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M.Yasin

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From the editor's desk.....

The present issue of the Journal of Political Studies contains eleven articles in addition to one review article and two book reviews. The articles can be grouped in three baskets; we have two articles on political thinkers, five on different general aspects of India's politics and four on some aspects of regional politics. Themewise the authors have approached issues of contemporary relevance and we sincerely hope that our readers will enjoy reading them.

With Regards,

Editor

Hydropower Development and its Impact in Kinnaur District

Amrit Zangmo

Abstract

In the recent decade Himachal Pradesh and its development revolved around hydropower development with its intent of turning Himachal into powerhouse of the nation. The present study tries to examine whether the setting up of large number of hydropower projects in entire stretch of Sutlej Basin in hilly area of Kinnaur district which is prone to the phenomena like landslide, flood and drying up of water resources is wise or not. The present paper is based on field work observation and study of official reports and statistics from the different departments, both governmental and non-governmental. Due to heavy blasting work used for making underground tunnel in the project entire hill on the right bank of the Sutlej river at Karcham Wangtoo project area have become vulnerable to landslides. Drying up of natural water resources has been observed at the surrounding affected villages of Karcham-Wangtoo hydropower project. In the age of climate change when area is already fragile and prone to such natural disaster question arises how prudent to start new and existing hydropower projects in the region.

Keywords: Hydropower, community, development, displacement, destructions, policy, projects, movements, run-of-the river.

1. Introduction

The impact of climate change is directly visible in mountain regions as compared to the plains. There is scientific evidence that many mountain regions have become increasingly disaster-prone in recent decades. Mountains are more frequently affected than other environments by destructive natural processes including earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, glacial lake outbursts, Flash flood. Large number of studies has been undertaken at the national level, on the issue related to the developmental projects and its impact (Narmada Dam, Tehri Dam and Silent Valley). While contesting these projects, many non-governmental organizations and local people led by social activists have come together and have focused the attention of government about negative implications of these developmental projects. The paper is an attempt to contest the impact of hydropower development in northern himalayan state of Himachal Pradesh by studying the case of Karcham Wangtoo hydro power project at surrounding ecology in Kinnaur district. Reason to take this project as analysis point is that it is largest hydropower project owned by a private company in the country till date. Large number of hydropower projects has been set up at the entire Sutlej basin in Kinnaur district but it is at this project local people first time gather to oppose hydro project which is unique in the district.

2. Statement of the Problem

Construction of multipurpose dam projects has been viewed by many as synonymous with the idea of development and economic progress. Hydropower, irrigation, water supply and flood control services were widely seen as sufficient justification for the huge investments required, while other benefits such as the economic prosperity brought to a region by multiple cropping, the installation of electricity in rural areas and the expansion of physical and social infrastructure were used to justify dam as the most economically and financially competitive option. However, with a growing body of knowledge and experience about the performance and consequences of dams has raised the questions about the level and distribution of benefits actually delivered to the local people where this type of projects has been set up.

The main reason for raising demands against these projects is that these projects are always located in relatively economically underdeveloped regions mostly in tribal regions because of the abundance of unexploited natural resources. The ideology of development is used to strengthen inequitable social relations in these societies, through acts like displacement and destructions of their natural location. These oustees who lost their livelihood and their sustenance economy are forced to depend on the market economy for survival. These people are too poor to buy the food from market economy and many households cannot afford to have electricity. They find it difficult to influence national policies, laws and institutions that could improve their life and shape their collective future. Studies have proved that existence of poverty is not so much due to the population pressure many people thinks about that causes food scarcity in most of the underdeveloped world (UNDP 1993: 161). It is primarily due to social inequality that has been prevalent to the process of development so far.¹

Cernea in his study makes an attempt to show that many public and private sector projects such as hydropower, dams and mines, trigger forced population displacement but fail to resettle people sustainably and instead cause their impoverishment. He argues that can compensation prevent impoverishment? Compensation is used by the state as the virtually single financial tool for handling displacement and resettlement and able to cure all the ills of economic impoverishment inflicted by forced displacement. However in real life compensation reveal itself to be misleading, unable to perform the restorative miracle which it is officially credited. No doubt compensation is economically justified but it is not capable of the improvement and restoration of livelihood.²

Generally, Project affected population (PAPs) often comes from fragile economic and ecological system, which can take a very long time to reconstruct. Involuntary resettlement disrupts and even destroys the sets of

relationships; the pattern of resource allocation also undermines the social relationships of family and neighbourhood from which much of the rural people's sense of their world is derived.³ In this Kothari tries to explain that most of the times, displaced people have experienced widespread traumatic psychological and socio-cultural consequences.⁴ These include the dismantling of production system, scattering of kinship groups and family system.

There is a growing awareness that the state's slogan of 'development' is no longer a politically neutral term. It is seen to amount to a redistribution of resources or production relations in favours of the powerful sections of society. It began to be perceived that the benefits and costs of these developmental projects were being unevenly distributed in society; this is the cause there was a rumbling of protest against them. Yet the dominant discourse in India continues to be in favours of the planning and implementation of these projects.⁵

3. Impact of Karcham Wangtoo Hydropower Development at Surrounding Areas

Himachal Pradesh at present has its twelve districts with different climatic zones. Among these twelve districts, Kinnaur district of Himachal Pradesh constitutes a special category of economic backwardness due to its inaccessibility and inhospitable geo-climatic setup of the region. Kinnaur is one of the districts of the country that is located on international border and it has its own peculiarities of language, history and natural phenomena. Being a Tribal district, it commands certain uniqueness among the districts of Himachal from the angle of socio-economic development as it remains among the most underdeveloped region in the state because of its geographical location. Kinnaur district is situated on both the banks of the river Sutlej of the northeast frontier of Himachal Pradesh. Because of limited rainfall and its dryness, the area is very fragile and sensitive and landslide is a common phenomenon in this area. Recently district faces the problems created by man and machine intervention in the natural resources like water. A large number of hydropower projects have been constructed in the district, some are under construction stage and some are still in the planning stage. The estimated hydropower potential at the entire Satlej river is more than 10,000 MW. In addition, there is tremendous potential for generation of hydropower from its tributaries. Within Kinnaur district with a net targeted exploitation of hydropower potential is about 4192.3 MW capacities.

Sutlej River, 7 km after entering Kinnaur District, flows from one tunnel into another tunnel because of these hydropower projects which is based on Run-of the-River scheme. It is astonishing to note that out of total 150 km. stretch of Sutlej basin in Kinnaur, about 120 km. length of Sutlej river is going to run through the underground tunnels and remaining 30 km. will be seen as reservoirs of these projects. The 1,000 MW Karcham Wangtoo project has a

17.2 km long tunnel. Karcham Wangtoo hydro power project in Kinnaur district of Himachal Pradesh has been selected as area of research. This project played a critical role in turnaround of local opinion on hydropower plant, as for the first time local people get together to oppose this project in the district. 1000 MW Karcham Wangtoo hydro-power project is the largest private sector hydro-electrical project in the country owned by the Jaypee group and its associates which is recently acquired by JSW group.

This project is based on the Run-of-The River project; under-ground tunnel construction has been made. Most of the 'Run-of-the River' hydroelectric projects are being developed in the Himalayan region. A technology called 'Run-of-the River' involves building of a dam at the point where the river is diverted into a tunnel to be dropped back into the source river several kilometres downstream. The power house is built at the point where the river is dropped back into its source.⁶ Accordingly project plays a critical role in local people livelihood since project authorities never consulted these people for the project especially about the underground tunnel construction and no objection was sought from these people. According to project authority reports, those who get displaced because of project settlement are 31 families. As these people have lost their land and houses in project settlement (colonies has been setup where their officials and labourers can reside and project offices has been built) and for this they have got monetary compensation. Since the villagers live above tunnels which is part of run-of-the river project scheme of Karcham Wangtoo project, so these villagers have been complaining about cracks in their houses, lands and natural water resources get dried away and they are suspecting that underground tunnels and blasting used in this work cause these cracks and loss of water resource. These villages have been not considered as displaced by project authority as they have given submergence as criteria to defined directly affected population. But these villagers have been facing socio-economic and ecological consequences of this project as much as other displaced families.

In order to understand development and its impact, the paper tries to analyse the impact of developmental projects, present study took indicators like impact of project on local economy and climate change phenomena like loss of natural water resources. Some official data like losses in horticulture and drying up of natural water resources has been used to explain the argument. Kinnaur district is known in the international market for its apple economy. Instead of the development of the local horticulture based economy, there has been indication of losses in fruit crops especially apple cultivation due to hydroelectric project being executed in the area during year 2009-2010. A loss in apple production has been attributed to dust pollution caused by various hydropower project activities in the area. To investigate this issue, Deputy Commissioner had constituted a committee consisting of the technical officers who were asked to assess the losses of fruit plant due to the construction

activities of hydroelectric project in four Gram Panchayats namely Chagaon, Urni, Meeru and Yulla. The Joint Inspection Committee of Technical experts conducted Panchayat wise assessment of losses in percentage as per the on spot inspection. It was undertaken between period from 11.05.2010 to 13.05.2010.

An Assessment of the losses to the Fruit Crop

Sr. No.	Name of the Panchayat	Approximate area under Orchard (Apple Cultivation)	Name of Up Mohal	% of losses to fruit crop due to hydro Electric activities.
1	Chagaon	167 Hectare	I. Tapri (34 hect.) II Yashing (6hect.) III Samkarang (84 hect.) IV Ranpanag (35 hect.) V Uravaning (4 hect.)	28-30% 12-15% 18-20% 18-20% 18-20%
2	Urni	80 Hectare	I Kutanu (24 hect.) II Urni Khas (26 hect.) III Ralsanthung (28 hect.)	28-30% 18-20% 18-20%
3	Yulla	30 Hectare	I Yulla Khas (25 hect.) II Yuldang (5 hect.) III Runang Nichla (20 hect.)	12-15% 12-15% 23-25%
4	Meeru	65 Hectare	I Cholling (9 hect.) II Meeru Khas (4 hect.) III Ghoumaruning (10 hect.)	18-20% 18-20% 12-15%

Source: Horticulture Department Recong Peo Kinnaur District.

These affected populations including displaced families and surrounding communities whose livelihood and access to resources are affected by changing land and water settlement in the area. With the set up of hydro-power developmental project, lots of changes are expected to take place. On a negative side, common property resources like grazing lands depleted because village structures have undergone changes. It has also had impact on cultural values of tribal communities as local people are getting influenced by modernization and urbanization because these projects are coming and people are forgetting their traditional means of livelihood like agricultural activities and uses of forest products. In search of education and employment opportunities people are migrated to other districts or different cities. It has have also implications on the local people social settings as many outsider labourers and officials have come up at the project area and they have interactions with local people and sometimes interfere in their internal affairs.

Another important implication has been seen is related to global warming phenomena. As the impact of climate change can directly visible in the hilly region as compared to plain areas. In the mountainous region climate change phenomena like either excessive rain which causes land slide problem and lack of rainfall which causes drying up of natural water resources and vegetation cover can be easily seen. The phenomenon can be supported by the indicator like drying up of natural springs due to construction and blasting activities which is the part of Run-of-the River scheme of the project. The Sutlej is not the main source of consumption water in the area. The natural springs are the key source of water for people living in the area for their domestic consumption, livestock use and irrigation purposes. A large number of hydropower developments in the area are causing diversion of river flow for power generation, directly putting an impact on availability of water for consumption at the area. The claim of the villagers was also verified by the state's Irrigation and Public Health Department in response to a Right to Information (RTI) application. The official data showed that water sources had been impacted due to the project. Complete drying of various natural springs however, has been reported due to construction activities which will have adverse impact upon locals in future time. Details of the natural water resources which have been dried away in the surrounding areas of Karcham Wangtoo Project are following:

**Joint Measurement of Discharge of Water Sources in Year
Between 2004 to 2011**

Name of village	Name of water sources	Status
Meeru	(I) Shodat Nichala (II) Bonmeech Nalang (III) Teag Nalang (IV) Duktee Dakhang (V) Garangcho Nalang	Dried
Chagaon	(I) Chhit Pane (II) Chirchirang (III) Runo Nalla (IV) Chhangla (V) Khachhang	Dried
Urni	(I) Sonoko (near Choling) (II) Choling (near Army camp) (III) Shhennalan (IV) Rochmanang (V) Kalinge	Dried
Runang	(I) Yumanang I (II) Yumanang II (III) Runang Nichala near house of Ramesh Kumar	Dried

Source: IPH (Irrigation and Public Health) Recong Peo, Kinnaur District.

It has been found out that due to unscientific and heavy blasting the entire hill on the right bank of the Sutlej River has become vulnerable to landslides and the road is hardly being restored. In 2014-15 the inhabitants of tribal district of Kinnaur have repeatedly been facing road blockages at Urni NH-22 due to landslides. Due to active and heavy landslides, travelling on this road had become very risky.⁷ On June 20, the HP High Court issued notices to the Central and the state governments on the issue of poor condition of roads in Kinnaur. The order was filed on a PIL which alleged that the roads were badly damaged due to indiscriminate and unscientific blasting by the JayPee Company constructing the Karcham Wangtoo Hydrel Project.

However A study by the Geological Survey of India blamed the landslides in Urni village of Kinnaur district as the horticultural and agricultural activities in the region which practices from earlier period. The irrigation water acts as lubricating agent in this structurally fragile slope triggering landslide action. The obvious question here is that if the area was landslide prone in the past and if the slopes were structurally fragile then why were these factors not considered at the time of allowing the Karcham Wangtoo project to come up? There has been no effort by the state government or the Ministry of Environment to recognise that there exist a linkage between natural disasters and construction activities of these hydropower projects in the area.⁸

In spite of this The Directorate of Energy (DoE), Govt of Himachal Pradesh had advertised for 37 power projects in Himachal Pradesh worth 1,137 MW seeking bids from the power companies on a build, own, operate and transfer (BOOT) basis in July 2014. As many as 11 of these projects are located in the tribal Kinnaur district, where the tribals are already resisting against these power projects.

Most of the existing literature on the environmental movements in India, while considering it along with other social movements, views hydropower development as reflecting a kind of disenchantment with state-led development strategies in general, and development projects in particular as well as it is creating political space for alternatives to the dominant development paradigm. In this way, clashes between villagers and project managements for different issues are becoming obvious at the Sutlej River in Kinnaur district, as most of the tributaries have been allotted hydro power companies to generate power. In the case of Karcham Wangtoo project, affected people are involved in an agitation under the leadership of Karcham Wangtoo Sangarsh Samiti and Him Lok Jagriti Manch. These organizations are the stage through which local people are voicing their concerns at the time when state agencies and project authority are not considered necessary to consult these affected people. These are the two organizations continuously focusing the attention of government and Jaypee project on different issues and mobilizing the people for demanding justice for their land and water resource use.

4. Summing Up

This paper makes an attempt to study the impact of hydropower development in the case of Karcham Wangtoo hydro power project at surrounding environment in Kinnaur district. In this direction study makes attempt to find the fault which causes local people opposition against such projects in district. Study reveals that the main issues which came up today in most of the hydropower developmental projects in the Himalayan regions and Kinnaur district in particularly are based on a scheme Run-of-the River project which is commonly described as being 'environmentally friendly'. The contention here is that as hilly area like Kinnaur which itself is known as rocky and fragile mountain the scheme itself is contradicting the environmentally benign project conception. So the need of the hour is to redefine the hydropower development policy of Himachal Government itself.

Notes

- ¹ Amita Baviskar, *In the Belly of the River: Tribal Conflict over Development in the Narmada Valley* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995), 26.
- ² Michael M. Cernea, "Compensation and Benefit Sharing: Why Resettlement Policies must be Formed," *Water Science and Engineering*, Vol. 1, No.1 (March 2008): 90.
- ³ Chris De Wet, "Economic Development and Population Displacement: Can everybody Win," *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 36, No. 50 (2001): 4639.
- ⁴ Smitu Kothari, "Whose Nation? The Displaced as victim of Development," *Economic and Political Weekly* (1996): 1477.
- ⁵ Satyajit Singh, *Taming the Water: The Political Economy of Large Dams in India* (New Delhi: Oxford University press, 2002), 204-205.
- ⁶ Prakash Bhandari and Manshi Asher, *In the name of clean energy: A Report on Asian Development bank financed hydropower projects in Himachal Pradesh* (Himachal Pradesh: Him Dhara, Environment Research and Action collective, May 2011), 5.
- ⁷ Himachal Pradesh Hydropower Projects in 2015, *SANDRP*, 13, January 2016.
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Discourses on Growth and Inequality: Indian Experience

Biswajit Choudhury

Abstract

The growth of India's knowledge based economy, the entertainment and the news industry, and the people to people links established by the Indian Diaspora Community have shaped India's global profile and prospect. By the end of 20th Century two dominant factors seem to have shaped a new thinking about India in the Western hemisphere, first, the India's economic performance and policy shift in the last decade of the century, and second, India's declared 'nuclear power' status. Moreover, there were several factors other than economic growth that contributed to India's self-image as a major power. For example, civilizational history, contribution to religion and philosophy, the intellectual (particularly scientific and mathematical) achievements, demographic size and composition, geographical size and location, military strength and capability.

Key words: Inclusive Growth; Economic Reform; Indian Diaspora; Liberalisation, PMJDY

1. Introduction

The 1990s makes the rupture in the evolution of the political economy of India. In this context Liberalization and Globalization have become synonymous with policies of economic reforms. The new economic reforms were seen as panacea of all economic evils which were continued by the state. Till 1991, India was largely a closed economy with high tariffs and strict controls on foreign investment. Indian businesses were plagued by 'License Raj' with a government permit needed before a company could engage in any kind of individual activities. Since then India's knowledge based business captured a higher share of services and business overseas.

The academic debate on India's economic reform were argued by Indian scholars like Jayati Ghosh, Prabhat Patnaik, Amit Bhaduri, Pranab Bardhan, Deepak Nayyar who often said that economic reform in India is only 'crisis centric' not a 'strategic developmental centric'. On the other hand, the radical economist of Nehruvian era K. N. Raj and left scholar Shukmoy Chakravorty had supported the economic reform process in India.

The factors that resulted in the paradigmatic shift of Indian economy includes the collapse of Soviet Union and the Communist regimes in East European Countries, the external debt crisis during Rajib Gandhi era, loss of confidence in social and political viability and the withdrawal of the NRI (Non-Resident of India) deposits, rise of consumerism indulged by the rising middle class, increased defence imports, inadequate resource mobilization, competitive politics of populism were some of the immediate factors of economic reform in

India. In international factors included the conditionalities from above by the international monetary institutions like IMF and World Bank.

According to Deaton and Dreze (2002), three broad phases are identified in the development of the Indian economy like (i) during 1951-63 the rate of growth of GDP was low. The industrial economy was in its infancy and feudal structures such as the *Zamindari* were being dismantled, (ii) slightly higher economic growth was typical in 1964-90, primarily because of the boost in agriculture consequent upon the Green Revolution and a more mature industrial base, and (iii) post-1991 period has been characterized by much higher growth rates, though this growth is not propelled by the agricultural sector.

2. Conceptual Understanding

The importance of equal access to opportunities for all lies in its intrinsic value as well as instrumental role. The intrinsic value is based on the belief that equal access to opportunity is a basic right of a human being and that it is unethical and immoral to treat individuals differently in access to opportunities. The instrumental role comes from the recognition that equal access to opportunities increases growth potential, while inequality in access to opportunities diminishes it, and makes growth unsustainable, because it leads to inefficient utilization of human and physical resources, lowers the quality of institutions and policies, erodes social cohesion, and increases social conflict (Ali 2007).

The differentiation of inequalities arising from efforts from those arising from circumstances leads to an important distinction between 'inequalities of outcomes' and 'inequalities of opportunities' (Ali 2007). Inequalities of opportunities are arisen mostly due to differences in individual circumstances, while inequalities of outcomes such as incomes reflect some combination of differences in efforts and in circumstances. If policy interventions succeed in ensuring full equality of access to opportunities, inequalities in outcomes would then only reflect differences in efforts, hence could be viewed as 'good inequalities' (Chaudhuri & Ravallion 2007). On the other hand, if all individuals exert the same level of efforts while policy interventions cannot fully compensate for the disadvantages of circumstances, the resulting inequalities in outcomes are 'bad inequalities'. While these two extreme cases are useful for analytical purposes, in reality, inequalities in outcomes would consist of both good or desirable, and bad or undesirable inequalities. Equalities in opportunities that emphasize eliminating circumstance-related bad inequalities so as to alleviate inequalities in outcomes are at the core of inclusiveness and at the heart of an inclusive growth strategy.

Inclusive growth with its simultaneous focus on rapidly expanding opportunities and ensuring equal access to these opportunities results in an inherent tension. The tension arises from the co-existence of effort-based or good inequality and circumstance-based or bad inequality. An increase in effort-based inequality could swamp out the decline in circumstance-based inequality resulting from equalizing access to opportunities, leading to an overall increase in inequality outcomes. It needs to be recognized that with and without counterfactual would suggest that inequality would be lower with an inclusive growth strategy as compared to the without an inclusive growth strategy scenario. As a consequence, inclusive growth is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for lower inequality (Ali 2007).

The distinguishing feature of the inclusive growth process is that it focuses attention on understanding the causal factors behind inequality outcomes and then addresses the causal factors. Inclusive growth depends on average opportunities available to the population and how opportunities are shared among the population (Ali 2007). Whether growth is inclusive depends on the contribution of increasing average opportunities in society with distribution of opportunities constant, and the contribution of changes in distribution when average opportunities do not change. As long as the combined effect is positive, growth would be inclusive. With inclusive growth, there would be improvements in social welfare.

Moreover, inequality is an outcome and it can be addressed with identifying the drivers of inequality. Inequalities can be associated with efforts that respond to market incentives. Inequalities also arise from lack of access to social services, geography, and social exclusion that are related to circumstances. An individual's circumstances such as religious background, parental education, geographical location, and caste (in India) are exogenous to, and outside the control of the individual, for which he or she should not be held responsible. Inequalities due to differences in circumstances often reflect social exclusion arising from weaknesses of the existing systems of property and civil rights, and thus should be addressed through public policy interventions. On the other hand, an individual's efforts represent actions that are under the control of the individual, for which he or she should be held responsible. Inequalities due to differences in efforts reflect and reinforce market-based incentives needed to foster innovation, entrepreneurship and growth (Ali 2007).

The inequality that results from differences in efforts are acceptable and even desirable to the extent that they reflect the motivations that an economy provides to its citizens for working harder, looking out for new opportunities and taking the risks entailed in seizing them. However, inequalities resulting from differences in circumstances are not only ethically unacceptable; they result in wasted productive potential and misallocation of resources. Disadvantages of circumstances are doubly undesirable. In addition to the

disadvantages that they create as when access to education, health care and job opportunities is unevenly distributed. They can create additional disadvantages by negatively influencing the amount of effort that an individual in unfortunate circumstances is willing to make.

The distinction between inequality outcomes resulting from efforts and circumstances provides the basis for the definition and rationale for inclusive growth. Inclusive growth is a growth that not only creates new economic opportunities but also ensures equal access to the opportunities created for all segments of society, including the disadvantaged and the marginalized. Growth is inclusive when it allows all members of a society to participate in, and contribute to, the growth process on an equal footing regardless of their individual circumstances (Ali 2007).

Hence, Amartya Sen (2005) in his discourse '*Three R's of Reform*' highlights three factors of reform process such as: 'Reach, Range and Reason'. According to him people have to be concerned with Reach in all its diverse forms, including economic reach and political reach which are individually important and jointly momentous. Regarding Range he refers education, health care, building of infrastructure and land reforms as well as intelligent use of domestic and global markets. Moreover, regarding Reason he refers nothing ultimately, is as important for reformers as a constant willingness to ask why exactly they are doing what they are doing (Sen 2005).

3. Economic Reform and Growth in India

India, desires a sustained economic growth which would be able to address the 4D Challenges such as: Development, Defence, Diplomacy and Diaspora (Baru 2006). Economic development within the framework of a decentralised democracy is the biggest challenge for India. The growth process of the past two decades has enabled India to address many of the challenges of development. India's ability to play the role of a regional peace keeper and stabilizer, ensuring the security and the free flow of energy from the region to the global markets, and facing the threat from the militant organisations critically depends on its ability to generate the resources required for the requisite defence capability. Diplomacy is even more directly related to the economic performance because international relations have increasingly come to be shaped by economic relations. To make globalisation work for India, it makes productive use of the diverse and talented community of 'People of Indian Origin' world wide (over 25 million) is also called as Indian Diaspora. This community has emerged as an important strategic asset in India's relations with rest of the world (Baru 2006).

The idea that economic growth has a favourable impact on poverty is based on the income mobility concept of Kuznets¹ (1963). High economic

growth creates opportunities for more work and increased income. The demands for unskilled labour are also magnified with such growth. A dynamic economy, where technological change is rampant causing continuous changes in the composition of technologically upgrading and stagnant industries, generates as well as destroys productive employment opportunities. In the process, some people move into lower income groups relative to where they were at the beginning of the growth process (downward income mobility) and some people move into higher income-groups (upward income mobility). In the rapid growth process, as is usually argued, opportunities for upward mobility far outweigh the downward mobility. Rapid economic growth, therefore, is pro-poor on the balance. However, if the poor cannot access the opportunities for upward mobility generated through the growth process, the potential favourable impact on poverty is far from realized².

The growth of India's knowledge based economy, the entertainment and the news industry, and the people to people links established by the Indian Diaspora Community have shaped India's global profile and prospect. By the end of 20th Century two dominant factors seem to have shaped a new thinking about India in the Western hemisphere, first, the India's economic performance and policy shift in the last decade of the century, and second, India's declared 'nuclear power' status (Baru 2006). Moreover, there were several factors other than economic growth that contributed to India's self-image as a major power. For example, civilizational history, contribution to religion and philosophy, the intellectual (particularly scientific and mathematical) achievements, demographic size and composition, geographical size and location, military strength and capability.

India's accelerated economic growth of trade and investment liberalisation has made its impact upon its political, diplomatic relations with nations near and far ranging from the US and European Union to ASEAN. Among developing countries India was late in shifting gears from 'inward-oriented industrial development' to an 'outward-oriented development'. Unlike most of the developing countries India has the potential of making Globalisation work in a more positive way through its large and diverse Indian Diaspora as a new network of overseas businesses. The Information Technology (IT) Revolution at home has enabled India to impart a strategic relevance to its economic policies during 1990's. Moreover, these capabilities have helped to create new relationship of economic inter-dependence with other growing economies of the world (Baru 2006).

The economic liberalization hurt the interest of the underprivileged in material sense: hence, there is a need of imaginative strategies to surmount the cleavages of deprivation and inequality between classes, caste, communities, gender and regions. India's booming information technology sector development, the high demand of 'Made in India' IT professionals unlike the

‘Made in India’ manufacturing items in global level is interesting. The earlier notion of ‘*Roti, Kapra and Maakan*’, has also transformed towards ‘Bijli, Pani, Sarak as well as Health and Education’.

Unlike the Pakistan’s three A’s notion like ‘*Allah, America and Army*’, the Indian version is still secular and democratic. India is now ‘rising and shining’ together (Baru 2006). The investment inflow and outflow as well as the new transition from an inward oriented economy to a moderately outward oriented economy have occurred. The strategic capability and the fast growing economy have shaped India as re-emerging great power.

Hence, India’s rise as major economy is determined by two factors such as: (a) the economic changes affected in political climate, and (b) the quality of political leadership (Baru 2006). The earlier notion of traditional orthodox variety of state security has also shifted towards non-traditional security aspects like human security, food security, energy security environmental security and the like. No doubt, the globalization and the more open economy, the trade liberalization, the WTO negotiations, the bi-lateral and the multi-lateral agreements and the policy of privatization in public sector, investment inflow in India has created a new dimension.

4. Problems of Inequality in India

The key factor responsible for increase in inequality appears to be unevenness in growth. Three dimensions of uneven growth seem especially pertinent in accounting for increases in inequality in many parts of the region. First, growth has been uneven across sub-national locations (i.e., across provinces, regions, or states). Second, growth has been uneven across the rural and urban sectors. Finally, growth has been uneven across households, such that incomes at the top of the distribution have grown faster than those in the middle and/or the bottom. In particular, the growth of incomes has tended to be the highest for the best educated (Ali 2007).

One can ask what policy factors are behind these patterns of uneven growth. The policy factors are complex. However, some broad themes emerge. First, there has been a relative neglect of the agriculture sector by policymakers. While economic development entails a move off the farm to industry and services, deficiencies in public investments in agriculture, and the rural economy more generally, has been problematic precisely because the productivity of agriculture determines the standards of living of so many people in Asia. Even today, a majority of the labor force of many Asian countries, especially its largest ones, is to be found engaged in agriculture. Second, the interplay between market-oriented reforms, globalization and technology has played a role in unequal growth. In several countries, for example, dismantling state-owned enterprises has been part and parcel of market-oriented reforms.

Typically, state-owned enterprises have had fairly compressed wage distributions. As the importance of the private sector has grown, it would be natural to find increases in wage inequality. And finally, new technologies display a bias in favour of skills. The same is true of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) also. Moreover, the demand for skilled workers has increased faster than the demand for unskilled workers (Ali 2007).

Turning to inequalities in access to public services, a major issue is the rapid decline in the effective delivery of these services. A deterioration of public ethics, public institutions and public administration has together resulted in significant leakages of public expenditures that do not reach the target groups. As a result, schools with errant teachers, measles immunization that never reach rural areas, and child nutrition programmes that are not delivered are commonplace in many Asian countries including India. A lack of accountability on the parts of governments to deliver public social services is widespread (Ali 2007).

Land reforms that never took place are at the root cause of inequality in land or access to it. Lack of political will and/or elite captures of political institutions make meaningful land reform exceedingly difficult in India. Related to inequality in land or access to it is the lack of access to credit that compounds the problem. Debts, penury, pauperisation all go together (Ali 2007).

The rise in inequality has been the result of three factors such as (Deaton and Dreze 2002): (i) a shift in earnings from labour to capital income, (ii) the rapid growth of the services sector, with a consequent explosion in demand for skilled workers, and (iii) a drop in the rate of labour absorption during the reform period. There has also been an increase in regional inequality, especially in the incidence of rural poverty. This rise in inequality has implied that, despite better growth, poverty reduction has been sluggish.

Economic equality is an essential component of a just society. One of the basic objectives of the policy makers since the inception of planning has been to achieve growth with justice. The economic reforms have led to a period of jobless growth. It creates job opportunities only for the highly trained manpower like the graduates from IITs and IIMs. Similarly the Call Centers provide jobs to those having good command over English. People coming from upper middle classes and urban background have a clear advantage in getting such type of jobs. The standard of public sector education system that is available to the weaker section is falling in India. At the same time the private education is becoming more and more expensive and out of reach of the people belonging to the disadvantaged sections of the society. This process has marginalized a large section of the population, as they do not have the education or skill to take the advantage of the growth. Indeed, economic inequality is a very complex phenomenon. On a narrower interpretation, it may mean disparities in personal income and wealth at any point of time.

It is commonly alleged that Globalization in developing countries is nothing but a policy imposition of International Monetary Fund and World Bank for economic exploitation without physical existence. Unlike the supporters of reform, the disappointed sections of people argue that it had created a vast gap between rich and the poor. The poor become poorer and the rich become richer. Several studies have validated that lack of education creates an asymmetry both in ability and skills leading to people being less employable or more employable. This enables those better skilled to earn better. But there is hardly any move to institutionalise skills training. India has only 12,000 vocational training institutes against 5,00,000 in China. Industry chambers offered to take over industrial training institutes and modernise the courses. But despite the support of the Ministries of Commerce and Finance, the Labour Ministry blocked it. As the Asian Development Bank report says, India illustrates best the impact of globalisation on income distribution. While wages for English-speaking graduates are rising fast as information technology sector thrives, salaries for unskilled labourers are stagnating.

Another important factor is physical infrastructure. India has had to struggle to add 45,000 MW in five years while China adds nearly 70,000 MW every year. Consider the road connectivity figures: states like Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh have barely 15 per cent road connectivity. This leads to income disparity between those living in urban areas and those in rural areas. Lack of connectivity from, production place to market place, prevents farmers from getting better returns. Again, regarding power sector every year close to Rs 30,000 crore worth of electricity is lost to leakage and theft. Yet, the entrenched have ensured no real reforms are allowed in transmission and theft control.

The cause of inequality is simply the lack of good governance and asymmetry of opportunity. The governance deficit is startling if one looks at the levels of literacy and primary health care. The wide disparity in literacy levels across states, say Bihar which has a literacy level of 46 per cent and Mizoram of 89 per cent, illustrates this best.

India, which has had poverty reduction as the central goal of policy over the last 68 years of independence, has recently switched to a new development strategy focusing on two basic goals such as: (a) raising economic growth, and (b) making growth more inclusive (Government of India 2006). The central focus of the 2006 World Development Report (World Bank 2006) is the pursuit of equality of opportunity while avoiding extreme deprivation. The Millennium Development Goals were derived from the United Nations Millennium Declaration, which were adopted by 189 nations in the year 2000. Most of the goals and targets were set to be achieved by the year 2015 on the basis of the global situation during the 1990s. The baseline for the assessment of progress towards achieving the MDG's is therefore 1990s.

It is remarkable that the rural people have also suffered from income insecurity as their jobs tend to be seasonal. This disadvantage hinders political participation. Poverty, unemployment, poor health care, sanitation and nutrition and lack of literacy are some of the barriers that hinder the lower economic class from participating in local decision making processes and rural power structure. Women's visibility in the public services has also been negligible. Female heads in India also does not ensure women's empowerment because of their insignificant representation in national administration.

Generic inequality has clear spatial attributes. Spatial inequality occurs when core locations become privileged sites for capital accumulation. In India, urban-rural and regional disparities institutionalised long before in 1980s and became rapidly worse after 1990s. The post-reform growth favoured Southern and Western States, while distressing Northern and North-Eastern States that had been disadvantaged by public and private investment decisions.

Moreover, the child labour issue, the street vendors, (mostly in metropolitan cities), the unequal resource sharing and distribution, the discriminatory public private collaborations, the rural development schemes, the Panchayati Raj Institution, the role of Information Communication Technology, Education and Health facilities are important, that are still going on Indian states, but the corruption processes have collapsed the whole issue of comprehensive development. Pranab Bardhan often argued that the corrupt and inefficient state level bureaucracy remains incompetent to carry out the reform. Patronage, corruption and nepotism continue unabated in India.

Again, Jayati Ghosh's³ field study on the Cotton farmers in Andhra Pradesh has brought a new picture of new tragedy. The farmer's suicide cases brought lack of caring people towards the old and child in the suicide farmer's families. Most importantly the process of development displacement, the SEZs issue regarding Singur and Nandigram, the killings of innocent human being are notable. The problems of development displacement, rehabilitations and illegal land occupation on the name of economic development is not fair, but instead of that there needs some people's friendly policy orientations. India's weakness stems from its internal political economy-lack of cohesive polity and the consequent rise of regionalism over any notion of national interest-to a point where it is gradually losing its 'infrastructural capacity'. Hence, different types of inequality that are increased in India after 1991 period arise in between: (a) states of the union, (b) economic sectors, (c) castes, (d) genders, (e) rural and urban areas, and (f) rich and the poor people.

