in China are not enrolled in school and that 75 per cent of the children who drop out of school are girls 13 . In both countries, cultural and social beliefs lead to bias against females, which starts before birth. However, gender disparities in primary education are sharper in India than in China. The growing financial burden of schooling has resulted in girls dropping out of rural schools in China. In both China and India there is a preference for sons, which leads to skewed gender ratios at birth. Parents in rural areas in both countries are less willing to meet the opportunity and real costs of educating girls than they are of sons. Rural parents in India regard education as a barrier to marriage for their daughters. They also feel that as they have to give dowries, there is no need to spend money on their daughters' education. Moreover, they assume that an educated girl will need to be married to a more educated boy, which entails a larger dowry. The recognition of female education in India as a social issue by the Government has only occurred in the past few decades. Education policy has shifted its emphasis away from Equality of Educational Opportunity to Education for Women's Equality and Empowerment, and this has made education more accessible to girls in rural areas. The dowry system and traditional beliefs about female education have led to distinctions between India and China in girls' primary school enrolment and retention rates. 14

Though the Chinese leadership claims that the introduction of the responsibility system and other economic reforms has increased decision-making power for women because of the need for their labour the data offers little support for this claim in rural areas and indicates that most rural women work exclusively in agriculture, and while this work contributes to the household budget, it is probably not a significant challenge to traditional authority structures and domestic relations Even if women's participation in household-run businesses were to increase, this situation is unlikely to change given that these endeavors are so easily incorporated into traditional family life. 15 Only if large numbers of women, especially married women, begin to work outside the household (and even village) in industrial and service jobs would we expect to see any impact. Even then, there is no guarantee. China's recent history has demonstrated convincingly that although work outside the home may be a necessary condition of improved status within the home, it is not a sufficient condition. 16

## Conclusion

Education thus empowers individuals, particularly women, opening up new employment and earnings opportunities, expanding individual frames of reference, and changing the way they view themselves in relation to the outside world. Even in rural areas women with higher levels of individual education tend to have more resources and more internal strength to sustain their egalitarian gender attitudes when they encounter a negative social environment. But it cannot be assumed that the positive effect of education on egalitarian attitudes is a universal phenomenon and that this positive effect can be applied to all societies at all historical times. The content of socialization reflects the varied sources of influence and assorted values that are promoted at different historical moments. 17

By questioning the social hierarchies as systems of domination, gender construction, power relationships, structural gender inequality, can transform social identity, human agency, and subjectivity of women in producing and transforming knowledge. These queries in research on women and gender have great potential for developing the field in China and India.

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# Role of Sufi Khanqahs in Promoting Tourism in Medieval India

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## I

### **Abstract**

*Sufism appeared in India as early as 8th century. Later on Sufis in large numbers migrated from Central Asia and Persia along with new Turkish rule in medieval India. They were very fond of traveling since travel is one of the major characteristics of a Sufi. They traveled widely throughout India and spread the message of cosmic love and universal humanism. They built many splendid khanqahs along the major trade routes. Merchant travelers were the leading financial supporters of the Sufi movement and in return the khanqahs offered them hospitality and protection for their smooth journey. Besides, rulers of this period especially of early medieval India also patronized the leading khanqahs. The role played by these khanqahs can be exemplified with a travel company, a hotel establishment, a cultural or educational center or even a bank as in the modern time. The purpose of this study is to assess the role and contribution made by the Sufi khanqahs to promote various types of travel and tourism activities in medieval India.*

**Key words** Sufi, Khanqah, Medieval India, Travel(er), Tourism

### **Introduction**

During the heydays of Islamic rule in medieval India from the Sultanate period to Mughal period, the whole socio-cultural system was divided into two strata, first, who followed shariyat and second, who were ignorant of it. From this division, a new form or branch of then dominating religion evolved to meet the socio-cultural and spiritual need of the people that can be understood in form of Sufism. Sufism is a common term used for Islamic mysticism. The Sufis were very liberal in their religious outlook. Keeping the motto that all human beings form the family of God, they preached spirituality through music and doctrine that professed unity of being (Wahdat-al-Wujud).

There are different opinions regarding the origin of the word 'Sufi'. The etymological roots have been traced to the woolen garments (jama-i-suf), the first in rank (saffa –i-awwal), the quality of purity (safa) and the companion of the verandah (ashab-i-suffa). The first is most popular because simple frock made of woolen garments was the sole and unique identity of a Sufi, besides, wool (suf) was the mark of purity for a Sufi.<sup>1</sup> The Sufis were organized into religious orders or silsilahs. These silsilahs were named after their founders which guaranteed the transmission of mystical knowledge acquired by founder of a respected order to promote generations of Sufis through their

successors. Though Abul Fazl mentioned about fourteen orders, the influential ones during the medieval period were six sects, namely Chishti, Suhrawardi, Firdausi, Qadiriya, Shuttari and added to the list later the Naqshbandi orders.<sup>2</sup> The founder and proponent Sufis of their respective orders settled in various urban centers of medieval India and built their own khanqahs. Soon, within a short span of time the entire country, from Multan to Lakhnauti and from Panipat to Deogir, was studded with khanqahs.<sup>3</sup>

## Objectives

The objectives of this study follow are

- 1). . . . . To draw a light on what Sufi khanqahs actually were in medieval India;
- 2). . . . . To present the role of khanqahs which gave India a socio-cultural stability which lasted for more than five decades;
- 3). . . . . To analyze the role and contribution of these khanqahs in developing and promoting various types of tourism activities.

## Methodology,

The study is mainly based upon the collection of secondary data. The secondary data were collected from various sources of publications such as books, journals, research articles and online data sources. Researcher's personal observation in Sufi literature and indirect oral investigations were also found useful.

## Review of Literature

K. A. Nizami (1985): The khanqahs of medieval saints developed into places where people of all types, assembled and a process of interaction started in language, social life and religious thought and behaviour. (9). Itinerancy being a part of the mystic discipline (Sufism) of the medieval period, itinerant mystics (traveler Sufi) carried mystic traditions from one country to another. (233). During the period under review, there were frequent movements of men. Tribal pressure, love of learning, mystic nanderjahre, commercial considerations, prospects of employment, and unsettled conditions were some of the determining factors. (246)

S.A.A. Rizvi (1978): From the time of khurasanian, Abu Sa'id, khanqahs were rendezvous for artisans and merchants. All khanqahs in India followed this tradition for the mutual benefit of both Sufi and their visitors. Page 399-400.

J.N. Nanda (2010): Finding the life in India among Hindus more congenial, they (Sufis) were popular in Hindu villages too...all the caravan routes were dotted with Sufi khanqah (stations) to help the travelers.

M. A. Khan (2004): They (Sufis) went to regions unknown to them and spent their lives there propagating the teaching of their masters. Over a period of time, these remote unknown places acquired name and fame due to their association with those saints and ultimately emerged as important urban centers.

Gilsenan (1967) argued that the functions performed by Sufi orders (khanqahs) in the past were now being ably executed by other institutions. The case of a hotel providing board and lodging to the travelers can be taken in this regard.

### **Meaning of a khanqah**

The term 'khanqah' is made up of two Persian words khana-gah that means 'a place of residence'.<sup>4</sup> Khanqah was a building designed specifically for gatherings of a Sufi brotherhood, comprising several rooms and a Jamaat-khana. The latter usually consisted of a big hall supported by a number of pillars and at the foot of each pillar a mystic could be seen with all his belongings - bedding, books and rosary. A typical khanqah was a large conglomeration of building including several rooms, a gateway, a mosque, masonry well (baoli) and to some extent, a meeting place for visitors with all of the necessary amenities and facilities.