5. Public-Private Initiatives (PPP Model)

In India, the economic growth rates of all states are not same. India's various states differ significantly in terms of employment generation, poverty reduction and policy processes. Over the past few decades, India has allocated 6

to 7 per cent of budgetary expenditures, or 1 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), to its anti-poverty programmes, mainly supporting food subsidies, subsidized credit, improvement of rural infrastructure and rural employment schemes. The targets of the Government of India's Eleventh National Development Plan (2007-2012) include (IFAD 2008):

- Improving access to and the quality of essential public services for poor rural people, including health and education, by implementing and improving specific programmes and involving the voluntary sector,
- Creating a broader base for income growth by doubling the agricultural growth rate to 4 per cent,
- Harmonizing the government's various self-employment schemes and implementing an integrated self-employment programme, and
- Giving special attention to scheduled castes, tribes and minorities, and especially to the economic empowerment of women in those groups.

The Eleventh Plan provides an opportunity to restructure policies according to a new vision of growth that will be more broadly based and inclusive, to achieve a faster reduction in poverty.

Inequality was an important issue for the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) Government. For instance, the Approach Paper to the 11th Five-Year Plan (2007-12) adopted in December 2006, mentions 'inclusive growth' in the title itself⁴. There is a specific chapter on bridging divides. The strategy of inclusive growth proposed in this paper can command broad based support only if growth is seen to demonstrably bridge divides and avoid exclusion or marginalization of large segments of our population. These divides manifest themselves in various forms: between the haves and the have-nots; between rural and urban areas; between the employed and the under/unemployed; between different states, districts and communities; and finally between genders.

Vice-President of India, Hamid Ansari (Ansari 2008) in his keynote speech delivered in the Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) Conference held in New Delhi, said that the redistribution of economic and political power, inclusion of rural areas and rural poor in development, enhancing access to resources and employment in rural areas, focus on non-farm rural activities, education and training activities and agrarian reforms continue to be important areas for public policy. According to him, in Asia in general, and in India in particular, poverty has a rural face. According to him rural development and poverty alleviation are thus two sides of the same coin. He also added that the world is facing an unprecedented global hike in the prices of agricultural commodities, with concomitant impact and food security for the poor and vulnerable. While macro-economic and

Globalisation issues have been debated, these remain the penumbra of the shadow of this agrarian crisis.

Indeed, the agrarian reform and rural development issues are inherently political in nature. While economic and social interventions are necessary, they are not enough to bring about the desired outcomes. It is therefore, the duty of policy makers to ensure that the interaction of politics with policy is constructive and synergistic. As important personalities influencing policy formulation and implementation, sharing best practices and benefiting from the experiences of each other would contribute to our common goal of promoting rural development and regional cooperation, he added (Ansari 2008).

In India too, the government approaches to these two issues have significantly changed in the past two decades. Given the federal structure, land reform legislation is a state subject and has not been pursued in a uniform pattern. Civil society movements like '*Janadesh*' have therefore sought to mobilize opinion for a national land reform policy and a national land reform commission (Ansari 2008).

On the other hand, the Government of India has developed a noticeably sharper focus on poverty alleviation and rural development programmes and significantly enhanced its expenditure manifold - from Rs. 76 billion in 1993-94 to Rs. 340 billion in 2003-04 and Rs. 1200 billion in 2008-09. The Government's strategy has focused on five dimensions for targeted poverty alleviation and rural development (Ansari 2008):

- Institute guaranteed wage-employment covering the entire country,
- Promote self-employment,
- Ensure rural connectivity and infrastructure augmentation,
- Facilitate basic amenities such as housing, and
- Provide social security especially for the aged, sick and other vulnerable sections of the society.

The World Bank (World Bank 2000b) has laudably blueprinted the vision of the social protection of the poor or vulnerable so that they can manage risks better mainly through the mechanism of safety nets. But the fiscal crisis of the state and the absence of donor support undermine the realism of such vision. In fact, Sachs (2001) held that IMF and the World Bank were accomplices in 'grossly under funded and insufficient strategies' of poverty reduction. But even under the existing constraints there is scope for new and innovative programmes such as health insurance and disaster insurance for NGO clients, which can be funded from the savings of the poor themselves. There can be GO-NGO collaboration in protecting the poorest of the poor.

According to the *Human Development Report, 2007/2008* of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), measured in terms of the Human Development Index among South Asia, India ranked as 128, compared with 140 for Bangladesh, 133 for Bhutan, 100 for Maldives, 142 for Nepal, 136 for Pakistan and 99 for Sri Lanka (UNDP 2007). But question arises why India sticks somewhere in the 120s on the UN Human Development Index. In 1994, India stood 134th on the UN Human Development Index (HDI). Ten years later, as the NDA government yielded, India had inched up to just the 126th position. On the UN HDI for the year 2005, India actually sank from 126th to 128th position. Again UNDP 2014 *Human Development Report* measured in terms of Human Development Index India ranked 135th compared with Bangladesh at 142nd, Bhutan at 136th, the Maldives at 103rd, Nepal at 145th, Pakistan at 146th and Sri Lanka at 73rd (UNDP 2014).

The UPA government has produced a report to the people⁵ where the key components of the strategy of ‘inclusive growth’ have been to: (a) step up investment in rural areas, in rural infrastructure and agriculture, (b) increase credit availability to farmers and offer them remunerative prices for their crops, (c) increase rural employment, providing a unique social safety net in the shape of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme, (d) increase public spending on education and health care, including strengthening the mid-day meal programme and offering scholarships to the needy, (e) invest in urban renewal, improving the quality of life for the urban poor, (f) socially, economically and educationally empower Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, Minorities, Women and Children, and (g) ensure that, through public investment, the growth process spreads to backward regions and districts. This strategy of ‘inclusive growth’ combines empowerment with entitlement and investment. Education empowers, improved health care empowers, employment guarantee entitles, fulfilling quota obligations entitles. Through a combination of offering entitlement, ensuring empowerment and stepping up public investment, Government has sought to make the growth process more inclusive. This is fine as a statement of intent. But for all practical purposes, the UPA government’s initiatives are on the side of entitlement, rather than empowerment. There is an attempt to cast everything into an employer-employee mould, be it through the national rural employment guarantee, reservations or social security legislation.

Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) is a National Mission for Financial Inclusion to ensure access to financial services, namely Banking Savings and Deposit Accounts, Remittance, Credit, Insurance, Pension in an affordable manner. This financial inclusion campaign was launched by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 28 August 2014. He had announced this scheme on his first Independence Day speech on 15th August 2014. The PMJDY is run by Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance. On the inauguration day, 1.5 crore (15 million) bank accounts were opened under

this scheme. By May 2016, the scheme had opened 21.74 crore accounts, with Rs. 37,445 crore in deposits.

The scheme has been started with a target to provide ‘universal and clear access to banking facilities’ starting with ‘Basic Banking Accounts’ with overdraft facility of Rs. 5,000. Under the scheme:

- Account holders will be provided zero-balance bank account with RuPay debit card, in addition to accidental insurance cover of Rs. 1 lakh (to be given by ‘HDFC Ergo’),
- Those who open accounts by 26 January 2015 over and above the Rs. 1 lakh accident claim will also be given life insurance cover of Rs. 30,000 (to be given by LIC),
- After Six months of opening of the bank account, holders can avail Rs. 5,000 overdraft from the bank,
- With the introduction of new technology introduced by National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), a person can transfer funds, check balance through a normal phone which was earlier limited only to smart phones so far,
- Mobile banking for the poor would be available through National Unified USSD Platform (NUUP) for which all banks and mobile companies have come together.

The scheme has been criticized by saying as an effort to please voters that has created unnecessary work-burden on the public-sector banks. It has been claimed that the poor deserves food more than bank accounts and financial security. Further, these accounts have not yet added considerable profits to PSU banks. Offers like zero balance, free insurance and overdraft facility would result in duplication. Many individuals who already have bank accounts may have had accounts created for themselves, lured by the insurance covers and overdraft facilities. As per the scheme, a very few people are eligible to get the life insurance worth Rs. 30,000 with a validity of just five years.

6. Issues of Concern

Economic Liberalisation however is not working as a panacea for everytime. It is limited in both conception and design. At one level, it is concerned with the economic problems of the government such as the balance of payment situation, the rate of inflation and the fiscal crisis of India. At another level, it is concerned with the efficiency of industrialisation. But it is not concerned with the economic priorities of the people such as employment and poverty, agriculture and rural sector or physical and social infrastructure. Long term development objectives, such as education and human resource development or the acquisition of technological and managerial capabilities, are

simply neglected. What is more, the reform process stresses the need to eliminate weakness or what went wrong but neglects the possibilities of building on strengths or what turned out right. This, too, is a serious shortcoming. Moreover, the simple fact of life is that those who do not have incomes cannot buy goods and services in the market. Thus, when the paradise of consumerism is unrealisable or unattainable, which is the case for the common people; it only creates frustration or alienation (Nayyar 1998).

The discussion on the nature and drivers of inequalities points three significant issues. First, rising inequalities could be an inherent by-product of the growth process, and knee-jerk reactions to eliminate increases in inequalities may stifle the growth process itself. Second, lack of access to basic public services, credit, and risk-mitigating instruments perpetuate the lack of capabilities and opportunities for the large sections of the society. Third, the marginalization and bypassing of significant sections of society could undermine the sustainability of growth (Deaton and Dreze 2002).

Globalization and trade liberalization affect poverty and income inequality in two ways. First are the changes in wages and other factor returns through changes in production pattern and, therefore, composition of output. This is the short run effect. There is also the indirect or long run effect on wages that work through the impact on growth of output, both sectoral and aggregate. However, free trade is not necessarily a pro-poor strategy. Trade creates both winners and losers in the short run, and sometimes that may be quite unfavourable for the lower income groups. That is, in the short run, trade liberalization acts more like an (indirect) income-redistribution policy than a poverty-alleviating policy. Rather, the long run or growth impact of trade liberalization is more important for poverty alleviation. With acceleration of growth of output, opportunities for upward income mobility for the lower income groups gets stronger⁶.

The key areas in which the general public and more particularly the 836 million people who are poor and vulnerable, desperately need efficient and rightful access to public goods and services are precisely the 29 areas set out illustratively in the eleventh schedule to the constitution for the devolution of powers-Functions, Finances and Functionaries-to the elected local bodies. These cover primary and secondary education; dispensaries and primary health care centres; pure drinking water; sanitation; rural housing; women and child development; public distribution outlets, rural infrastructure including roads, bridges and culverts and others elements of rural connectivity; veterinary centres; the maintenance of community assets; rural industrialisation and off course, everything to do with minor irrigation and agriculture, and above all agricultural extension. Unlike the bureaucratic development, there is a need of grassroot development through grassroot democracy (Aiyar 2008).

The whole population should also have equitable opportunities of access to public services such as education health protection and housing. A few comments are in order here. Education is essential to development due to its intensive values, in so far as it contributes to cultural awakening, conscientisation, understanding of human rights, enhancing of adaptiveness and growing sense of autonomy, self-reliance and self-confidence. Of course, it has also an instrumental value with respect to employability. But education is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for access to decent work. It must come in a package of development policies, while some would like to present it as a panacea. One of the paradoxes of the situation prevailing today is mass unemployment of adults, going hand in hand with intolerable child labour. In order to send all the children to schools, fellowships are required for those coming from poor families, whose survival depends on the money they bring home (Sach 2004).

7. Concluding Remarks

The question of economic growth is not simply a matter of increasing the aggregate of income, but is a matter of the kind of growth, the composition of it and whom it has benefited. According to Baru (2006), the two most important challenges before India in 21st century are like: (a) mass poverty and degradation (b) defining India's status in global economy and society. However, the UPA regime has tried to evolve its own brand of inclusive growth. It has boosted spending in education through the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA), increased credit to agriculture and tried to improve physical infrastructure through *Bharat Nirman*.

In the words of *New York Times* columnist David Brookes, 'today's rich don't exploit the poor; they just out-compete them'. In this view, more productive people earn more by merit and inequality increases because markets do not provide unproductive people what they need to compete successfully in the market. Such logic induces major development agencies to promote 'pro-poor growth' policies, which rely on governments, NGOs' and businesses to provide loans, education, health, housing and jobs that poor people need to compete. Yet despite pro-poor initiatives, inequality is increasing in most countries.

According to Robb, the issue of Participatory Poverty Assessments (PPAs) uses participatory research methods to understand poverty from the perspective of the poor by focusing on their realities, needs and priorities. A participatory poverty assessment is a method to include poor in the analysis of poverty with the objective of influencing policy. The findings are transmitted to policy makers, thereby enabling the poor to influence public policy choices (Robb 2002).

One important phenomenon of the use of government waste land by the landless poor or by the self-help groups for production process is though new, it has tremendous output value. This is practiced in Tamil Nadu and got tremendous influence from the disadvantaged section of the people (Vidyanathan *et al.* 2007). Again in Rajasthan, RUDA is playing a vital role in organising and employing rural people in income generation activities and got international recognition for its growth performance record.

However, people often questioned on India as it a superpower of poverty (Das 2008) or a paper tiger (Baru 2006). The real growth will only happen if the partner states of Indian Union will grow equally. The rural non-farm sector is an alternative way of livelihood process when agricultural farming fails in India to engage all the rural poor. Concepts such as e-governance, social auditing, Public Interest Litigation (PIL), and Right to Information Act (2005) are gaining importance nowadays in India. It is the right time that the government servants pay enough attention to these Acts and tools to ensure efficiency and transparency of service delivery to the citizens of India.

Hence it is to be said that time has come to: (a) clarify the mind set of general masses on the one hand and the policy makers on the other, (b) reduce trust deficit among and within States, (c) enhance interdependency ratio unlike the one way of dependence, and (d) fight against common enemy i.e. poverty and terrorism for comprehensive human development and social welfare.

Notes

- ¹ Rajat Acharya, "*International Trade, Poverty and Income Inequality: The Indian experience during the Reform Period*", for more information see pdf available at Internet
- ² Rajat Acharya, "*International Trade, Poverty and Income Inequality: The Indian experience during the Reform Period*", for more information see pdf available at Internet
- ³ Professpr Jayati Ghosh had disclosed it in a post dinner public talk at Kaveri Hostel Mess of Jawaharlal Nehru University on 9th of September, 2006
- ⁴ Bibek Dev Roy and Laveesh Bhandari, "Exclusive Growth and Inclusive Inequality", for more information see pdf available at Internet
- ⁵ Bibek Dev Roy and Laveesh Bhandari, "Exclusive Growth and Inclusive Inequality", for more information see pdf available at Internet
- ⁶ *Ibid* 2

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Women in politics: An analysis of Women Representation in State Legislative Assembly of Sikkim

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Abstract

Gender equality in politics is still a distant reality across the globe, with only one-third of the countries exceeding the global target of 30 per cent women's representation in legislative bodies. The under-representation of women in national parliaments, therefore, poses a problem in terms of both the practice and the theory of politics. In practical terms, the under-representation of women in political leadership is even more remarkable when one realises that women have succeeded in gaining access to other sectors of society in many countries. Moreover, equality between men and women is now a leading political principle across the globe. Taking part in decision-making however, in politics as well as in the private sector, typically remains a male privilege. As far as women is concerned, very few of them hold leadership roles in decision-making processes. This unfortunate reality holds true especially at the national and state levels and Sikkim is no exception to this. It is in this backdrop, this paper seeks to study the representation of women in politics in Sikkim and to shed light on the reason of low representation. Besides, the author also seeks to provide strategic and practical recommendations for advancing women's representation at all levels in the decision-making process.

Keywords: Women, Gender Equality, Participation, Representation, India, Sikkim

1. Introduction

Women constitute almost half of the world population but their participation in the formal political structure and processes, where decisions regarding the use of societal resources generated by both men and women are made, remains insignificant. Milbrath and Goel (1977) has observed that "it is a tradition in almost all societies that politics is mainly an affair of men and that women should fall in line with them politically". The changes brought by the modern industrial societies are eroding this sex difference but the impact of tradition is still visible. Men tend to be more psychologically involved in politics than women. Discrimination against women, according to Chafe (1972), "finds in the deep rooted structure of society, in the roles women play and in a sexual division of labor which restricted females primarily to the domestic sphere of life". Therefore, it is argued that only substantial social changes capable of demolishing the structural basis regarding the traditional views of male and female roles is necessary to modify the existing trends in the political participation of men and women.

Gender equality in politics is still a distant reality across the globe, with only one-third of the countries exceeding the global target of 30 per cent

women's representation in legislative bodies. The under-representation of women in national parliaments, therefore, poses a problem in terms of both the practice and the theory of politics. In practical terms, the under-representation of women in political leadership is even more remarkable when one realises that women have succeeded in gaining access to other sectors of society in many countries. Moreover, equality between men and women is now a leading political principle across the globe. Taking part in decision-making however, in politics as well as in the private sector, typically remains a male privilege. But the women's participation in the legislature and in politics has certain benefits not only to women but to the general society as a whole. For instance, Thomas (1991) in her study of women in US state legislatures notes that women legislators were most successful in passing legislation dealing with women, families and children. Likewise, Flammang (1985) argues that female politicians have been observed to approach their participatory roles as public officials more creditably. According to Flammang, women have been more responsive to constituents, being better at the human relations parts of politics and places more emphasis on constituency service. Indeed, women legislators have attached different weights and meanings to the notion of representing women (Reingold 2000). But as far as women in concern, very few of them hold leadership roles in decision-making processes. This unfortunate reality holds true especially at the national and state levels and Sikkim is no exception to this. It is in this backdrop, this paper seeks to study the representation of women in politics in Sikkim. Besides, this paper also seeks to provide strategic and practical recommendations for advancing women's representation at all levels in the decision-making process.

2. Constitutional Provisions for Women in India

In 1950, the Constitution of India granted women the right to vote and to run for parliament. It also declared that men and women are equal in all spheres. Beginning with that, international developments such as the UN-sponsored decade for women launched in 1975 and the UN conference on women held in Beijing in 1995 not only lent momentum and even respectability to the women's movement, but also provided the impulse for several state policies for the enhancement of women's status. Besides, India has also ratified various international conventions and human rights instruments committing to secure equal rights of women. Key among them is the ratification of the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1993. Yet, India had fared poorly among the developing nations in the index measuring women's political participation. Concerned about the near absence of women from established political structures, scholars have tried to explain this gap between the extension of political rights and access to the centers of power. They have pointed to the historical and cultural factors that have moulded the process of specific politicization of men and women in India

and created a 'gender typed' role for them. Others have talked of division between the public and the private spheres as the division between men and women in Indian society and consequently categorize politics as a male domain.

In order to address all these issues, the Constitution not only grants equality to women, but also empowers the State to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women for neutralizing the cumulative socio economic, education and political disadvantages faced by them. Within the framework of a democratic polity, the laws, development policies, plans and programmes have aimed at women's advancement in different spheres. Fundamental Rights, among others, ensure equality before the law and equal protection of law; prohibits discrimination against any citizen on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth, and guarantee equality of opportunity to all citizens in matters relating to employment. Articles 14, 15, 15(3), 16, 39(a), 39(b), 39(c) and 42 of the Constitution are of specific importance in this regard.

However, in spite of such provisions in the Constitution, the decades following independence witnessed a decline in the women's participation in politics. Though there has been a marked increase in their voting turnout and election campaigning. While there have been significant gains in these two areas, women continue to be under-represented in legislative bodies both at the national and state level and in political parties. It has been observed that post-independent women are playing a significant role in less conventional activities such as environmental movements, anti-alcohol agitations, peace movements, etc. which equally effect power relationships as they have the capacity to influence the State. Yet politics proved to be a very inhospitable terrain for women and continues to be the male domain where entry to women is severely restricted. This has resulted into a poor representation of women in Parliament and State Legislative Assemblies.

3. Women and Legislative Representation in India

In India, women were given their political rights along with independence but their participation in politics is not so impressive (Chhetri 2014). Over the last 16th Lok Sabha elections, the representation of women has witnessed a very slow improvement. The First Lok Sabha election was held in 1952 where only 22 women members were elected out of total 499 members, which was just 4.4 per cent. Though a the number of women representation were increase in second and third election of Lok Sabha to 27 and 34 respectively but starts declining from the fourth election held in 1967. The number was increased only in the year 1996 i.e. in the eleventh election of Lok Sabha where 39 women candidates were elected. In 1999 polls, 284 women had contested the election and 49 were elected and in 2004 election, 355 women contested the election of whom 45 won (Chhetri 2014). The 2009 Lok Sabha

election saw the increase in the number of women members in the Lok Sabha. A total of 59 women candidates were elected in the fifteenth Lok Sabha election held in 2009 which account to 10.86 per cent of total, (Chhetri 2013). Of the total of 556 women candidates contested in 2009 Lok Sabha election, 59 were elected. In 2014, the Sixteenth Lok Sabha was held and 62 women got elected as the members of Lok Sabha which account to 11.42 percent, one of the highest ever since independence (see Table 1). Total of 668 women candidates contested the sixteenth Lok Sabha election. Of the total 62 elected women members, 4 are from INC, 30 from BJP, 11 from All India Trinamool Congress and 4 from AIADMK. The BJD and YSRCP has 2 members each in the present Lok Sabha. The Apna Dal, SP, SAD, SHS, NCP, CPI (M), JKPDP, LJP and TRS each has one member in the Lok Sabha. If we see the state wise women members in the Lok Sabha, 13 are from Uttar Pradesh, 12 from West Bengal, 5 each from Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, 4 from Tamil Nadu, 3 each from Andhra Pradesh and Bihar, 2 each from Assam and Odisha and the State of Chattisgarh, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, Kerala, Punjab, Rajasthan and Uttarkhand each has 1 women members in the Lok Sabha. Delhi and Chadigarh each has 1 women member in the Lok Sabha.

Table 1
Women Members in Lok Sabha (1951-2016)

Year	Total No. of Seats	Total No. of women Members	Percentage to Total
1952	499	22	4.4
1957	500	27	5.4
1962	503	34	6.8
1967	523	31	5.9
1971	521	22	4.2
1977	544	19	3.5
1980	544	28	5.1
1984	517	44	8.1
1989	544	27	5.2
1991	544	39	7.2
1996	543	40	7.4
1998	543	43	7.9
1999	543	49	8.8
2004	543	45	8.2
2009	543	59	10.87
2014	543	62	11.42

(Sources: Lok Sabha Secretariat, New Delhi, Chhetri 2014)

The representation of women in Rajya Sabha has shown similar pattern to that of the Lok Sabha. Women members in the Rajya Sabha has ranged from minimum of 15 (6.12%) to the maximum of 38 (15.51%) (see Table 2). The total representation of women in Rajya Sabha has never gone beyond 38. At

present there are 27 women members in the Rajya Sabha of which 24 are elected and three are nominated. The State of Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu has 3 members each in the Rajya Sabha. The State of Maharashtra, Bihar and Andhra Pradesh has 2 members each in the Rajya Sabha. The State of Tripura, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Assam, Karnataka, Haryana, West Bengal, Punjab, Meghalaya, Himachal Pradesh and Chattisgarh has 1 women members each in the Rajya Sabha.

Table 2
Women Members in Rajya Sabha (1952-2015)

Year	Total No. of Seats	Total No. of Women Members	Percentage to Total
1952	219	16	7.31
1957	237	18	7.59
1962	238	18	7.56
1967	240	20	8.33
1971	243	17	7.0
1977	244	25	10.25
1980	244	24	9.84
1984	244	28	11.48
1989	245	24	9.80
1991	245	38	15.51
1996	223	19	8.52
1998	245	15	6.12
1999	245	19	7.76
2005	243	25	10.29
2006	242	25	10.41
2008	242	23	9.50
2010	244	25	10.24
2014	242	28	11.57

Sources: Rajya Sabha Secretariat, New Delhi; Chhetri 2014)

Therefore, the representation of women in Parliament which has remain a maximum of 11.42 per cent in the Lok Sabha and a maximum of 15.51 per cent in the Rajya Sabha thus far is far from satisfactory, especially when we compare it with other countries of the world. The low representation of women in the decision-making organizations is due to the political parties that harbour very conservative view about women. Different parties though champion the cause of women in their manifesto, but during election time they give tickets mostly to men and only to few elite women. The Constitution (108th Amendment) Bill, 2010 as approved by Rajya Sabha recently, seeks to reserve as nearly as possible one third of all seats for women in the Lok Sabha, the lower house of Parliament, and the state legislative assemblies including Delhi. This is the latest legislative initiative to increase women's political

representation in India. If enacted, it will result in an increase in women in the national legislature simply because it requires a certain percentage of women to be elected (Chhetri 2014). The number of women in the Lok Sabha would increase to 182 in one stroke, from the current level of 62 MPs (11.06 %).

Women representation in State legislatures has also been equally dismal. Less than 9 per cent of 4118 law makers in state assemblies across India are women (Chhetri 2014). At present the total percentage of elected women in State Assemblies is 8.47 per cent. The highest percentage of women members in the State Legislative Assembly to the total number is Haryana with 14.44 % women members and Mizoram, Nagaland and Poducherry with no women members in the State Legislative Assemblies (Table 3).

Table 3
Women Members in State Legislative Assemblies in India

S. N.	State	Year of Election	Total No. of Seats in the Legislative Assembly	Total No. of Women Members	Percentage to Total
1.	Andhra Pradesh	2014	175	18	10.28
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	2014	60	2	3.33
3.	Assam	2012	126	14	11.11
4.	Bihar	2015	243	28	11.52
5.	Chhatisgarh	2013	90	10	11.11
6.	Delhi	2013	70	6	8.57
7.	Goa	2012	40	1	2.50
8.	Gujarat	2012	182	12	6.59
9.	Haryana	2014	90	13	14.44
10.	Himachal Pradesh	2012	68	3	5.8
11.	Jammu & Kashmir	2014	87	2	2.29
12.	Jharkhand	2014	77	8	10.39
13.	Karnataka	2013	224	6	2.68
14.	Kerala	2011	140	7	5
15.	Madhya Pradesh	2013	231	30	12.98
16.	Maharashtra	2014	288	20	6.94
17.	Manipur	2012	60	3	5
18.	Meghalaya	2013	60	4	6.67
19.	Mizoram	2013	40	0	0
20.	Nagaland	2012	60	0	0
21.	Odisha	2014	147	11	7.48
22.	Poducherry	2011	30	0	0
23.	Punjab	2012	117	14	11.96
24.	Rajasthan	2013	200	28	14

25.	Sikkim	2014	32	3	9.37
26.	Tamil Nadu	2011	234	21	8.97
27.	Telangana	2014	119	09	7.56
28.	Tripura	2013	60	5	8.33
29.	Uttarakhand	2012	70	5	7.14
30.	Uttar Pradesh	2012	404	32	7.92
31.	West Bengal	2011	294	34	12

(Source: Election Commission of India; Chhetri 2014)

4. Women and Legislative Representation in Sikkim: Past and Present Scenario

Sikkim the erstwhile sovereign monarchical country became the 22nd state of Indian Union in May 1975. It is situated in the western part of the Eastern Himalayas and has been hemmed by three international boundaries and a state of West Bengal. It is bounded by China (Tibet) to the north and northeast, Nepal to the west, Chumbi valley of Tibet and Bhutan to the east and the Darjeeling district of West Bengal to the south (Chhetri 2009). Sikkim consists of four districts and nine sub-divisions. The total population of the state is about 6.07 lakhs, with women accounting for about 47 percent of the total population.

In Sikkim, the women are more empowered socially and politically but their participation in politics is not so impressive. Over the last 9th Assembly elections, the representation of women has witnessed a very slow improvement. The first election of the State Legislative Assembly of Sikkim was held in the year 1974 before the merger of Sikkim with the Indian Union. The Legislative Assembly which was elected prior to the merger was continued till 1979. The second election of the Sikkim Legislative Assembly was conducted in the year 1979. The subsequent elections were held in the year 1985, 1989, 1994, 1999, 2004, 2009 and the recent one in the year 2014.

Table 4
Women Members in the Sikkim Legislative Assembly

Assembly Election	Year	Total Number of Seats	Numbers of Women Members	Percentage (%)
First	1974	32	01	3.12
Second	1979	32	Nil	00
Third	1985	32	Nil	00
Fourth	1989	32	01	3.12
Fifth	1994	32	01	3.12
Sixth	1999	32	01	3.12
Seventh	2004	32	03	9.37
Eight	2009	32	04	12.5
Ninth	2014	32	03	9.37

(Source: Election Commission of Sikkim; Chhetri 2009)

The Assembly election held in the year 1974 prior to the Sikkim's merger saw only one women candidate becoming the member of the Sikkim Legislative Assembly out of 32 members which comprise merely 3.12 per cent of women representation in the Sikkim Legislative Assembly. In the subsequent Assembly election of 1979 and 1985 no women candidate were able to win the Assembly elections. The Assembly Election of 1989, 1994, and 1999 returned only one candidate each in the Sikkim legislative Assembly. The 2004 State Assembly Election gave three women members to the Assembly. The number was increased to four after the 2009 Assembly election. However, again the number of women members in the State Legislative has come down to three in the 2014 Assembly Elections (see Table 4).

From the above analysis and observation it clearly shows that the representation of women in the Sikkim Legislative Assembly since the beginning is very inadequate. Although after joining the Indian Union there has been improvement in different aspects of life in the Sikkimese society, the womenfolk in Sikkim is yet to make a desired result with regard to their share in politics as far as their representation in the State Assembly is concerned. Various electoral data shows that in Sikkim the female electoral participation as voters has seen a notable upsurge as voter turnout figures of different Assembly elections shows which are held till now. The marginalisation of women in Sikkim from electoral participation stems mainly from political party competition, as national as well as regional political parties in Sikkim discriminate not only in terms of seat allotments in the electoral fray, but also in the party rank and file and chain of command. Therefore, we find poor allotment rate of seats to women by political parties in the elections to the State Legislative Assembly and marginalisation within the party structure in Sikkim. This could be attributed to a large extent to the party competition structure in Sikkim as it is encumbered by inherent male dominance and a patriarchal mindset that excludes women from the electoral process.

5. Concluding Remarks

Given the above literature and analysis, it can be concluded that women representation is dependent on multiple factors, which increase or decrease the role of women in political matters of a country. Their significance and prediction power, however, varies from situation to situation. The reason to fact is that every state provides different social, political, economic and governmental role to different sectors of society. In developing countries like India the women are still in the backyard and treated as such in almost all aspects of life. If any country is sincere in giving due role to their women in the parliamentary affairs, she must take up the matter on all fronts particularly, proportional electoral system, sufficient quotas, clear cut human rights for women especially the political rights, high GDP growth rate and more opportunities of education and increased labor force participation of women in a

country. Therefore, it can be concluded that the political participation of women and their representation in legislative bodies, the trend which is prevalent in the country, the Sikkim is also no exception to it. As far as state of Sikkim is concerned, the representation of women in legislative assembly is not satisfactory. A lot of improvement is needed so as to acquire the desired result in this direction. Taking into consideration the improvement which has taken place in the local governance all over India as well as in Sikkim especially to ensure women representation, there is a definite need for affirmative action on the part of policy makers to change the condition and also to increase the representation of women in legislative bodies. In terms of specific policy lessons for Sikkim and to allow for greater women's participation to shape and influence policy processes towards improved equity for women, following recommendations is suggested. Multiparty politics is crucial to achieve substantial women's political participation; women must be part of political parties and internal processes to drive change from within; proportional representation electoral systems increase prospects for a fairer representation of women in politics and government, through political parties, especially in the absence of constitutionally mandated representation quotas and a strong women's movement is necessary for setting standards, norms and accountability.

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Indian Secularism – Distinctive Ideas of Jawaharlal Nehru

Krishna Roy

Abstract

To Nehru, secularism meant granting of equal status to all religions in India. Secularism demands tolerance and close and active interaction among various communities in India. But when Nehruvian model of secularism had been put to practice, there were threats to this concept arising out of communal violence in present Indian context and hence Nehru's secularism has been criticized by several scholars. Irrespective of such criticism Nehru defined secularism as a means to strengthen national unity and to construct better and brighter India.

Key Words: Secularism, Rationality, Religious-plurality, National Integration, Dharmanirapaksata, Sarva-dharma samabhava, Religious tolerance

1. Introduction

The Indian state is secular in the sense that its constitution guarantees full religious liberty to all individuals and groups and forbids discrimination against any citizen on grounds only of religion, caste etc. At the same time it is not secular in the western sense of complete separation between church and state, for it reserves to itself the right to intervene in the interest of necessary social reforms in matters which customarily come under the preview of religion. Nehru did not make the mistake of defining religion in terms only of its communal or organised manifestation. Secularism was accepted as one of the fundamental bases for the development in India. The founding fathers of our constitution took it for granted that there would be tolerance in every aspect and sphere of our national life among all religions that prevail in our country. Secularism would thus mean an attitude of tolerance and peaceful co-existence on the part of citizens belonging to different faith and a policy of perfect neutrality and equality by the states towards all religious communities.

In this article we will try to analyse Nehru's concept of secularism, his ideas on religion, Nehru's views on secular state and his contribution to secularism in India. Attempt has been made to provide a glimpse into Nehru's vision of India with special reference to his views on secularism. Though the Nehruvian model of secularism was put to practice, there were threats to this concept even during this period. The ever present problem of communal violence tested the applicability of this model to Indian context and hence Nehru's concept of secularism has been subjected to criticism by scholars like Ashis Nandy, Partha Chatterjee, T.N. Madan, Akhil Beelgrami, and Achin Vanaik. Apart from all these criticism Nehru's idea of secularism occupies a distinct place in Indian context according to Neera Chandhoke. Nehru adopted various methods to foster national unity and suppressed separatist and

secessionist tendencies besides regional and communal fanaticism which has been recognised by scholars like Rajeev Bharghav.

1.1 Nehru's Concept of Secularism

Nehru is known as an architect of Indian secularism. The constitution of India contains his philosophy regarding the religious neutral state¹. Indian secularism, as propounded by Jawaharlal Nehru and incorporated in the Indian constitution contains the three main features –

First, our secularism is liberal in the sense that Nehru wanted it to combat communalism with social welfare politics while maintaining religious neutrality and ensuring religious equality and liberty to all minorities living in India.

Second, Indian secularism is not absolute in its character, that is, it is qualified in the sense that religious freedom given to all religions is subject to all the considerations of public order, morality and welfare of the citizens as such and the state authority may impose restrictions on any of the freedoms or rights guaranteed under Article 25 of the Indian constitution. It is for the judiciary to determine whether or not any such restriction is in consistent with the spirit of the constitution.

Thirdly, Nehru's concept of secularism is both dynamic and enlightened, as it allows the religion to play a part in social welfare. Nevertheless the Government of the day may change the personal law of any community or define it as it did in respect of the Sikhs and the Buddhists in the common interest of the country as a whole.

Nehru built the institutions and policies that would consolidate the nation. He knew fully well that our nation state could stabilise only if the secular polity divorced itself from all communal pulls and fanatic revivalism. A pluralistic and liberal society could survive by unifying the large cultural diversities. He understood that chauvinistic call for 'uniformity' was in reality a slogan, which sought to erase the minority cultures and their ways of life.

To Nehru, India was the centre of Hinduism as a unique expression of a 'cultural multiplicity' which lasted for thousands of years. In a reminiscent mood he wrote, "Hundreds of vivid pictures of this past filled my mind, and they would stand out as soon as I visited a particular place associated with them. At Saranath, near Banaras I would almost see the Buddha preaching his first sermon. Ashoka's pillar of stone with their inscriptions would speak to me in their magnificent language and tell me of a man who though an emperor, was greater than any king or emperor. At Fatehpur Sikri, Akbar, forgetful of his empire, was seated holding converse and debate with the learned of all faiths or curious to learn something new and seeking an answer to the eternal problem of man"².