### **Organizational structure**

The prominent Sufi saints belonged to their concerned orders, established themselves in the major cities of medieval India. With the passage of time their successors and descendents had also established daughter khanqahs at other places. These khanqahs had a limited territory to spread their spiritual influence. But, these khanqahs being in relation to each other and sub-ordinate to the principal khanqah constituted a large network which represented a wilayat. Subsequently, a large social and administrative network of these khanqahs of various orders was constituted that represented a large spiritual territory (wilayat). Delhi was a nucleus of large network of khanqah organizations, life as well as regime. Besides, there was an elaborate hierarchy of the officers of the Devine court consisting of 300 Akhyars, 40 Abdal (lieutenant), 7 abrar, 4 pegs, 3 naqba and 1 qutb or ghans was the chief of the entire corporation.<sup>5</sup> However daughter khanqahs were headed by khalifas, the principal khanqahs used to have an office of Sajjada nashin along with an administrative office of Khadim-i-khas who played an important role in rendering multifarious services including management of the khanqah's affairs. He was solely responsible for arranging all the necessities demanded by inmates and visitors to a khanqah.<sup>6</sup>

### **Sponsorship**

Although majority of the khanqahs enjoyed royal patronage as sponsored by the government especially in early medieval period, besides there were merchants and trade guilds who were leading financial supporters since all the caravan routes were dotted with Sufi khanqahs to help them for their smooth journey. Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq and his mother Makhdum-i-Jahan

built many khanqahs where travelers were provided with food and shelter. His successor Firoz shah Tughlaq also built many khanqahs around Delhi. It is reported that at every 4 or 5 kos a khanqah was built. Besides, the old khanqahs which had fallen into miserable conditions were repaired. The sultan allocated 10,000 to 30,000 tankas to every khanqah for their maintenance. He is credited with having built about 120 khanqahs between Delhi and Firozabad.<sup>7</sup> According to an early 14th century traveler there were as many as 2000 Sufi khanqahs in Delhi and around neighboring areas.<sup>8</sup> Besides royal patronage, merchants and other trade guilds were the leading financial supporters, in return the khanqahs offered them both hospitality and protection. As regard the complex of the Khanqahs, merchants and other wealthy people also seem to have spent money on raising structures for the comfort and benefit of the travelers around the major Sufi khanqahs from early times.<sup>9</sup>

### **Traveler Sufis - The Ambassadors of Khanqahs:**

By the early medieval India, the people of khanqahs could be seen as divided into two categories – residents (muqiman) and travelers (musafir). Resident Sufis had certain duties towards the traveling Sufis. A warm welcome to the travelers should be extended by the resident and best food offered to them by the khanqah's steward. The travelers shouldn't be pestered with questions and if a traveler was ignorant of the customs and practices of the khanqah, the duty of the residents was to explain him what was expected. However, there were certain conditions to the travelers too, he should reach khanqah before asr (afternoon prayer) and if late should spend the night in a mosque nearby. Secondly, if a traveler stays more than three days, he must render some services (cleaning, cooking etc.) in the khanqah.<sup>10</sup> Besides the division of khanqah's people into travelers and residents, the Qalandar Sufis were the purely wandering dervishes. The traveling attributes of the qalandar Sufi can be understood by the following quatrain:

**I'am a wandered whose name is Qalandar;  
I'have neither home, nor goods, nor kitchen;  
when day comes, I wander round the world;  
when night falls I lay my head on a brick.<sup>11</sup>**

Although traveler Sufis were hardcore loyal to one's Shaikh, they started to travel frequently to the khanqahs of other Shaikhs to get benefits of faiz (grace).<sup>12</sup> This custom seems to have influenced the elite and masses to travel during this period.

The blue patched cloak might be called the uniform of the traveler Sufis. It has been seen in almost all parts of Asia and Europe for nearly four hundred years. The basic reason is that during a long journey, a white (or light colored) garment could not be easily washed and retain its original appearance.<sup>13</sup> The role played by the traveler Sufis was like an Ambassador of the khanqah. The life style they led, wherever they traveled, was similar to that of the locals. This was crucial for their acceptance within the community. They narrated the spiritual excellence of the saint; the successful career of their disciples; the legends that the saint invented and all about his miraculous



power. Thus, they popularized the khanqah to which they belonged, mainly through the word of mouth and advocated the masses to travel to the concerned khanqah.<sup>14</sup>

Some outstanding traveler Sufis who took long journey in India and abroad are mentioned as follow:

Saiyid Gesu Daraz, after the death of his Pir Shaikh Nasiruddin Chirag-i-Dilli (d. 1355) visited nearly all khanqahs of early Chishti saints before he finally settled at Gulbarga (Karnataka).<sup>15</sup>

Saiyid Jalaluddin Bukhari, a prominent Suhrawardi saint of India was known as Makhdum-i-Jahaniyan-i-Jahan Gasht because of his extensive tours to various places in India and abroad.<sup>16</sup>

It is said that a disciple of Nizamuddin Auliya, Saiyid Nazmuddin Ghawthudahar had toured England and China; besides pilgrimages to Mecca not less than 42 times.<sup>17</sup>

Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya who is said to be the richest Sufi of India traveled to Baghdad, Bukhara, Jerusalem and number of other foreign cities in search of his inner quest.<sup>18</sup>

Shaikh Bahauddin, son of Shaikh Fariduddin dedicated his life to travel. He moved freely among the cities of Northern India. On these trips he was always a welcome guest at the various Chishti and Shuttari khanqahs.<sup>19</sup>

haikh Abdul-Wahhab Qadiri (b. 1536) chose the life of a traveler Sufi. He traveled from Gujarat and Deccan to Malabar, then to Ceylon to Mecca in a merchant ship.<sup>20</sup>

### **Role of a Khanqah in promoting Tourism**

Khanqahs in medieval India were mainly known for the hospitality they provided; in fact the true meaning of a medieval khanqah could be understood as a place of hospitality. Example of a khanqah of Khwaja Moinuddin at Ajmer can be cited where there was generosity like a river, affection like the sun and hospitality like the earth.<sup>21</sup> Rumi also expressed in his verses through a story of two traveling brothers that khanqahs were the most convenient of all the places to stay in medieval India.<sup>22</sup> The rule of first greet, then eat, then talk was applied to every visitor/traveler irrespective of caste, color or creed.<sup>23</sup> Rooms were offered to stay and refreshment was given to make a traveler comfortable after the long hazardous journey. In the case of a traveler Sufi, the servants of the khanqah offer to wash his feet when he at bed time and during the morning bath, they had to offer to rub his back, knees and soles of the feet, besides offering a fresh set of clothes.

A significant social activity of the khanqahs was their organization of the langar (community kitchen).<sup>24</sup> The langar was a regular feature of every khanqahs because of regular flow of futuh (unsolicited gift) from merchants and other trade guilds. The royal people also did a lot to let the khanqah run the langar smoothly. Some of the names from Makhdum-i-Jahan, mother of Sultan

Muhammad bin Tughlaq to the Mughal Emperor Jahangir can be suggested in this regard. The latter gave a cauldron to the khanqah at Ajmer in 1614 and also had food cooked in it that sufficed for more than 5000 people at a time.<sup>25</sup> Purchase of agriculture land and garden by the khanqahs for the maintenance of langars are also mentioned in the history of medieval India. Food of extremely good quality was cooked there. Travelers were fed lavishly in these khanqahs. Many khanqahs have been popular in the past for certain dishes too.<sup>26</sup> Ibn Battua mentions a beautiful khanqah in Bakkar where the best food was served to the travelers. It is also worth mentioning that in medieval India many khanqahs were known for giving lavish feast in celebration of religious events and festivals in their complexes.

Audition or singing session (sama) was an indispensable part of khanqah's life since Sufis were fond of music.<sup>27</sup> Sama was in fact a type of musical concert whose modern and parallel form is known as Qawwali.<sup>28</sup> It was a corporate activity which is completely against shariat (Islamic law)<sup>29</sup> as was argued by Ulemas (Islamic scholar) that sama was likely to lead to sensuality than to spirituality. It is because music is by nature ambivalent that could elicit purely sensual reaction. Sama was often held in the premise of a khanqah after mid-day meal and was attended by people of even surrounding villages. Tanbul and sherbet was served to the participant after performance was over.<sup>30</sup> The recitation of Hindawi music along with regional dialects at sama was popular at all Sufi khanqahs, particularly those distant from Delhi. Although Al-Hujwiri made a distinction between two types of visitors in sama; first, those who concentrate deeply upon the spiritual objective and moral lesson; and the second are those who are instinctively attracted to and fond of musical concerts.<sup>31</sup> Yet Sufis enjoyed the sama very much which can be estimated by the fact that in the state of ecstasy, they would often tear open their cloaks or shirts.<sup>32</sup> Special guests to the khanqahs were welcome through organizing mehfil-i-sama in which local dignitaries, social and political leaders were also invited.