Nehru's definition of secularism was four pronged: secularism meant first, separation of religion from political, economic, social and cultural aspects of life, religion being treated as purely personal matter. Second, dissociation of the state from religion, third, full freedom to all religions and tolerance of all religions and four, equal opportunities for followers of all religions and no discrimination and partiality on grounds of religion. Thus Nehru was a unique statesman, with an instinct for secularism. He strived for converting the country from the 'cow dung age' to an age of science and technology. He was opposed to superstitions, communalism and religious fanaticism. He always wanted that his countrymen should become rational and secular in their attitudes.

1.2 Nehru's Ideas on Religion

Religion is just an inner development of individual's personality. There is no concrete idea for religion. Religion has its own broader meaning; religion is a concept which relates to every individual, every community, and every nation. Religion involves value faith, morality and belief of a person. India is one of the oldest civilizations of the world and also it is one of the largest countries in the world. India unlike some other societies is not a homogeneous society, but it is a plural³ society. It is a multi-racial, multicultural, multi-lingual, multi-religious society. There are many religions, Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, Christianity, Buddhism, Jainism, Judaism and Zoroastrianism in India. Every member of a particular religion takes pride in being a follower of that religion and to Nehru the secular nation means that the state shall observe neutrality with regard to all religions.

Nehru believed that the progress of man or the progress of nation was only possible by adopting scientific methods, tools and techniques. He admitted that some form of religious belief is necessary for the generality of mankind because religion has given a set of values to human life and religion prevents the growth of science in society, whereas science over looked completely the values and purposes of life. Nehru was very much a Hindu of the monastic⁴ tradition of Indian philosophy. This Indian philosophy stood for the values of oneness, harmony and unity. He was influenced by the religion of Lord Buddha as the principles of Buddhism were based on scientific approach. Here Nehru rightly said, "It is science alone that can solve the problems of disease, hunger, poverty and illiteracy of vast resources running to waste of rich country inhabited by a starving people". Organised religion means reactionary force which opposes progress hence Nehru did attempt a definition of religion, he ignored all communal manifestation and according to him the purpose of religion is to develop the inner consciousness of the individual. In fact he believed that the ideas of Hindu and Muslim culture would vanish at the touch of reality by which Nehru meant modern scientific culture and its product, the industrial civilization.

1.3 Nehru's Views on Secular State

The term 'secular state' is commonly used in the present day to describe the relation which exists or which ought to exist between state and religion. Many aspects of our conception of the secular state are common to all the countries within the liberal democratic traditions.

The secular state means, a state which guarantees individual and corporate freedom of religion, deals with the individual as a citizen, irrespective of his religion, which is not constitutionally connected to a particular religion, nor does it seek either to promote or interfere with it. A secular state is therefore a state where citizens are not discriminated in any form or manner on the basis of their religion. Secularism may be an ideology⁵ and may be seen as such a way of life. However, it has to be seen essentially in the concrete process of nation building.

The underlying assumption of this concept is simply that religion and the state functions are basically different areas of human activity. It is not the function of a secular state to promote regulate, direct or otherwise interfere in religion. In a secular state all religions are in one limited respect, subordinate as well as separate from the state, as voluntary association of individual citizens. Religions and groups are under the general laws of the state and responsible for the proper discharge of civil responsibilities. In this respect religions are viewed by the state like other voluntary associations based on common, social cultural or economic interests. A secular state while granting basic fundamental rights, enjoins upon its citizen not to discriminate against any citizen on grounds of religion, sex, caste etc. It also grants freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion subject to public order, morality and health. Simultaneously a secular state may also reserve the right of making provision for advancement of any socially backward community or of making any law imposing restrictions on religious practices in the interest of public peace and morality. A secular state thus always exists to safeguard⁶ the welfare of its citizens and provides them equal opportunities for the development of self. It does not recognize any other world beyond this world. Thus we can assume the following to be the characteristics of a secular state – no established state religion, tolerance to all the religions, discouragement to bigotry, equality of rights, welfare of people, no religious education by government, condemnation of religious dogma, no religion exempted from the laws of the secular state.

A true democratic society is one which adopts or practices the ideology of secularism and that state is called as a secular state, that is state shall observe neutrality in regard to all religion and there is no established⁷ religion. Secularism has come to India from the west. India believes in the aloofness of state from religion or a state which does not patronise any one or any religion. The modern idea of secular state was totally unknown to old India. Throughout the history of India there was Hindu politics, Buddhist politics and in the

medieval period the strong influence of Islam was there. But despite religious dominance of different religions, the states adopted the policy of religious tolerance which is one aspect of secular state.

In a country like India which has many faiths and religions, no real nationalism can be built up except on the basis of secularity. Secular state⁸ in India means a state which honours all faiths equally and gives those equal opportunities, that as state it does not allow itself to be attached to one faith or religion. Secular state does not mean that people should give up their religion, a secular state means a state in which state protects all religions but does not favour any one at the expense of others and does not itself adopt any religion as state religion.

The word secular conveyed to Nehru much more than the mere dictionary meaning, especially in the context of social conditions prevailing in this country. Thus a caste ridden society is not popularly secular hence Nehru desired to build a political structure in which the individual was not subject to any social inequalities imposed by religious diversity existed in the country, secularism was essentially a practical approach for maintaining social stability and harmony. Nehru's concept of secularism⁹ was as much a product of Indian situation and intimately linked with the idea of the good society. Nehru was concerned with secularism because he was convinced that organised religion and even the religious outlook were opposed to democracy. Religions generate a reactionary force opposing change and progress. Nehru's view of religion is based upon certain fundamental human values and looks upon science not merely as a means of material progress but as a quest for truth and search harmony with rather than mere control over nature. So Nehru was opposed to dogmatism and intolerance, associated with it of other opinions and ideas.

Western model of secularism that is state-church separation can hardly fit the Indian reality. One can hardly talk of secularism in the Indian context without referring to communalism – the two major religious communities; Hindu and Muslims fought against each other mainly for capturing political and economic power. Hence Nehru's secular spirit inspired him to establish a secular society based on justice and equality in an intensively way. Secularism was not only a political doctrine but a social one of revolutionary character which embraced all religions and all communities in India. Secular philosophy meant neither irreligion nor only material wellbeing, it contained spiritual elements also. According to Nehru, "Secular philosophy itself must have come from some background, some objective other than merely material wellbeing. It must essentially have spiritual values and certain standards of behaviours"¹⁰.

1.4 Nehru's concept of secularism has mainly four aspects

Firstly, Nehru always believed in a multi-religious¹¹ India and India is a common home to all those who live here to whatever religion they may belong,

they have equal rights and obligations. The most essential factors of secularism were granting of equal status to all religions in India. He thought that the right to perform religious ceremonies should certainly be guaranteed to all communities. He said that no religion should be deprived of its legitimate rights, should depend on the membership of religious group of community. It can fully understand the right to freedom in religion, to him it means equal respect for all faiths and equal opportunities for those who profess any faith.

Secondly, Secularism according to Nehru is that, state should follow a policy of neutrality in religious matters. Nehru was convinced that the government of free India must be secular, in the sense that government will not associate itself directly with any religious faith. Nehru always condemned in strong words any talk of Hindu raj or Muslim raj. He believed in people's raj¹² and for that, state expected to follow a policy of co-existence as far as various religions were concerned. If the state tried to transgress upon religious freedom, then that approach would be not only wrong in it but will inevitably lead to friction and trouble.

Thirdly, Nehru's secular state or secular philosophy also meant a certain mental attitude¹³ on the part of various communities. Particularly in India, with a variety of religious groups, it becomes most essential that they should develop an attitude, which can bring about harmony and a feeling of fraternity towards one another. He believed that from the religious point of view, it is the responsibility of the dominant community not to use its position in any way which might prejudice our secular ideal. He emphasized that any narrow and aggressive attitude on the part of the majority creates apprehension in the mind of minority communities. It was much better to displease a few persons to lose an election rather than fail in the ideals such was the firm faith Nehru had in secularism.

Fourthly, Nehru wanted secularisation in all areas of social life. Nehru recognised how deep religions have made their way into the social field such as marriage, inheritance, civil and criminal law. He thought that they lay down a complete structure for society and try to perpetuate them by giving religious sanction and authority. So, the existence of separate sets of laws governing different religious communities was not consistent with the ideal of a secular society. Nehru tried to evolve a uniform civil code¹⁴ for the whole Indian people irrespective of the distinctions of religions and caste by introducing many measures of social legislation. His ideal of secularism envisaged a political structure in which the individual was not subject to any social inequalities imposed by religious sanctions.

What actually prompted the constitution makers to opt for a secular state model for India was the problem posed by the religious diversity¹⁵ of the land, the protection of minorities, the unsavoury experience of partition of the subcontinent, and such other peculiar conditions faced by the country at the

time of constitution making. In 1976, the 42nd Amendment included the word secular in the Indian constitution. Till then secularism were inferred in terms of articles 25 and 26 which formed the core of religious liberty in India. Article 25 guarantees freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion, subject to public order and health. Article 26 guarantees freedom to manage religious affairs subject to public order morality and health.

Nehru fully agreed with Ambedkar, the father of our Indian constitution who said that democracy would be unreal and meaningless in the wake of rampant communalism and hence only a secular state based on equality and justice could fit to the Indian society. The constitution of India contains Nehru's philosophy about the religious neutral state¹⁶ contains the three main features –

Firstly, our secularism is liberal in the sense that Nehru wanted to combat communalism with social welfare, politics while maintaining religious neutrality and ensuring religious equality and liberty to all minorities living in India.

Secondly, Indian secularism is not absolute in its character, that is it is qualified in the sense that religious freedom given to all religions is subject to all consideration of public order, morality and welfare of the citizens as such, and the state authority may impose restrictions on any of the freedom or rights guaranteed under article 25 of the Indian constitution. It is for the judiciary to determine whether or not any such restriction is inconsistent with the spirit of the constitution.

Thirdly, Nehru's concept of secularism is both dynamic and enlightened and it allows the religion to play a part in the social welfare. Nevertheless, the government of the day may change in the personal law of any community or define it as it did in respect of the Sikhs and the Buddhists in the common interest of the country as whole.

Thus Nehru regarded secularism as the most essential feature of modern democratic society. Modern India could not go back to the narrow medieval concept of theocratic state. If India is to develop as a modern state, how could India believe in the theocratic conceptions of state which considers people of other's faith as something beyond its pale? Therefore, the secular state according to Nehru would not however imply in any sense that religion should cease to be an important factor in the private life of an individual. He wanted principally to uphold the cardinal of modern democratic practice where the state is separate from religion. Nehru's concept of secular state was a practical necessity in India as a solution to the problem of religious diversity which was a challenge to Indian unity, harmony and social stability. We have not only to live up to the concept of secular state proclaimed by Nehru, but make them apart of our thinking and living and thus build up a really integrated

nation. That does not mean absence of religion, but pulling religion on different planes from that of normal, political and social life.

1.5 Nehru's Contribution to Secularism in India

Nehru's secular spirit inspired him to establish a secular society based on justice and equality in an intensively religious country like India. For him secularism is not only a political doctrine, but a social one of revolutionary character which embraced all religions and all communities in India. It means a social structure where an individual would not be subjected to some hierarchical position in society on the basis of one's faith and religion. It means a certain mental attitude on the part of the individuals and groups, towards the members of other religious groups. Inter-group and inter-personal relations are not supposed to be affected by religion and religious considerations. The most essential feature of secularism according to Nehru was the granting of equal status to all religions in India. Individual has the right to attend any religious ceremonies and no religion has any special privilege and no community should be deprived of its legitimate rights on the basis of religion. Nehru's concept of secularism has four aspects.

Firstly, Nehru always believed in a multi-religious India. India is a common home to all those who live here, to whatever religion they may belong. They have equal rights and obligations. Ours is a composite nation. In modern plural society, the concept of personal faith and personal conduct must be respected. Secularism is a federal principle¹⁷ applied to a federal society for the welfare of the whole. So Nehru declared, "We are building a free secular state, wherein every religion and belief has full freedom and equal honour, who's every citizen has equal liberty and equal opportunity.

Secondly, the state should follow a policy of neutrality in religious matters. Nehru always condemned in strong words any talk of Hindu raj or Muslim raj rather he believed in people's raj and for that state was expected to follow a policy of co-existence as far as various religions were concerned. If the state tried to infringe upon religious freedom, then that approach would be not only wrong in itself but will inevitably lead to friction and trouble.

Thirdly, to Nehru, secularism also meant a certain mental attitude on the part of various communities, particularly in India, with a variety of religious groups, it becomes most essential that they should develop an attitude, which can bring about harmony and a feeling of fraternity towards one another.

Fourthly, the realization of the secular ideal depended largely upon the attitude adopted by the majority community, the Hindus, towards other minority communities. Repeatedly he emphasized that the Hindu must always remember that the interest and the wellbeing of the minorities are their sacred trust. If they fail in their trust, than they injure not only the country, but themselves. Any narrow and aggressive attitude on the part of the majority community would

create a feeling of an apprehension in the minds of the minority communities. According to Nehru it was much better to displease few persons to lose an election rather than fail in ideals – such was the firm faith Nehru had in secularism.

Nehru was determined to build an integrated nation after independence. India being an ethno-cultural¹⁸ mosaic provides scope for variety and diversity. At the dawn of independence, religion became a formidable force and led to the partition after considerable blood bath and painful migration on both sides of India and Pakistan. Even after the partition on narrow religious line and on two nation theory, the fact remained that we have the second largest Muslim population in the world next to Indonesia. Hence to preserve the unity and integrity of India Nehru advocated his theory of secularism which is suitable in highly diverse society with a long history of disunity.

2. Debates on Indian Secularism

The cornerstone of Indian democracy, secularism is a highly contested concept. It is contested because two different line of understanding are competing for ideological domination ever since independence and even before. (a) One side of this understanding was Jawaharlal Nehru who had a vision of separating religion and politics manifesting in the concept of ‘dharmanirpekshata’. (b) By way of contrast Mahatma Gandhi rejected the idea of separation of religion and politics and believed in the principle of equal respect of all religions manifesting in the concept of ‘sarva dharma samabhava’. The contest between these two different understanding of secularism was an issue of debate in the Constituent Assembly and later in academic circles in India.

Several critics of Indian secularism maintain that given the pervasive role of religion in the lives of the Indian people, secularism, defined as the separation of politics or the state from religion, is an intolerable, alien, modernist imposition on the Indian society. This, argument is a misreading of the Indian constitutional vision, which enjoins the state to be equally tolerant of all religions and which therefore requires the state to steer clear of both theocracy or fundamentalism and the "wall of separation" model of secularism. The critics point out the dichotomy, between Nehruvian secularism and Gandhian religiosity. What is distinctive to Indian secularism is the complementation or articulation between the democratic state and the politics of satya and ahimsa, whereby the relative autonomy of religion and politics from each other can be used for the moral-political reconstruction of both the religious traditions and the modern state. Indian secularism is one of the deeply problematic issues in contemporary Indian political discourse.

The most important contemporary challenge to Indian secularism has been mounted by the forces of Hindu nationalism, and from influential

academic writers, notably Ashis Nandy, T. N. Madan and Partha Chatterjee. Since the mid-1980s, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the "Sangh Parivar" have been insisting on a distinction between their own "positive secularism" and the "pseudo-secularism" of the Congress. According to them, "positive secularism," which would mean "justice for all and discriminations against none," should replace the prevailing "pseudo-secularism," whereby the word secularism is misused to denigrate the Hindu categories and symbols of the majority community and to justify the pampering of the minority communities.¹⁹ According to T. B. Hansen, the ideology of Hindutva and "positive" or "true" secularism amounts to the principle of rule by Hindu majoritarianism. He notes that it is a "peculiar co-articulation of brahminical ideologies of purity, romanticist notions of fullness and authenticity, and quasi-fascist organicism and celebration of strength and masculinity which characterizes the Rashtriya Swayamesvak Sangh (RSS) and its affiliated organizations.

According to Nandy, Nehruvian secularism, which separates state and religion, and which has been imposed on the Indian people, is part of a larger, modern, western package of scientific growth, nation-building, national security and development. These constitute a "modern demonology, a tantra with a built-in code of violence." Whereas secularism demands from the members of religious communities to dilute their faith so that they can be truly integrated into the nation-state. It guarantees no protection to them against the sufferings inflicted by the state itself in the name of its "secular, scientific, amoral" ideology of nation-building, security, development, etc. As a handy adjunct to these "legitimizing core concepts," secularism helps the state-elites to legitimize themselves as the sole arbiters among traditional communities, to claim for themselves a monopoly on religious and ethnic tolerance and on political rationality. To accept the ideology of secularism is to accept the ideologies of progress and modernity as the new justifications of domination, and the use of violence to achieve and sustain the ideologies as the new opiates of the masses²⁰.

According to Nandy, this modern Western rational-scientific secularism, which Nehru sought to impose on the Indian society, has failed either to eliminate religion from politics or to promote greater religious tolerance. Hence, it can "no longer pretend to guide moral or political action." Nandy therefore has no hesitation in calling himself an anti-secularist. By so criticizing secularism, Nandy does not mean to privilege the communalist ideology of either the majority or minority religious communities. To the contrary, these communalist ideologies are, in his view, the pathological by-products of modernity; they are the dialectical "other" or counter-players of modernity's secular state. He notes that khaki shorts of the RSS cadres are modeled on the uniform of the colonial police. According to him, the ideology of Hindu nationalist revivalism or fundamentalism, with its borrowing of the

models of semiotic religions and of the modern Western nation-state, is "another form of Westernization²¹" in the sense that it seeks to decontaminate Hinduism of its folk elements, turn it into a classical Vedantic faith, and then give it additional teeth with the help of Western technology and secular statecraft, so that the Hindus can take on, and ultimately defeat, all their external and internal enemies, if necessary, by liquidating all forms of ethnic plurality-first within Hinduism and then within India. Nandy draws a distinction between two conceptions of religion -

- (1) Religions as tolerant and accommodative faiths or folk ways of life and
- (2) Religions as politically constructed monolithic, communalist ideologies of sectarianism and intolerance. The former, he says, characterized the pre-modern and pre-liberal way of life in India, whereas the latter is a product of modernity's nationalism, statecraft, and developmentalism.

The next move in Nandy's argument is to suggest that it is the very package of modern nationalism and its statecraft and scientific developmentalism which generate and nourish religious communalisms, which the state elites combat by resorting to the use of the ideology of the secular or nonreligious nation-state. This counter posing of the tyranny of the modern secular state and the violence of modern communal organizations is, in Nandy's view, nothing but the internal dialectics of modernity's nation-state paradigm. By this reasoning, communalism can be the majoritarian or the minoritarian variety, and the secular state stand condemned as the perverse gifts or, rather, the inevitable products of Western modernity. In Nandy's view, the ethico-politically appropriate alternative to them lies in the non-modern, pre-secular conception of religions as accommodative, tolerant faiths or ways of life as was practiced, in exemplary manner, by Asoka, Akbar and Gandhi. They derived their religious tolerance not from secular politics but from Buddhism, Islam and Hinduism, respectively. Gandhi's religious tolerance, he writes, "came from his anti-secularism, which in turn came from his unconditional rejection of modernity." Accordingly, Nandy writes: "As far as public morality goes, statecraft in India may have something to learn from Hinduism, Islam or Sikhism; but Hinduism, Islam, and Sikhism have very little to learn from the Constitution or from state secular practices."²²

Ashis Nandy calls himself "an anti -secularist" and argues that ideology and politics of secularism has exhausted its possibilities in India. He even asks for a different conceptual frame which he visualizes at the border of Indian political culture. He locates the cause of new religious violence in secularism and modernity. A 'gift of Christianity' and child of modernity and colonialism secularism is a product of western science and rationality and function as the ideology of modern State which according to Nandy is a source of most contemporary problems. Nandy's rejection of secularism is rooted in a twofold critique of modern culture and society and critique of secular state.

According to Nandy, Indian secular State has much to learn about morality from Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism while Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism have nothing to learn from the secular state in this respect. As an alternative to secularism Nandy pleads for the recovery of India's traditional religious tolerance²³. Nandy's critique of the ideology of secularism is against western state centered version which is adopted by India's westernized intellectuals. In this version of secularism religion should be abolished from the scientific management of the public sphere. In contrast is the non- western religion centred understanding of secularism that supports equal respect for all religions and suits South Asian realities.

To Nandy religion in South Asia has split into two, Religion as faith and religion as ideology. Faith means religion as non- monolithic, operationally plural way of life. Ideology means religion as sub national, cross national or national identifier of population protecting political or socio -economic interests. Religion as ideology is usually identified with one or more text and become the final identifier of the pure forms of religions and modern state prefers to deal with this form of religion. This idea is the product of modernity, statecraft and developmentalism. Secularism which is an imported idea from west does not use religion to link up different faiths or way of life which has its own principle of tolerance. The idea of secularism that give state the role of ultimate arbiter among different religions and communities is incompatible with understanding the role of religion in life of people in south Asia.

Nandy discuss two different meaning of the word in modern India, the first meaning of secularism demarcate two distinct sphere, public life and private life and one's religion is not admitted in public life. According to Nandy, one can be a good Hindu or a good Muslim within one's home or at one's place of worship but when one enters public life, one is expected to leave one's faith behind. This ideology believes that public realm is dominated with vision of science and universal and bringing religion may lead to potential threat to modern polity. Pitched against this is the non -western meaning of secularism that believes in the principle of equal respect to all religions. Implicit is the idea that public sphere must have space for continuous dialogue among different religions because each include within it "an in house version of the other faith, both as an internal criticism and as a reminder of the diversity of the theories of transcendence"²⁴. This version of secularism is compatible with Indian understanding of secularism but India's westernized intellectuals have opted for abolition of religion from the public sphere. Nehruvian secularism which separates state and religion is a part of modern western package of scientific growth, nation building, national security and development. These according to him constitute a 'modern demonology a tantra with a built in code of violence'. The idea of secularism creates rigid separation of two spheres – state and religion. Religion enters politics through different means in the form of ideologies and instrumentalized religious exclusivism. Thus even threat of

Hindu right has to be coped with religious and not secular means through reactivating traditional forms of tolerance. Secularism is also insensitive to politics of culture and believer is treated as person with inferior political consciousness. In this process traditional culture based on tolerance is eroded and tendencies of extremism increases and generates communal politics. Thus he suggests Gandhian path of inter-faith dialogue.

Like Nandy, T. N. Madan maintains that religious zealots, who contribute to fundamentalism or fanaticism by reducing religion to mere political bickering, are provoked to do so by the secularists who deny the very legitimacy of religion in social life. According to him is because Nehru's secularism denies the immense importance of religion in the lives of the people of South Asia. Secularism is in this region an impossible credo, an impracticable basis for state action and an impotent remedy against fundamentalism or fanaticism. Ruling out the establishment of a Hindu state as an utterly unworkable proposition, Madan concludes that "the only way secularism in South Asia, understood as inter-religious understanding, may succeed would be for us to take both religion and secularism seriously and not reject the former as superstition and reduce the latter to a mask for communalism or mere expediency."²⁵ He commends Gandhi not only for emphasizing the inseparability of religion and politics but also for opening up avenues of inter-religious understanding and of a spiritually justified limitation of the role of religious institutions and symbols in certain areas of contemporary life.

Madan also criticize the idea of secularism though does not dismiss it absolutely. He cautions against unproblematic adaption of secularism in south Asian realities. Coding Bankim Chandra Chatterjee Madan argues how translations are difficult because words can be translated but it is difficult to translate an idea that the word denotes if that idea does not exist among people in whose language translation is required. The idea of secularism as transferred to countries of South Asia also poses many difficulties. South Asia is a multi-religious society and the majority of people living in this region are active adherents of some religious faith. While Secularism is impractical for State action because Buddhism and Islam have been declared as State religion, Policy of equidistance is also difficult to maintain since religious minorities do not share the majority's view of what this entails for the State. It has failed to bring under control divisive forces which resulted in the partition of the subcontinent in 1947 and also failed to counter religious fundamentalism. Madan argues that it was possible to privatize religion in the West because of developments internal to Christianity such as reformation that facilitated the process. Whereas in South Asia major religious traditions do not assume any radical antinomy between the sacred and the secular. Religion covers all aspects of life and its impact is totalizing in nature thus it was impossible to restrict it to private domain. Religion as the doctrine of overarching ends is the most important

factor in the lives of the people of India and South Asia. Religion gives meaning to lives of most of the people and also determines their place in society. Thus to impose secularism on believers is wrong in the words of Madan "an act of moral arrogance and political folly"²⁶. Religion and the belief of people must be taken seriously and should be given its place in society as non-religions because denial of legitimacy to religion in society of believers provokes fundamentalism on the part of religious zealots. Through religious pluralism inter religious harmony could be established. Secularism and religious faith must be recognized to be compatible with each other. The alternative conception in Madan's views is Gandhism because it has the possibilities of inter religious understanding.

Though Nandy dismisses secularism altogether Madan suggests that state practices of secularism have to be based on the recognition of religious practices. This has to be buttressed by discovering and strengthening the internal resources of religious pluralism and tolerance. Since India's civil society is deeply religious Nehru's concept of secular ideas poses a problem as state project. But in the end both theorists ground their understanding of tolerance in largely undefined and unarticulated lived practices. That these practices may have changed or degenerated in the context of competitive electoral politics and an equally competitive market economy is something that they would rather not take into account.

Partha Chatterjee too finds that the ideology of secularism is not an adequate or appropriate political perspective for meeting the challenge of Hindu majoritarianism. In his view, the official model of Indian secularism and the present campaign of the Hindu right for setting up a "positively" secular state have brought India to a "potentially disastrous political impasse."

Turning to the recent shift in the ideological articulation of Hindu nationalism, Chatterjee points out that its present championing of "positive secularism" is meant not only to deflect accusations of its being anti-secular but also to rationalize, in a sophisticated way, its campaign for intolerant interventions by a modern, positively secular state against the religious, cultural or ethnic minorities in the name of "national culture" and a homogenized notion of citizenship²⁷. In this role, writes Chatterjee, the Hindu right in fact seeks to project itself as a principled modernist critic of Islamic or Sikh fundamentalism and to accuse the 'pseudo-secularists' of preaching tolerance for religious obscurantism and bigotry. The quandaries generated by the career of the secular state in India and the potentially disastrous nature of the new politics of "positive secularism" lead Chatterjee to the conclusion that the theory and practice of the secular state cannot bring about what, according to him, is really needed in India, namely, the toleration of religious, ethnic and cultural differences.

In so denouncing secularism, Chatterjee is in agreement with Nandy. They share the view that the politics of interventionist secularization is part of the same practices of the modern state which promotes religious communalism or religious intolerance. While Nandy's "anti-secularist manifesto" of religious tolerance is couched in terms of the non-modern, pre-liberal philosophy, symbolism and theology of tolerance in the everyday faiths of Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism and Sikhism, Chatterjee's search is for a "political" conception of tolerance as part of a non-Western form of modernity in India²⁸. Finding that the liberal-democratic state can only recognize individual rights, and not the collective rights of cultural or religious groups, Chatterjee directs his intellectual efforts not to secularize the state in the name of any universalist framework of reason, but to defend minority cultural rights and to underscore the duty of the democratic state to ensure policies of religious toleration.

According to Chatterjee to assess the proper relationship between the state and the religious, ethnic and cultural groups, we need to go beyond the "state sovereignty vs. individual rights. Following Foucault, he maintains that the specifically modern form of power, which cuts across "the liberal divide between state and civil society," exercises itself through forms of representation and through technologies of governmentality, that is, the self-disciplining of its subjects. He notes that this modern form of power is characterized by "an immensely flexible braiding of coercion and consent"²⁹. Hence, according to him, the secularization of the state cannot be taken as a non-coercive or power-free politics of pure (secular) rationality. Rather, under modernity, the religious, cultural and ethnic communities as well as the secular state are to be seen as institutional sites or strategic locations of the politics of identity and difference. This being so, according to him, arguments for a universal framework of governance based on so-called pure secular-rational grounds (e.g., the principle of the equal rights of all regardless of their religion or caste) which ignore their context of cognitive-political struggles over issues of identity and difference. Hence, Chatterjee calls for a conception of tolerance which recognizes that there will be political contexts where a group could insist on its right not to give reasons for doing things differently provided it explains itself adequately in its own chosen forum. In other words, toleration here would be premised on autonomy and respect for persons, but it would be sensitive to the varying political salience of the institutional contexts in which reasons are debated.

Contrary to Nandy's non-modern, religious conception of tolerance, Chatterjee directs his search to finding a 'political' conception of tolerance which will set out the practical conditions in order to demand and expect tolerance from others. According to him, if a religious community seeks to gain or preserve its autonomy and respect from other groups or from the state, it must conduct its own affairs through representative public institutions insofar as those affairs are not confined to simple matters of innocent beliefs or holy rituals. Those affairs or practices of any religious group which have a regulative

power over its members must rest on the publicly secured consent of those members. In other words, writes Chatterjee, "even if a religious group declares that the validity of its practices can only be discussed and judged in its own forums, those institutions must have the same degree of publicity and representativeness that is demanded of all public institutions having regulatory functions"³⁰.

According to Chatterjee the duty of the democratic state is to ensure policies of religious tolerance within the constitutional vision. So is the case with the principles of respect for persons and of the consent of the governed, which he rightly takes to be the basis for the toleration of religious differences. The activity or policy of giving equal tolerance to all religions is not a strictly religious activity or policy. It is also not and a moral political activity in which the end is taken to justify any means adopted for its realization. It is rather a moral-political activity or policy, which is predicated on the relative autonomy of the political and the religious from each other. It assumes not only that a pluralism of religious and or nonreligious beliefs is ineradicable under the conditions of modernity but also that political institutions and political policies can be constructed and operated in different ways and for different purposes from those of religious institutions or religious doctrines. Indian secularism cannot be said to be situated entirely outside the problematic and thematic of the Western discourse on secularism. The problematic relationship between religion and politics in the West had its analogies in India too. What we mean is that despite important philosophical or metaphysical differences between them, both European Christianity and Indian Hinduism legitimized, in their own ways, analogous systems of social inequalities during the pre-modern period. The latter was complicit in the "social construction" of the social evils mentioned above, namely, sati, untouchability, etc. Hence, an ethico-political reform of the socio-religious sphere was taken to be an integral part of the Indian movement for swaraj and sarvodaya. Government has also intervened in the matters of conversion. In the constituent assembly conversion as an issue was discussed and the constitution grants right to propagate but the word conversion was not included. After Independence different State government made these acts to prohibit force, fraud and inducements for conversion. When matter relating to conversion was discussed in the Court, Supreme Court differentiated propagation of religion from conversion and viewed it as contrary to freedom of conscience.

According to Chatterjee in post independent India the model of secularism adopted by India's westernized elites implied exclusion of Indian alternative to Western secular modernity. It also introduced direct involvement of state in religious and social matters especially in Hindu religious matters. Chatterjee problematize implementation of secular principles in Indian realities. If secularism is interpreted as strict separation of religion and politics this can prove fairly compatible with the discrimination against minorities. If secularism

is interpreted as equidistance from all religious groups then its practice in India raise some doubts because State has intervened selectively in personal laws of different communities making laws to reform Hindu personal laws but the same reformist agenda has been absent for other communities like Muslims, Christian and Parses. Hindu right describe this as appeasement of minorities. Chatterjee refers to the exceptionality of India though he does not call for a new version of secularism. Chatterjee is in favour of idea of political tolerance that incorporates autonomy and respect for persons and accommodates different reasons coming from different cultural and traditional institutions. He seems to be in agreement with the idea that minorities resist homogenization from outside but may introduce democratization within the community.

According to Achin Vanaik idea given by Nandy and Madan is based on traditional idea of embedded self and support a form of religious communitarianism. Despite theoretical insightfulness the 'anti-secularist', legitimizes politics of religious identity. According to Vanaik, Nandy's idea of replacement of secular state and secular public morality with religion based public morality of tolerance is dangerous. While for Nandy Secular state is imposed from above on traditional society Vanaik in his thesis proposes that traditional beliefs and practices are responsible for undermining the secular state and democratization of society. The root cause of religious communalism is religion itself. The struggle against religion should not be limited to setting up a state equally tolerant of all religions but extend to the secularization and diminution of religion in civil society. To secularize civil society religious influence, importance of religious identity in everyday life and increasing privatization of religious commitments has to be reduced. Secularism means three things - right to freedom of worship, primacy of citizenship and non-affiliation of State to any religion. The secular State must separate state and religion, secularize state laws and policies. Recognizing due importance of Gandhian legacy Vanaik argues that though Gandhi did not separate religion and politics his role was remarkable in giving principle of equal respect to all religions. But many of Gandhi's perspectives were against modern conception of secularism. Secular democracy requires rights centered relationship between individual and society. Vanaik interprets Gandhi's mixing of politics with religious idioms of ahimsa trusteeship etc. as a strategy of class accommodation³¹ for preventing any socialist revolution against capitalism. Gandhi mobilized masses in the Indian national movement but this contributed to a conservative though anti communalist, religious nationalism in contrast to a secular, democratic and egalitarian nationalism.

Akkel Bilgrami criticize Nehruvian form of secularism but reject Nandy's views on secularism also. He criticizes Nandy for practicing both nostalgia and skewed historiography. While Nandy is right in arguing that different religious traditions have their specific source of the realization of a tolerant way of life his ideas of the rise of Hindu Nationalism is oversimplified.

According to Bilgrami Nandy's anti secular proposal have flaws in it because the condition for different religious traditions and communities has changed in modern India. In Bilgrami's opinion Nehruvian secularism stands in a conceptual and political space that lies outside the sphere of substantive political commitments. Secularism did not emerge as the product of a negotiation and dialogue between religious communities. It was adopted from above as an Archimedean point. If it would have been the result of debate and understanding of different communities then different groups would have subscribed to it. Presence of different communities in State is important and these communities could play very important role in designing secular principles. Bilgrami presents the model of negotiated or emergent secularism³² which is based on moderate religious persons embracing principle of secularism not on the basis of universalistic rationality but on their own internal value system. Secularism should also incorporate clarification of those principles that belong to illiberal religious persons also. Instead of seeking neutral common agreement communities should contribute to a secular outcome for different reasons from within their different substantive value economies. Instead of being imposed it should emerge from bottom up incorporating moderate political voices and assumptions of different communities. In his later writings he calls this liberal model post classical liberalism. He is also critical of contextualization of secularism including Taylorian proposal of redefinition. He proposes various conceptions of secularism may complicate the issue thus theoretically it is important to uphold unified definition of secularism.

3. Relevance of Nehru's Secular Model in Contemporary Indian Society –

Nehru's notion of secularism dharammirpekshata did not mean a state where religion is discouraged. It rather meant a State where people have freedom of religion and conscience and freedom for those as well who have no religion. Nehru himself said it is perhaps not very easy to find a good word for 'secular'. Some people think it means something opposed to religion. That obviously is not correct. What it means is that it is a state which honors all faiths equally and gives them equal opportunities, that as a state, it does not allow itself to be attached to one faith or religion, which then becomes the State religion³³. Nehru's secularism was understood as freedom of religion or irreligion, no state religion and due honour of all religion equally. Different articles of our constitution define the Secular character of the State. Constitution guarantees freedom of religion to individual, also to religious denomination, guarantees equality of citizenship, equality of opportunity in public services, no discrimination in educational institutions, no communal electorate, although there is provision for reservation of seats for Schedule Castes and Schedule Tribes , no special taxes for promotion of religion, no religious instructions in state educational institutions. Through principle of sarva dharma sambhava Gandhi tried to bring people from different religions

together. It was also a way to form mass movement in a religiously divided plural society. Gandhi also realized and recognized value of religion in people's lives and believed in equal respect of all religions. The difference in opinion of two stalwarts Gandhi and Nehru on Secularism was even visible in Constituent Assembly Debates.