The major event at a khanqah was celebrating the Urs (death anniversary) of the Shaikh. It symbolizes the marriage of Shaikh with God which is possible only after death.<sup>33</sup> This annual event was eagerly awaited by the poor and affluent alike. Artisans and traders also waited for the occasion as pilgrims from far and near bought products as souvenirs. At every khanqah certain special items associated with the Shaikh were supplied on this occasion and were bought by votaries for presentation to family member and friends, for they were believed to have been sanctified by the khanqah.<sup>34</sup> The vast land around the khanqah was covered by the tents of pilgrims and general visitors. They often lived under the shade of trees. Evidences are available since fourteenth century that Urs provided rogues with an opportunity for merry-making and promiscuous enjoyment. Special entertainment programs and ritual ceremonies were held to keep the gathering busy and enthralled in the night. Mehfil-i-sama was the most important official function of the Urs. The popularity of Persian ghazals and Hindawi music also owes a great deal to the Urs. On the other hand, Jaffery (1981) in her study of the dargah of Nizamuddin Auliya, documents various ceremonies at the time of Urs which were attended by the people of diverse backgrounds, from different parts of the world. The ritual of walking on fire is one case in this regard.<sup>35</sup> Abbe Carre's eyewitness account of the Urs ceremony at the dargah of Saiyid

Muhammad Gesudaraz at Gulbarga in Karnataka applies to every Chishti dargah. Writing sometime after 1673 he says: 'I was surprised to find the road (to Gulbarga) full of procession of fakir and Hindus. Most of the men had a sort of cradle on their heads, covered by little streamers of cocks feathers, bells, and the like. The women and children all carried sticks which they lifted in the air, for the wind to run whirligigs on them, made of cloth, in all sorts of colors. They also carried plates of copper, little pots and a sort of cauldron on which they beat, as on Basque drums...'36 Basant mela and twelve days Jesht mela were some other major festivities celebrated by the khanqahs. A visit of Hindus to the Sufi khanqahs on the days of their festivals is also a well known practice since medieval times.

Khanqahs in medieval India also gave an impetus to trade and commerce. People were encouraged to indulge in trade and commerce for their livelihood. Financial help was extended to the needy by the khanqahs to set up their enterprises. They also approved of agriculture and pursuit of craft, but they strongly advocated honesty and fair dealing in business.<sup>37</sup> On the other hand, a large gathering of pilgrims and other visitor's visit was instrumental in organizing the commercial activities around a khanqah. With the passage of the time and popularity of khanqah, shops selling flowers, chadar, books, tobaccos, eatable items and number of other commercial enterprises had started to come up. During the major festivals, the whole area around a khanqah used to look like a fair with vendors, hawkers, wayside shops selling wares and memorabilia associated with the Sufi saint. The shopkeepers, hawkers and other business persons participated both in order to receive a blessing and make a profit.

The khanqahs played an important role in the process of urbanization in this period and consequently in the promotion of migration of people from one place to another. The Sufis themselves came to be identified with the urban centers and vice versa e.g. Shaikh Farid with Ajodhan, Qutbuddin Munawwar with Hansi, Bu Ali with Panipat, Shaikh Ahmad with Ahmadabad, Mohammad Gesu Daraz with Gulbarga, Shaikh Jalaluddin Tabrezi with Malda etc. there is a big list containing names of places founded by the Sufis or were associated with them in one way or the other. Nevertheless the association of these places with the names of Sufis would indicate that they must have played a role in the process of urbanization. It is worth mentioning that some Shaikhs deputed their disciples to popularize their silsilahs in different places of India. In compliance of the order of their masters, these disciples even went to regions unknown to them without making any distinctions between hills and plains or between deserts and fertile land. They built khanqahs and spent their lives there. Over a period of time, these remote unknown places acquired name and fame due to their association with those saints and ultimately emerged as important urban centers. It may be mentioned that in the hills it was very difficult to discover a route connecting one area to the other. When the Sufis settled at different places of the Himalayan region of India, these began to be inhabited by people of different social background.<sup>38</sup> What is being suggested that the Sufis never believed in geographical boundaries, therefore, the topography of India couldn't dampen their zeal for travelling, settling and propagating Sufism along with promoting tourism side by side.

Khanqahs also had a profound unifying impact in the realm of arts and culture. From about 12th century, poetry became a medium for Sufis to popularize their views. It was usually composed in the regional dialects, which could be easily comprehended by the common people of the region. Underlining the importance of folk poetry, Eaton states that 'the bulk of the folk poetry written by the Sufis was sung by village women as they did various household chores.'<sup>39</sup> It is the Sufi poetry along with Hindawi music which provided the most captivating songs for a particular type of singing known as sama. Such songs whether composed for propaganda purpose or a natural evolution but a significant factor in the deep arousal of Hindu interest in the corporate activities of khanqahs.<sup>40</sup> Khaliq Ahmad Nizami finds Sufi khanqahs as fertile grounds for the growth of common medium of communication among people of different linguistic background coming into contact with each other mainly because of their mutual economic and political needs. It was here that the dialects intelligible to them were conceived. In this regard, the fact that birth place of Urdu language was the khanqah of medieval India can be hardly questioned.<sup>41</sup>

They respectfully followed the regional cultural values pertaining to food, clothes, housing and means of livelihood. Sufis like Shaikh Hamiduddin Nagauri advocated vegetarianism and non-violence in deference to the local custom. Social groups like that of the peasants, architects and artisans, observing that Sufis respected their sentiments and life styles, found no hesitation to embrace the life of khanqah.<sup>42</sup> As far as architecture and paintings are concerned, there are various paintings from the Mughal atelier painted by renowned artists showing the Sufis in a discourse or discussion.<sup>43</sup> Such paintings also show the large gathering of people including peasants, laborers, artisans etc. on the other hand, the tombs built in the complex of khanqahs are the earliest specimens of Indo-Muslim architecture which influenced the course of Islamic architecture of the rest of the subcontinent.<sup>44</sup> Most of the tombs in design and effects were a tour de force. The famous inscription on the base of the façade of Buland-Darwaza signed by Shaikh Husain Ahmad is also a remarkable wonder for centuries.<sup>45</sup> To sum up, the Sufis and their khanqahs worked toward the cultural unity of medieval India.

To boost tours and travel across the country, the Sufi khanqahs in medieval period provided various facilities. The contemporary sources mention that journeys across the country were full of terror. There was fear of robbers and wild animals. To eradicate these terror conditions khanqahs made various arrangements. The improvement of communication by planting fruit trees along the roads to provide shade and food, digging wells at regular intervals and setting up rest house for travelers were some of khanqah's positive social services. Describing these arrangements, Barni makes the following observation, '...many platforms with thatched roofs over them were constructed on the way from the city (Delhi) to Ghiyaspur; well were dug; water vessels were kept, carpet were spread, and a servant and a hafiz was stationed at every platform so that people going to Shaikh (khanqah) may have no difficulty...'<sup>46</sup> Maksud states at another place that several buildings between Shergarh and Lahore were attributed to Saiyid Khairuddin, a disciple of Shaikh Daud, on his way to Lahore. He also dug well and tanks and laid garden for the comfort and safety of the travelers.<sup>47</sup> Thus, it can be understood that the above discussed activities and functions of the khanqah were very instrumental in promoting travel and tourism in medieval India.

## **Types of tourism promoted by the khanqahs**

Pilgrimage tourism: Since time immemorial, man, in order to achieve his target sought divine help and for this purpose, khanqahs in medieval India became a medium of fulfilling such targets of the people. They considered making a pilgrimage to the saint is an act of worship, comparable to visit the holy Ka'aba and thought that it is better to worship there than at any other place.<sup>48</sup> After the demise of saints, their tombs became famous centers of pilgrimage. In 1333, when Ibn Battuta arrived in Delhi, he found the dargah of Shaikh Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki one of the most popular pilgrimage places in this metropolitan city. Abul Fazl, describing the annual pilgrimage to the tomb of Salar Masud states, '...people from distant places carrying multi-colored flags and numerous presents made pilgrimages to the Salar's tomb at Bahraich (Gujarat). A large number of people going to Bahraich from Agra went without sleep for several nights while reveling in the neighborhood of the capital.. '<sup>49</sup> A pilgrim, being devout to the concerned silsilah, had to know about the lives of first five saints along with locations of their tombs and date of their Urs. This would explain that when people visit a town to attend the Urs of their favorite saint, they would also go on pilgrimage to the tombs of all those saints who in one way or the other were connected to their favorite saint. Khadim was solely responsible to perform the ritual of presenting to the tomb (ziyarat); escort them (pilgrims) to the various other ritual ceremonies held in the khanqah and take them around the sacred places of the town. Thus, pilgrimage tourism was promoted in this way by the khanqah in medieval India.

## **Educational tourism**

. Education has been an important cause of traveling since Sufis were very fond of study and roamed the whole country to impart education and lesson of religion. Various versions are available for their constant traveling, partly due to the missionary work and partly for pursuit of knowledge and education. On the other hand, khanqahs of some prominent Sufis were the hub of popular educational centers. Examples of the khanqahs at Ajodhan, Sirhind, Delhi, Ajmer, Bahraich and Gulbarga can be cited in this connection. Many bright young men were initiated and enrolled as disciples.<sup>50</sup> Khalifas after awarding them khalifat-nama, were recruited in khanqahs to teach those disciples. Some disciples of famous Khalifas in their respected khanqahs were also associated with foreign countries. These khalifas, by their very vocation were also obliged to make educational tours to foreign lands for acquiring mystic knowledge and learning from the experience of some renowned master.<sup>51</sup>

## **Business tourism**

. Sufi khanqahs along the major trade routes played a strategic role in economic development and also in promoting business tourism. The grand trunk road of India was connected with many branch routes running north-south and also south-west lying on both sides of river, Ganges and Yamuna. The Nepal route connecting India with Nepal and Tibet and Assam route connecting India with China and south-east Asia were quite important. From the time of khorasanian Abu Saiyid,

khanqahs along these routes, provided a rendezvous for merchants. All khanqahs in India followed this tradition for the mutual benefit of both Sufis and merchant travelers. The latter at this time were continually undertaking hazardous journey to distant countries, while being engaged in risky commercial ventures. Some khanqahs operated a type of 'Spiritual Insurance' scheme in which financial pledge were made by merchants in return for Sufi prayer for protection during a journey, installments being collected enroute. The chain of khanqahs of Shaikh Abu Ishaq from Kazirun (Assam) to China is a case in point. Naturally this system was one sided and hardly compares with a modern insurance scheme.<sup>52</sup> Nevertheless, the network of Chishtis, Suhrawardis and Firdausia khanqah in north India, and those of the Kubrawiyya, and of other orders in Kashmir offered greatly needed physical and psychological comfort to merchants travelers during medieval India. Not only land routes but sea routes were also in vogue to carry goods for business purpose during this period. At this point, Ibn Battuta's statement about the flow of wealth to a khanqah is worth quoting: 'Travelers (merchants) on the sea of China make a practice when the wind turns against them and when they fear pirates, to make a vow and on their safe return pay the money to the Shaikh of the khanqah. The ships from China and India carry Muslim merchants...'<sup>53</sup> This applied to all important khanqahs in India as well. Hence, these khanqahs soon developed as a place for rest, refreshment and relaxation for the merchants and other travelers.

### **Eco tourism**

. The khanqahs were also instrumental in promoting so called Soft tourism which can today be termed as Eco and Adventure tourism. It is well known that Sufis preferred to settle down on the outskirts, far away from the hustle and bustle of a place. In their search for solitude and peace of mind, they even penetrated deep in the forest. Over a time their tombs were raised in these places. Such tombs become surrounded by trees since no one dare cut them down or remove fallen wood from the Sufi's grave.<sup>54</sup> Shaikh Abdul Haqq states at a place that the area around the grave of the Shaikh Husain Nagauri in Ajmer had turned into a wilderness and abounded in wild animals.<sup>55</sup> In this way, these tombs not only promoted ecological conservation but also eco tours to these places of the great souls.

### **Adventure tourism**

. Hunting as a mode of adventure tourism had an important place in medieval India. The contemporary literature on Sufism provides numerous reference of hunting expedition. It states that hunting was a sport liked mainly by the royal class. Even some Sufis were also fond of hunting.<sup>56</sup> The hunting expedition of royal people in the forest in the outskirts of Delhi and their cumulative visits to the Sufi khanqahs are also mentioned. The example of Alauddin Khilji may be cited in this connection, who, while on a hunting expedition wandered into Panipat and presented himself at the khanqah of Shaikh Bu Ali.<sup>57</sup>

## Conclusion

The medieval India is marked by journeys and pilgrimages to holy places. This is a period in which pilgrimage and travel for many other motives were a collective phenomenon that was also an integral part of a Sufi khanqah. The advantages of established khanqahs were great in sense of promoting various types of tourism. Firstly, as per the rule of khanqah, 'first greet, then eat, then talk', hospitality was one of the most important aspects of the khanqah. Secondly, they offered board and lodging to the travelers. Third, khanqahs being situated on safe locations in a particular urban center especially along the trade routes provided easy accessibility. Fourth, large numbers of people were impelled to undertake pilgrimage to the tombs of Sufi saints throughout the length and breadth of the country. Fifth, singing sessions (sama) in khanqah were often attended by Muslims and Hindus of surrounding villages where for latter, it was a source of entertainment. Sixth, the khanqah became a site for the exchange of religious goods where pilgrims from distant places visited to offer futuh in return for receiving amulets, talismans, charms designed to prevent sickness, diseases, misfortune, damage of crop and other catastrophes. Seventh, the major festivities including the Urs, Basanti Mela, Jesht Mela were celebrated with great enthusiasm and eagerly awaited by the people. Finally, some affluent khanqahs were transformed into commercial ventures, thereby functioning as an agent of providing money to pilgrims and their provisions for pilgrimage.

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# **Perspective Section**

## Public Morality and Freedom of Speech and Expression in India

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The moral panic in urban India over women's attire, different sexualities, eroticization of the body be it in the cinema, social media, books, advertisements have kept the lines blurred regarding public morality and the privacy rights. The law has often stepped in to decide on matters of the morally acceptable in both public and private sphere. Print and electronic media have pushed the boundaries of public morality by challenging the restrictions on freedom of speech Article 19 a. These have re-worked the legal category of obscene through the logic of social merit/good, the 'average' mind accessing the content and on rare occasions, consent of participants in the speech act. Some recent cases have thrown light on the ambiguous nature of the restrictions on free speech especially when it comes to public morality. Should there be a thrust for constitutional morality instead?

### Morality and public space

Article 19 (a) refers to the protection of certain rights regarding freedom of speech and expression; where clause 2 states that reasonable restrictions of public order, decency or morality might be applicable to the freedom. Obscenity laws in India are covered under IPC Section 292-294. The Ranjit Udeshi case of 1964 stated that obscenity clause would be read in the restrictions to free speech of public decency and morality.<sup>1</sup> This case revolved around the public sale of the impugned book, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Judging by community standards, the Supreme Court held that there was no social good that seemed to preponderate over the banning of the book. Working through the Hicklin test, the Court stated that though nudity in art and literature did not make the subject obscene, the law must also protect those whose prurient minds take delight in reading erotic writings. Thus, the Court felt that the morality of the public space would be harmed if the book was allowed to be sold in public.