Donald E Smith in his work "India as a secular State" published in 1963 provides elaborate and logical analysis of Indian Secularism. He gives a theoretical outline of a secular state that involve three connotations—Freedom of religion, citizenship and right to equality and separation of State and religion. This understanding incorporates three distinct interrelated set of relationship concerning State, religion and individual. In relationship between individual and State religion is excluded and individual is viewed as citizen. In a relationship between Individual and Religion State is excluded. Third is the relation between state and different religions and Secularism entails mutual exclusion of state and religion. Considering this important framework of secularism according to Smith while freedom of religion and equal citizenship has been duly incorporated in the Indian Constitution, State right to intervene in religious matters compromise these two principles in an important way. Hindu temple in Khajuraho India, incorporating a Hindu spire, a Jain cupola, a Buddhist stupa and a Muslim style dome, in place of the usual 'shikharas' (peak).

Thus India has some but not all features of a secular state. In Smith's view³⁴ heritage of Hinduism that has characters conducive to secularism, presence of different minority groups as well as legacy of national movement under the leadership of Gandhi and Nehru provides prospects for strengthening secular State. However consolidation of Secular state is problematic one due to caste and religious loyalties that may take ugly turn of communal rivalry and conflict and second aid to groups based on communal stratification. State interference in Hindu religious institutions to reform them and continuance of personal law is also opposed to the principle of secularism. India had to resolve whether non sectarianism or non- religiosity is the true meaning of secularism. Despite these problems in Smith's views India is a secular State.

According to Neera chandhoke to understand secularism it is important to situate it in the wider conceptual context of which it forms part and unravel its meaning in relation to meaning of equality, freedom and democracy. Indian version of secularism is rooted in the principle of sarva dharma sambhava which requires equal respect for all religions. The premise of equality of all religions is problematic in multi religious society where religious communities are divided on the basis of majority and minority and some minorities are weak and extremely poor. In this background the idea of secularism as equality of religion when employed by Hindu right put pressure on religious minorities. She employs the principle of substantive equality to ensure both inter group and

intra group equality and defends protection of minority rights. This principle demands to recognize institutionalized inequalities in society and to rectify them, employ measures to benefit the least well off that may include accommodating minority rights. Neera Chandhoke offers a normative theory of minority rights based on the shift from secularism to the universal principle of moral equality.

According to Chandhoke, Nehru's idea of secularism 'dharmanirapekhta'³⁵, preferred that the state would not be influenced by religious consideration in policy and decision making. Yet Nehru was convinced that in the Indian context religion could not be banished from the political and public spheres. Indian secularism is related to the constitutional values of democracy and fundamental rights. Thus secularism is important for India because (a) it enables people of different religions to live in civility with respect for all faiths, (b) it is a part of democracy which grants equal rights, (c) it safeguards democracy by limiting the powers of the majority and (d) it protects the equal rights of minorities to citizens. Nehru's secular ideal is important for India because it regulates the relation between the state and various religious groups on the principle of equality that the state shall not discriminate against any religion. Otherwise people will be subjected to oppression and denial of their right to freedom of belief. The majority is to be told that it does not have the right to control the country and the minority is to be assured of equal treatment. Thus secularism is the only alternate to destructive communalism.

Nehru's doctrine of 'dharmanirapekshata', implies that the state would not be influenced by religious considerations in formulating its policies. But Nehru realized that policy making could not be separated from the domain of religion and that religion could not be banished from the political and public sphere. The violence that followed after the partition of the country proved that religion had become an intrinsic part of political life. Nehru made it clear that secularism did not mean a state where religion is discouraged, instead it means freedom for all religion, including the freedom for those who have no religion. For Nehru, the word secular was not opposed to religion. It is a state which honours all faiths equally and it does not allow any religion to assume the status of the state religion. Hence Chandhoke points out that Nehru's concept of the secular state implies (a) freedom of religion or irreligion for all, (b) the state will honour all faiths equally and discriminate against none and (c) that the state shall not be attached to one faith or religion which becomes the 'State religion'. Rights of the minority community were secured by article 29 and 30 and Ambedkar, the chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Indian Constitution made it clear that the rights of the minorities should be absolute and unconditional and not subject to any other considerations.

Chandhoke made it clear that Nehruvian concept of secularism in the Indian context implies that everyone has the freedom to practice their religion. This right is guaranteed in article 25 of the fundamental rights. In fact we do not need to proclaim secularism in order to grant religious freedom. This freedom forms a part of the Fundamental Rights. But the principle of secularism goes further and establishes equality between all religious groups. The concept of secularism also distances the state from the sphere of religion that is there is no state religion. This assures the minority a legitimate place in the country. At the same time the majority groups would not be privileged in any manner. Thus the concept of secularism in India has the following components – (a) the state shall not attach itself to any one religion which will thereby establish itself as the state religion, (b) all citizens are granted the freedom of religious belief. Hence the state will ensure equality among religious groups by ensuring that one group is not favoured at the expense of the other. Similarly the minorities will not be discriminated in any way.

Secularism discussed by Bhargava is the principled or non-sectarian distance between State and religion. State's excludes religion for some purposes and include it for some other but it is always guided by non-sectarian principles constituting set of values that incorporates equal dignity for all. Within contextual secularism if there is any conflict then State relies on minimalist procedures to control or remove controversial ideals. The policy of principled distance entails a flexible approach on the question of inclusion or exclusion of religion and the disengagement of the state, which depends on the context, nature or current state of relevant religions. This means that religion may intervene in the affairs of the state if such intervention promotes freedom, equality or any other value integral to secularism. Principle distance allows for differential treatment. It may even require state intervention in some religions more than in others, considering the historical and social condition of all relevant religions. For example suppose the value to be advanced is social equality this requires undermining in part caste hierarchies then it may be required of the state that it interfere in caste ridden Hinduism much more than say Islam or Christianity.

According to Bhargava secularism is fully compatible with the defence of differentiated citizenship rights and secularity of the state does not necessitate strict intervention, non-intervention or equidistance but any or all of these as case may be. Indian constitution presents vision of contextual secularism³⁶ and exclude religion for some purposes example exclude separate religious electorate and include it for example personal laws for religious communities. But different institutions have practiced other two versions of secularism at different times. For instance in the Shah Bano case courts followed hyper substantive secularism and parliament by refusing to participate in Muslim personal law practiced ultra-procedural personal law. Bhargava criticize Nandy and Madan thesis on secularism and writes, modern secularism

arose because the resources of tolerance within traditional religion had exhausted their possibility. According to Bharghav features that make Indian Secularism distinctive is -

- i) Multi value character—it values religious liberty, equality, peace and toleration.
- ii) Constitution respects and recognizes Community specific rights
- iii) Principled distance - It is not mutual exclusion of State and religion. It accepts a disconnection between State and religion at the level of ends and institutions but does not make a fetish of it at the third level of policy and law.
- iv) It uniquely combines an active hostility to some aspects of religion with an equally active respect for its other dimensions.
- v) It attends to the issues of intra religious oppression and inter -religious domination.

Hence through the writings of D. E. Smith, Neera Chandhoke, Rajeev Bharghav Nehruvian model of secularism 'dharmanirapekshta', or maintaining neutrality towards religion occupies a distinct place and becomes relevant in contemporary Indian society.

4. Conclusion

Secularism is invaluable for a society like India which is characterized with religious diversity. Secularism regulates the relationship between the State and various religious groups. In a secular State, all groups are treated equally and the State is not aligned to any religion. No person shall be discriminated against on the ground that he or she belongs to a particular religion. The concept of secularism is derived from the principle of democracy. Secularism becomes meaningful only when it refers to democratic equality. No society is secular unless it is committed to democratic principles of freedom and equality. But secularism is meant to regulate inter-group relations. Within the group, individual members may be treated unjustly as in the case of women's rights within religious communities.

Secularism allows us to live in some measure of civility. It compels people to respect other religious beliefs. Secularism is a part of democracy which grants to citizens equal rights. It protects democracy by limiting the power of the majority. Secularism protects the equal rights of the minorities. Secularism is therefore desirable for a plural society like India. Irrespective of critical analysis by scholars like Ashis Nandy, T.N. Madan, Partha Chatterjee, Achin Vanaik, Akhil Beelgrami, the distinctiveness and relevance of Nehru's secularism in contemporary India can be summarised in the following ways.

Firstly, Nehru regarded secularism as the basic law of Indian nationhood. It grew as an integrative process. He believed that the territorial integrity, political stability and national identity in a country like India with multi-faceted diversity can be achieved only through secularism. According to Nehru, secularism does not mean indifference to religion. It only means that the state as such is not identified with any particular religion but tolerates every religion, appreciates every religion, respects all religions —Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, Christians, etc. He used every single opportunity to impress upon the people the danger of mixing religion and politics. He was a vehement critic of communalism and fundamentalism of both Hindus and Muslims. Communalism, he believed, could not only weaken the very fabric of a society but also threaten its very existence. He was of the view that for proper functioning of democracy and growth of national unity and solidarity, communalism must be eliminated from India's life. Due to his deep concern for the minorities Nehru constantly strove to find ways to root out the fear and distress of the minorities and wanted the majority to be generous. The spirit of tolerance has been the landmark of our secular attitude and outlook and the tolerance arises from our attitudes and from our past conditioning and mental outlook. Secularism stood against blind faith, belief, dogma, bigotry, superstition, exploitation and preservation of vested interests. Thus Nehru visualised a secular state as one in which every group and every individual had the full freedom to function according to his own way either culturally or in matters of religion. It was Nehru's vision that shaped the Constitution of India in such a manner that it should provide for a secular state. Four aspects of Nehru's secularism which would suit to India's caste ridden society are - grant of equal status to all religion, opposed to any special privileges to any religion, religion and belief has full freedom and equal honour, all citizens has equal liberty and equal opportunity.

Secondly, Nehru's secularism implied neutrality of the state in religious matters. He mentioned that the future government of free India must be secular in the sense that the government will not associate itself directly with any religious faith. He was opposed to the association of the state with any particular religion because it divided the citizens into two classes—some having more opportunities and others having less.

Thirdly, Nehru viewed secularism as a mental attitude on the part of various communities which could bring about harmony and feeling of fraternity towards one another. He fully realised that the success of secularism in India would depend on the attitude of the majority community towards the minorities. He, therefore, exhorted the Hindus, who constituted the majority, to remember that the interest and well-being of the minorities are their sacred trust. If they fail in their trust, then they injure not only the country but themselves. He also expected the minorities to be tolerant and advised them not to adopt an attitude which could be detrimental to the integrity and unity of India.

Finally, Nehru's concept of secularism implied the existence of a uniform civil code for the people of India. He considered the existence of different sets of laws governing different communities as inconsistent with his ideal of a secular society.

Today, the secular ethos for which Nehru strived hard throughout his life is facing a multi-prolonged challenge from the hydra-headed monster of communalism. A spark is enough to ignite a communal flare-up; people slit each other's throat. Thus in the light of our experience, particularly during last two years, a fresh reappraisal or the correctness of what Nehru stood for and tried to achieve, is the need of the hour.

Notes

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- ³ Sayeed Abu Ayyub, "Secularism and Jawaharlal Nehru", in Sinha. V. K ed. 1968, *Secularism in India*, New Delhi, Lalvani Pub. House (pp.126-128)
- ⁴ D. E. Smith, "India as a Secular State", in Bhargava Rajeev ed. 1998, *Secularism and its Critics*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press Publications (pp.180-82)
- ⁵ According to Nehru, "religion is whatever introduces genuine perspective into the piecemeal and shifting episode of existence, or again any activity pursued in behalf of an ideal end against obstacles and in spite of threats of personal loss, became of its conviction of its general and enduring value, is religion in quality, Nehru truly believe in the vedantic approach of Indian religion which shows respect to all religious community". A.B. Shah, "Secularism in India" in Sinha, V. K. ed. 1968, *Secularism in India*, New Delhi, Lalvani Pub. House (pp.1-3)
- ⁶ Saran A.K., 2007, *On the Theories of Secularism and Modernization*, Varanasi, Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies Pub. Sarnath (pp.199-201)
- ⁷ Grover, Virender, 1990, *Political Thinker of Modern India*, New Delhi, Deep and Deep Pub. (pp.226)
- ⁸ *ibid* (228-29)
- ⁹ Ahulwalia. B.K., 1978, *Nehru India's Man of Destiny*, New Delhi, New Man Group Publishers (pp.15)
- ¹⁰ Luthera. V.P., 1964, *The Concept of Secular State and India*, London, Oxford University Press. (pp.154)

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- ¹¹ Nehru commented, “we the Indians believe in a national state which includes people of all religions and is essentially secular as a state, or do we believe in the religion, theocratic conception of a state which regards people of other faiths as somebody beyond the pale? He speak of one national outlook, which would inform the working of the Indian state, though he did not spell out the source for the development of that one national outlook”. Smith. D.E. “India as a Secular State”, in Bhargava Rajeev ed. 1998, *Secularism and its critics*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press Publications (pp.180-182)
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- ¹⁴ Tejani Shabnum, “Secularisms Historical Background”, in Needham Anuradha Dingwaney and Rajan Rajeswari Sunder ed. 2007, *The Crisis of Secularism in India*, New Delhi, Permanent Black Publications (pp.82-86)
- ¹⁵ Saran A.K., 2007, *On the Theories of Secularism and Modernization*, Varanasi, Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies Pub. Sarnath (pp.204-205)
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- ¹⁷ Parekh Bhikhu, “Nehru and the National Philosophy of India”, *EPW*, Vol.26, No.1/2 (Jan.5-12, 1991), (pp. 35-39)
- ¹⁸ Gandhi Rajiv, 1987, *Secularism, Social Equity – Foundations of the Indian State*, New Delhi, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India Pub. (pp.11-13)
- ¹⁹ Pantham Thomas, “Indian Secularism and its Critics”, *Journal, The Review of Politics*, Vol.59, No.3 (Summer), 1997, (pp.523-524)
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- ²¹ Ashis Nandy, “The Politics of Secularism and the Recovery of Religious Toleration”, in Bharghav Rajeev ed. 1998, *Secularism and its Critics*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press Publications (pp.324-25)
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- ²³ *ibid* (pp.337)
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- ²⁹ Chatterjee Partha, "Secularism and Tolerance", in Bharghav Rajeev ed. 1998, *Secularism and its Critics*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press Publications (pp.372)
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The General Election of 2014 and the Changes in the Indian Party System

Mouli Dey

Abstract

General elections in India in present times are fought more on the plank of four Ps where populist policies promises to satisfy the pangs of hunger for comprehensive development and vigorous election campaign by a popular leader raising people's hopes and aspirations to achieve development for an developing nation. However, survival and continuity of the popular government depends on the symmetry between 'proclamations' and 'performance'. General elections also realign and reconfigure the party system.

Keywords: General Election, Popularity, Populism, Performance, Positivity

1. Introduction

The study of Indian party system has always been a matter of interest. Time and again the Indian party system has witnessed sea changes and reconfiguration. This adds to create quite a messy picture of the party system. The Indian party system not only produces surprising results but it is a critical mediating factor in producing social changes in the society. The Indian party system offers a menu of choices and acts as an instrument for social transformation realigns power structure and the basic dynamics of the society.

James Manor (2002) in his article '*Parties and the Party System*' has tried to uphold the impact of various factors such as defection, increase in mass consciousness, people's urge for development and the performance of a ruling government on the Indian party system and the subsequent changes in it due to these factors. Prakash Sarangi (2002) too has shown his interest in the study of the Indian party system which underwent several transformations. In his article entitled "*Economic Reforms and Changes in the Party System*" he has highlighted the fact that socio-economic development and the economic reforms that have been undertaken has a direct bearing on the nature of the party system. He has tried to show how this tends to influence the voting pattern and the behavior of the electorate. The change that has occurred in the role and attitude of the Congress and the transformation that the Congress has undergone has introduced significant changes in the nature of the party system in the country. Moreover as it seems the lack of any established political culture and the undying pangs of hunger for development has led to transitional shifts and transformation of the Indian party system. Its demise from the hegemonic position has brought significant changes in the nature of the party system. Since election is a very significant component of a democratic political structure

therefore with the aid of the electoral results an attempt has been made to show the reconfigurations in the party system.

In recent times the electoral logic of the Indian electorate irrespective of any class, caste, community and language has been mostly guided by their judgment on the records of parity between 'as promised' and 'as delivered'. The present electoral logic defies the claim of Lipset and Rokkan (1967)¹ that cleavages and conflicts influence the trajectory of the party system of a nation. On the contrary, besides cleavages and conflicts, "aspirations" (for growth, development, social justice and equity) of the populace translates into the party system and determines the trajectory of the party system at both the levels. The Indian population desires to rise above and shed the status of being citizen of an underdeveloped country. It wishes to tread the path of development or growth along with equity through various social welfare schemes. Hence as discernible in our opinion the Indian politics and the Indian party system is driven by four Ps *Popularity and Populism, Performance and Positivity*.

This trend consolidated most particularly since 2004 general election when people of this diversified country set aside issues such as caste, religion, language, *mandir-masjid* issue and gave a clear mandate for 'progress'. BJP's pro-rich policies, the issue of rising unemployment and the catastrophic impact of its fanatic Hindutva campaign prepared its graveyard for burial. This prompted the Indian voters to give another chance to the Congress party which portrayed itself as the party of the common man or '*aam admi*'. Once again the party which was not able to deliver was punished by the Indian voters. Hence, BJP-led NDA was ousted from power. Hence it became clear that the party which perform and enable the nation to tread the path of development will survive in a developing nation. This prompts the masses to give whimsical verdicts which ultimately pave the way towards politics of alliances, fronts and coalitions with no adherence or allegiance to any one single party. With every passing day India is witnessing participatory upsurge among all the sections of the society. These sections pass their valuable verdict as the course of politics demands.

In underdeveloped countries it is the performance of the government which determines its ability to come back to power. This has been the guiding factor for determining the mandate of the people in India since 1967. This article attempts to see how parameters like populism, personality, performance and ability is used to raise the hope of the electorates by a political party for a better tomorrow and how these parameters determines the outcome of the General Election. Besides, it deals with the most important strategies adopted by Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to come to power with the 2014 Lok Sabha election. The article finally looks at how the performance of the different political parties in the 16th Lok Sabha polls has cast its impact upon the nature of the Indian party system.

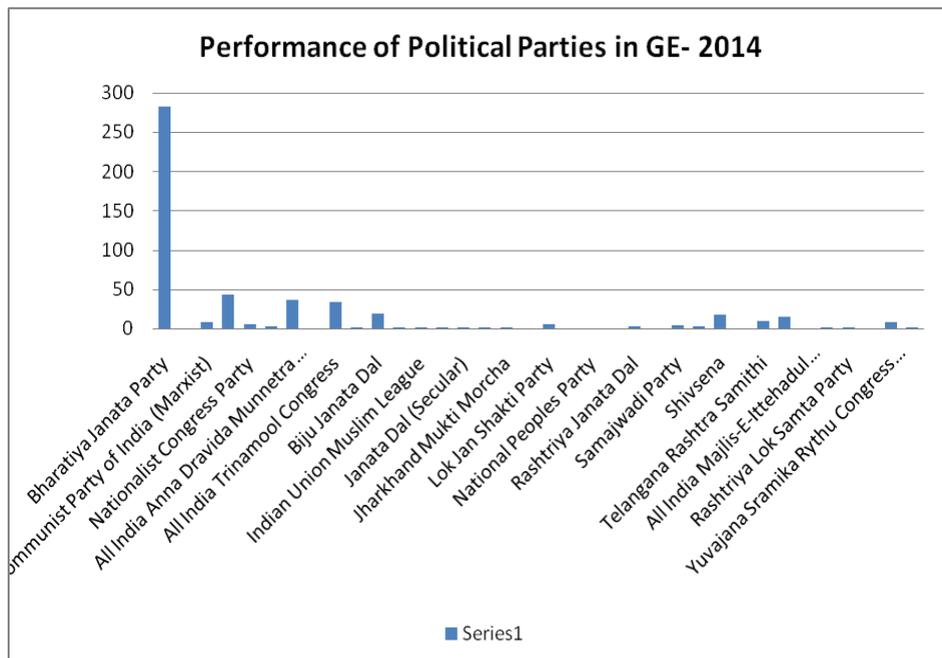
2. General Election to the 16th Lok Sabha

The General Election to the 16th Lok Sabha held during April-May 2014 saw a comprehensive victory for the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) with a very pronounced verdict. Such a victory is bound to invite some interpretations as BJP is not dependent on any of its pre-poll allies to form the government at the Union level. The 2014 Lok Sabha election establishes the fact that the country craves and stands for 'development' and aspires for 'good governance'². The strategy of alluring the electorate with the 'Gujarat development model' reaped benefits for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The series of corruption charges and scams, the issue of rising prices of essential commodities hurting the ordinary people, spiraling inflation, faltering growth, weakening currency, rising fiscal deficit, falling sensex, rising cases of crimes against women etc. wrested the chances of Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) coalition government from coming to power for the third consecutive time.

2.1 Interpreting the General Elections 2014

The election to the 16th Lok Sabha was unique in its own way as it for the time since independence produced a mandate that installed a 'party' at the central level with absolute majority that is otherwise marked for its indulgence in fanatic Hindu fundamentalism to rule a country that pledges in the name of secularism. Unprecedented popularity earned through rigorous media advertising, undying hope and unparalleled electoral campaign of Narendra Modi saw the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) emerging as the largest party by securing an absolute majority on its own with 282 seats polling 20.58 percent of votes and 31.34 percent of seats. BJP along with its allies secured 336 seats and Congress with its allies secured only 59 seats. Left front has secured 11 seats only. The nation has offered Modi and his government a chance to deliver growth and governance without any hurdles by reposing their faith in him and thereby bestowing him with maximum number of seats. The verdict shows that the nation has breached the gap between rural-urban, upper caste-lower caste, rich-poor, Hindu-Muslim and stood only for growth, progress and overall development of rural India besides the urban India.

Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) has been forced to bite the dust. Indian National Congress (INC) secured 44 seats polling 12.82 percent of votes and 19.52 percent of seats. INC was reduced to double digits for the first time in general election. In the 2009 Lok Sabha election it had secured 206 seats on its own. It secured 162 less seats in this election in comparison to 2009 Lok Sabha election. This is BJP's best ever performance in a general election since its inception in 1980. It has bagged 166 seats more than 2009 general election.



Source: Figures available from Election Commission of India website <http://eciresults.nic.in/>

2.2 Lok Sabha Polls 2014: Popularity and Populism, Performance and Positivity

The BJP resorted to its sole trump card Narendra Modi (who had been chosen consecutively thrice as the chief minister of Gujarat) and his well professed ‘Gujarat model’³ of development for winning the 2014 election. The assembly elections that were held in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Gujarat resurged gallons of confidence within the Bharatiya Janata Party. BJP benefitted immensely from the fallouts of Congress-led UPA government which was voted back to power for the second time for its pro-people agendas. The second tenure has been a watershed for UPA II as it got riddled with series of corruption charges such as 2G spectrum scam, Commonwealth Games scam, Adarsh Housing society scam, Augusta Westland chopper scam, Railway bribery and coal mine scam that maligned its pro-people image based on which it had revived itself to the centre stage with the 14th general election. These cases of corruption caused huge losses amounting to crores of rupees to the national exchequer and this antagonized the common man. Rising cases of crimes against women questioned the administrative credibility of the UPA II government.

The pangs of hunger for development and better governance compelled the Indian electorate to vote for a change in government from Congress-led UPA to a BJP-led government⁴. The crux for survival for any government in

power in a developing country like India which is always yearning for progress and massive development in all the parameters is to 'perform' and translate rhetoric into intent. The corrupt image of the Congress and DMK have contributed negatively towards the electoral fortune of the Congress led UPA coalition and had produced serious repercussions that solely contributed positively towards the electoral fate of the Bharatiya Janata Party. The projection of Narendra Modi, the sculpted icon of development, aroused hope among the people of the country that they can now taste development. Assurance of rural growth and generation of rural jobs, pro-active, pro-people good governance along with emphasis upon inclusive and sustainable development worked wonder for the party⁵. In Modi people saw hope and credibility because he has been voted thrice back to power by the people of Gujarat⁶.

3. The Reasons why BJP emerged as the 'new' Majority Party: Popularity and Positivity

Highly strategized and calculated campaign by BJP reaped benefits for the party. Emphasizing on core issues like development, good governance and covertly gliding with its core ideology of Hindutva politics or politics based on religion to consolidate its base when required then quickly shifting its campaigning strategy towards caste-based politics by wooing Dalits, OBCs to form new and enhanced support bases produced wonder for the party. Social and geographical barriers have been overcome with BJP's highly intelligently strategized electoral campaign, claims party president Rajnath Singh. Hence it has touched all the basic issues of concern as politics in India revolves around issues like religion, caste, development and aspiration for good governance. The repeated insistence of good days lying ahead (*acche din aane wale hain*) if Modi is voted to power was also able to catch the fancies of the development starving nation. It used every possible medium to spread the aura of Modi and resorted to emphatic and effective slogans like '*aab ki baar Modi Sarkar*' (this time it should be Modi-led government), '*Sabka saath, sabka vikas*' (collective efforts inclusive growth) to highlight its willing to adhere to an all inclusive policy and eschew its majoritarian policy. Its majoritarian and fundamentalist attitude was its biggest loophole that has prevented the Bharatiya Janata Party to have greater mass appeal in this secular country. The minorities and the disadvantageous section of the society have since the Bombay and Gujarat riots have perceived BJP with skepticism, fear and disdain.

Moreover, placing Amit Shah in charge of election campaign in Uttar Pradesh played dividends for the party. Shah is credited to have crafted a very well planned election campaign in the state of Uttar Pradesh (U.P.) by meticulously preparing a consortium of diligent cadres, striking every chord correctly with regard to caste calculations as well as simultaneously pursuing its traditional *hindutva* politics by wooing its core support base of the upper caste

Hindus. BJP retained its hard line Hindu credentials. During the 1980s the communal agenda of BJP centered on issues like Babri mosque, construction of Ram temple and the city of Ayodhya. Earlier it mobilized Hindu voters through anti-cow slaughter movement during the 1966-67 and insisted and protested in front of the Parliament to pass law for prohibiting it. In the 2014 electoral campaign, apart from issues like development, eradication of corruption, good governance, mobilization in the name of 'identity' was also pursued as BJP had opted the city of Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh, the most religiously significant Hindu city on the bank of sacred river Ganges, as its citadel and subtly remained associated with its pro-Hindutva strategy to attract its vote from its traditional bases such as upper- caste, urban Hindus, small and middle businessmen and Hindu traders, cultivators, etc. (Hansen & Jaffrelot, p.4, 1996). Uttar Pradesh is the most populous state that sends eighty Member of Parliament to Lok Sabha. Since the presence of the party was not much impressive in the north-east and down south therefore winning maximum number of seats from the most populous Hindi heartland state⁷ was imperative for the party to capture power at the centre. Therefore, to rekindle the feeling of 'being Hindu' and to popularize Modi, its prime ministerial candidate for Lok Sabha election 2014, for bigger electoral gains in the state of Uttar Pradesh the BJP leadership very intelligently opted for the most sacred city of the Hindus, Varanasi, which is primarily an ancient Hindu holy site and prudently abandoning the much controversial site Ayodhya which has left unhealing bruises in the memory of the people of India. This step yielded the desired benefit for the party and eventually the BJP could garner as much as seventy three seats in the state following the 2014 general election. Social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Google plus came to the rescue of the party that made its campaign more approachable and kept the party connected with millions of voters. The extensive use of the social media reaped benefits for the party significantly⁸.

BJP made significant inroads in Bihar, Maharashtra besides Uttar Pradesh and retained its outstanding performances in Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Rajasthan. Choosing Modi the prime ministerial candidate despite of opposition from the old vanguards paid dividends for the party as well. On the contrary, despite of every odd the party has tried to put up a united picture among the upper rung leaders in front of the nation to win their faith and confidence⁹. The party refurbished its line of leadership by discreetly sidelining the leaders like Murli Manohar Joshi, L.K.Advani, Sushma Swaraj, Arun Shourie, Jaswant Singh, Yaswant Sinha and displacing them with a new team of leaders like Rajnath Singh, Amit Shah, Narendra Modi, Nitin Gadkari etc.

Modi's electrifying campaign across the nation created a wave of support for the party. Modi enthused energy in the electoral campaign and emerged as the star campaigner of the 2014 general election. The positive image of the prime ministerial candidate worked in favour of the party in whom

people saw the leader of the nation who can steer them out of poverty, unemployment and some such other problems. He in order to effectively identify and connect himself with the common *masses* and create a greater appeal referred to his humble origin of a poor, simple ‘*chaiwala*’ (tea vendor) in his early life who has now dared to challenge the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty¹⁰.

4. The Reasons for Congress-led UPA Debacle: Performance

The Congress party could not raise hope and sell vision for a better tomorrow among the masses. It appeared as though they were overburdened with their own under performance, inefficiency and stains of corruption. They failed to assess people’s mood which yearned for development, performance, enhanced services, good life, strong, decisive leadership and a stable and an ‘able’ government. They on the contrary Congress during its election campaign got engaged in dirty blame game and had no such significant achievements to bolster up on¹¹. Rahul Gandhi lacked the enigma and energy and could not emerge as ‘one’ among the many¹². Their last minute alliance with Lalu Prasad’s RJD was seen with skepticism by the common masses as he himself was behind the bars for his alleged involvement in the fodder scam. With time it was seen the credibility of the Congress-led UPA government faded away. Large investment in social sector, a surge in the investment in infrastructure building, rapid increase in rural consumption pattern, increasing per capita income for three times during the last decade, making attempts to bring transparency through Right To Information Act (RTI), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee (MNREGA) programme, food security bill, pension reform bill, land acquisition bill, direct transfer schemes and some such other legislations were some of the achievements of the Congress-led UPA government over the last ten years. Yet efforts like MNREGA were found to be riddled with ineptitude and corruption. The land acquisition bill¹³ that took long span of time to come up was said to be full of flaws and not well enacted as some section of the industry felt that the process of land acquisition from the farmers was long and cumbersome and involved exorbitant compensations¹⁴. Its hasty initiatives for foreign direct investment in retail and insurance sector, cutting government expenditure by introducing direct cash transfer scheme (which will indirectly reduce the burden of subsidy) invited criticism for UPA II government.

When the series of corruption scandal jolted the credibility of the pro-people image of the Congress-led UPA government they resorted to strategies like maintaining silence, giving assurances, strong denial of any wrongdoing, sacrificing allies, sending tainted leaders behind the bar etc. They could have won back the confidence of the people of India by cancelling the tainted contracts, denying and protesting in public against the quick bail of the accused, discontinuing alliance with DMK completely rather than waiting until the latter itself deserted it on the issue of the protection of the Tamils in Sri Lanka,

refraining from shielding corrupt ministers which could have strengthened the stature of the office of the Prime Minister who is the leader of the nation. Rather than resisting against the corruption crusade (India against Corruption campaign under the stewardship of Anna Hazare) the Congress party should have associated itself actively through its prominent cadres to testify the fact in front of the nation that it too abhors the evil practice of corruption and could have saved the party from the worst ever downslide to a great extent. To make the matter worse for the Congress-led government the Nirbhaya rape case in Delhi (which then had Congress-led state government), the Shakti Mill Mumbai gangrape case (where too Congress-NCP duo ran the state government) corroded the validity of the government. These series of crises ultimately made difficult for the Congress party to win back the faith of the general populace of the nation. The only way the population of a democratic country can show their wrath is through the electoral verdict. The Congress-led UPA government has been severely admonished for its incompetence, inefficiency, non-performance and apathy. Therefore, INC could secure a very dreary tally of seats and scored zero in some ten states such as Rajasthan, Tripura, Gujarat, Goa, Odisha, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu, Jammu and Kashmir, Delhi and performed miserably in West Bengal by securing four seats. In Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh it could bag just two seats respectively. In Karnataka it could win just nine seats, in Kerala it fetched some eight seats and in Assam and Punjab it could garner just three seats. In Chattisgarh and Haryana it scored one seat respectively.

5. 2014 Electoral Performance of BJP

The good showing of BJP in the state of Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Rajasthan during the 2013 assembly polls was an early sign of the probability that BJP might leave its imprint in the national election, remained unheeded by the Congress Working Committee. The BJP performed outstandingly in the North and in the West that contributed extensively towards the victory of the party in the 2014 general election in the country. Rajasthan under the leadership of Vasundhara Raje captured all of the twenty five Lok Sabha seats. In Gujarat, BJP had a clean sweep over all the twenty-six Lok Sabha seats. Madhya Pradesh under the leadership of Shivraj Singh Chauhan fetched twenty-seven of the twenty nine Lok Sabha seats and Chattisgarh too voted in favour of the right wing party by bestowing it with ten out of the eleven Lok Sabha seats.

BJP made inroads in the North-East by occupying one seat in Arunachal Pradesh and Assam as well by bagging seven seats thereby surpassing INC and All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF). Although in the last assembly election BJP was drubbed by INC in Karnataka but the trend got reversed when it surpassed all the other parties by occupying 17 of the 28 Lok Sabha seats and this contributed considerably towards the overall tally of seats for the party. Uttarakhand contributed all its five Lok Sabha seats in the

share of BJP's total tally of seats. In Bihar too BJP had put up an outstanding performance by fetching for itself twenty two of the forty Lok Sabha seats by surpassing INC, Janata Dal-United (JD-U) and Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD). The votes of the Yadavs, OBC and Dalits as well has drifted towards BJP due to 'NaMo' effect that claims to provide development and upliftment to all irrespective of caste, community, creed, religion through his motto '*sabka saath, sabka vikas*' (collective effort inclusive development). Delhi after its disappointment with INC and Aam Admi Party (AAP) finally has now resorted to BJP by conferring it with all the seven Lok Sabha seats. In Uttar Pradesh, BJP gave its hallmark performance by bagging seventy one seats out of the eighty Lok Sabha seats and this led to rise in the share of the seat for the party that contributed significantly towards its success. The magnificent electoral campaign designed by Amit Shah, general secretary of BJP, paid manifold. Appealing to vote for the party from the Jats to take revenge from the Muslims for the Muzaffarnagar riot in U.P led to consolidation of OBC vote behind the party that triggered its total number of seats¹⁵. Varanasi resonated with slogans like '*Har Har Modi*' whereby efforts were made to equate Modi with Lord Shiva, the Hindu mythological god, so as to consolidate the votes of the Hindus and the Brahmins for the party. BJP made its presence felt in West Bengal and Punjab as well by winning two seats respectively. In Maharashtra, it routed out Congress-NCP duo by winning twenty three seats along with eighteen seats grabbed by Shiv Sena, its long time ally in the state. In Odisha, despite of any strong presence in the state, BJP could manage to win one seat. Himachal Pradesh bestowed its entire four seats in the favour of the BJP. The 'NaMo wave' also swept Haryana where it had secured seven seats in comparison to one seat of INC. Even in Jammu and Kashmir, BJP could leave its imprint and could bag three seats whereas Nationalist Conference drew a blank.

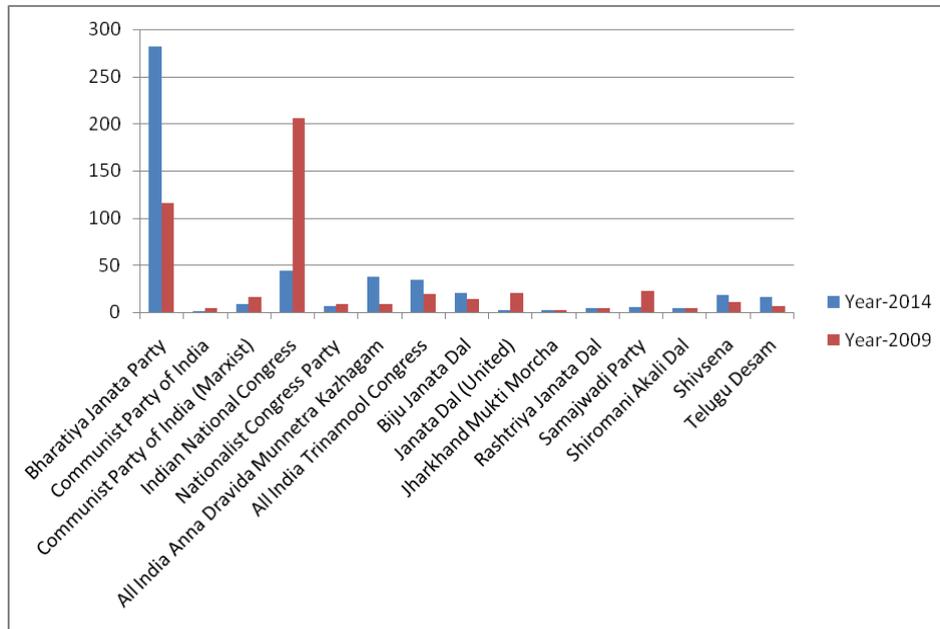
6. The Translation of aspirations into Party System: Populism

When all the states have thrown aside regional considerations and voted in favour of Brand Modi and his much hyped and celebrated 'Gujarat model', four states remained an aberration namely, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Odisha and Tripura. This election yielded results for those who performed and was prepared for delivering governance and development. Jayalalitha was paid off for her pro-people and development oriented policies such as providing drought relief to the farmers, rice at Rs. 2 per kg, distributing mixer and grinder and electric fan free of cost, ensuring free education along with laptop, books, bicycles, school bags to the students free of cost, etc. All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) gave a laudable performance in the state of Tamil Nadu and bagged thirty seven Lok Sabha seats polling 3.3 percent of votes eliminating its prime opponent Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) which drew a blank probably for its linkages with the 2G spectrum scam. Similarly, Naveen Patnaik of Biju Janata Dal (BJD) in Orissa too kept his

record by bagging twenty of the twenty one Lok Sabha seats polling 1.7 percent of votes. Patnaik is credited with efficiency and administrative efficacy and these has been considered as some of the prime reason for his spectacular performance. His populist measures like subsidized rice for Rs. 1 per kg, old age pension and social security schemes, distribution of free umbrella, laptop, clothing and school uniforms to the destitute, providing houses to homeless families not included in Below Poverty Line (BPL) list and bicycles to girl students paid profusely for the party. West Bengal routed out INC and Left and maintained its adherence to Trinamool Congress. Despite of some serious challenges confronting the pro-people image of the party such as Sharada chit fund scam that involved some of its own MLAs, the haunting Park Street rape case and the subsequent forced transfer issue of Indian Police Service (IPS) officer Damini Sen, the Kamduni rape case where the family members of the victim alleged involvement of some Trinamool leaders in the incident of rape the party was still able to withhold its performance and in fact improved its number of seats from nineteen to thirty four of the forty two Lok Sabha seats polling 3.8 percent of votes. Mamata Banerjee kept her voters allured with her simplicity and catchy phrases, resorted to popular strategies such as providing financial assistance to the youth through schemes like *yuvashree* and aided girl child through schemes like *kanyashree* which assured Rs.500 per year for schooling and transferred Rs. 25000 to the family bank account when a girl turns 18, besides removing entry taxes on goods. Although Left has performed abysmally poor in the state of West Bengal but could retain its performance only in Tripura where the Communist Party of India–Marxist (CPI-M) won both the seats in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls. The popularity of Manik Sarkar, the Chief Minister of Tripura, and his political acumen are some of the most significant factors that have enabled CPI (M) to retain its last bastion. Apart from this, attaining self-sufficiency in food, generating employment through several projects, ability to restore and maintain peace and harmony among the tribal indigenous population and the Bengali settlers, providing access to safe drinking water and provision of 35 kg of rice at Rs. 2 per kg for BPL families are some of the factors that contributed towards its consolidation in the state and its performance in the Lok Sabha polls. Left as of now has slipped into oblivion. It stands almost eradicated In West Bengal. When it parted ways with UPA- I in 2009 over the nuclear deal in the name of ideology the general populace was unable to grasp their intellectual projections. The Left leadership stands in disarray and failed to adapt itself to the changing social and political dynamics, lacks the organisational strength which was earlier its hallmark. It lacks its presence among the backward classes. The leadership needs to be revamped, enthused with energy, zeal to work and broader vision for a nation. Moreover, it always lacked an impressive national appeal. It was mostly restricted to Kerala, West Bengal where it ruled for more than three decade and in Tripura where it still maintains its foothold. Kerala still shuffles between Left Democratic Front (LDF) and Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF).

The smaller parties that had played bigger roles have now with the 2014 general election been cut to size. Parties like Samajwadi Party (SP), Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), Janata Dal (United) who have earlier played burgeoning influence in Indian politics since the late 1980s have suffered a nose dive with the 2014 Lok Sabha polls. BSP, a significant regional player representing the Dalits drew a blank whereas SP that is now in possession of the state mantle in Uttar Pradesh could bag just five seats polling 3.4 percent of votes. SP was accused of minority appeasement by its own traditional voters and this led to the swinging away of the Yadav, Jats and OBC votes from the party. BJP by resorting to caste-based mobilization during the electoral campaign, despite being traditionally an anti-Dalit and anti-Muslim party, have cut into the share of votes of the parties representing these sections of the society. Communal polarization following the Muzaffarnagar riots in Western Uttar Pradesh between the Jats (who recently have been conferred with the category of OBC) and the Muslims went against the electoral fortune of Samajwadi Party, Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) of Ajit Singh and Bahujan Samaj Party as well. The rise of BJP proved detrimental for popular regional players like RJD and Janata Dal (United) as well. Their seat tally has reduced drastically to four and two respectively. However, regional parties like Telegu Desam Party (TDP), Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) of Ramvilas Paswan, Akali Dal in Punjab and Shiv Sena (SS) gained immensely in the 2014 Lok Sabha election by forging their opportunistic alliance with BJP. New entrant Telangana Rashtriya Samiti (TRS), a state based party, headed by Kalvakuntla Chandrashekhara Rao (KCR) too swept the Lok Sabha and assembly election with thumping number of seats. TRS bagged eleven of the seventeen Lok Sabha seats polling 1.2 percent of votes and out passed Congress, YSR Congress, TDP-BJP combine in the state assembly election by capturing sixty three seats in the 119 member Telangana assembly. The victory for TRS was obvious as its leader was the architect of the 29th state that took birth after a relentless struggle for statehood. His arduous campaign and motivating speeches enchanted voters in its favour. Moreover, the victory was the reward for his struggle. This election has pruned most of the regional parties but the time to write an obituary has not yet come. It would be premature to conclude that regional satraps have lost their essence and relevance in the Indian politics, more particularly at the central level or that 'issue' based politics have replaced or sidelined identity-based politics in such a heterogeneous society.

Comparative performance of Political Parties during Lok Sabha election 2009 and 2014



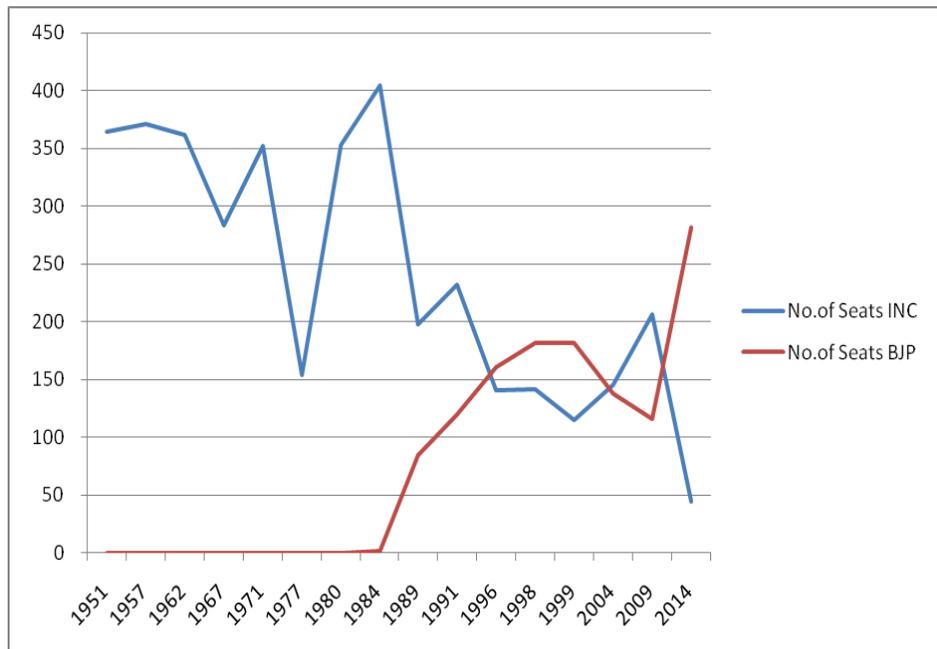
Source: Figures available from Election Commission of India website http://eci.nic.in/eci_main1/statistical_report.aspx and <http://ecireresults.nic.in/>

Another new entrant the Aam Admi Party (AAP) too gave a dismal performance in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls. Following these cases of corruption, India witnessed a crusade against corruption under the banner of ‘India Against Corruption’ movement (which has been compared with the Jaya Prakash movement of 1974) for a Jan Lokpal Bill to cleanse the system of improper practices. Eventually the party emanating from the corruption crusade namely the Aam Admi Party (AAP) under the stewardship of Arvind Kejriwal, a civil society activist, was expected to play a decisive role in the 2014 election. But its 49 days tenure as a state ruler which failed to deliver as promised led to erosion of its charisma that it had spelt over the people of India with its crusade faded away. People failed to repose their faith in it as it clearly displayed its administrative ignorance and ineptitude while in power heading the Delhi state government. Kejriwal played an opportunistic role by forming a party thereby giving manifestation to his own political aspirations under the veil of corruption crusader. AAP is a political novice with no significant experience of running a government and this acted as a deterrent towards its electoral performance. Although it had contested 443 seats from all over the country but could win just four seats in Punjab only.

7. 2014 Lok Sabha Election and the Realigned Indian Party System

With the 16th Lok Sabha election the Indian party system has also witnessed sea changes. The Indian party system as it exhibits is multiparty in nature since its origin, although it keeps reconfiguring structurally with every election. The Indian party system from a competitive multi-party system with Congress predominance as the majority party till 1967 that remained fragmented as well as binodal since 1967 has once again transformed into a competitive multi-party system with Bharatiya Janata Party's predominance as the 'majority party'¹⁶ as it has secured only 20.58 percent of votes and 31.34 percent of seats.

Comparative Performance of INC and BJP since 1951-2014



Source: Figures available from Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation website http://mospi.nic.in/Mospi_New/upload/SYB2014/ch43.html

The trend of bipolarization, fragmentation and coalition politics has suffered a setback although these trends have not evaporated completely. The party system still remains bipolarized with BJP at one end and Congress and other parties at the other pole trying to revamp them. The Indian party system has always remained in a state of flux therefore the equation might get reversed at any course of time. The Indian party system still presents a messy picture as in many states such as Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Odisha, Sikkim, voted for their respective state-based parties and Tripura voted for CPI(M) thereby

keeping the party system fragmented in nature. States like Telangana, Seemandhra, Odisha, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Puduchery, Bihar, West Bengal and Arunachal Pradesh that went to assembly polls subsequently, voted for non-BJP parties such as TRS, TDP, BJD, SDF, AIADMK, Congress-DMK alliance, JD(U)-RJD alliance and Trinamool Congress respectively retaining the fragmented nature of the party system. Arunachal Pradesh too voted for a non-BJP alternative. Congress had a clean sweep in the state by securing thirty nine seats of the sixty assembly berths. BJP won just five seats and People's Party of Arunachal secured a lone seat. Similarly, in Odisha BJD stormed back to power by capturing 117 seats in the 147 member assembly. In the Seemandhra assembly election TDP- BJP combine secured 106 seats out of the 175 assembly seats. In Sikkim, Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) emerged victorious by winning 22 seats of the 32 assembly seats. The Indian Party System still stands bifurcated into the national and state level. Some stability, coherence and uniformity has been restored at the central level only as the mandate went in favour of a party that had crossed the half-way mark all by itself which breaks the spell of coalition government. BJP came back to power at the centre after more than a decade. It is the first party since 1984 to get a majority on its own at the union level as since 1989 coalition form of government had become the order of the day. Since 1989 not a single political party was able to secure absolute majority on its own at the union level. Three national elections between the period 1996 till 1999 and five votes of 'no confidence' indicated a high level of political instability of the Indian party system. Moreover, it is credited to be the first non-Congress party to have won an absolute majority on its own. The verdict restored some essence to the lost relevance of the form of Parliamentary Democracy and also strengthened the office of the Prime Minister as the overwhelming role of the small parties was reduced as the ruling party had absolute majority on its own.

8. Conclusion

The Indian Party system has acquired coherence after a long span of almost more than two decades. The Opposition party (BJP) has elevated itself to the position of the ruling party by bagging an absolute majority of seats. An informal coalition structure of government exists at the central level although the leading party has crossed the half way mark on its own. This development ensures a higher degree of stability in the way of ensuring governance to the masses with the absence of disruptions, continuous bargaining, negotiations and messy compromises with the coalition partners. 2014 general election is significant because the intensely disparate coalition era has come to a halt although the Indian party system still stands bifurcated into two levels due to the fragmented pattern of voting behaviour of the electorates. However, BJP can withhold its status of a majority party in the Indian party system only if it is able to deliver, perform and resort to dedicated and sincere implementation of

its programmes and policies. The Modi-led Government has to now create policies that would respond to people expectations and translate promises into actions. The BJP-led Central Government should work ardently and with great determination to resolve some of the grave problems like – corruption in the administration, financial lay off, fiscal deficits, unemployment, poverty, accelerating agricultural growth, expanding primary education, reducing gap between the rich and the poor, minimize threats to climate change, take efforts to control pollution, environmental hazards, terrorism and insurgencies, the Naxalite challenge and others threats to internal and external security, etc. to cement its credibility.

Notes

- ¹ Party system will reflect principal cleavages and conflicts in the society. According to Lipset and Rokkan, cleavages manifest in several forms along the socio-economic, religious, ethnicity and urban-rural parameters. See Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, *"Cleavages, Structure, Party Systems and Voter Alignments: An Introduction"* in *"Party system and Voter Alignments: Cross National Perspectives"*, Free Press, New York, 1967.
- ² *"Only NDA can bring about change in India: Narendra Modi"*, www.ndtv.com, May 11, 2014 (accessed on May 20, 2014 at 10:45 am).
- ³ For understanding of 'Gujarat Model' See <http://www.narendramodi.in/>
- ⁴ *"Leadership factor in 2014 polls"*, The Hindu, May 28, 2014.
- ⁵ BJP Election Manifesto (2014) :http://www.bjp.org/images/pdf_2014/full_manifesto_english_07.04.2014.pdf
- ⁶ *"India has won! Good days ahead: Modi"*, The Hindu, May 16, 2014.
- ⁷ Census 2001 data on Population by Religious communities. Out of 166197921 people from all religious communities in U.P 133979263 Hindus resided in Uttar Pradesh in comparison to 30740158 Muslims. (NSSO National Data Bank For Socio-Religious Categories).
- ⁸ *"How BJP's Online Campaign Proved Vital For Success"*, www.ndtv.com, May 20, 2014(accessed on May 22, 2014 at 02:10 pm).
- ⁹ The futile future of the Bharatiya Janata Party therefore depends in its ability to perform as well as maintain cohesion and cordiality among its cadres. The party's linkages with the militant organisation like Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) is still seen with apprehension. On various occasions these organisations have regulated the functioning of the BJP. RSS is a militant Hindu nationalist organisation and VHP, a Hindu revivalist organisation that favours adopting a militant Hindu stand on political and social issues (Malik and Singh, 1994). The RSS under the stewardship of Mohan Bhagat have negotiated

to bring unanimity among the rank and file of the BJP leadership to endorse Modi's candidature for prime ministership for the 2014 Lok Sabha election. There was considerable opposition from the top leadership of BJP over the possible choice of Modi as the prime ministerial candidate. Sushma Swaraj and L.K Advani have firmly opposed to his candidature. RSS and VHP through their cadre is said to have extensively supported BJP in the ongoing general election campaign and rallies.

¹⁰ "Modi-chaiwala to dream merchant", The Hindu, May 17, 2014.

¹¹ Sonal Bhadoria, "Toffee Model: Rahul Mocks Modi's Gujarat Model", www.indiatimes.com, April 14, 2014 (accessed on May 20, 2014 at 12:05 pm). Also See "Rahul Gandhi Attacks Narendra Modi in Varanasi", www.ndtv.com, May 10, 2014 (accessed on May 20, 2014 at 12:30 pm)

¹² "Congress Concedes Weak Campaign, Failed Media Strategy", www.ndtv.com, May 16, 2014(accessed on May 23, 2014 at 11:15 am).

¹³ The Bill will empower the rights of the farmer as according to the Bill it gives farmers' upto four times more of the market rate for land acquired for the industry and infrastructure.

¹⁴ "Lok Sabha Passes Land Acquisition Bill", www.profit.ndtv.com, August 29, 2013. Also See "House Panel Decision on Land Bill to hit industry: Adi Godrej", www.profit.ndtv.com, May 17, 2012 (accessed on May 22, 2014 at 10:45 am).

¹⁵ Communal passions were flared by some BJP leaders for their own electoral gains during the mahapanchayat that was held after the culmination of the Muzaffarnagar riots during September, 2013 to resolve the conflict between the Jats and the Muslims.

¹⁶ A "majority party" is one which by itself possesses more than half of the parliamentary seats. However, a dominant party is one that holds the majority over a long period of political development. See Maurice Duverger, "Political Parties: Their organisation and Activity In Modern states", 1955, pp.307-309.

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Indian Federalism under Stress

Mrutujanaya Sahu

Abstract

In a period of widespread corruption, coupled with economic downturn, disconcerting issues related to autonomy and separate states, the management of grassroots level affairs by local communities in the wake of political consciousness and local aspirations and the issues of Centre-state relations are back on the political agenda. A legitimate question that arises in this context is: do we need to rethink federalism in India? This paper attempts to highlight the present challenges to the centre-state relations and explores the directions in which the national and state governments should move if the country is to achieve its goals of a strong, stable, economically vibrant nation.

Keywords: Indian Constitution, Decentralisation, Regionalism, Fiscal Federalism

1. Introduction

Sixty seven years in the life of a nation such as India appear perhaps inadequate to judge the efficacy of its Constitutional institutions and the system of governance. In a system of multi-level governance, operating essentially within a federal framework, like that of India, harmonious relations between the Centre and the States are critical to the stability, integrity, security and economic development of the country. Strengthening of the federal system is necessary for meeting the aspirations of the people governed by the respective State Governments and also for preserving the unity of India. The nation today is passing through critical times. 'Federalism' in India is under a great stress. The role of Centre and States as envisaged in the Constitution over 67 years ago versus the socio-political-economic realities of today has come under a considerable strain on the principles of federalism and functioning of the Central Government. The contemporary debates centered around Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in retails, The Goods and Services Tax (GST), Right to Food Act, Prevention of Communal and Targeted Violence (PCTC) Bill, Tamil Nadu's stand on Sri Lanka, West Bengal's stand on River Teesta water-sharing treaty, the Lokpal Bill, the National Counter-Terrorism Centre (NCTC), and the imposition of President's rule in Arunachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand state raise a number of disturbing questions regarding the very nature of Indian federalism or popularly called Centre-state relations in India. The question that arises in this context is: do we need to rethink Indian federalism? What extent the multifarious conflicts can be seen as emerging from the relationship between the Union and its constituent units and the tendency of the so-called Centre to centralize powers in its hands? Can rebuilding federal structures and balancing power sharing mechanisms help in resolving conflicts? This paper seeks to

provide a brief survey of how federalism has evolved in India during the past 67 years and attempts to highlight the present challenges to the Centre-state relations and explores the directions in which the national and state governments should move if the country is to achieve its goals of a strong, stable, economically vibrant nation.

2. Development of Indian Federalism

No system of governance can be properly understood without a reference to the socioeconomic and political context in which it was born and consolidated. Given the complex and peculiar circumstances in which the nation became independent in 1947, it is not difficult to grasp the arguments defending centralised government. It is also obvious that in view of India's well-entrenched multicultural character, federalism was considered to be the best possible structure. The roots of Indian federalism can be traced to the British colonial regime. The British influence, experience with the workings of provincial autonomy under the 1935 Act, and the popularity of federalism in the 20th century as a desirable political system for plural societies influenced the framers in favor of federalism (Kothari, 1970). The Constituent Assembly devised a system which seemed most suited to the needs of the time and the requirements of a federal society. The founding fathers built the fabric of Indian Federalism on three pillars, Viz., a strong Centre, flexibility, and co-operative federalism.

India represents a classical federation with Constitutional demarcation of functions and finances between the Union and the States. Article I of the Indian Constitution declares: 'India shall be a Union of States'. The choice of wording was deliberate, given the threat of fissiparous tendencies in the country, and the need to keep it together (Sen, 1988). The Constitution of India provides for a relatively clear vertical division of powers between the Central legislature and the state legislatures, both constituted through direct elections, respectively, in the Seventh Schedule. The Seventh Schedule to the Constitution specifies the legislative domains of the Central and State governments in terms of Union, State and Concurrent lists. The Union controls the 'Union list', consisting of areas that involve national interests, 97 items in all, 'State list', 66 items in all and the 'Concurrent list' holds 47 subject of overlapping interest, where both Centre and state can make laws. The Constitutional scheme of governance at the Centre and in the States broadly deals with three types of relations namely (a) Legislative Relations (Articles 245-255); (b) Administrative Relations (Articles 256-263); and (c) Financial Relations (Articles 264-293). The Constitution has evolved the Finance Commission for the purpose of distributing financial resources between the Centre and the states (Verney, 2003).

The Constitution describes India as a “Union of States”. Strangely, however, in all our discourses and writings on the Indian polity and Constitution, we rarely use the term ‘Union’. In particular, in matters of relationship with the states we keep using the terminology ‘Centre-state relations’ instead of the constitutionally ordained ‘Union-state relations’. This is a sad hangover from the colonial period and the 1919 Government of India Act. A great deal of mischief has been caused by the wrong use of these words. India’s federal system, unlike other major federations, is tilted more towards the Union. India’s Constitution has been variously described as quasi federal, federal with a strong unitary or pro-centre bias, federal in structure but unitary in spirit, federal in normal times but with possibilities of being converted into a purely unitary one during Emergency, etc (Bagchi, 2003). The provisions related to creating and altering the boundaries of states, the appointment of Governors, the amendments to the Constitution, the draconian laws like the imposition of President’s Rule in States, the CRP, CISF and BSF matters and other fiscal provisions are un-federal in nature.

India’s federalism has undergone a three-phase evolution in the last six decades. The first phase of federation of the political process extended from the time of independence to mid-1960s. The framework of Centre-State relationship had worked fairly smoothly till mid-sixties and the institutions created under or inspired by the Constitution for this purpose enjoyed complete trust and respect of all concerned. This harmonious functioning was, perhaps, possible because this period was characterized by, by and large, a single party that is the Congress Party, domination of the Governments both at the Centre and in most of the States (Kothari, 1964). The Centre-State relations were not really put to any severe test during this period. Whatever differences or occasional conflicts arose, were endeavoured for mitigation and resolution, not as between two different Governments but more between two entities of the same system. The second phase of the development of Indian federalism began with the fourth general election (1967), which drastically reduced the overwhelming strength of the Congress party in the national Parliament to a simple majority and nearly half the states moving out of Congress control and into the hands of opposition parties or coalitions, and led to a radical change in the nature of centre-state relations (Arora, 2000).

With the prolonged period of coalition governments at the Centre, the third phase in the federalization of Indian politics began at the end of the 1980s. Regional parties, such as the Dravida Munnetra Kazagam (DMK) of Tamil Nadu or the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) of Bihar, have asserted their interests more openly over the past one-and-a half decades of coalition and minority governments. However, the Indian federalism stands gravely endangered by populist imperatives originating in the states which trespass into the Union’s jurisdiction to the extent of enervating the Parliament and the Union Executive. The last two decades have seen the emergence of coalitions with constituent

parties from around the country. This has led to a regional assertiveness, redefining the structure of governance at both the State and Central levels (Roy, 2011). The failure of any of the national parties in terms of gaining majority in the central Parliament, and their growing dependence on the support of the regional parties to run the government at the centre, have allowed the federal units to bargain and influence important policy decisions at the centre.

3. Decentralisation and Federalism

Local self-governments play a critical role in enhancing democracy across federal systems besides bringing governance closer to people through both representative and participatory democracy, particularly following the 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Constitution. Local governments in both urban and rural India, although constitutionally mandated, experience a very weak existence in their own right in terms of being subservient to the state government. The local governments have no power to legislate, nor do they possess the capacity to approach courts for resolving disputes related to the respective constitutional powers of second and third orders of government (Sathyamurthy, 1996). The implementation of flagship programmes initiated by the central government like Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Public Distribution System (PDS), Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM), Bharat Nirman programme and universalisation of education (Sarvashika Abhyan) have undermined the effective functioning of local governments. Further, the allotment of local area development funds/grants to federal and state legislators (MLA/MLC/MP grants) also has undermined the effective functioning of these institutions (Mitra & Pehl, 2010).

The states show more interest in the share of sovereign power, but they are not willing to share the same with local governments. Economic reforms have helped the states in attracting more investments and strengthening state capitals, in the process; on the other side; coalition politics has enhanced the political clout and the status of regional leaders with respect to national politics. But neither of the above guarantees nor promotes the third-tier of federal governance. Democracy must begin at local levels and to be safe and lasting, it must be crowned with a federal polity. If we are serious about providing multi-tier government and taking it to the doorsteps of the people at the grassroots levels, the Constitution should clearly provide for the distribution of powers between the Union, the States and the local governments by way of making the 11th and 12th Schedules mandatory. Hence, the effective functioning of local governments depends upon the commitment of the central and state governments to the decentralisation of powers and supporting of civil society organisations as well.

4. Fiscal Federalism

Fiscal federalism in India has always been deeply problematic with vertical and horizontal imbalances not only persisting till date, but also getting aggravated in many cases. The transfer system as it has been operating so far has not been able to offset the fiscal disadvantage of the poorer states (Saez, 2002). While attempts have been made to alleviate the regional disparities through equalization transfers their impact remains blunted by various factors such as invisible transfers, tax exporting by relatively advanced states and the subsidized lending by the centre. The functioning of the internal common market is impeded by fiscal and regulatory barriers with respect to the movement of goods and factors of production across states like the origin-based tax on interstate sales, viz, the Central Sales Tax and restrictions on the movement and marketing of food grains. There is need of urgent reforms as creating a congenial macroeconomic environment, providing efficient infrastructure, minimizing microeconomic inefficiencies and developing market institutions and governance. Reforms suggested in respect of the transfer system include: defining the role of the Finance Commission and the Planning Commission in terms of greater clarity, the need to incorporate incentives for efficiency in equalization transfers through a truly normative approach.

Democratic decentralisation in the context of parliamentary multiparty system has major implications for the Centre-state financial relations in India. The structure of local governance differs across various parts of the country and so does the degree of fiscal decentralisation. In some regions, the fiscal decentralisation has been more successful, not in terms of delivering public services, mobilizing physical and human resources, but in unleashing incentives for exploiting the developmental potential than in other regions (Rao, 2001). Local governments are yet to achieve a fair degree of financial autonomy. They still depend upon higher level governments for about 70-80 per cent of their expenditure. The total expenditure of local governments as a proportion of the combined expenditure of the Union, states and local governments amounted to 6.4 percent for 1998-1999 and 5.1 percent for 2002-03. The decline in the expenditure of local governments from 3.9 percent for 1998-99 to 3.3 percent for 2002-03 is a matter for concern. With economic liberalization must come, the decentralisation of political power and management, income tax, corporation tax, while, indirect tax could be moved to the concurrent list. It won't amount to the violation of the basic structure of the Constitution nor the parliamentary system.

5. Regionalism and Federalism

Regionalism has remained perhaps the most potent force in Indian politics ever since independence (1947), if not before. The regionalist movements in India are not claiming just for more autonomy and further federalization of the polity, but also for the recognition of the cultural identity

of those communities as well as their demand for the economic care of their region (Bhattacharyya, 2005). Despite being federal right from the beginning, the Indian state has always insisted on a strong centre. This could be because of the recognition of the inherently fragile character of the nation and frequent threats of secession. This has made the centre insecure about the integrity of the nation. It has been continuously trying to strengthen the centre on the grounds of national integration, mainstream-periphery, extremist and hostile threats to the integrity of the nation and so on. Recent development like: demand for separate statehoods like Vidarbha, Bodoland, Bundelkhand and others and also regional considerations have begun to dictate vital strategic national interests like: Tamil Nadu's stand on the relationship with Sri Lanka and West Bengal's on Teesta water-sharing treaty and FDI in retail trading show the changing trends of the times that the centre can no longer afford to ignore state related concerns or while framing foreign policies.

Indian federalism is seen as a means of accommodative regionalism in India. Federalism is seen here as a political equilibrium-an appropriate balance between shared rule and self-rule (Verney, 2003). Federalism and regionalism may complement each other in the practical political processes. The need for a balance is of utmost importance if the unity of the country is not to be risked. A Federation rather than a nation-state is better able to accommodate ethnically distinct regions because, while the nation-state demands uniformity, federalism is based on the recognition of differences. A two-tier federation may not be sufficient to accommodate regionalism of many forms and levels. A tier below the 'state' or 'province' with an appropriate constitutional guarantee may be necessary for regional accommodation. Unless the regions feel the presence of 'nation' in them, parochialism would grow in strength. The creation of states and an autonomous space by the Indian state apparently in pursuance of the federal principle is actually an attempt creating a local power structure base rather than devolving powers.

6. Internal Security and Federalism

National security is a common concern for the Union and the states. Both are equally interested in unitedly fighting terrorism and other ethnic threats facing the nation. At the operational level, the Union forces have to inevitably function in cooperation with the state police, thereby translating into practice the concept of operative federalism (Mitra & Pehl, 2010). Internal security has always been a critical issue for the Indian state though not recognized officially as such. When the Constitution was framed more than 65 years ago, our internal security tasks were simple, i.e., dealing with dacoities, robberies and insurgencies of the Telangana kind. Our founding fathers had a fair degree of confidence in the ability of the States to deal with any kind of internal security threats alone. In their keenness to preserve and protect our federal State, they made the Police a State subject. However, the state has found

itself unable to act alone, in view of the fact that the threat of terrorism or insurgency is no longer a 'law and order' issue to be handled by the state government. The Maoists have particularly taken advantage of the current constitutional arrangement of the state government's control over the police force. The current model of individual states dealing with the Maoists has proved to be a failure because the country continues to persist with a colonial police structure. The current NCTC controversy is nothing short of the Constitutional illiteracy or the wilful distortion of the Constitution. There is an alarming loss of trust and confidence between the Centre and states which has damaged the spirit of federalism. In this regard, there is a need for a rethink on the sharing of power between the centre and states as to prevent the issue of internal security from becoming a seed of political contention within the Indian federal structure.

7. Resource Federalism

Buoyant commodity markets and liberalised investment rules are attracting foreign and Indian capital to resource rich states in India. Given their financial and development problems, these states see the resources—minerals, oil, natural gas, and hydropower—as key revenue and development handles, and are demanding a greater share of the economic benefits of their development (Noronha et al., 2009). While the centre and states are proactively engaged in creating investment opportunities in resource development, the local people in resource-bearing states are concerned that the authorities may overlook local environmental and social responsibilities. It is against the backdrop of the states demanding a more "fair" distribution of resource rents, and of the local people demanding a better recognition of rights and compensation for the adverse effects of resource development (Baviskar, 2003). The recent demand by states like: Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Goa and others shows that there is need to revisit the Constitutional mechanism for fair distribution of national resources between Centre and States.

The resource federalism needs to recognise the three perspectives with respect to resource development: agency, spatial, and temporal. While the states have a right to allow the exploitation of minerals, they have to have the prior approval of the centre in respect of some major minerals as specified by the central legislation. However, there is a transgression into the states' domain in the working of resource federalism through the Mines and Minerals Development and Regulation (MMDR) Act. The sources of disagreement between the centre and states revolve around the manner of royalty fixation; delays in revising royalty rates for coal; control over mineral development by the centre which does not reflect states' need for new investments; and matters of cess and other charges on mines and other minerals under Entries 49-50 of List II (Noronha et al., 2009). Hence, resource federalism can be strengthened through the creation of more independent bodies for resolving issues related to

centre-state interests, expanding the space for local governance; improved compensation and the sharing of resource revenues; and enhanced local institutional capacity.

8. Concluding Remarks

The preceding discussion clearly brings out the changes that have taken over the Indian federalism in the last six decades. India needs a strong Union with strong States. The federal structure has come to stay and needs to be strengthened. The only way to preserve 'India, that is Bharat' as a 'Union of States' is to work for building it as a 'Federal Union' with multiple tiers of government and sharing of powers from the lowest grass root levels of Panchayats to the Parliament and the Government of the Union. More innovative federal structures need to be devised. It is necessary to address the deep-rooted sources of conflicts. Apart from restructuring the federal Union, we need administrative reforms, parliamentary reforms and over-all reforms for good and clean citizen-friendly governance. Hence, it is appropriate to restructure the Union-state relations, in order to correct the existing imbalances and to strengthen the federal system by empowering the States with a greater degree of autonomy. A great deal needs to be reformed in the domain of our politics, but most of the desirable reforms can be brought about within the constitutional framework by way of exhibiting a strong political will, executive action or ordinary legislation. Only in respect of rare cases, constitutional amendments may be deemed necessary. These can be enacted under the existing constitutional provisions without violating the basic structure of the constitution.

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Ethnicity and Insurgency in the Autonomous Councils of Assam: An Overview

Navaneeta Deori

Abstract

In the last couple of decades there have been several incidents of violence between different ethnic groups and communities residing in the Autonomous Councils of Assam. Tensions in the three Autonomous Councils soon emerged after several militant groups were formed asserting to protect their ethnic identity. The article attempts to explore the complex ethnic heterogeneity of these regions and how insurgency had disrupted their normal lives and their group-identity which primarily emerge from the territory they dwell in.