Central to the argument laid down in the judgment was the need for legal understanding of public morality that sought to reflect the existing standards in society. Society often comes to deal with obscene or immoral content through recurring moral panic. Moral panics often identify particular groups as the personification of sexual immorality, conferring upon the public, spatial policies that are designed to contain this threat. The recurrence of moral panics irrespective of economic crises demonstrates the continuing need for society to define its social and spatial boundaries.<sup>2</sup> These boundaries make the binaries of the public and the private.

Critical to this discourse on morality is, understanding the space of the public itself. What is open to public discussion and what should be left out of the debate? In a case for 'strong democracy' made by Benjamin Barber states that spaces should not be defined as wholly public or private but

is more like a common ground of contesting common goods.<sup>3</sup> When morality becomes a matter of public sentiments, private interests and privacy rights are bound to suffer. Both should be kept in a balance to ensure a proper functioning of society.

In India the Right to Privacy is covered under Article 21; Protection of Life and Personal Liberty. It states that 'no person shall be deprived of his life and liberty except according to the procedure established by law'<sup>4</sup>, thus introducing into the Indian constitutional jurisprudence, the right to privacy of an individual. Privacy is understood as freedom from unwarranted search and seizure, informational privacy, bodily integrity and personal autonomy, among others. Martha Nussbaum's study of the law in restitution of conjugality rights shows how privacy arguments validate the subordinate position of the woman in the sphere of the private which is the home and marriage. Sighting examples like the regulation or banning of gay sex publics or bar dancing which do not take into account the consent of the parties involved, she states that public morality. often trample the rights of individuals to their own private space.<sup>5</sup> Thus, public morality often seeks to reinstate the patriarchal heteronormative structure even in the space of the private.

### **Obscenity and Content**

In 1996 the Apex court lifted the restrain on exhibition of the movie Bandit Queen (1994) that displayed nudity and a scene of rape. The court stated that the subject matter of the film depicted 'a social evil' and hence was not derogatory.. Here a thrust was made on the social context of the display of nudity in the film which captured the life and struggles of a convict turned political leader, Phoolan Devi.<sup>6</sup> The Supreme Court relied on the Roth Test of 1957 that measured obscenity by identifying the dominant theme of the work and the degree of its appeal to the prurient interest.

The recent ban on Lee Udwin's documentary, India's Daughters, for its derogatory comments on women seems to contradict the Bandit Queen judgment. The documentary gives an account of the rape in Delhi in 2012 through an interview of the convicted, the lawyers and the parents. Shared in it are thoughts on women that are steeped in patriarchal overtones, for example comments like, a woman out late at night is provoking rape, a woman is like a diamond that needs (male) protection if alone. The idea of this documentary is to challenge these very stereotypes by posing questions on women's freedom, privacy and opens up a debate on morality itself. The social message of the documentary cannot be outweighed by the laws that protect the women's 'modesty' which thereby reinforces gender discrimination. Much like the Bandit Queen movie this movie too does not encourage a viewer to propagate these misogynistic sentiments but in fact seeks to shun them.

In 2014 Aweek Sarkar and Anr Vs State of Bengal & Anr case (2004) the Supreme court stated that, keeping the contemporary standards in mind and the social message of anti apartheid the picture in question was not obscene, nor did it incite sexual offences.<sup>7</sup> This picture was that of Boris Becker and his fiancé in the nude which featured in a Bengali newspaper Anandabazar Patrika. Though the verdict deviated from the standard Hicklin test in its measure of obscenity, there almost seems to be a compulsive search for a 'social message' in the context. The bench also

observed that the photograph was taken by the father of the fiancé, giving familial consent to this otherwise probably objectionable portrayal of women.

### **Obscenity and Consent**

This draws on to another matter surrounding morality, that of consent. While discussing public morality we find that often the consent of parties involved in the impugned speech/act is not taken into account, which side steps privacy rights. It is further argued that privacy often becomes a tool of the heterosexual society to reinstate heteronormativity by protecting the space of the private only, wherein public expression of gay or lesbian desire is not protected. J.S. Mill in his book *On Liberty*, makes a distinction between self-regarding acts (acts that do no harm to others) and other regarding act (acts that may impact the audience). This distinction is based on the private-public sphere separateness where acts in the private are considered consensual and those in public is open to censure and is considered not necessarily consenting. This compartmentalization of consent is problematic because here it is determined by the place rather than the participants. However, from here he conceptualizes the 'harm principle' whereby actions must be judged according to the harm they cause and not just because they are offensive or disgusting (i.e. laws should not be moralistic). Accordingly, 'the liberty of the individual must be thus far limited; he must not make himself a nuisance to other people. But if he refrains from molesting others in what concerns them, and merely acts according to his own inclination and judgment in things which concern himself, the same reasons which show that opinion should be free, prove also that he should be allowed, without molestation, to carry his opinions into practice at his own cost.'<sup>8</sup>

In 2010 *Khushboo versus Kanniammal* case deliberated on the limits to article 19(a) to freedom of speech and expression. Actress Khushboo in an interview gave her view on pre-marital sex stating that society should accept that girls need not to be virgins at the time of marriage.<sup>9</sup> The Supreme Court defended the appellant Khushboo based on the harm principle wherein her speech act did not effectively endanger community interest or cause immoral activity. More importantly the court specified that personal autonomy must be not tampered with. Consent was given a priority in this ruling.

This idea of consent seems to be lacking in the *Naz Foundation Judgment* of 2013 where the Supreme Court upheld the clause of Section 377 that criminalizes homosexuality.<sup>10</sup> This was done to prevent acts of child sodomy and exploitation of children that clearly falls within the domain of unnatural sex. However this judgment does not give space to consensual same-sex acts between adults. A few years back Delhi Sessions Court judgment of 2009 regarding homosexuality read down Section 377 stating that, 'popular morality, as distinct from a constitutional morality derived from constitutional values, is based on shifting and subjecting notions of right and wrong. If there is any type of "morality" that can pass the test of compelling state interest, it must be "constitutional" morality and not public morality.'<sup>11</sup> Though the term 'constitutional morality' has been used in the context of law only of late, its first mention was made by B.R. Ambedkar, to distinguish it from a morality that would otherwise be the stronghold of any majority

community.<sup>12</sup> Constitutional morality should be such that it reflects the basic principles of the constitution across the gender, caste, class, religion and other hierarchies.

In the context of consent, morality finds itself on slippery surface. Take a look at the recent controversy of executive banning the All India Bakchod (AIB) Roast video on YouTube. It has been called into question because of its derogatory comments/jokes that have been termed racist, sexist and offensive. The roast was held in front of four thousand other people who attended the event knowing full well that the jokes were likely to be offensive. The participants in the speech act (including the audience) consensually agreed to be witness of the event. Can public morality have truly been harmed if the consent of participants/viewers has been made certain? In this tangle one must not let go of the Right to Dissent even if consent (by way of buying tickets to the show) is ascertained. The contract of consent should not belie the right to dissent. This particular event came under public scrutiny after it was posted on YouTube. Airing it on YouTube does enlarge the audience but to watch it must mean a 'consenting' act of searching it on the website, etc. In morally fragile matters like these it may be helpful to keep the harm principle in mind separating it from the offensive in order to hold onto a Freedom of Speech which is reflective of constitutional morality.

### **Censorship and security interests**

The Indian government has followed a rather strict guideline in censorship of harmful/offensive content on TV and print media. Pre-censorship was introduced into electronic media by the Supreme Court in petitioner's K. A. Abbas' case of 1970. It stated that pre-censorship was necessary as the medium of film had to be treated differently from other forms of art and expression. The visual and aural appeal of the television made it a more formidable communication device than any yet invented.. It further noted: 'The art of the cameraman, with trick photography, vistavision and three dimensional representation thrown in, has made the cinema picture more true to life than even the theatre or, indeed, any other form of representative art.'<sup>13</sup> The court stated that the grounds of pre-censorship however were laid down by Article 19 (2) of the constitution which ensured that freedom of speech remain intact in the Indian law. This amendment was justified on the grounds that TV channels had more reach than books and were more easily accessible. However, the internet poses new threats to the censorship policy. The internet does not allow for pre-censorship per se. It is possible to block content but only after it has already been posted on the web. The easy access and dissemination of information via electronic media has its positive and negative side. While it does go on to give added weight to freedom of speech it also has the potential to conduct fear and terror in an instant, as one saw in the North East scare. The North East scare led to a mass exodus of the North Easterners from the Bangalore and Mysore and other metropolitan areas that was triggered by a mass sending of an MMS depicting violence, over the phone.