Key words: Tribes, Ethnicity, Conflicts and Autonomous Councils

1. Introduction

Ethnic clashes have become a regular feature in the north-eastern states of India. Conflicts in the region can be characterised as between the state and ethnic groups/insurgent groups, inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic conflicts (Hussain 2012: 33). The region has constantly been in news for the intractable ethnic conflicts, leading to brutal death of thousands of people. In July 2012, fierce communal violence between the Bodos and Muslims in Kokrajhar, had resulted in huge displacement of villagers in BTAD and the fear of reoccurrence of similar tensions still haunts the communities. In Assam dominant tribal communities have expressed their dissent through separatist movements emanated from a feeling of ethno-nationalism. From anti-foreign agitations to demand for a separate state by tribal communities has been regular phenomenon of post-independence politics of the region. Ethnic conflicts and cleansing among the Bodos-Santhal, Assamese and Bengali people, Dimasas-Zeme Nagas, Kuki and Karbis in last two decades have aggravated acts of political violence and internal displacement of thousands of people.

Similar ethnic strife is frequent in the contemporary world, which describes the complex heterogeneous society that we live in. In most plural societies, ethnicity has been an issue that has troubled much of their daily lives. To a large extent Cold War was wars between nations and the international politics envisaged that end of Cold War would signify 'end of all wars'. On the contrary, repeated internal conflicts within the states became a regular phenomenon leading to complex and protracted violent disputes in many societies. Currently, ethnicity and nationalism are used in synergy to describe unrest among the tribal groups. The concept of ethnicity is often used in sociological and anthropological studies, but according to Hobsbawn (1992:3),

it becomes political entity when it is associated with nationalist and separatist movement. It is with the help of ethnicity that they derive their historical pedigree and reasons for nationalism. Ethnicity differentiates between in-groups and out-groups on the basis of cultural identity and nationalism justifies its claim to integrate or disintegrate groups of people on the basis of this ethnicity. This political usage of ethnicity along with nationalism has a broader connotation. Ethnic group demands for a self determination or political autonomy, which can be called as nationalism based on the terms of ethnicity. When there is such congruity between concepts of ethnicity and nationalism, they more or less have the same objective. Thus ethnicity is already said to be given and natural whereas nationalism is the ethnic politicisation and mobilisation of an ethnic group that endeavours to form a national identity. This explanation is contradictory to notions of Benedict Anderson who argues that nations are 'imagined communities', because its members will never know most of their fellow-members, yet each of them have a feeling of communion and this nation is being headed by a common comradeship. This sense of community is regardless of all inequalities existing in the society. A nation state is a collective existence of people within a common territory and the ethnic relations are adjusted accordingly. In cases of any counter state movements for formation of new states are rooted in power relations and not ethnic solidarities and distinction per se (Calhoun 1993:219). However ethnic assertion and consequent armed movements is instrumentalist to mobilise a tribal community for their greater territorial as well as political autonomy. Since the early 1990s the trends have been the increasing incoherence of armed movements; a growing role for inter-communal and inter-factional violence as opposed to attacks on the state's security forces; and a proliferation of movements due to ethnic groups arming in response to each other (Lacina 2007:167).

The vibrant multi ethnic society of Assam represents diverse indigenous/tribal communities like the Bodos of western Assam, Dimasas of North Cachar Hills, Karbis of Karbi Anlong and Miris, Tiwas, Kacharis, Deoris, Rabhas, etc who reside in the plains and hills of the region. Earlier they were the sub branch/part of the Assamese ethnicity. Though most of the communities share a common history, however they have maintained their unique customs and traditions. Each tribal group has a distinctive ethnic identity, which has been an attributing factor to claims of cultural differences against the Assamese speaking community. Often the tribal groups assert their self identity because majority had undergone a state of poverty, helplessness and underdevelopment. For long they have not received any kind of state government aid and assistance. After a prolong exclusion from the developmental processes particularly in the autonomous councils, the socio-economic conditions of these people have deteriorated further.

2. Ethnic Conflicts and Separatist Movements in Assam

In the 1960s the plains tribes of Assam¹ formed the Plains Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA) and in 1967 launched a popular movement with the demand for a new state for all the plains tribes of Assam to be called 'Udayachal' on the north bank of Brahmaputra (Nath 534: 2003). The PTCA's agitation for a separate homeland was discontinued after they joined the state politics. A few years later in 1979 secessionist movement was started with strong support from the majority Assamese populace. The movement was under the leadership of the All Assam Student's Union (AASU) and later it came to be known as the 'Assam Movement' that aimed to safeguard the Assamese identity from that of the illegal migrants who they termed as foreigners coming from across the borders. The militant group United Liberation Force of Assam (ULFA) that evolved during the same time inflicted violence on the Indian state demanding for a 'sovereign state' for the Assamese people. However much have progressed and changed, throughout the decades and what was previously preserving the identity of one larger ethnic group, called the 'Assamese', have been in conundrum leading to schism within the broader Assamese community. Some of the dominant tribal groups like the 'Bodos', believed that the Assamese movement can be categorised as one that is supported by the 'upper-caste Assamese' who are descendents of immigrants from other parts of India and have dominated the tribal communities (Baruah1999:173). They also disapprove Clause 6 of the Assam Accord which promised to safeguard the cultural identity of the 'Assamese people' as they fear the clause might give legitimacy to the imposition of Assamese language and culture (Singh 2010:3). A 1960 Act made Assamese the official language of the state, and the effort by Assamese to impose the language on all the people, including the Bodos, has driven a wedge between the two communities (George1994:881). Such opinions brought a distinction between the tribal and the non-tribal. The tribal groups claim that they are ethnically distinct from each other; however primordial ethnic attributes between them remain intact. In course of time, they have created a distinctive culture and identity of their own. Each tribal group on the basis of their identity, demand for greater political rights and territorial autonomy since they believe such assertion will safeguard their social and economic interest.

3. The Autonomous Councils of Assam

The Autonomous District Councils (ADC) have less power than states but more than local governments; they are intended to incorporate their predominantly tribal populations, as communities, into the Indian state (Stuligross 1999: 498). These councils fall under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution and have been vested with a special provision to self administer. While providing territorial autonomy, the policy makers considered that the basic characteristics should remain integral to all the communities i.e.

they should fall under the broad purview of what is termed as the Scheduled Tribes (ST) in the Indian Constitution. But the diverse ethnicity sharing a common space was not taken into consideration. Gradually discontentment and dissent emerged among the minority and non tribal groups over such provision of preferential administrative and territorial autonomy to one majority tribal group. In Assam there are three autonomous councils in accordance to the sixth schedule namely Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC), Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) and Dima Hasao District Autonomous Council (DHDAC). This article centres around these three councils. Apart from these three councils there are six more autonomous councils formed on similar viewpoint which are named after the tribal groups, the Rabhas, the Tiwas, the Mishings, the Deoris, the Themgal Kacharis and the Sonowal Kacharis.

4. The Bodos of Western Assam

On 10 February 2003, the Government of India, the Government of Assam and the Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT)² (erstwhile militant group) signed the Memorandum of Settlement on Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC), in New Delhi. The BLT after signing the accord, agreed for a ceasefire and its members formed a political party. Under the agreement the self governing autonomous body of the Bodos, the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) was extended over 3082 villages and four new districts were formed after re-organisation of the existing districts, viz., Kokrajhar, Baska, Chirang and Udalguri. According to the Accord these areas were included on the criteria that it had not less than 50% of tribal population. The formation of BTC was opposed by 18 non-Bodo organisations, which together formed the Sanmilita Janagosthiya Sangram Samiti (SJSS). They believed that the Bodos did not form a majority in the areas that have been demarcated under the Council.

The BTC has legislative power on 40 subjects. The BTC was included under the constitutional provision of the Sixth Schedule and its objective was to bring economic development as well as preserve the land rights and cultural identity of the Bodos. In order to accelerate the development of the region and to meet the aspirations of the people, the Government of India provided financial assistance of Rs 100 crores per annum for 5 years for projects to develop the socio-economic infrastructure in BTC areas over and above the normal plan assistance to the State of Assam (www.satp.org).

According to Sanjib Baruah there are certain challenges in creating a separate homeland for the Bodos. The Bodos who are demanding significant portion of northern bank of the Brahmaputra, comprise of 1.1 million or 11.5 percent of the total population, hence some of the areas cannot be turned easily into Bodoland. However in order to claim complete majority over these territorial areas they started the process of ethnic cleansing. There were ethnic violence of the Bodos against the Santhal, Muslims, Bengalis and the Assamese

dwelling in these areas. Majority of these populations were internally displaced and were bound to live in relief camps. More than 47,000 people displaced by Bodo-Muslim and Bodo-Santhal violence in 1993, 1996 and 1998 were staying in camps in Kokrajhar and Bongaigaon districts and in 2008, 125,000 people were displaced by Bodo-Muslim violence who were staying in camps in Darrang and Udalguri districts of Assam State (Dutta 2012:72).

5. Mayhem in the Twin Hills Districts of Assam

The North Cachar Hills is an autonomous district located on the north of Karbi-Anglong, neighbouring the district of Nagaon, a part of Manipur and Nagaland. On 1 April 2010, the state government of Assam renamed North Cachar Hills district into Dima Hasao District (Dutta 2012: 74). The district is a melting pot of various ethnic groups, an amalgamation of several cultures and religions. The Dimasas consist of 58.46 per cent of the total population and the other tribes belong from the Zeme Nagas, Kukis, Hmars, Karbis, Bietes, Jaintias, Hrangkhols, Khelmas, Viapheis etc. The Kukis are in majority in the Singhason Hill area and the Hmars population is scattered around the Cachar and the North Cachar Hills district. According to the Census of India, in 2001 the total population of the Dimasas was 110,976, majority of whom reside in the Dima Hasao district, a sizeable number of 46,095 Dimasas live in Karbi Anglong and they are a minority in Cachar district of Assam and Dimapur district of Nagaland (Langthasa 2011:7). Due to scarcity of resources and lack of infrastructure, there have been ethnic clashes between the Dimasas and non Dimasa tribes. In August 2009, the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) reported that in the backdrop of the Dimasa-Zeme Naga ethnic conflicts in Missidui village, Haflong on 16 June 2009, 16 children died in the incident. The Dimasas also had major ethnic conflicts with the Hmars in 2003.

In Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, the Karbis (earlier known as 'Mikirs') dominates the region with its 76.28% of population (Terang Dili 2011: 32). Few thousand of them live in the neighbouring districts co-inhabiting with other tribal communities. The minority tribes in the region are the Kukis, Hmars, Dimasas, Garo, Khasi, Jaintia, Rengma Naga etc. There are migrant settlers belonging to the Adivasis, Assamese, Bengali, Nepali and Biharis communities. The Kukis and Hmars are in the Singhason hill area, Dimasas in Dhansiri and Mohendijua area, Bodos in Langhin area.

6. Insurgents and their Unlawful Activities

The National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) led by its chairman Ranjan Daimary alias D.R. Nabla who earlier opposed peaceful negotiations was recently involved with the informal peace talks with the Central government through an interlocutor. However Ranjan Daimary viewed

the Bodo Accord signed by BLT in 2003 was a mere promise to provide a measure of autonomy, which miserably failed to accommodate the aspirations of the Bodo people. Hence his group believed that there should be arms struggle for accomplishing the goal of 'sovereign Bodoland.' Some of the activities of the NDFB militants are extortion, abduction and they often are involved in fratricidal killings, since the NDFB's objectives oppose peace negotiations and also the concept of Autonomous Councils. The insurgent group's activities go beyond the Autonomous councils, to the neighbouring areas. They have abducted government engineers, local businessmen, contractors and constantly threaten the non Bodos of the region. There have been several instances when the NDFB have extorted ransom regularly from the people compelling most of the government employees to give a certain percentage of their income to the outfits. In a systematic ethnic cleansing perpetrated by the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) on 3rd October 2008, more than 53 people were killed and about 100,000 people were uprooted from their homes. The ethnic violence happened in Udalguri and the neighbouring Darrang district, wherein the outfit was attacking the Muslim settlers forcing them to evacuate their homes (Internal Security Review 2008). Districts like Udalguri have more non tribal population comprising of Assamese and Muslims settlers (migrant settlers from erstwhile East Pakistan). There have been regular incidents of ethnic clashes between the Bodos against the Muslim settlers and the Santhals adivasis too. Virulent outbreak of violence between the Bodos –Adivasis have started from 1990s onwards, with the Bodos people supported by their outfits have attacked Santhal villages, and on several occasions they were bound to take shelter in relief camps. One of the notable activities of the NDFB was on 30 October 2008. Serial bomb explosions occurred, killing nearly hundred people and hundreds of them were injured. In May, 2010, the NDFB leader confessed the outfit's involvement in the explosions.

Similar to the Bodo secessionist movement, other tribes of Assam, like the Dimasas and the Karbis have insurgents outfit promising to defend their respective tribes. The strategy to exhibit such ethnic consciousness of the rebel outfits representing their own tribe is through coercive means. Besides unlawful activities of accumulating funds for their outfit, the militants have started the process of ethnic cleansing against the minority tribes of their particular regions. Violence erupted in October 2003 and March 2004 when ethnic clashes occurred between the rival militant groups, the Kuki Revolutionary Army (KRA) and the Karbi Longri North Cachar Hills Liberation Front (KLNCLF) (anti-talks faction of the UPDS) killing over 80 people. The feuds started after the rebel group Kuki Revolutionary Army (KRA) hacked to death four Karbi youths and set ablaze several houses in Uden Tisso village. Gradually the KRA attacked other Karbi villages and the fight between two militant groups turned into ethnic clashes and the local Kuki and Karbi villagers began to attack each

other. The KRA has since then been attacking Karbi villages, primarily in the Sinhasan hill range.

In the last couple of decades there have been several incidents of violence between different ethnic groups and communities claiming for land and territory. Some of the militant groups that are active in the region are United People's Democratic Solidarity Group (UPDS), formed in 1999, by the Karbi People's Front (KPF) and Karbi National Volunteers, the Dima Halam Daogah (DHD) was formed in 1995, the Kuki Revolutionary Army (KRA) (Karbi Anglong unit) was formed in 2001 and also the National Democratic Front of the Bodoland (NDFB). Due to internal differences within the UPDS, led to a split of the group and a faction called the Karbi Longri National Liberation Front (KLNF) was formed. The KLNF was formed after UPDS signed a ceasefire agreement with the central government and the government of Assam. Similarly the DHD also split into two groups called the Dima Halam Daogah, Jewel (DHD-J) (also known as the Black Widow) and the Dima Halam Daogah Dilip (DHD-D). The Karbi and the Dimasa militant groups aimed for socio-cultural and economic development by gaining greater political autonomy or separate state for administering the region. They also demand that the non tribal population residing in the area after 1951 should evict their land and resources. One of the major reasons of conflict among the militant groups of Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills was their aims and aspirations which they had in common to each other. Since they share the same territorial area, their demand for a separate state for their ethnic group jeopardises the other ethnic groups. Hence a Karbi state or a Dimaraji (dimasa kingdom), will obviously be at the risk of the other ethnic groups and communities. The Karbis demanded for a separate state that included beyond the Karbi Anglong district. They aimed to include the Karbi-dominated areas of Assam (Nagaon, Morigaon and Kamrup districts) and Meghalaya (Ri-bhoi district). The Dimasa militant group on the other hand demanded for the creation of Dimaraji Kingdom, comprising of the Dimasa dominated areas of the North Cachar Hills, Karbi Anglong, parts of Nagaon and parts of Dimapur. The notion to have a separate homeland for these communities has resulted into forced migrations of other minority groups and fierce competition for land and resources. Moreover ethnic clashes between the two major ethnic groups the Karbis and the Dimasas have created a lot of bloodshed and hatred for each other. Internecine wars among the militants groups have targeted innocent villagers, killing them brutally and there had been several incidents of forced migrations. In the aftermath of murder of three Dimasa autoricksaw drivers at Tissom village near Diphu, on 26 September 2005, five Karbis were killed at Hemari Terang village. Other retaliatory attacked continued killing more Karbi villagers and burning their houses.

The militant groups of the Dima Hasao and Karbi Anglong districts are involved in various kinds of activities implicating tremendous pressure on the

common people. Groups like the UPDS and DHD prior to their actively being part of the peace negotiations were extorting money from the local people within the districts and from the border states, abducting government employees posted in the region and harassing the local population. Though the UPDS and the DHD often deny of extorting money from the local people, ginger planters and traders, yet there were instances where they terrorised local villagers for money in Karbi Anglong. Even the neighbouring villagers in the Assam Meghalaya boundary areas were not spared from such extortion. The villagers of Mukroh and Saba in the Jaintia Hills district and Madan Umwang village in the Ri-Bhoi district of Meghalaya regularly paid taxes/ransom to the UPDS and KNV.

The various rebel outfits of Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao districts usually target the non tribals for extorting money or abducting them. They also impose conditions on them which either compels them to leave the district or pay a regular ransom to the militants. On 12 December 2004 UPDS imposes a ban on the flourishing bamboo trade in the twin districts of Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills districts, cutting off the supply of raw materials to Hindustan Paper Corporation Ltd's (HPCL) Jagiroad mill in Morigaon (www.satp.org.) district. The outfit alleges that the HPCL had damaged the forest cover of the area and they would be allowed to use the bamboo raw materials after two years. Over 70 per cent of the bamboos from Karbi Anglong were used as raw materials in HPCL. Hence such threats are often given to corporations working in these areas. On 1 September 2006 anti-talks faction of the DHD, Black Widow threaten the contractors working in a railway project, destroyed the excavator worth rupees six lakhs. This compelled the contractors to stop work in the project. In another incident on 10 September, the Black Widow outfit set ablaze labour camps in the construction sites of the Northeast Frontier Railway's broad gauge project in Dima Hasao. Political assassinations are often committed by Black Widow, like the killings of Ajit Bodo, Deputy Chairman of the North Cachar Hills Autonomous District Council, from Maibong area and of the former Executive Members of the North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council, Purnendu Langthasa, and Nindu Langthasa, at Langlai Hasnu village in the NC Hills district, who were potential candidates for the subsequent council elections.

Often the militants group supports ethnic clashes, by burning houses of villages, killing people, of their rival tribesmen. Other specific feature is the intra feud among the militants belonging from the same communities. This is especially evident in cases of the Anti-talks breakaway faction of the UPDS and the DHD who regard the pro talks groups as their rivals. Hence the difference in ideology and resorting to negotiations by militant group leads to formation of another faction group which continues with violent means for their demands.

A spur of violence happened in Manja, which was triggered by the murder of three Dimasa youths on September 26, 2005. Since then, nearly 100 people have perished and thousands have become homeless. Due to ethnic strife between the Karbi and Dimasa at Tamulbari under the Diphu police station on 21 October 2005, nine UPDS militants were killed by the DHD militants. While in retaliation the UPDS set ablaze several houses in the Kakubasti and Kishibam villages (Asian Centre for Human Rights 2005: 13). The Assam Government reports that the ethnic violence between the Karbis and Dimasas in Karbi Anglong district, have resulted in the total dead of 72 persons, including 60 Karbis, nine Dimasas and two Nepalis have died and 1014 houses set ablaze since September 26, 2004 (Asian Centre for Human Rights 2005: 35). The DHD cadres frequently attack Hmar villages and threaten them to leave North Cachar Hills. The root of the Hmar-Dimasa ethnic feud can be traced to February 24 2003, in the abduction of three important members of the Dima Haram Daogah (DHD) by NSCN (I-M) with the help of the Hmar rebels of the HPC-D (Bhattacharjee 2011: 96). Retaliatory attacks from the Dimasa militants in two Hmar villages aggravated the ethnic clashes and the Hmar villagers were forced to flee from their homes. The report submitted by Justice P.C. Phukan on ethnic clashes between the Hmar-Dimasa in 2003 said that the kidnapping of three DHD cadres has triggered the conflict.

7. Conclusion

In last two decades the three autonomous councils of Assam have experienced occurrence of ethnic violence, with the insurgent groups demanding from separate state to forming regional councils for an individual ethnic group. In case of the Bodos, they had once again renewed the demand for a separate state of 'Bodoland'. It is likely that in near future more violence may erupt between the Bodos and non-Bodos, disrupting normal lives of these regions. Moreover, the past ethnic cleansing supported by the Bodo militants and the fratricidal clashes in the BTAD area have created a sense of insecurity for the people. Although Ranjan Daimary, of the NDFB anti-talks faction, has agreed to come for peace talks, yet the outfit's violent activities in the BTAD and neighbouring areas continue to create terror among the common people. In December 2011, most of the doctors fled from Kokrajhar district after the NDFB militants demanded huge sums as protection money. This resulted in acute shortage of doctors leaving a number of patients in despair. Though, NDFB leader signed a ceasefire agreement with the Centre and the State government on 29 November 2013, yet the outfit's activity remains belligerent. The Songbijit faction of NDFB faction who is not a part of peace talks is involved in spree of violence in Western Assam. On 17 January 2014 six persons were killed by NDFB (S) militants on NH-31 at Athiabari under Serfanguri police station. This incident happened in retaliation to the death of an NDFB (S) cadre earlier on that day.

On 19-20 July 2012, riots occurred in BTAD when two student leaders belonging from the All Assam Minority Students' Union (AAMSU) and the All Bodoland Minority Students' Union (ABMSU) were shot at in Kokrajhar district (Goswami: 2012). This allegedly led to a retaliatory attack by the minority community, killing four former members of the Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT) (Goswami: 2012). The chaos further escalated to a communal riot wherein the Bodos and the Muslims were in conflict with each other. Almost 400,000 people were displaced to refugee camps in Kokrajhar, Chirang and Dhubri districts (Fernandes: 2012).

In a similar spur of ideology, the UPDS, DHD and their respective anti talks factions have already agreed for a peace process and agreed for Suspension of Operations (SoO) or signed a ceasefire agreement. The cadres of these camps are staying in different designated camps. On 14 December 2011 a total of 568 militants of the UPDS surrendered their arms at a function held at Diphu in Karbi Anglong District. Despite the fact that the DHD and UPDS were under the ceasefire agreement with the State and the Union government, they were constantly engaged in extortion and other activities. For the sake of safeguarding the identity of one's own tribe, these militants have actually accumulated sufficient wealth for themselves. In February 2012, four close relatives of Niranjan Hojai, 'commander-in-chief' of the outfit DHD-J was arrested in connection of alleged money laundering (Niranjan Hojai's wife received a draft amounting \$200,000 from a unknown sources in Singapore).

The ethnic conflicts in Assam have indeed created mayhem for the people of the state, building various kinds of cleavages of differences among the ethnic communities who once lived in cohesion for centuries. The rise of ethnic consciousness among the ethnic groups like the Bodos, the Karbis and the Dimasa has constructed an atmosphere wherein other tribes and non tribes remain under constant threat. Hence for the self defence of the minority tribes, the youths of their community have also formed outfits. Moreover the claim over the land and territory by these dominant tribes and the creation of militant groups to protect their ethnic identity has resulted in many incidents of ethnic cleansing. The strong bondage of ethnicity within the ethnic groups has alienated them from other ethnic groups in way that a peaceful resolution becomes a hard task. The threats from violent activities in the autonomous districts still exist even after majority of the militants have surrendered themselves. Ethnic conflicts in Assam though comparatively reduced since last couple of years, but there has been every possibility of resurgence of such violence. Unless serious measures of reconciliation are initiated through the ongoing peace process between the disarmed outfits and the government (both Assam and the Central Government), the chances of restoring peace in Assam becomes a difficult proposition. Above all the role of the civil society to act as a harbinger of peace might be an effective alternative to resolve ethnic conflicts in Assam.

An ardent question still remains to be answered, whether formation of autonomous councils, not only in Assam but by and large in the North East India have effectively able to preserve the tribal identity of the people in a justifiably manner. Since the councils provide the rights to self administer to the majority tribal group, this has negatively impacted and threatened the other minority groups. In context to the changing and sometimes volatile situations in these regions innovative administrative intervention by the Central and the State government is now crucial for peaceful co-existence of all communities sharing territory.

Notes

- ¹ The tribes of Assam may broadly be divided into two categories i.e. plain tribes and hill tribes. The plain tribes reside in the plain regions and the hill tribes are mainly concentrated in the hilly regions of the state.
- ² The Bodo Liberation Tigers was formed on June 18, 1996 --- a belligerent group fighting for a separate state out of Assam, but within the Indian Union, through an armed struggle. On 14 July, 1999 the BLT unilaterally decided to suspend its armed operations and agreed to negotiate with the Government of India.

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Remapping India since Independence: Critical reflections

Rajvinder Singh

Abstract

Political history of state formation in India after independence can be divided into four distinctive periods. In all four phases, different situations and factors have played a decisive role. The paper 'Remapping India since Independence' is an attempt to explore the connection and difference between these four phases. It would also try to explore the basic reasons which are responsible for the formation of a new state. With the new developments taking place in the Indian politics after independence about the demands of the creation of new states, the time may come for the formation of the Second State Reorganisation Commission to consider redrawing the map of India.

Keywords: Reorganisation, Princely State, Language, Hindi Heartland State, North-East

1. Introduction

The story of the tragic partition of the subcontinent is well-known but there is another remarkable story of the creation of the Indian Union which is not known to most of the people. Indian national movement leaders forged a national union out of hundreds of separate states which comprised the British Raj to find an entirely new nation on 15th of August 1947. After Independence, internal map of Indian Union is redrawn a number of times. The political history of remapping of India since independence is divided into four distinct phases: first phase of integration of princely states and reorganisation (1947-50); second phase of reorganisation on the basis of language (1950-1966); third phase of reorganisation of North-East (1960-90); and fourth phase of contemporary reorganisation of Hindu-Hindi heartland States and Telangana (1990-2014).

2. The First Phase: Integration of Princely States and Reorganisation

The Independence of India was a glorious achievement for the Indian people and its political leadership. It was the end of the British Empire almost after two centuries. But it did not signify the end of the struggle for India. As Alfred Cobben said, "it raised more problems than it solved" (Cobben, 1980). First and the foremost problem which India faced were of the unity and integration of the country which was the result of the crisis that India faced at the time of its Independence.

The British entered India after the disintegration of the Mughal Empire. They conquered these areas one by one and built a huge colonial empire across the subcontinent. The British Empire was built on the basis of administration,

unlike the hereditary monarchy of Mughal Empire. “British established, in territories under their direct control, a regular and uniform system of administration composed of a hierarchy of authorities, one subordinate to another, with powers and functions clearly demarcated. The pattern commenced at the base with the districts and converged at the apex with provincial Governors and the Governor-General, who were in their turn subordinate to the authorities in England” (Menon, 1961). But British Empire was not a united and integrated entity. Within the British Empire, there were three distinct categories- British India, princely state (native state or Indian states) and Tribal India (distinguished as Excluded Area and partially Excluded Areas). British Empire was the area directly administered by the British; Princely India had treaty relations (Paramountcy power) with the British and certain tribal areas of north eastern and central India were ruled by the Viceroy of India directly. The princely states in the subcontinent numbered around 600. Many of them were bigger than some European nation (Copland, 1999). A number of states like Bhopal, Hyderabad, Jammu and Kashmir, Jodhpur, Jaipur, Gwalior, Indore, Baroda, Travancore, Mysore, etc. were quite large and economically as well as militarily viable.

After the Second World War, Labour Party Government came into power in Britain. Under the Cabinet Mission plan 1946, new government announced the transfer of power to Indian people and the paramountcy which they exercised over the princely states would automatically lapse. On 20th February 1947, British Prime Minister Clement Attlee announced that, “As was explicitly stated by the cabinet mission, His Majesty’s Government do not intend to hand over their power and obligations under paramountcy to any government of British India” (Sajal, 2007). On June 3rd British Government declared that the transfer of power was to take place on 15th August, and paramountcy was to lapse on that day. Consequently, rulers of several states claimed that they would be independent from 15th of August. Once the paramountcy lapsed, some of these states refused to join either India or Pakistan and declared their intention to remain independent, and some Excluded Areas too wanted to remain outside both the countries. On 11 June 1947, Travancore had decided to become an independent state, and next day, Hyderabad too made the same announcement. The rulers of Jammu and Kashmir, Junagadh and many other viable states were also thinking on similar lines.

Integration of the princely states is a fascinating chapter in the history of India. For the integration of these states into Indian Dominion, Indian Constitutional Assembly created a new ministry under the leadership of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on June 1947. Its primary task was to bring the states into some form of organic relationship with the centre in order to prevent the balkanization of the country. For this purpose Sardar Patel and V. P. Menon produced two key documents: ‘Instrument of accession’ on three subjects (defence, external affairs, and communication), and a ‘Standstill Agreement’

which kept alive the existing relations between the states and the Government of India. The territorial integration of princely states took three forms - merging with the adjacent provinces; grouping of certain States into separate units; and transformation of certain States into centrally administered areas (Sajal, 2007).

By August 15, 1947, all the princely states had acceded to India by signing the Instrument of Accession, except Junagadh, Hyderabad, and Jammu & Kashmir. These three states after 1947 were also acceded into India by different methods: Junagadh by plebiscite, Hyderabad by police action and Jammu & Kashmir by instrument of accession (With Special article 370). The accession of Indian states went side by side with their physical integration and reorganisation, 310 states were organised into six unions, while 215 were merged with their neighbouring provinces. Another 5 states were converted into Chief Commissioners' Provinces, but Hyderabad and Mysore were left untouched initially. Thus, as a result of integration, in the place of 554 states, 14 administrative units had emerged (Menon, 1961). In all these units, responsible Governments were set up, and the former rulers were given the title of 'Raj Pramukhs'. They were allowed to retain their personal privileges, and tax free privy purses were granted to them. The policy of integration served a great purpose. On the completion of this process, India emerged as an integrated entity both geographically and politically. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru said:

"The historian who looks back will no doubt consider the integration of the states into India as one of the dominant phases of the India's History. (Menon, 1961)" It united the whole country into one political framework, and removed many administrative drawbacks and financial disparities.

3. Second Phase: Reorganisation on the Basis of language

India is considered to be the most diverse and complex society in the world linguistically and it is also one of the prominent factors that lead to the demands of separate states. "This linguistic diversity was speculated to lead to the break-up of the country in the initial years immediately after independence" (Harrison, 1960). All around the country various states started demanding the reorganisation on the basis of language (one language, one state) particularly in the southern regions. But the national leaders started expressing the fear that separation of provinces on such a basis would foster the growth of sub-nationalism in the reorganised states and could lead to further divisions whereas even the one (Pakistan partition) that had taken place earlier had been very painful and cruel.

The Congress party had historically been the initiator and most vigorous exponent of a linguistic solution to the problem of division of the Indian states. During British rule, the Congress party had advocated the re-division of the Indian states on a linguistic basis as a part of its platform. In

1903, Sir Herbert Risely, the Home Secretary in the Government of India, first raised the issue of reorganisation of Bengal province. "The Montague-Chelmsford Report (1918) considered the linguistic reorganisation of the provinces impractical even through reforms favoured smaller states. The Simon Report (1928) recommended the formation of provinces on linguistic basis. The reorganisation of Orissa (1936) and Sindh on linguistic principle was the only example of the British acceptance of this principle." (A Sarangi; S Pai, 2011). As early as in 1905, the Congress Party had supported the principle of linguistic states but it opposed the division of the Bengal Province. Thus, Congress Party's linguistic policy between 1905 and 1920 was ambiguous. It gained a concrete shape only in 1920 at the Nagpur session when the Congress accepted it for the first time in principle. And in 1921 the Congress went ahead in establishing 20 Provincial Congress committee's based on language. Officially, the Congress Party endorsed the linguistic principle in 1928 with its acceptance of the Nehru Report which advocated that the present distribution of Indian provinces had no rational basis and believed that its distribution was merely accidental. The Nehru Report endorsed that "the redistribution of provinces should take place on linguistic basis on the demand of the majority of the population of the area concerned" (Stephen, Lina, & Yadav, 2010). Congress reiterated its faith in this policy at Calcutta session in 1937 and in its election manifesto of 1945-46.

On 17th June 1948, the Government of India appointed the Linguistic Provinces Commission under the chairmanship of S.K. Dhar¹ to study the feasibility of organizing states on linguistic basis. In its 10th December 1948 report, the Commission recommended that division on linguistic basis would not be in the larger interest of the nation. It says:

"In the any rational and scientific planning that may be take place in regard to the provinces of India in the future, homogeneity of language alone cannot be the decisive or even an important factor. Administration convenience, history, geography, economy, culture and many other matters will also have to be given due weight" (Report of the Linguistic Commission, 1948).

The report submitted by Dhar commission led to much resentment among people. As a result, in the Jaipur session of 1948, Congress appointed a three member JVP² Committee to consider the recommendations of Dhar Commission. This committee also rejected the linguistic factor of reorganisation of the states. Rather it recommended the reorganisation of states on the basis of security, unity and economic prosperity of the nation. It observed:

"We feel that conditions that have emerged in India since the achievement of independence are such as to make us view the problem of linguistic provinces in a new light. The first consideration must be the security;

unity and economic prosperity of India and every separatist and disruptive tendency should be rigorously discouraged” (JVP Committee Report, 1949).

After the reports of Dhar commission and JVP committee, constitutional assembly agreed with the ideas proposed in these reports and on 26th January 1950 made a federal constitution within centralised federal system and divided the 28 states into four categories- A, B, C, and D on rational basis or balanced approach.

By the early 1950s, it was apparent that regional and non-congress political parties, state politicians, regional elites, and in some cases ordinary people did not agree with this classification. People all over India especially in Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, Karnataka, Gujarat, Tamilnadu and Kerala demanded reorganisation on the basis of language. The demand for Andhra, creation of a Telugu-majority state in the part of Madras state had become stronger in 1952. A Gandhian leader Potti Shreemalu was demanding formation of Andhra. He died on 16th December 1952 after undertaking a fast unto death and as a result, the Telugu majority 'Andhra state' was formed by Nehru in 1953.

The problem of reorganising the states of the Union of India assumed a new perspective with this announcement by Prime Minister Nehru. Consequently, his Government decided to appoint a three-member³ State Reorganisation Commission (SRC) under the Chairmanship of Syad Fazl Ali to “investigate the conditions of the problem, the historical background, the existing situation and the bearing of all important and relevant factors thereon” (Windmiller, 1954). After three years, on 30 September 1955 the Commission submitted its report to Government of India. It recommended the establishment of 16 states and 3 union territories without any distinction and rejected the previous division on basis of four categories. After much debate, Parliament called for a reorganisation of India based on the criteria laid down by the SRC. The State Reorganisation Act 1956 implemented some of the recommendations of SRC and re-drew Indian map into 14 states and 6 union territories.

Indian Government hoped that these changes would satisfy the demand for territorial reorganisation, but the struggles continued in and across a number of states. Once the principle of linguistic states had been accepted, the demands for reorganisation on the basis on linguistic and ethnicity increased in Punjab and Bombay. In 1960, the bilingual Province of Bombay was divided into the states of Maharashtra and Gujarat after violent language riots. The demands for a separate Punjab State were also denied by the Central Government because they considered it as a religiously (Sikh) motivated demand. In 1966 'greater Punjab' was split between Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh. It was accepted only when the Sikh leadership abandoned religious rhetoric and implied its demands in ethno-linguistic arguments (Chada, 2002).

4. Third Phase: Reorganisation of North-East (1960-90)

The third phase focussed on the division of the Assam state in Northeast India. The Northeast was the least integrated region in the territorial and administrative sphere of British Empire. The North-East is a patchwork of tribal and mixed linguistic communities. In the Indian Constitution, Six Schedule⁴ added for the protection of hills district, which made all the hill district of Assam autonomous with their respective district councils. Although several new States had been created in India on the basis of language after independence but in Assam there were no such demands.

But the tribal leaders demanded the formation of a hill state, cut off from plains area under one administrative unit. Another proposal was raised for the formation of Purbanchal state, composite of Cachar, Tripura, Manipur, the Lushai Hills, the Naga Hills and the NEFA. Naga National Council (NNC) also wanted an independent Naga homeland for the Naga people outside Assam and India. Under the leadership of A. Z. Phizo, NNC launched a violent struggle against the government. "Taking all these entire factors into consideration, State Reorganisation Commission had come to conclusion that formation of hill state in this region was never feasible nor in the interest of the tribal peoples themselves. The hill district therefore should continue to be part of Assam and no major change should be made in their present constitution pattern" (Chauble, 1973). Ethnic and linguistic group in various areas, especially in the hill area and Naga leaders expressed their dissatisfaction with the recommendations of the SRC.

In 1960, Assam Government made Assamese the sole official language of the state. The tribal leaders expressed anxiety over the predominance of Assamese language in the region. Tribal of the hills and linguistic minorities had strongly protested against the imposition of Assamese language. Some had even said that, "as long as tribals remained with Assam their destiny lay in the hands of the Assamese" (Barpurji, 1998). In 1960, various party of hills area merged into the All Party Hill Leaders Conference (APHLC) and again demanded a separate state within the Indian union. APHLC consistently protested against the state government's language policy of 'Assamisation' of hill people. In the end, Government of India acted in the favour of the APHLC and five states and two Union territories were carved out of Assam, under the act of North-East Reorganisation Act 1972. This state attained full statehood: Nagaland (1963), Meghalaya, Manipur, Tripura (1972), Mizoram (1986) and Arunachal Pradesh (1987).

5. Fourth Phase: Contemporary Reorganisation of Hindi Heartland States and Telangana (1990-2014)

In 2000, Once again the internal map of India was redrawn to create three new states – Chhattisgarh, Uttaranchal and Jharkhand. These new states

were proposed on the grounds of administrative efficiency rather than on the language principle. These were the first states which were created on non-linguistic basis. Let us consider the following reasons that played important role in redrawing these states: - The trends that had become visible in the 1980s like the decline of Congress, the rise of Hindu nationalist forces, the emergence of coalition governments, the regionalisation of politics, and changes in political economy were important reasons for the creation of these states.

The idea of smaller states has found support among political elites across parties over time due to the change taking place, particularly with the emergence of the other backward caste communities and the presence of their strong leaders within the Congress and the BJP. The most important structural change arose from what Christophe Jaffrelot has called the '*silent revolution*' that swept north Indian politics in this period as a result of the rise to political power of lower castes (Tillin, 2011). Regional parties across India became important players within federal coalition government. Maya Chadda (2002) explains the formation of three new states in 2000 as one of the reasons for closer integration of ethnic and caste based regional parties in the central government. After 1989, the formation of coalition government in the centre had made the roles of regional parties even more significant in the national politics. Emma Mawdsley (2002) suggests that in the new era of unstable coalition government at the centre, a few seats either way could help to determine who governs in the state, and even at centre.

All these states witnessed the emergence of distinctive types of social movements in the early 1970s. Mary Katzenstein, Smitu Kothari and Uday Mehta (2001) had argued that identity-based movements (around caste, regional, or religious identity) emerged successfully within electoral politics. Rajni Kothari (1985) observed the emergence of new movements or 'non-party political formations' in the 1970s was linked to a shift towards a more participatory vision of decentralized democracy and development in which grass root issues became the subject of political activism.

Regional inequality has markedly increased since the early 1990s. Globalization and liberalization have led to the establishment of a global-national market economy which has opened up the floodgates for private capital which leading to regional inequalities among states and contributing to the rising demands for smaller states. The new political economy created 'region within the region.' The Marxist intellectual A.K. Roy calls it an 'internal colonialism.' He says:

"In India, the under- developed area is exploited by the developed areas as colonies, as are the underdeveloped by the developed people...the natives of the internal colonies are not only the victims of underdevelopment...but of development as well in central India, as this development does not mean the development of the people there but their displacement and replacement by the

colonies of developed people, the clever people, the political connected people coming from the developed areas” (Sinha, 1973).

The emergence of the Hindu national forces in the Indian politics is the next factor behind the demands for separate states. In the general election of 1989, BJP consolidated a position of a national political party. The implementations of Mandal Commission’s recommendations for affirmative action for OBC, and the destructions of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya and continuing campaign to build a Ram Mandir on its site, consolidated its base in the middle and upper class Hindu voters. In early 1990s, BJP became a stronger proponent of states’ right in India’s federal system and emphasised the need for the decentralisation of power.

In 2000, BJP government that had come to power with the support of regional parties and created three new states on the basis of administrative efficiency. L. K. Advani, then the home minister, explained that the states were being created on the grounds of ‘administrative and economic viability’ as well as for the ‘overwhelming aspirations of the people of the region’ (Speech to Lok sabha, 2000).

Telangana, the 29th state of the Indian Union came into being on 2 June, 2014 after a long drawn-out struggle of more than six and half decades. K. Srinivasulu says that three trends in the discursive articulation on Telangana can be identified: first, political marginalisation of the leadership, second, Economic and educational backwardness of the region or uneven development of the region (logic of internal colonialism) and third, Constructing the identity of Telangana as an ‘imagined community’ in opposition to the Andhra identity (Srinivasulu, 2011). Much like the states of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Uttarakhand formed in 2000, Telangana too has moved away from language affinity as the sole basis of state formation to a more complex network of socio-economic, political-ideological and regional bases of identities, favouring the creation of states in contemporary times (The Hindu, 2015)

6. Conclusion

In these four phases, different situations and factors have played a decisive role in the state formation. In the first phase ‘integration or unity of nation’, in second phase ‘language’, in third phase ‘geographical-cultural-ethnic identity’ and in the fourth phase ‘new economic development and new trends in Indian electoral politics’ have played important role. In the present time, there are number of sub-states advocates of state rights within Indian union. They have openly challenged the authority of the central government. Present political development after the formation of Telangana and the strong demands for Vidharbha, Bodoland, Coorg, Harit Pradesh, Bundelkhand and many more, where economic demands are triumphed over linguistic homogeneity, have changed the nature of the demands of state formation. There have been a

number of arguments in the favour of the formation of new states. Among them are geographical proximity, common historical traditions and experience, similar usages and customs, economic backwardness, administrative efficiency and democratic decentralization. These developments in the direction of creating new states suggest that the time may come to take a decision on the formation of the Second State Reorganisation Commission to consider redrawing the map of India for addressing the demand for smaller states. The demand for new states has once again emerged as a major issue in Indian politics.

Notes

- ¹ S K Dhar commission had been authorised by Constitutional Assembly and it investigated the problem of linguistic states only in southern India.
- ² its members, Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel and Pattabhi Sitaramayya
- ³ Its members were Justice Syad Fazl Ali, H.N. Kunzru and K.M. Panikkar
- ⁴ [Articles 244(2) and 275(1)] Provisions as to the Administration of Tribal Areas in the States of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, Mizoram and the areas under the Gorkha Hill Council, Darjeeling in the State of West Bengal

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Media and Politics: An Exploration of the Role of Media in Political Movements in the context of Darjeeling Hills in West Bengal

Ramesh Dural

Abstract

All forms of media impact society and politics. The media are commonly understood to be able to—and many would argue, obligated to—provide a forum for the expression and discussion of a diverse range of oftentimes conflicting ideas. However, the role of media has been such that it has impacted political processes enormously with its twin contributions of empowering as well as silencing the ‘people’/audience it targets so much so that politics has changed and transformed from a largely interpersonal to a predominantly mediated activity. There are many different forms of media that affect the political landscape. The use of print media, and in the recent years, the emergence of the electronic media, has been instrumental in shaping the nature of politics. The present study purports to investigate the role of media in the social and political transformations and political movements in Darjeeling hills.

Keywords: Media, Movements, Darjeeling hills, Gorkhaland

1. Introduction

Social relationship of people is determined significantly by the information obtained through various media forms like the news and newspaper articles, radio broadcasting, television programmes etc. by linking place, space and people. Media’s influence on people begins at home in its relationship with the household life – a process which the cultural historian Lesley Johnson (1981) has called its ‘capturing’ of time and space in the home; transcends the domestic, and interweaves a people, culture and social process of a community, involving the mapping out and shifting uses and implications of a media form in the domestic and public life of a people.

However, any analysis of people and her political institutions and processes necessitate a prior reference to the press and media of her times. In this context, the press, as Mitra (1930) observes, is the guardian of the liberties of its people as well as the most effective instrument for extending the bonds of human freedom and progress. It plays an effective role in moulding and educating public opinion. It proves itself as an exdona in the socio-political consciousness. The press, particularly the vernacular one, highlights the inherent social evils of the society. The press also exposes the wrong and unjust policies of the administrative system which, by and large, serves as the principal source of inspiration both for the social reformers and the political leaders of the day. Yet, it needs to be cautioned that such views on the functions

of media are not free from criticisms (Patterson, 1993; Graber, 2003). Despite criticisms, the role of media in politics continues to remain significant. Keeping such a role of the media and grounding itself on the theoretical insights from various studies globally (Tuchman, 1978; Blumer and Gurevitch, 1981; Beniger & Herbst, 1990; Protes & McCombs, 1991; Neuman, Just, & Crigler, 1992; Gamson & Wolsfeld, 1993; Agarwal, 2002; Biagi, 2006; Iyengar & McGrady, 2007), the present study is an earnest attempt to investigate the role of media in the social and political transformations and political movements in Darjeeling hills.

Darjeeling hills, the northernmost part of the state of West Bengal and inhabited by Gorkhas has a contested history. The people of the region had been demanding a homeland within India for last hundred years or so, and the demand for the creation of a separate state of Gorkhaland within the framework of Indian federation has its history ever since India's independence. The hills saw a bloody agitation for separation from West Bengal and for the creation of a separate Gorkhaland state within the federal structure of India in the 1980's under the leadership of Subash Ghising and his Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF), after which a Hill Council was formed as a separate development agency for the Darjeeling Hills. The developmental benefits in the twenty or so long years of the existence of the council, however, seemed to have failed to percolate down to the people even after twenty or more years of anxious wait, creating in the minds of the nation a sense of deprivation and of being marginalized. Therefore, second wave of protest movement began in 2007, under the leadership of Bimal Gurung and his Gorkha Jana Mukti Morcha (GJMM), albeit with the same demand of the creation of Gorkhaland, however, with different ideological orientations and strategies.

2. Development of Press and Media

The Indian press and media has had a glorious history. It is not out of place to say that the Indian press is not like the British press or French press, 'a press of one language'. It is a press of the major Indian languages in most of which, apart from English, it had its beginnings about the same time. The growth of such press was bound to be multifarious, and at the beginning somewhat diverse. But there has been an underlying unity, with common urges and common conditions. Along with political unity came economic unity, and along with it commonness of development, especially with the enforcement of a common legal system all over the country.

According to 1977 report of the Register of Newspapers for India, India continued to be the second largest publisher of daily newspapers in the world in 1976, with a marginal increase to 875 from 835 in 1975. In circulation, Indian daily newspapers occupied the third place in Asia, coming next only to the USSR and Japan. Newspapers published in India touched 34.075 million in

total circulation, marking a rise of 0.235 million in 1976, as compared to 1975, when circulations stood at 33.822 million. The growth of circulation during 1971-76 was 4.456 million. The circulation of dailies in 1976 was 9.338 million as compared to 9.383 in 1975. Among the daily newspapers and periodicals in different Indian languages English dailies are accounted for the highest circulation figures, Hindi came next, followed by the Malayalam. The largest number of newspaper, 3,289 was in Hindi, followed by English (2,765), Urdu (975) and Bengali (855). At the same time it is evident that the largest number of dailies (252) was in Hindi, followed by Marathi and Urdu (94 each), Malayalam (91), English (89), Tamil (58), Kannada (53), Gujarati (37), Bengali (22), and Telugu (17). But we see that the biggest period of growth of the publications took place after independence, under conditions of adult suffrage and growth of liberty. The Indian Press started as press of dependency and later on the press became the press of developing society compelled to answer many challenges. At present publication of press is not only the medium of news dissemination, but also as a purveyor of advertising service.

However, the development of press and publications as popular media was not uniform throughout the nook and corners of India. In different parts, several forces and factors accounted for a particular nature of growth as well as content. In Bengal, at the beginning of Bengali Press did not owe its origin to any political consideration, although it was destined to play a vital role in the political movement of the succeeding years. It was, in other words, a manifestation of the all round awakening that was taking place in Bengal in the early nineteenth century. Similar is the case with Darjeeling.

In almost all the Third World Countries which were the erstwhile colonies of the Western imperial powers, the development of the vernacular languages and the associated establishment of printing presses and publications in vernaculars have taken place in strikingly similar ways. The common feature of this being that the colonial rulers did not encourage the development of the vernacular. However, although appearing ambivalent and contradictory, yet the initial impetus for the development of the vernacular languages and establishment of the printing presses came from the Christian missionary groups as a part of their proselytisation activities. In Darjeeling hills too, this trend was visible, with the missionaries engaged in efforts of developing the vernacular language, translating the Holy Bible into the vernaculars, and encouraging the opening of and /or opening the printing presses through which the religious messages were communicated. Similarly, the colonial administration's requirements and the necessities of the Planters, all contributed to the mushrooming of printing presses in Darjeeling. Consequently, Darjeeling became a centre of literary activities with the publication of host of papers and periodicals covering a vast range of themes like various socio-economic, political and cultural issues.

As it is evident that the development of press and media in the hills of Darjeeling did not owe to a single factor. Rather, it has been a result of the interplay of multiplicity of forces and factors. However, the most noteworthy among them are: first, the role played by the Christian missionaries and spread of education; second, the introduction of Darjeeling Himalayan Railway as an effective and popular means of communication; third, the emergence of a host of associations: socio-cultural as well as literary, during the period; and finally, the contributions of the Tea Planters and government establishments, among others.

2.1 Role of the Christian Missionaries and Spread of Education

The Christian missionaries were the pioneer to introduce modern education in the hill area of Darjeeling. For the last generation practically the only organization for meeting the primary education of the people of the hills has been the Church of Scotland Mission. When the British took over the district, it was found that popular education was practically unknown. The first attempt to reach education to the hill people was made by Rev. W. Star. After him came a band of German Missionaries, one of whom, Mr. Niebel, devoted himself especially for schoolwork. But it was not till the advent of the Rev. William Macfarlane in the year 1869 that any broad scheme of vernacular education was devised for the district. Mr. Macfarlane soon set himself to draw some statesmanlike scheme of education based on that of which he aimed at putting some opportunity for even the initial stage of learning within the reach of every child. Moreover, to encourage the cause of general education in the Darjeeling Hill area, Mr. Macfarlane induced Government to offer Scholarship for the students during their course of education. Another person who left significant contribution for the education of hill people was Rev. R. Kilgour. As evident, therefore, the Christian missionaries contributed towards the development of education in Darjeeling Hills, which in turn, contributed to the rise of vernacular press and media in Darjeeling Hills. Furthermore, the missionaries required to develop the language of the natives in order to promote the spread of Christianity. This requirement led to the translation of Bible into the vernacular languages, and above all, its publication, thereby leading to the development of both the language as well as the press and publication houses in Darjeeling Hills.

It has been found that the first attempt to make the Darjeeling hills the home of European education was in the 1860s. For some years Bishop Cotton had been advocating the establishment of Hill Schools for Europeans, and his efforts were supported by Lord Canning who pointed out in a celebrated minutes how the domiciled English and Europeans would, if neglected become profitless, unmanageable, and a glaring reproach to the government, while if properly cared for, they might become a source of strength to British rule and usefulness to India (O'Malley, 1985). The consequence of this movement was

the establishment of several Hill schools, of which one was St. Paul's School, which was transferred in 1864 from Calcutta to Darjeeling. The establishment of this School in the hills of Darjeeling was a very important step for the development of English education in the region. Subsequently within a short time a good number of English schools were established in Darjeeling hills as a result of which the people got the opportunity to learn. Education is the most powerful instrument for the intellectual and cultural exercise of any place or area. Without literary background it is absolutely impossible to have any literary activities, intellectual interaction and cultural practices. In this respect the Christian missionaries were the pioneer to introduce modern education in the hill area of Darjeeling. It is evident that in Darjeeling the Christian missionaries were the pioneers in the field of education (Pradhan, 1982). The gradual spread of education prompted the development of press and media in Darjeeling during this period. Thus, the development of the vernacular newspapers could be credited by the movement that took place during this period for the upliftment of Nepali language and literature. It can be said that this periodicals got its backbone in it.

2.2 The Establishment of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway

Rapid progress was made in the development of the communications of the district, which the Sikkim expedition of 1860 and the Bhutanese war the year before had shown to be vitally essential. One of the major developments in this direction was the introduction of Darjeeling Himalayan Railway (DHR). The ease of communication facilitated the movements of both articles and goods and people. The accentuated interaction between the people from the plains and the Hills on the one hand and the availability of resources required for publication on the other facilitated the growth of press and media in Darjeeling. The construction of railroads linked with the plains in 1880 moved Darjeeling to a new history with its contact with the rest of the India which brought the newly educated youths more and more under the influence of literary movements ahead in many new directions. This period was the age of awakening in the Indian subcontinent, a period of momentous happenings of epical magnitude. The socio-religious regeneration and the awareness of the economic exploitation of the colonial rule had given birth to a strong sense of nationalism which had received impetus from the contact of the European writings and thoughts. This change brought a new phase in history of Darjeeling and brought the beginning of the journals in Nepali vernacular language which was the epoch making event because it was through this papers that new ideas were brought out.

2.3 The Emergence of Associations in Darjeeling

The emergence of associations and organizations has a clear indication of the general awakening of the people. The associations and organisations which were generally formed to ventilate the grievances of the people, through

their charters, mouthpieces, etc., published preferably in the vernacular languages of a community, which such associations represent. In similar way, there had emerged in Bengal in general and Darjeeling Hills in particular, several associations and organizations, mostly of cultural and literary in character which provided meeting places for exchange of views and for the promotion of common objectives, which ultimately facilitated the evolution of press and media in the region. The growth of public organisations and Associations in Bengal was closely related to the growth and development of the press and media. In Darjeeling district, a good number of associations and organisations emerged during this period. The most important of these include the following: Indian Association (1883), Gorkha National Theatrical Party (1906) Nepali Sahitya Sammelan (1924, Gorkha Dukkha Nivarak Sammelan (1932), Nebula (1935), Gorkha Association (1926), Gorkha Library (1918) and, Hillmen's Association (1917), Nepali Sahitya Adhayan Samiti (Kalimpong), Nepali Sahitya Prasar Samiti (Siliguri), Arya Samaj (Darjeeling Branch), among others. Most of these were socio-cultural and literary organisations, yet they contributed significantly in ventilating the grievances of the hill people and to fulfil their aspirations through their various publications from time to time.

2.4 Contributions of Tea Planters and Government Establishments

The Tea-planters from their commercial outlook and necessity inspired the development of press and publication houses in Darjeeling. They also used the printing press for printing handbill, cash book and some other commercial cum official documents. So it is obvious that in the initial stage of printing and publications the Tea-Planters had some significant contribution. Another factor important on the issue of publication in Darjeeling hills happened to be the government itself. The government for their administrative purposes generally used the press. Most of the government official papers and documents were also printed, therefore, encouraging the printing machinery in Darjeeling.

Darjeeling, a favoured destination of the British and its winter headquarters during colonial period had the privilege of being a centre for leaning. As a result, history of Darjeeling has to its credit a large number of publications in Nepali, English, Bengali and Tibetan, which owed largely to the contributions made by the British rulers and the missionaries by way of the establishment of schools and other institutions of learning. During the colonial period too, the demand for a separate administrative apparatus for the Gorkhas was in place, and hence, several Gorkha leaders propounded these ideas and propagated them through a huge number of magazines and newsletters. Several vernacular publications in the likes of *Gorkha Bharat Jiban* (1886- (Motiram Bhatt), *Gorkha Khabar Kagat* (1901-Ganga Prasad Pradhan) were published from Darjeeling, investigating different aspects of hill society and culture, propagation of the republican ideals and the condemnation of the social evils like child marriage (especially between 1912 and 1939) engaging basically in

socio-cultural reform. The publications in Tibetan took place especially after the arrival of the Tibetan refugees to Darjeeling in the later part of the 1950s, and, most of their publications focus on the plight of the refugees, reflections on their religious and cultural traditions, their determination to free Tibet, and so on. Some Nepali novels (like *Noyo*) also focus on the story of the inhuman treatment meted to the Tibetans and the flight of the refugees from Tibet to India etc. Several associations also contributed to the development of media and to the socio-cultural and political transformations in the region. As regards the associations, most of them were formed in for the assertion of the cultural and ethnic identity of the people of the hills (for instance, the NEBULA) barring some (like Gorkha Dukkha Niwarak Sammelan- GDNS and Nepali Sahitya Sammelan) which devoted to socio-cultural and literary endeavours. Their aspirations were exposed through these associations. Nepali Sahitya Sammelan published Nepali Sahitya Sammelan Patrika. Gorkha Dukkha Nibarak Samity published 'Khoji' by Rupnarayan Sinha to ventilate their thoughts and ideas, to highlight their socio-political and economic demands and problems. The trend continued in the aftermath of the Indian independence and the mobilisation of the print media got further accelerated for the movement in the 1980s under Subash Ghisingh. Ghising himself was a literary figure. Apart from propagating his political ideas for mass mobilisation through his literary pieces in vernacular, Subash Ghising who led the Gorkhaland movement in the 1980s sent letters regarding the status of Darjeeling hills and the need for immediate intervention for its resolution to His Majesty, the King of Nepal and also to the International Court of Justice of the United Nations. The copies of the letters were also sent to the Government of India, the President of the USA, Russia and many others. He regarded this move as a tactic to pressurise the Indian government and to get recognition to the problems of the hill people. His intention was to draw the attention of the international media so that the movement could not be suppressed. Further, during Ghising's movement, he mobilised the local media like the *Himalchuli* and made it the mouthpiece of the movement. The second wave of the movement, under the leadership of Bimal Gurung, apart from mobilising the traditional print media, electronic media has largely been mobilised.

3. New Media

New media is a term meant to encompass the emergence of digital, computerized, or networked information and communication technologies in the later part of the 20th century. Most technologies described as new media are digital, often having characteristics of being manipulated, networkable, dense, compressible, interactive and impartial. Some examples may be the Internet, websites, computer multimedia, computer games, CD-ROMS, and DVDs.

Simultaneous to the development of the new media is the entry of global television channels, and access to global information. Hence, post

liberalization India has provided a space for the conglomeration of media forms: print media: both vernacular and otherwise, global television networks, new media and social media.

Darjeeling is not an exception to this development and has provided for simultaneous existence and working of all these media forms with national and local newspapers, cable television, digital and social media, both enabling and constraining the public sphere, including the virtual.

Today Darjeeling Hills receive almost all the television channels that are received in the rest of India. Cable Television serves most of the homes in the town, while DTH connections are now growing in popularity. Besides mainstream Indian channels, the Hills have Nepali-language channels like *Dainandini (DD)*, *Kalimpong Television (KTV)*, *Haal Khabar*, *Pratidin* and Himalayan People's Channel (HPC), *Hamro Channel*, the *Himali Channel* and the *Darjeeling Television* produced by local TV channel media houses and transmitted through the local cable network which provides daily local news based programs.

Newspapers in Darjeeling Hills include English language dailies, *The Statesman* and *The Telegraph*, which are printed in Siliguri, and *The Economic Times* and the *Hindustan Times* which are printed in Kolkata (Calcutta). Among other languages, Nepali, Hindi and Bengali are prominent vernacular languages used in this region. Newspapers in all these four languages are available in the Darjeeling Hills region. Of the largely circulated Nepali newspapers *Himalay Darpan*, *Swarnabhumi* and some Sikkim based Nepali newspapers like *Hamro Prajashakti* and *Samay Dainik* are read most.

Darjeeling Times in Darjeeling and Kalimpong News from Kalimpong are the online newspapers that chronicle the details of socio-cultural, economic and political life of the Hills.

These apart, people in the Hills today make extensive use of the social media like the Facebook, Whatsapp, weChat to communicate on everyday issues. Even political leadership makes use of these social media forms to communicate to its followers.

The Gorkha Jana Mukti Morcha (GJMM), apart from mobilising the traditional print media, has been mobilising electronic media to a large extent. The GJMM has created its own homepage. The website of the Party provides information on the Party and its ideological orientation, its objectives, its organisational structure, etc. The website also carries various other informations like the Historical documents, press releases of the party, etc., among others. During the second phase of the Gorkhaland movement under the GJMM, various issues and strategies of the movement found place in the website of the Party. In the recent phase, the GJMM has resorted to social media with the extensive use of the facebook.

GJMM supremo Bimal Gurung has been taking the help of social media to spread his message on the statehood demand and at the same time clarify his stand on various steps being taken as today most of the political leaders have accepted the importance of social media. His Face book page had been out there since early 2008. He has also pointed out at several occasions that the new medium or social media is one of the most democratic medium to reach out to public and answer their queries.

Apart from the leadership spearheading the movement (GJMM), the leaders of the opposition have also resorted to electronic media for mobilisation. For instance, in the aftermath of the death of Madan Tamang, the then President of Akhil Bharatiya Gorkha League (ABGL) a weblog named Madan Manch was developed as a virtual space wherein supporters of the ABGL could come together, interact and mobilise popular support by way of mobilising sympathy towards the League leader. Therefore, as evidenced, the Gorkhaland movement in Darjeeling has experienced leadership's attempt to mobilise media- both print and electronic, in the course of the movement. Such mobilisation has contributed more often than not towards both enabling and disabling the consolidation of the support base of the movement and party organisations.

Besides, The Himalayan Beacon, a blog by Barun Roy, a citizen of Darjeeling, very often sparked debate on issues of Darjeeling, sharing knowledge about the hills, and in particular the Gorkhaland issues and conflicts. The site offered insights into the controversies between hills and the government, and also on what were the proper and viable ways of acquiring more autonomy.

Darjeelintimes.com, a regional online news media outlet with occasional print magazines, has been devoted to Darjeeling district issues. It has tried to be transparent and tries to give voice to different opinions by allowing comments on all articles. It also republishes newspaper articles from other Indian news sources.

However, at times, the media-politics interface has accentuated in Darjeeling Hills. For instance Himalaya Darpan (Nepali Daily) turned itself to be almost a mouthpiece of the GJMM with its launching of the Gorkhaland Movement since 2007. For obvious reasons, immediately the readership of the paper increased manifold in a very brief period of time, despite the approximately cent percent hike in its price with the paper carrying every news about the GJMM led movement and the appreciation of the emergent leadership. However, a sudden change was observed with the GJMM turning away from the Darpan, in which the Party banned the circulation of Himalaya Darpan from 26th January to 2nd February of 2008. The controversy of *Himalaya Darpan* spilled over to the streets as GJMM finally deciding to protest Himalaya Darpan's 'unethical journalism' by requesting people to

refrain from buying the paper. The GJMM also decided not to issue any news to the paper. They alleged that one of the journalists of the said daily was into criminal conspiracy against them along with some members of the opposition. However, on 28th January, GJMM President declared that there was no ban on Himalaya Darpan and that the so called ban had been a ‘Public outcry’ over the unethical journalism. He requested people not be overzealous over the issue but requested journalists to maintain the dignity of their profession. However, the ban continued till the 2nd of February 2008 in different forms. The ban was opposed by various newspapers, political leaders, civil society organizations and the Darjeeling Press Guild.

Similar incidents took place with other media forms during August-September 2013, and the politics of the media rocked the Hills then. The Darjeeling District officials shut down the cable television network from 8th August 2013 throughout the Darjeeling Hills. A notice was served to Darjeeling Combined Cable Network, one of the service providers. The notice read:

“As per the direction of the district magistrate, Darjeeling, the broadcast of the Combined Cable Network is hereby shut down and the control room is suspended until further order.”

The reason behind such a move on the part of administration was to restrict the local channels, viz, the *Hamro Channel*, the *Himali Channel* and the *Darjeeling Television* from portraying and propagating the news of protests. Similarly, in Kalimpong and other places in the hills, the local channels were banned from telecasting programmes of that sort. The ban was imposed by the office of the district magistrate as per the provisions of the Cable Television (Regulation) Amendment Act, 2011. The Act empowers the district collector to impose such a ban on cable operators in case of the telecast of programmes that could disturb peace and cause hatred.

There were strong protests against the shutdown of the television network. Posters and processions were seen throughout the hills demanding immediate reinstatement of television services in the hills. The Darjeeling Press Guild, particularly, communicated/ wrote to the National Human Rights Commission, National Broadcasting Association, Press Council of India, about the forcible shut down of the television network in the Darjeeling hills. However, after three days, with the district administration allowing the cable operators to telecast, the television network was reinstated but with the ban on the local channels on reasons of having no license to that end, to telecast the local news and other programmes that help propagate the movement.

4. Concluding Observations

The study revealed that in case of the Gorkhaland movement, media was mobilised by the leadership since the inception of the movement during the

colonial period in the 1920s. Both the active phases of the movement- 1980s and the post 2007 made extensive use of media for movement mobilisation. The leadership in the Gorkhaland movement resorted to electronic media for mobilization as soon as it was available before them in post-liberalized India. Obviously, because of the contributions of the media, the Gorkhaland movement which has extensively mobilised the media has emerged as a stronger movement in the region vis-à-vis the Kamtapuri movement which has, to an equal extent, failed to mobilise the media to that extent. In the recent times, however, controversies surrounding the politics over the media itself have taken ground, with strong promises of democratizing the media itself.

Media in general and the regional vernacular press has acted as agencies of socio-cultural and political transformations and contributed to the development of popular political consciousness in Darjeeling. The press/media has contributed to and/or constrained the construction and articulation of cultural, ethno- linguistic and political identity of the Gorkha Community over time.

With the dawn of liberalization and the period following it, Darjeeling underwent a dramatic transformation in terms of press and media. Electronic media, global news channels through cable television, new media with the coming in of internet facilities, and the social networking sites—all became pervasive. Each of these media forms came to be consumed increasingly by the people. This phenomenon transformed the nature of media use since 2007 with the emergence of the GJMM in Darjeeling politics and the subsequently in the period following the murder of opposition leader Madan Tamang.

However, on the other hand, it has also been found that press and media has not only become agencies of socio-cultural and popular mobilizations, but have become epicenters of politics. Increasingly, press and media have been politicized because of the differences in opinion of the political interests and the interests of the publishing houses. Whereas the political organizations tend to manipulate the media coverage to their favour through the contents and nature of news coverage, the media/press owners tend to be more driven by their profit motive, as well.

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Judiciary in India: The Dialogic Space

Ranjita Chakraborty

Abstract

The judiciary in India has been praised and blamed in the same breath, praised for being the voice of the people, upholding democracy in India at a time when faith in the other institutions responsible for upholding democracy is ebbing, and blamed for making a mark in the number of pending cases that stands to at present a scary 3.2crores figure. Critics point to this pendency as undesirable, for justice delayed is justice denied. The critics further point out that this delay is caused by the tendency of the judiciary in India to go for sensationalism and overreach, taking up cases for hearing that are sensational and in the process not responding to the civil and criminal cases that get filed in the courts. Supporters of the judiciary however, have reasons for this pendency like the strength of the judiciary and the number of cases to be heard ratio, vacancies, poor infrastructure and support system etc. This is the political argument which the present paper would not focus on but would, by a discussion of some select cases; attempt to highlight the representational role played by the judiciary in India, facilitating the creation of a space for dialogue between the different sections of the society in India.

Keywords: Judiciary, activism, rights, dialogue, Demosprudence, dialogic space, public sphere, deliberation

1. Introduction

One of the preemptive assumptions that has gained ground since the historic Golaknath case (AIR 1967 SC 1643) and the Keshavanand Bharati (AIR 1973 SC146) that the judiciary in India need not follow the traditional principles of mechanistic jurisprudence rather may engage in setting out a new direction through progressive jurisprudence. Needless to say the judicial process is imperceptibly related to the country's legal culture, social reality and political processes. The judiciary therefore has to respond to the myriad realities and demands of the society, economy and the polity thereby making space for new issues to be discussed from a range of issues and new claims to be made and recognized. Although one needs to agree to the often made statement by the political establishment during the decades of the fifties, sixties and seventies of the bygone century, that judges are often influenced by their beliefs and value-preferences while deciding on the choice of issues to be placed before the people to deliberate on and form opinions about. Nevertheless, the judiciary in the Judges' Transfer case (AIR 1982 SC 149) judgement made its intentions clear about its role when it held that any member of the public, even though may not be directly involved but may have a sufficient interest can approach the court on behalf of those who cannot move the court because of poverty, helplessness or disability or socially or economically holding a disadvantageous

position. In fact in the People's Union for Democratic Rights Vs. Union of India (AIR 1982 SC 1473) the court declared that, "The time has now come when the courts must become the courts of the poor and the struggling masses of the country.....They must be sensitized to the need of doing justice to the large masses of people to whom justice has been denied by a cruel and a heartless society."

Lord Denning, the father of judicial activism, while searching for the spirit of the British Constitution had suggested that (his suggestions have strong undertones of judicial activism) rest upon three instincts: "the instinct for justice, which he associates particularly with independence of the judges and certainty of the law; the instinct for liberty which involves freedom of discussion, (including freedom of the press) and also freedom of association (including the right to form political parties); finally, a practical instinct which leads to a balancing of rights with duties, and powers with safe guards, so that neither rights nor powers shall be exceeded or abused..." (Denning 1953). According to Prof. Sathe (2002), judicial activism can be positive as well as negative. He defines a court engaged in altering the power relations to make them more equitable is said to be positively activist and a court using its ingenuity to maintain the status quo in power relations is said to be negatively activist.

The judiciary in India has been praised and blamed in the same breath, praised for being the voice of the people, upholding democracy in India at a time when faith in the other institutions responsible for upholding democracy is ebbing, and blamed for making a mark in the number of pending cases that stands to at present a scary 3.2 crores figure approximately. Critics point to this pendency as undesirable, for justice delayed is justice denied. The critics further point out that this delay is caused by the tendency of the judiciary in India to go for sensationalism and overreach, taking up cases for hearing that are sensational and in the process not responding to the civil and criminal cases that get filed in the courts. Supporters of the judiciary however, have reasons for this pendency like the strength of the judiciary and the number of cases to be heard ratio, vacancies, poor infrastructure and support system etc. This is the political argument which the present paper would not focus on but would attempt to by a discussion of some select cases; highlight the representational role played by the judiciary in India, facilitating the creation of a space for dialogue between the different sections of the society in India.

The paper is segmented into three segments, the first section would discuss the emergence and role of Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in India especially in the domain of guarding and guaranteeing the rights of the citizens in India against any form of usurpation; the second section would delve into an examination of the argument of the paper through a survey of a few cases; the

third segment would focus on the emerging trends within the judiciary and the final segment would try to draw a conclusion to the paper.