The potential of the internet has not been missed by the government agencies. The Information Technology Act of 2000 has laid down several tight monitoring policies. These policies must be

discussed elsewhere. However, it becomes important to note the striking down of Section 66A of the IT Act that made a distinction between 'harmful' and 'offensive' content, giving wider ambit to the scope of free speech.<sup>14</sup> It was held that offensive was not a category that was reflected in any of the eight restrictions on free speech and thus could not be held a valid reason for withholding content on the internet. This judgment came under the light of gross misuse of the Section 66A by governing bodies.

## Conclusion

Monica Juneja observes that those who protest obscenity must delineate themselves from the fascist wing. The public is fraught with this untenable dichotomy. These dichotomies give rise to debates regarding the separation of sex from obscenity; vulgar from what is obscene and sexual violence being the extreme perversion of the obscene hence punishable. The women's movement and the Hindu Right Wing draw attention to the difference in position on censorship and obscenity where while one is about the rights of the woman, the other talks of the inviolate purity of the woman and the private space.<sup>15</sup> Debates regarding beauty contests have the right wing and certain strands of feminist voicing their opinion against it but from different perspectives. Clamour for privacy is not to be read as the demand for the woman to be restricted in the safe zone of the private sphere.

Recently, in the movie 'Dum Lagake Haisha' the word lesbian was censored which is a decidedly regressive attitude adopted by the Censor Board of Film Certification. Does our public morality have no room for sexual minorities? Regulating the obscene must not give in to fascist diktats that have taken the form of moral policing in India. The contemporary community standards must be held as the guiding principle for adjudging the immoral. The consent of adults should give room for social acceptance of the otherwise unacceptable standards of morality. Privacy rights should entail equal protection of law and equality in cases of discrimination based on sex. When it comes to abortion, marital choice etc privacy clause is not enough and needs a more substantive basis. The law is a reflection of social standards; however, at times the law must set the precedence in what is constitutionally moral.

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# **Review Section**

## Review of God and Evil in the Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas

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**Calame, John and Charlesworth, Esther. Foreword by Woods, Lebbeus. *Divided Cities: Belfast, Beirut, Jerusalem, and Mostar*, University of Pennsylvania Press, (2012), 280. McCabe, Herbert 2010.. *The God and Evil in the Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas*. London: Continuum International Publishing Group. .xviii + 206 pp, (paperback), (ISBN 978-0826-41304-8)**

This book provides two historical accounts: firstly, the book deals with the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas; secondly, this book is an edited version of McCabe's thesis titled *God and Evil in the Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas*, examined on 26 June 1957. Brain Davis, the editor and literary executor of McCabe's works, provides an introduction to this work. The book is organized into five unequal, thematic sections preceded by Terry Eagleton's foreword, and followed by an afterward, two appendices, bibliography, and index. The shortest chapter is about thirteen pages and the longest one is about thirty eight pages.

Until recently much has been written on the topic of God and evil, but McCabe's approach is totally different. The author examines what we mean by 'good', 'evil', and 'God' focusing on what we might call 'the metaphysics of creation' (xvi). Though the editor acclaims this text as strikingly original yet the readers may find McCabe is defending and presenting the Aquinas's thought on God and evil. However, the author gives a clear and exact account of the basic aspects of Aquinas's thinking. The purpose of this publication is to make the readers aware of the McCabe's work published posthumously. Herbert McCabe died in 2001.

Herbert McCabe, a preeminent Catholic theologian, was quite interested in the philosophical thought of Aquinas. In this text, the author examines how St. Thomas Aquinas deals with the problematic area of whether God can coexist with evil because the author says that God is not an explanation of all that happened to the world as evil arises only because we confuse the language proper to God with a language of something enormously powerful.

In The Statement of the Problem, the author argues that 'there is no problem of evil', and he provides reasons to show that these arguments are invalid (p. 3). Most of the time, people fallaciously wonder why doesn't God prevent evil. The author argues that God is not evil because 'it is impossible for God to create himself, so it is impossible for him to create something in no way different from himself' (p. 4). Furthermore, he provides three arguments; firstly 'This is evil' is not a descriptive account of the thing, secondly, 'This is evil' is a false assertion as our knowledge is limited, and finally, 'This is evil' is a false representation of reality (pp. 4-5). He argues that it is necessary for the theologian to dissolve the problem of evil as 'it is not merely a task for philosophers' (p. 12).

The Chapter two, Metaphysical Preliminaries, provides a brief account of St. Thomas's notions of essence, being, goodness, perfection and causal action. Aquinas believes existence belongs only to essences, while focusing on the requirements that 'phrase should be grammatically concrete and not abstract' (p. 22). Though Aquinas takes the help of language play to prove his point, yet he does not attempt to answer the question 'What is the relation of language to reality' like Wittgenstein (p. 33). According to Aquinas, the author says, properties are characteristics that are neither strictly essential to a thing nor yet merely accidental. Thomas associates the quality of goodness with perfection, and a 'good thing is desirable; it has a purpose...in which satisfaction is attained' (p. 41).

The next chapter titled Good and Evil is in the continuation of the argument proposed by St. Aquinas. But in this chapter, the viewpoint is explicitly directed towards McCabe's interpretations of Aquinas instead. The author continues the argument under three headings: the analogical use of 'Good', evil as a real deprivation, and the priority of nature over morals. The author repeats Aquinas's view that 'God is never an explanation of the world' (p. 68). But what we know about the world at times helps us to know something about God. He argues that the case of revelation cannot be adduced as 'a case of finding out something about the world from what we know about God' (p. 69).

The fourth chapter, The Creator and Evil, has a moral tone. The author talks about what is meant by a good or bad human being; the notion of moral evil; and the notion of creation. The author considers evil as 'imperfection and defect' (p.73). The author argues, if God's world is defective, are we compelled to blame him or to say that he could not help it' (p. 91)? The author provides an explanation that moral goodness and badness we can only attribute to rational beings and 'there can be no sense in which God can be said to achieve or fail to achieve this perfection' (p. 106).

The final chapter shows the implications of the transcendence of God. The author says evil must necessarily be subjected to good, and 'nothing is sheerly evil' (p. 113). He states that "God is not what is left over when you remove creatures..... God and creature cannot be thought of together, or even apart. It is simply that what is not Him is His' (p. 129).

This book is an attempt to justify that 'faith is not the abdication of knowledge; rather than it remains within the order of knowledge' (p. 12). However, there is no clear answer to the question why does evil exist? The author believes that God's plan is not of absurdity, and moreover ration beings are not in the position to comprehend it as 'God and creatures cannot be thought of together or apart' (p. 129). The Appendix consists of an article entitled 'Categories'

The McCabe's style is lucid. The book brilliantly and quite succinctly encapsulates the Aquinas's thought. Philosophers and theologians will find this work a wonderful read.

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## **Review Beyond Kolkata: Rajarhat and the Dystopia of Urban Imagination**

**Anchal Kumari**

Ishita Dey, Ranabir Samaddar, and Suhit K. Sen. *Beyond Kolkata: Rajarhat and the Dystopia of Urban Imagination*. Routledge, New Delhi. 2013. 265p.

As indicated by the title 'Beyond Kolkata: Rajarhat and the Dystopia of Urban Imagination', this book attempts to put together a theoretically and empirically well-rounded dynamics of the emergence of new town in Rajarhat. This book appears in the series of 'Cities and Urban Imperatives' which is edited by Professor Sujata Patel. The books in this series provide a holistic approach to study cities, the urban experience, and its imaginations.

The book under review begins with a fundamental question: how the new town in Rajarhat is beyond Kolkata (p. 2)? This book provides the narratives of the birth of new town in Rajarhat, and how a space is destroyed and a new space came up. 'Rajarhat beyond Kolkata disrupts the earlier pattern of the mutually constitutive relationship between the space of accumulation of capital and the urbanity of democratic citizenship' (p. 19). The book comprises nine chapters and discusses the crucial issues like the ideas that shaped the planning of new town in Rajarhat, the history of people living in Rajarhat before it became new town, land acquisition and displacement, who are the beneficiaries and losers in this process of urban development, the new labour in this new town, and the global and national histories of Rajarhat.

### **Emergence of new town in Rajarhat**

Based on the in-depth analysis of various reports and data, the first chapter of the book provides the detailed profile and historical account of Rajarhat in terms of population dynamics, land, and livelihood. The traditional benefit of Rajarhat to the Kolkata metropolis was enormous. Apart from supplying fish and vegetables to Kolkata, Rajarhat also acted as the producer of 'public goods' for Kolkata. Rajarhat was the chief source of income to thousands of small farmers. 'A substantial part of the area being part of the wetlands of east Kolkata, it was dependent on agriculture and fishing' (p. 6). The authors of this book have cited from an environmental report that explains how the continuous conversion of agricultural land to non agricultural use have severely affected the livelihood of people who were dependent on fishing and agricultural activities in that area. The farmers, fishermen, vegetable growers and sellers, boatmen, and agricultural labour now lost their livelihood and some of them are serving the newcomers of Rajarhat with domestic labour, transportation, vegetable supply or serving tea and sundry snacks (p. 9). This book has also presented the narratives from the pre-acquisition era in Rajarhat. The new town project in Rajarhat was first conceptualised in the mid-1990s, since then there has been a massive displacement and loss of livelihoods in Rajarhat without any substantial reintegration of people into the new

economy in the new township area (p. 25). Many of the dispossessed small farmers had to become the scrap collectors when they lost their livelihood. Authors of this book have raised many important questions throughout the chapters. For example, 'if the opposition between public and private, primitive and virtual, representation and void, city and periphery breaks down, what will be the new forms of collective action?... what will be the new public space, which was till now essential for public actions?' (p. 17). In Singur and Nandigram, for example, the protest movement had inspiration from the city. But the form of resistance and collective action evolved locally. So in the privatised nature of new towns development, what will be the possibility of public action?

The idea of new town in Rajarhat was actually conceptualised as a residential urban centre, where people across the social spectrum would live, so that the pressure of habitation in Calcutta can be eased. The chapter 2 and 3 traces the narrative of land acquisition and displacement, and addresses the question of how government later implemented the idea of hi-tech township in Rajarhat. **HIDCO** (Housing Infrastructure Development Corporation), headed by the Left Front's minister for housing. Gautam Deb was given the charge of executing the new town project in Rajarhat. **HIDCO** released a report in 2010 which defended the way government had been going about actualising the project (p. 34). The large majority, almost 70 per cent or more of Rajarhat's agrarian society and economy were the labourers who owned no land. Almost 80 per cent were small and marginal peasants. So it was mainly a small peasant economy with fishing being the other main activity. Historically this place had seen very little anti government mobilisation for roads, communications, and supply of inputs for agriculture, fishing and marketing. Hence when the government started acquiring land in mid 1990s, the community took time to react or respond to this. There were no large landholders in Rajarhat who would even stand to make large amount by way of compensation, so the displaced people lost their livelihood and got very small amount by way of compensation. The authors have also argued that between the mid 1990s, when the project began to take off, and in the post-Singur period, no political formation, and not even the mainstream leftists supported the movement against the land acquisition in Rajarhat. There was lack of organised political support for the movement against land acquisition in Rajarhat. Because of this it became easy for the government to even use the force whenever needed to acquire land in Rajarhat.

### **The neo-liberal process**

The residents of Kolkata connects to new town at Rajarhat only for few reasons, for example, if they are working as a BPO employee over there, or as an employee in a mall, or a construction worker or when they have relatives to visit in Rajarhat. Also those who work and live in Rajarhat have few reasons to visit Kolkata. In the era of neo liberalism, the redesigning of a city into a township is entirely different from the old industrial towns. 'Rajarhat beyond Kolkata represents the function of the developmental and rational need to bring together the national and the global in the making of a neo-liberal city' (p. 110). Chapter 4 of the book has discussed the nature of neo-liberal governmentality in Rajarhat. 'Neo-liberalism is a technique of power that links macro-

political aims with the micro-management of life... For example in the case of Rajarhat, the local elements the political party, the local mafia, land sharks, local MLAs, or any other local representatives- all making the desperate, almost final, bid to unite with the global power interested in one particular area' (p. 118). Here the authors have also linked the case of Rajarhat with the theory of primitive accumulation and have analysed the role of capital in reconditioning the local life.

The chapter 6 of the book presents the ethnography of the labouring lives in new town in Rajarhat; it presents the narratives and dimensions of the strategy of capital to create the exclusive city spaces through public-private initiatives. It traces the kind of labouring space new town will produce. Bhattacharya and Sanyal (2011) see the labour process in new town as the hegemony of immaterial labour. Here immaterial labours are those who involve in the production of immaterial products, for example, knowledge, information, or communication. The nature of labour force which are active in the making and functioning of this new town is characterised by temporariness. The workforce in the IT sectors generally engages with the new town mostly for 3-4 years and the construction workers in these new towns will be here not more than six months. So there are workers who work in different time zones in IT sectors, the workers in the malls, and local people who are living with the anxiety of being displaced and dispossessed of their livelihood.

This book is an important contribution in the field of contemporary new towns in this neo-liberal period in India. It has presented the strong theoretical as well as empirical analysis (based on fieldwork, analysis of government documents, court records, photographs, and chronicles of public protests) of new town in Rajarhat. It has traced the history of planning and development of new town in Rajarhat, elaborated the urban politics behind this new town, the socio-economic and ecological impact of this township, and how capital is reconditioning the life of locals in Rajarhat.

### Notes and Referances

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## Ancient India Calling

Pratip Chattopadhyay

**Thinking Politically: Commentaries on Indian Political Sensibilities with Indian Wisdom, Sanjeev Kumar Sharma, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Ahmedabad, 2013, pp. 104, price- Rs. 450/- ISBN 978-81-7276-485-2**

With the new government of BJP at the Centre a new focus on ancient Indian tradition and culture is on place. The present work under review is a timely intervention in this contemporary academic milieu where ancient Indian political traits are increasingly becoming redundant in the contemporary analytical discourse of politics and political science across the country. This book with an introduction written by Justice V.M. Venkatachaliah, is a conglomeration of several short notes, written during 2011-2013 as editorial in the Indian Journal of Political Science, arranged systematically into 29 chapters having in between some coloured pictures of important thinkers and philosophers of ancient India.' In the Preface the author clarifies his intention for this publication by saying 'these writings were to plead the case of Indian solutions to Indian problems' that is exemplified by a picture of Bhagwad Geeta in the opening page where Arjuna seeks sermons from Lord Krishna in the battleground of Kurukshetra. Justice Venkatachaliah in his introductory note sets the context of the book by arguing that society and polity changes its nature with time and poses a question 'with the onset of the consumerist epidemic era how much of Indian-ness we are left with!' (p xiii). The chapters in this book can be seen as some an admission of this comment and prescriptions of how to be attentive towards our past.

The opening write-up is on 'Ancient Indian Wisdom: An Apartheid Approach' where the author laments that 'serious attempts to look into grand old Indian treatises for tracing links to modern issues have largely been ridiculed as parochial, fundamentalist or conservative.'(p.1) Analysis of socio-political trends of early India by foreign scholars with an outsider's perspective, lack of knowledge of Indian classical language, political logic of liberalization in 1990s and associated belief to look into the past as futile are some of the reasons shown for such a sorry state of affair. 'Re-introducing Lingual Sobriety' talks about the degenerating language used in the domestic political space by political leaders and calls for the re-establishment of lingual decency through academic leadership by re-introducing the ancient Indian tradition of supremacy of academic institutions over the administrative and political institutions. The piece on 'Our Uncertain Academicians' focuses on Indian tradition of 'regular debates, discussions and symposia of the learned and knowledgeable person of contemporary period with the disciples being present, active and responsive every time' (p.12) and laments that India's presence as active members at NAM, SAARC, IPSA (founding member of International Political Science Association) which were a reflection of academic pursuit of scholars have slipped to an extent that India is now only an 'inactive' Associate Member of IPSA. The author requests the political science fraternity to realize

the worth of membership of IPSA and to be associated with it more closely. Chapter on 'Global Blending' notes that since independence, the “indigenous generation of knowledge is largely hampered by the pan-India preponderance and the assumed superiority of the English language” (p.15). The author pleads that the teachers and researchers of the discipline must ascertain the causes, effects and challenges of this phenomenon because 'only the rediscovery of our traditional knowledge in sync with western traditions can open the roads leading to the ultimate truth' (p.16). The note on 'Our Roots and their Realities' records the way our history is marked by foreign invasions and external-cultural intrusions and thereby a loss of faith in our past community life can be seen mostly till nineteenth century, and only after being reinvented by the West, Indian intelligentsia started treading Yoga, Ayurveda, Sanskrit literature, etc. The author cautions that 'only physical, material, infrastructural and technological advances will not pave the way to power and glory. We will have to strive hard to create good citizens, having faith in themselves and finding pride in their glorious past'(p.19). 'Ostracizing Indian-ness: A Hyphenated Existence' highlights the overwhelming indifference to our past and historical antecedents due to 'toxification and detoxification of Indian history by politically aligned historians and historically blind politicians' (p.102) to be rectified by a love for the motherland in India and makes a claim to include Indian political thinkers and philosophers as part of syllabus of political science across the world.

The chapter on 'Sensitizing with Education' is a critical commentary on the education programme and policy of the government as more of 'schemes and slogans' and less of effort towards character building leading to corruption and inefficiency in implementing resulting educational proliferation but little of conviction and integrity. In the 'Burden of West', he critique the general indomitable faith in the Western ideas, and prescribes that self-belief and confidence among upcoming educationists can come if 'the academic research pursuit must be directed towards exploring the knowledge potential of our ancestors'(p.25). Next comes 'Ethnicity of Nationalist' where highlighting a controversy over recitation of national song the author questions the indifferent attitude of academicians to such acrimonious controversies and requests 'all my fellow countrymen to ponder over the issues and questions pertaining to the feelings of nationalism with an open heart and mind' (p.29). The piece on 'Equity of Knowledge' talks about the importance of intellectual community of each country in the public policy discourses to find solutions to the socio-political problems by focusing on country-specific ground realities. The write-up on 'The Light of Knowledge' links the responsibility of knowledge community of the country to teach the emotionally charged ethnic communities across the country for not making their rich cultural heritage as the basis for secessionist movements but rather make them realize the importance of national solidarity through assimilation of various cultures and thereby lead the path of overall progress of any community. Reading the note on 'Wounded Humanities and Confused Science of Society' one understands that due to repetitive interpretative western ideas there has been a 'deliberate ignoring of indigenous concepts, ideas and writings so as to please our academic masters'(p.47), and the Raj-Dharma of today should be to take care of narrowing the gap between the aspirations of the people and the priorities of the government. The author writes in 'A Proud Past in the Tense Present' that the National Knowledge Commission 'has blatantly and quite

unfortunately' ignored 'the prominence of humanitarian elements in the traditional knowledge of ancient India (p.53)' and the pressing task is to 'open up unknown floodgates of the extensive knowledge we have inherited as Indians' (p.54) to the younger generation. Taking a toll on the Delhi-centric fully elite-oriented influence on the education system in 'Our Distant Educators', the author believes that 'we must involve the people of the grassroots in higher education planning' to enable a realistic and comprehensive view of the situation...' (p.46).

The notes on 'The Contours of Indian Politics' and 'A Coercive Democracy' talks about the declining popularity of the political institutions of our country like the political parties (their programmes and leadership) and legislatures, leading to gradual apathy of the citizens towards the political process which is a serious threat for governance. Such distance should be narrowed by a 'reorientation of our attitudes in order to promote peaceful coexistence of contradictory and conflicting ideas.'(p.44) In essays on electoral democracy ('Mandating Menace', 'Stamping Over the Ballot', 'An 'Un'holistic Prophecy') in India, Professor Sharma deals with the negative issues relating to electoral scene in India and views that 'students of political science must take note of the situation and appraise society with our reactions in an emphatic manner'(p.10) and recording a shift in election campaign - 'wall-writing, paper-kites, and scented cards have been replaced by modes of television campaigns, mobile strategies and new-media management' (p.58) but criticizes the over stepping of the role of media and argues that the 24X7 enormous flow of information results to lack of time to think about issues separately on their merit and the tele-discussions on politics are not take seriously by the political parties and the public and calls for 'a role of re-defining of the role and functioning of the first two estates of state-authority in an intrinsically Indian perspective' (p.60) and in order to achieve real loktantra-adhikar or people's rights, elected representatives have to work day and night for the betterment of their living conditions by fulfilling their developmental needs. Continuing the discussion in 'The Legacy of Democracy: Sitting Getting', the author records his displeasure at the nature of contemporary political leadership, particularly the political heirs, who, according to him, hamper the progress of hardworking grass-root people and argues that 'democracy should...give birth to more representative and grass-root...sensitive and responsible leadership' (p.69).

In 'Corruption: A Menace or a Practice?', corruption is equated with the lack of fairness in politics and puts onus on the academician to raise questions on this issue rather than the usual practice of their about turn views and new jargons which for the author is a 'sophisticated, deceitful and deceptive corruption' harming the moral edifice of the democratic politics' (p.72). For him, in line with ancient Indian philosophers, rulers must be caring and sensitive as a father. In 'Questioning Utopia: Ethical Etiquettes' the author sees the enquiry commissions to various corruption scams as artificial face saving by political class and to rebuild the national character one has to 'revisit our cultural tradition and relocate the ethical values of eternal utility for human kind'(p.84) In 'Terrorism : A Violent Reality' the author deals with the debate over the possible balance between the attempts to fight terrorism and preserve human liberty and believes that the 'Indian cultural tradition can direct us towards ways of achieving better' citizenship because of its value based

prescriptions providing moral and ethical boundaries to human behavior and creating better individuals.' (p.57)

'First Among Equals: All in the Family' says that the necessary precondition of the success of a democracy is the 'continuous extension of mass participation' (p.77) which is hampered by the particular family controlled political parties stepped in Western etiquette, mannerism and priorities. In the piece on 'Degenerated Grounds' the author laments about the unfulfilment of the expectation for a republic through price-rise at all levels and identifies disbelief in our tradition, lack of faith in own culture as examples of rampant anarchism and in the context of democracy, he terms it as democratic anarchism. To come out of the situation the prescription is to adhere to our dharma because 'dharma transforms our personality' (p.88). 'Facing Dissent in its True Colour' proclaims that mass consent provides legitimacy to authority and the dissenting voice denotes the existence of dissatisfaction which is particularly for corruption index and the prescription is to change the individual first to create good human beings. The main reason behind the decreasing faith of people in institutional framework is the exposure of people in high public positions by our media and in the tract on 'Respect in Waiting' the author argues that leadership has to be cautious so as to invigorate and strengthen our political system. (Un)Ruled by the Mob talks about the existing inefficient working of different organs of the government and it is the strengthening of educational systems which will 'reestablish lost beliefs in their capacities' (p.100).

The entire narration is very colourful and emotive having only one spelling mistake of bonding (p 43). The goal of the collection is summarized by the author when he writes that 'being proud of our past should not mean being indignant with the present, rather it should mean being inquisitive about the future. Our past glory should show us path to future exhilaration'. (p.96). The book should be a must read for the present genre of academicians, political leaders and policy makers as to how fruitfully, openly and with less controversies, ancient Indian ideas and philosophies can be utilized for the well being of the society and making of good citizen.

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