2. Public Interest Litigation: Ally of Common Man

PIL appears to be an increasing and important resource for political and social movements. Essentially PIL consists of writ petitions by people who are not immediately affected by the grievances. The new activism of the court goes along with a sense of public awareness fostered by the press. (Baxi 1985) After the emergency not only the middle class in India was less willing to tolerate human rights violations, the judiciary too, assumed an activist role. A good example of what one might call 'epistolary jurisdiction', the fact that Supreme Court justices have gone so far as to accept mere postcards concerning infringements of fundamental rights as writ petitions. PIL has been on the rise since the early 1980s and has brought justice to the doors of those who live a hand-to-mouth existence and are illiterate and unorganized. (Prakash 1984) Judiciary's role has become crucial and significant in every sphere of governance which includes: prisoners' rights, child labour, inmates of various asylums, ensuring the rights of the poor to education, to shelter and other essential amenities, sexual harassment of women at working place, preventing corruption in public offices, accountability of public servants, and utilisation of public funds for development activities. (Bhushan 2004) The reasons for the increasing concern of Court in governance arenas are varied and complex but one major factor has been failure of implementing agencies to discharge their Constitutional and Statutory duties. (Baxi 1985) This has prompted civil society groups and the people to approach the Courts, particularly the Supreme Court, for suitable remedies. Interestingly, the Court has also responded in a pro-active manner to address different governance problems. (Sathe 1998)

The judiciary has thus become a potential ally of individual citizens and of action groups insisting on better performance of state institutions. It has become a byword for judicial involvement in social, political and economic affairs, with a range so wide that anything under the sun is covered under the rubric of PIL (Singh 1992). PIL thus provides an important forum for agents of civil society to stake their claims. It has turned the judiciary into an arena in which government lawlessness and malfunctioning are debated, providing public exposure and to a certain extent relief for frustrated and even traumatized citizens.

Critics of judicial activism say that the courts usurp functions allotted to the other organs of government. On the other hand, defenders of judicial activism assert that the courts merely perform their legitimate function. According to Mr. Justice A. H. Ahmadi, the former Chief Justice of India, judicial activism is a necessary adjunct of the judicial function because the protection of public interest, as opposed to private interest, is the main concern.

(Ahmadi, 1996) Understanding of judicial activism depends on their conception of the proper role of a constitutional court in a democracy. Those who conceive the role of a constitutional court narrowly, as restricted to mere application of the pre-existing legal rules to the given situation, tend to equate even a liberal or dynamic interpretation of a statute with activism. Those who conceive a wider role for a constitutional court, expecting it to both provide meaning to various open textured expressions in a written constitution and apply new meaning as required by the changing times, usually consider judicial activism not as an aberration, but as a normal judicial function. (Sathe, 2001)

Prof. Upendra Baxi describes Indian judicial activism either as reactionary judicial activism or as progressive judicial activism. He cites the Nehruvian era activism on issues of land reform and right to property and the pro-emergency activism typified in Shiv Kant Shukla as manifestation of reactionary judicial activism. On the other hand, he describes Golak Nath and Kesavananda as the beginning of progressive judicial activism. 34 According to Baxi, 'Progressive judicial activism' extends the frontiers of that which is judicially doable in time and place, both in terms of political and social transformation. (cited in Sathe 2002)

Even more crucial remains the constitutional space provided by the SCI and High Courts for the practices of human rights and social movement activism; this judicial creation of space-time for activism has contributed to the growth of staying power of civil society interventions against the sovereign prowess of the Indian state which transforms itself from the 'post' to the 'neo' colonial formation, the latter so acutely described by Kwame Nkrumah as 'power without responsibility, and exploitation without redress.' (Baxi, 2010 b)

3. Creation of a Dialogue through PIL in India

The judiciary in India has utilised the new found tool of PIL to enter into new spheres of governance and opened up new areas for dialogue and deliberation. A diverse range of issues starting from environment to the claims of the silent voices in the society, the courts in India had been instrumental in initiating a dialogue between the various actors. Following are a series of cases that highlight the veracity of the argument that the court in India has acquired a representational role in the process of being an activist.

Case-1

The Stockholm Conference on Human Environment and growing awareness of the environmental crises in the country, India has amended its Constitution and added direct provisions for protection of environment. The Constitution (Forty-Second Amendment) Act, 1976 has made it a fundamental duty to protect and improve the natural environment. Article 48-A states that the state shall endeavor to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard forests and wildlife of the country. Corresponding to the obligation imposed on

the state, Article 51 A (g), which occurs in Part IV (A) of the Constitution dealing with Fundamental Duties, casts a duty on every citizen of India. Article 51-A (g) provides that it shall be the duty of every citizen of India to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wildlife and to have compassion for living creature. In the following years, the enactment of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act of 1974 has given the statute book its first real foundation for environmental protection. Other major enactments that have followed are the Forest Conservation Act (1981), the Air Prevention and Control of Pollution Act (1986), the Environmental Protection Act (1986), the National Environment Tribunal Act (1995), the National Environment Appellate Act (1997) and the Biodiversity Protection Act (2002). (Upadhyay & Upadhyay 2002) In this way, India has enacted a range of regulatory instruments to preserve and protect its natural resources. Unfortunately, the plethora of such enactments and the Constitutional provisions has not resulted in preventing environmental degradation in the country. Noticeably, the last two decades have been a period of rapid degradation in the Indian environment. The enactment of a number of laws both by the Central and State governments relating to environment has not made much headway in controlling the environmental degradation process and the laws, by and large, have remained mismanaged, mis-administered and unenforced. (Sahu 2008) Against this the judiciary engaged in environmental jurisprudence and through verdicts on various cases actually played the role of a communicator, an educator to the society , a voice of the future generations for whom we need to protect the environment. Linking up environment with the right to life, the judiciary in India brought the issue of environment with the discourse of the claims made by the individuals.

In the realm of environmental protection many of the leading decisions have been given in action brought about by the renowned environmentalist M.C. Mehta. His petitions have resulted in orders placing strict liability for the leak of oleum gas from a factory in New Delhi (M.C. Mehta vs. Union of India 1987). Directions to check pollution in and around the Ganges river (M.C. Mehta vs. Union of India, 1988). The relocation of hazardous industries from the municipal limits of Delhi (1996) The initially criticized verdict delivered (M.C. Mehta vs Union of India, 1998) to shift to CNG buses (government) then to auto rickshaws finally helped to check vehicular air pollution in New Delhi. The constitution of Green Bench by the Supreme Court in 1996 following the cases and the debate that followed on environmental protection and countering ecological degradation, fallout of the industry based mode of development thinking and the rapid urbanization and increasing human encroachment of the green belts of India. Supreme Court in India while hearing the cases was successful in creation of a dialogue between the *brown* thinkers and the *green* thinkers and was successful in ensuring a shift in government policy towards environmental concern and justice.

Case-2

The movement to repeal Section 377 was initiated by AIDS Bhedbhav Virodhi Andolan in 1991. Their historic publication *Less than Gay: A Citizen's Report* spelled out the problems with 377 and asked for its repeal. A 1996 article in *Economic and Political Weekly* by Vimal Balasubrahmanyam titled 'Gay Rights In India' chronicles this early history. As the case prolonged over the years, it was revived in the next decade, led by the Naz Foundation (India) Trust, an activist group, which filed public interest litigation in the Delhi High Court in 2001, seeking legalisation of homosexual intercourse between consenting adults. (*Naz Foundation vs. NCT Delhi, 2001*) The Naz Foundation worked with a legal team from the Lawyers Collective to engage in court. In 2003, the Delhi High Court refused to consider a petition regarding the legality of the law, saying that the petitioners had no locus standi in the matter. Since nobody had been prosecuted in the recent past under this section it seemed unlikely that the section would be struck down as illegal by the Delhi High Court in the absence of a petitioner with standing. Naz Foundation appealed to the Supreme Court against the decision of the High Court to dismiss the petition on technical grounds. The Supreme Court decided that Naz Foundation had the standing to file a PIL in this case and sent the case back to the Delhi High Court to reconsider it on merit. Subsequently, there was a significant intervention in the case by a Delhi-based coalition of LGBT, women's and human rights activists called 'Voices Against 377', which supported the demand to 'read down' section 377 to exclude adult consensual sex from within its purview.

In May 2008, the case came up for hearing in the Delhi High Court, but the Government was undecided on its position, with The Ministry of Home Affairs maintaining a contradictory position to that of The Ministry of Health on the issue of enforcement of Section 377 with respect to homosexuality. On 7 November 2008, the seven-year-old petition finished hearings. The Indian Health Ministry supported this petition, while the Home Ministry opposed such a move. On 12 June 2009, India's new law minister Veerappa Moily agreed that Section 377 might be outdated.

Eventually, in a historic judgement delivered on 2 Jul 2009, Delhi High Court overturned the 150-year-old section, legalising consensual homosexual activities between adults. (*Naz Foundation vs NCT Delhi, 2001*) The essence of the section goes against the fundamental right of human citizens, stated the high court while striking it down. In a 105-page judgement, a bench of Chief Justice Ajit Prakash Shah and Justice S Muralidhar said that if not amended, section 377 of the IPC would violate Article 14 of the Indian constitution, which states that every citizen has equal opportunity of life and is equal before law.

The two judge bench went on to hold that:

“If there is one constitutional tenet that can be said to be underlying theme of the Indian Constitution, it is that of 'inclusiveness'. This Court believes

that Indian Constitution reflects this value deeply ingrained in Indian society, nurtured over several generations. The inclusiveness that Indian society traditionally displayed, literally in every aspect of life, is manifest in recognizing a role in society for everyone. Those perceived by the majority as "deviants" or 'different' are not on that score excluded or ostracised.

Where society can display inclusiveness and understanding, such persons can be assured of a life of dignity and non-discrimination. This was the 'spirit behind the Resolution' of which Nehru spoke so passionately. In our view, Indian Constitutional law does not permit the statutory criminal law to be held captive by the popular misconceptions of who the LGBTs are. It cannot be forgotten that discrimination is antithesis of equality and that it is the recognition of equality which will foster the dignity of every individual." (Naz Foundation vs NCT Delhi, WP(C) No.7455/2001, para 130 and 131.) The court stated that the judgement would hold until Parliament chose to amend the law.

A batch of appeals was filed with the Supreme Court, challenging the Delhi High Court judgment. On 27 March 2012, the Supreme Court reserved verdict on these. After initially opposing the judgment, the Attorney General G. E. Vahanvati decided not to file any appeal against the Delhi High Court's verdict, stating, "insofar as [Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code] criminalises consensual sexual acts of adults in private [before it was struck down by the High Court] was imposed upon Indian society due to the moral views of the British rulers."ⁱ

On 11 December 2013, the Supreme Court of India ruled homosexuality to be a criminal offence setting aside the 2009 judgement given by the Delhi High Court. In its judgment the Supreme court bench of justices G. S. Singhvi and S. J. Mukhopadhaya stated —

"In view of the above discussion, we hold that Section 377 IPC does not suffer from the vice of unconstitutionality and the declaration made by the Division Bench of the High court is legally unsustainable."ⁱⁱ

The bench of justices G. S. Singhvi and S. J. Mukhopadhaya however noted that the Parliaments should debate and decide on the matter. This followed a series of debate and demonstrations by the LGBT population. The central government filed a review petition on 21 December 2013. In its review petition the Centre said: "The judgment suffers from errors apparent on the face of the record, and is contrary to well-established principles of law laid down by the apex Court enunciating the width and ambit of Fundamental Rights under Articles 14, 15 and 21 of the Constitution." The IPC, when enacted in 1860, was justified; but with the passage of time it had become arbitrary and unreasonable, the petition added.ⁱⁱⁱ

Naz Foundation has also filed a review petition against the Supreme Court order on Section 377. [On January 28, 2014 Supreme Court dismissed the

review Petition filed by Central Government, NGO Naz Foundation and several others, against its December 11 verdict on Section 377 of IPC.

This issue that people especially the middle class population in India wants to keep it under wraps as it doesn't fit in with their binary notion of gender as male and female and sexual orientation specifically heterosexual considered as '*normal*' faced a challenge from those ,especially the coalition of LGBT, women's and human's rights activists, who are by now politically strong with their strong networks (both nationally and internationally), coupled with the use of social media that has made the people find support quickly and no longer isolated and scared of social persecution. In fact the recognition of it as normal has been boosted up with many of them belonging to the upper echelons of the society coming out open on their sexual orientations have given a strong support to engaging in a dialogic process for recognition of the demand for doing away with Sec377.

Case-3

Only two sexes – male and female – are recognised in Indian civil law. (Sood 2010) The Peoples' Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) Report on 'Human Rights Violations against the Transgender Community' (2003) argues, turns the transgender status of hijras into that of a legal non-entity.

Hijra (Hijras are biological males who reject their 'masculine' identity in due course of time to identify either as women, or “not-men”, or “in-between man and woman”, or “neither man nor woman”. Hijras can be considered as the western equivalent of transgender/transsexual (male-to-female) persons but Hijras have a long tradition/culture and have strong social ties formalized through a ritual called “reet” (becoming a member of Hijra community). There are regional variations in the use of terms referred to Hijras. For example, Kinnars (Delhi) and Aravanis / Thirunangai (Tamil Nadu). Hijras / TG communities have been excluded from effectively participating in social and cultural life; economy; and politics and decision-making processes. A primary reason (and consequence) of the exclusion is the lack of (or ambiguity in) legal recognition of the gender status of hijras and other transgender people. It is a key barrier that often prevent them in exercising their rights related to marriage with a person of their desired gender, child adoption, inheritance, wills and trusts, employment, and access to public and private health services, and access to and use of social welfare and health insurance schemes. (Chakrapani & Narain 2012) The Election Commission way back in 2014 Lok Sabha Elections had introduced the option of 'other' in the voter's identity card and indicated that 'hijras' can vote or contest as 'other'. However, the legal validity of this executive order on the right to contest is not clear. Hijras had contested elections in the past. It has been documented that the victory of a transgender woman who contested in an election was overturned since that person contested in a seat reserved for women and according to the judgment of the Madhya

Pradesh High Court (*Kamla Jaan v. Sadik Ali*, Civil Revision Petition No 1294 of 2002) the person was not a woman but a “hijra”. However, there have been other documented cases of transgender persons contesting elections as women.

The Naz decision decriminalizing Sec 377 was instrumental in the extension of the rights to the hijra/transgender community as well. What the *Naz* decision did was to apply the understanding of Constitutional rights to a minority which had never been deemed worthy of rights protection or judicial consideration. (Chakrapani & Narain 2012) In fact the judges were aware of the condition of the transgender community, when in the *Naz* judgement itself the judges pointed out, “During Colonial period in India, eunuchs (hijras) were criminalised by virtue of their identity. The Criminal Tribes Act, 1871 was enacted by the British in an effort to police those tribes and communities who 'were addicted to the systematic commission of non-bailable offences.' These communities and tribes were deemed criminal by their identity, and mere belonging to one of those communities rendered the individual criminal. In 1897, this Act was amended to include eunuchs..... While this Act has been repealed, the attachment of criminality to the hijra community still continues.” (*Naz Foundation v. NCT Delhi*, Para 50) (for detailed analysis see Siddharth Narrain, *Crystallizing Queer Politics: The Naz Foundation Case and its Implications for India's Transgender Communities*, 2 *NUJS L. Rev.* (2009) 455.)

In Karnataka, the State Legal Services Authority, then headed by Justice Manjula Chellur had organised workshops on the issues of transgender people and the law in Belgaum, Gulbarga, Shimoga and Bangalore. This initiative was part of a larger national programme spearheaded by the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) to bring this issue in the judicial mainstream. Justice Altamas Kabir, who then headed NALSA has publicly stated that he has proposed an amendment to a bill that is being discussed around extending adoption rights to various religious groups on the lines of the Special Marriage Act, to also include provisions that will enable transgender persons to legally adopt. (Speech by Justice Altamas Kabir, “Trans genders and the Law Seminar”, organised by Karnataka State Legal Services Authority and Karnataka High Court Legal Services Committee, Bangalore, October 2011) Subsequently NALSA filed a PIL on behalf of the Transgender community in the Supreme Court. In relation to NALSA's petition, the Supreme Court in its order dated October 1, 2012, has observed:

“This petition has been filed by National Legal Services Authority to recognise and grant Trans genders a legal status as a third gender and to recognise their rights under Articles 14, 15, 16 and 21 of the Constitution of India. Petitioner also seeks direction to the Union of India and State Governments to grant equal protection and rights to Trans genders as available to males and females of this country. The question involved is of considerable

public importance which calls for an authoritative pronouncement which will have far reaching consequence to Transgender community.”

A Bench of Justices K.S. Radhakrishnan and A.K. Sikri, on April 14, 2014, in separate but concurrent judgments, said “eunuchs, apart from the binary gender, be treated as a “third gender” for the purpose of safeguarding their rights under our Constitution and the laws made by Parliament and the State Legislature.” The ruling came on a petition filed by the National Legal Services Authority. The Bench directed the Centre and States to take steps to treat them as socially and educationally backward classes and extend reservation for admission in educational institutions and for public appointments. The Bench said “recognition of trans genders as a third gender is not a social or medical issue but a human rights issue. Trans genders are also citizens of India. The spirit of the Constitution is to provide equal opportunity to every citizen to grow and attain their potential, irrespective of caste, religion or gender.^{iv}

By virtue of this verdict, all identity documents, including a birth certificate, passport, ration card and driving license would recognise the third gender. The Bench said gender identification is essential. It is only with this recognition that many rights such as the right to vote, own property and marry will be meaningful.

In September 2014, the centre sought a clarification from the court on whether lesbians, gays and bisexuals qualify as “third gender”. “The centre has delayed implementation of the 2014 ruling and the clarification is just to delay the process,” said senior advocate Anand Grover, who had earlier represented transgender activists in the case. The court had also clarified in 2014 that transgender does not include gays, lesbians and bisexuals. The court had, in its earlier verdict, directed all governments to take steps to resolve problems such as fear, shame, social pressure, depression and social stigma faced by trans genders.

Case-4

The Shah Bano judgement in 1985, whereby the Supreme Court directed the husband to pay maintenance to the petitioner who was old and was incapable to support herself. This created a lot of debate among the people. Muslim Women’s (Right on Divorce) act, 1986, was passed by Parliament in response to the protest lodged by Muslims against the Shah Bano decision. This was indeed a retrograde step. It was also disliked by many forward-looking Muslims. Daniel Latifi, a senior advocate of the Supreme Court and a scholar of Muslim law, filed a writ petition challenging the validity of the Muslim Women’s Act. The petition came up for a hearing in the year 2001 and was finally decided upon on 28 September 2001. (*Daniel Latifi v. Union of India* (2001) 7 SCC 740. s) Section 3(1)(a) of the Muslim Women’s Act provided that a divorced woman was entitled to a reasonable and fair provision and

maintenance to be made and paid to her within the period of iddat by her former husband. It was held that a divorced Muslim woman was entitled to a fair and reasonable provision for the future extending beyond the period of iddat. The High Courts of Gujarat, Kerala, Madras, Bombay and Punjab confirmed the above interpretation. The High Courts of Andhra Pradesh, Calcutta, Madhya Pradesh, and Delhi took the opposite view and held that the husband's liability would end after providing maintenance for the period of iddat. The Supreme Court had before it two plausible interpretations which the High Courts had taken while construing Section. 3 (1) (a) of the Act. Kapila Hingorani and Indira Jaising appearing for the petitioner argued that the act was un-Islamic, unconstitutional and had the potential of suffocating the Muslim women. According to them, it undermined the secular character which was the basic feature of the Constitution and there was no rhyme or reason to deprive the Muslim women of the applicability of the provisions of Section 125 Cr.Pc. and therefore it violated Articles 14 & 21 of the Constitution. By excluding Muslim women from the benefits of Section 125 Cr.P.C, act discriminated between women and women on the ground of religion, it was said.

Mr. Y.H. Muchhala, appearing on behalf of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board submitted that the main objective of the Act was to undo *Shah Bano case...* He contended that the aim of the Act was not to punish the husband but avoid vagrancy and, in that context, the provisions contained in Section 4 making other relations who were potential heirs or the Wakf Board liable were good enough. He insisted that the court would have to bear in mind the social ethos of the Muslims and impugned Act was consistent with law and justice. He further contended that Parliament had enacted the impugned Act respecting the personal law of the Muslims and that itself was a legitimate basis for making the differentiation. A separate law for a community on the basis of personal law applicable to such community could not be held to be discriminatory.

Dr. A.M. Singhvi, appearing for the National Commission on Women, submitted that the interpretation placed by the decisions of the High Courts of Gujarat, Bombay, and Kerala, and the minority view of the High Court of Andhra Pradesh should be accepted and; if such interpretation was accepted, the; impugned act would remain constitutionally valid.

The Supreme Court in a 5 judges bench (comprising of Justice Rajendra Baby, Justice Patnaik G.B., Justice Mohapatra D.P. Justice Doraisway and Justice Shivraj Patil) decision held that only if section 3(1) (a) was interpreted so as to oblige the husband to pay maintenance and make provision for the future within the period of iddat, the Act would be saved from the infirmity arising from the inconsistency with Articles 14, 15 and 21 of the Constitution.

The Court used its power of interpretation in the Daniel Latifi case in 2001 and the Shamima Farooqui vs. Shahid Khan, 2015, in an intelligent

manner thereby in a way upheld the Supreme Court judgement in the Shah Bano case. Whereas the All India Muslim Personal Law Board stood by the aforementioned Act of 1986 but the community had started to feel the ripples of the need for deliberation and dialogue. The All India Shia Personal Law Board supported the stand of the Court opposing the position taken by the All India Muslim Personal Law Board. The Muslim women went ahead and the All India Muslim Women's Personal Law Board (AIMWPLB) an organisation was constituted in 2005 to adopt strategies for the protection and continued applicability of Muslim Personal Law in India, with a particular focus on women's issues, including marriage, divorce and other legal rights. The AIMWPLB consists of a 30-person executive board and is led by president Shaista Ambar. The AIMWPLB in March 2008 it released a "Sharai Nikahnama" which sought to offer India's Muslim women a religiously sanctioned alternative to conventional Islamic marriage contracts.

In January 2007, the Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan or BMMA (Indian Muslim Women's Movement) was formed. It is an autonomous, secular, rights-based mass organization led by Zakia Soman which fights for the citizenship rights of the Muslims in India. It released a draft on June 23, 2014, 'Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act' recommending that polygamy be made illegal in Muslim Personal Law of India.^v

The age-old debate of whether the triple-talaq system in Indian Muslim personal law provides any safeguard for women in arbitrary divorce reached a new height recently as the Indian Supreme Court issued a suo moto ruling to test the legal validity of the system, resulted in mixed reactions from different quarters of the country's Muslim community.

This movement, the seeds of which could be said to have been rightly sown in 1985 Shah Bano judgement, has generated a series of debate within the community itself and has brought the silent voices, the Muslim women now to the forefront who are insisting on a change in the Muslim personal law and it is the Court that has registered itself as the platform for a dialogue and debates, instead of the Parliament and the Legislatures which should have had been the fora for discussion.

Case 4

The National Family Health Survey (NFHS) in 2005-06 posed questions to over 80,000 women between the ages of 15 and 49, on sexual violence by husbands and other men. Sensitive questions such as "did your husband ever physically force you to have sexual intercourse with him even when you did not want to?" are difficult to ask in a survey; hence informed consent for the violence module was obtained twice, and trained interviewers were given strict instructions to ensure complete privacy of the respondents. Data show that 8.5 per cent of the surveyed women (one in 12) said they had experienced sexual violence in their lifetime. Almost 93 per cent of these

women said that they had been sexually abused by their current or former husbands, while only 1 per cent said that they had been sexually abused by a stranger. In the NFHS survey, when the women were asked if wife beating is justified, 54 per cent said they believed it was.

The debate on marital rape in India echoes arguments that go back more than 125 years ago to the Phulmani case when an 11-year-old Bengali girl died after being brutally raped by her 35-year-old husband. The colonial government then proposed to increase the age of consent for sexual intercourse for a girl from 10 to 12 years. But some of India's most prominent leaders opposed the measure, and the Age of Consent Act was passed only in 1891, after much acrimony and argument.

As recommended by the Justice Verma Committee in 2013, the committee argued that the "relationship between the accused and the complainant is not relevant to the inquiry into whether the complainant consented to the sexual activity". The government, then led by the Congress party, had rejected this proposal. A panel of lawmakers who opposed the move at the time argued it had "the potential of destroying the institution of marriage." (Verma Committee, 2013)

"If marital rape is brought under the law, the entire family system will be under great stress," a report submitted by lawmakers to Parliament had said in 2013. The government eventually passed a new sexual-assault law, which did not criminalize marital rape.

It would be erroneous to conclude that the problem can be solved merely by removing the marital rape exception. A much bigger challenge is to change the patriarchal social norms. The present controversy was stirred when Rajya Sabha MP Kanimozhi asked the government if it plans to bring an "amending bill to the IPC to remove the exception of marital rape", to which the Minister of State for Home Affairs Haribhai Parathibhai Chaudhary reply was that the government had no plans to do so, as marriage is a sacred institution in India.vi

Clearly, the law alone cannot change mindsets. However, opening up a debate can definitely create a space for dialogue and pave the way for '*demosprudence*'

4. Judiciary and the Dialogic Space

The struggle for a democratic public sphere is waged in all arenas of public life. Following Craig Calhoun (1993:273), 'public sphere' is here taken to mean as 'an arena of deliberate exchange in which rational critical arguments rather than mere inherited ideals or personal status could determine agreements and actions'. Real dialogue is possible and can be precursor to action, in an ideal public sphere that happens when private people using their own critical

reason come together to create a public—a place and a practice in which people as citizens may address together issues of political and social concern in a way that gives access to all those with interest. For Jurgen Habermas (1989) the idea of democratic decision-making is based on an assumption that, through communicative action or communication itself, people establish a sphere of commonly shared meanings in which to transact politically. This is the basis on which real democratic participation can take place. People should be informed of all relevant alternatives when they make their choices. Very often this is considered the task of the mass media. In contrast to Habermasian influenced deliberative theory, where the medium of language itself contains the transformative possibilities “in between” two interlocutors, properly oriented towards reaching an understanding. Martin Buber’s Dialogic theory, I-Thou (1923 translated in English in 1937) as a normative foundation for democratic politics based in citizen management, we get an account of the phenomenon of turning towards one another that explains our being opened up to transformation through co-participation with this particular other, rather than remove the transformative potential to the medium of language used correctly. The turning towards an other as ‘thou’ opens up a space ---the presence of other becomes a catalyst for change. People are more open to transformation when confronted directly with the presence of the other.

Generally speaking the viability of a liberal democracy depends on a sense of trust stemming from the accessibility and accountability of government agencies to civil society in a sufficiently transparent public sphere. In this context, the judiciary is of particular relevance as the branch of government safe guarding constitution, law and rules of democratic conduct. It has to serve as much to check and balance the coercive powers of the state as to resolve disputes among citizens. In a democratic order, legitimacy means that decisions are not only made, but also supported, understood and accepted by both the populace and decision makers themselves. The public sphere, the analytic category between the State and the civil society gives legitimacy to democracy and provides a stage for governance within society. Judiciary performs the role of a conduit and opinion maker. It opens up the space for a dialogue between the state and the civil society and the different segments within civil society, on issues that matter to both the state and the citizenry. Stressing on the creation of space for dialogue, Fletcher (1994) points out that, “Politics is too important to be left to politicians-----or the political scientists.” Godden’s (1998) points out towards the need for the ‘democratization of democracy’. Upward democratization through the expansion of the role of public sphere towards greater openness and transparency, with the state professing a cosmopolitan outlook and downward democratization through the renewal of civil society including the protection of the local public sphere.

Dialogic democracy creates forms of social interchange which can contribute substantially to the reconstruction of social solidarity “The potential

for dialogic democracy is instead carried in the spread of social reflexivity as a condition both of day to day activities and the persistence of larger forms of collective organization” (Giddens 1994) It is possible that no consensus is achieved though, mutual tolerance is required. Therefore, dialogic democracy starts according to Giddens, in opposition to fundamentalism to all types. In fact the presence of other may serve as a catalyst for change. The normative possibilities inherent in deliberation are connected to the possibility of legitimate personal transformation. A process of deliberation (which produces such changes) makes democracy better—more fair, more just. The core of the deliberative theory places the possibility for transformation squarely on the work that the process of rational communication can accomplish. It is through the nature of communication itself, that is, through rational exchange (or something approximating it) that we can improve democracy by providing a legitimate mechanism for transforming opinions and wills of citizens towards these better ends.

Taking a cue from the above discussion, one can argue that the practice of creating a space and environment for dialogue in spheres of governance issues that touch human lives would facilitate progression and freedom. Alexander Bickel was the first to consider that the judiciary had a role to play in initiating a dialogue and become educators by developing principles that would have acceptance in the foreseeable future. The Courts in his opinion should be a leader of opinion not a mere register of it. (Bickel 1962) In recent years, “dialogue” has become an increasingly ubiquitous metaphor within constitutional theory. It is most commonly used to describe the nature of interactions between courts and the political branches of government in the area of constitutional decision making, particularly in relation to the interpretation of constitutional rights. Dialogue theories emphasize that the judiciary does not (as an empirical matter) or should not (as a normative matter) have a monopoly on constitutional interpretation. Rather, when exercising the power of judicial review, judges engage in an interactive, interconnected and dialectical conversation about constitutional meaning. (Bateup 2006 pp 1109-1180)

Theories of constitutional dialogue offer an alternative way of filling the legitimacy lacunae, because if the political branches of government and the people are able to respond to judicial decisions in a dialogic fashion, the force of the counter majoritaria difficulty is overcome, or at the very least, greatly attenuated. (Dorf 2003) Infact, Friedman (2009) points out that the Court and the public not only speak to one another, they *listen* to each other, with the Court deferring to the public when they disagree. Public ambivalence although, grants the Court some latitude, but there are boundaries that it may not cross, where the Constitution’s meaning is pushed beyond the public understanding.

‘Demosprudence’ is an emergent and fully contested term of art in US constitutional theory. This rubric at last takes more seriously the finite yet

complex ‘dialogic relationship between the courts and the people’ (Guinier, 2008). As happens always with hegemonic modes of production of constitutional knowledge, the notion remains entirely US-centric. Its proponents see *no* comparative advantage in making any reference to the imagination and experience of transformative constitution-making and development in the Global South (Baxi, 2001, Baxi, 1989; see also Ray, 2010.) Nevertheless, the discussions carried on above and the examples which has proved that the emerging trends visible in the domain of constitution making with the judiciary engaging in as an initiator and a facilitator in the dialogic process as well as the complex dialogic relationship that the judiciary in India has engaged in has definitely proved to be transformative in constitution making and creation of a progressive democracy.

What extended the possibilities of high judicial activism in India, as opposed to creating it, (Rudolph and Rudolph, 2001; Ruparelia 2013), was the diffusion of power that marked India’s democratic politics after 1989. It had many distinct causes; its ramifications were many too. The increasing electoral participation of historically subordinate groups, who began to vote in higher numbers relative to more privileged sections and express their grievances through vernacular conceptions of social justice, undermined the alignments and broadened the discourses that had previously configured the party system. The proliferation of new state-based parties, often representing lower-caste groups and peripheral regions, diminished the relative electoral power of national political formations. High electoral volatility and minority coalition governments ensued. And economic liberalization devolved power to the states, created new arenas of prosperity, and empowered the rise of the corporate capitalist class, whose values, beliefs, and desires acquired social legitimacy amongst the aspiring middle classes of metropolitan India. Yet these reforms also engendered growing social inequalities across classes, sectors and regions and produced new opportunities for rent-seeking and corruption, feeding the avarice of an ever more assertive corporate sector and mendacious political class. In short, the simultaneous fragmentation of power in the electoral system, democratization of status in the social order, and concentration of wealth in the economy created unprecedented political uncertainty.

These massive changes enabled the apex judiciary to expand its purview and deepen its institutional self-confidence vis-à-vis parliament and government. On the one hand, its growing power in the early 1990s was a deliberate concession by party elites, keen to “to legitimize unpopular decisions that they did not have the courage to take and to avoid taking decisions that were likely to incur unpopularity.” As a result, the political establishment itself began to refer more questions to the Court. (Rudolph & Rudolph 2001)

There is another side of the story as well. Often the question of whether the courts should have the power to decide issues of policy has always evoked a

vehement debate. Judicial activism has thus become a subject of controversy in India. (Sathe, 1997, p 441) Recent and past attempts to hinder the power of the courts, as well as access to the courts, included indirect methods of disciplining the judiciary, such as supersession of the judges (Palkiwala, 1973) and transfers of inconvenient judges. (Seervai, 1978). Equally troubling is the possibility of enforceability of court orders, that appears to be questionable in many instances (Delhi Janwadi 1997, EPW 1996, Kishwar 1994, Sivaramayya 1993) Dealing with environmental matters, Banerji and Martin (1997) claim that the Supreme Court does not have adequate knowledge and ends up giving unrealistic orders. The credibility of the judges' depends wholly on the conviction that the relief granted by the Supreme Court is enforceable (Agrawal 1985:34) the efficiency of PIL is further undermined by the fact that court administrations like other bureaucracies in India do not have the reputation of being fast and efficient (Kishwar 1994). PIL may drag on for years. For petitioners this is highly frustrating, particularly if the court is far away. Scholars like Marc Galanter (1989) observe that PIL tends merely to react to episodic cases of outrage. It still depends largely on initiatives of classes because poverty, lack of literacy and scarce legal knowledge deprive oppressed strata of Indian society of access to the courts. Sivaramayya (1993: p296) even concludes that PIL appears to be more a 'sedative' than a 'cure' and that its 'effectiveness' is 'limited to the judicial arena'. Oliver Mendelson (1981) too, concludes the same. Conrad (1995) warns the judiciary of running the risk of overburdening itself by taking up an array of politically sensitive issues. This is particularly true in the context of the shortage of manpower within the judiciary as is the present state of the judiciary in India.

However, judicial activism has not cowed down under pressure. The judiciary India has internalized the importance of laying down clear normative standards which drive social transformation. A number of distinctive innovative methods are identifiable, each of which is novel and in some cases contrary to the traditional legalistic understanding of the judicial functions. (Cassels 1989) Its interventions through strategies such as the expansion of Art 21 and the use of innovative remedies in PIL cases has actually expanded the scope and efficacy of constitutional rights by applying them in previously unenumerated settings. Furthermore, the courts allow groups and interests with unequal bargaining power in the political sphere to present their case in an environment of due deliberation. Not just within the corridors of court the deliberation and dialogue extends out within the greater social milieu. Moreover, when the Courts take cognizance via PIL of activist petitioners, and as much time they take to finally decide on contestations, they also bestow on them a measure of immunity from the repressive powers of the local political state. This aspect is often unfortunately obscured by studies engaging judicial outcomes concerning contested developmentalist projects (Baxi 2010b).

5. Conclusion

Dialogue facilitates a creative partnership between active citizens and activist justices (see Sathe, 2002; Baxi, 2001). New human rights norms and standards not explicitly envisaged by the first constitution stand judicially invented such as the right to privacy and dignity, the combined reading of which gives us the recent Delhi High Court *Naz Foundation* decision by Chief Justice A.P. Shah and Justice Muralidhar, which declares as unconstitutional the criminalization of the right to sexual orientation and conduct among consenting adults. (Baxi 2010) Further, the SCI brings back into the realm of the constitutional state (rights?) features often declared to be unsuitable by the emerging political state (such as the right to speedy trial, bail, compensation for injurious state action or conduct). This is scarcely an occasion to narrate the achievements any further (see Baxi, 2001, Fredman, 2008).

However, sceptics point to the not so celebratory aspects to the trend posing certain questions that tend to problematize the claim of the commentators about the activist and facilitation role of the judiciary. The questions that are posed are many and to start with, the quality of discourse and the quantity of participation, it is argued, is dependent on the nature of mediation. Social relations and our individual social identities are constructed in a process of mediation. This could often result in two problems, as our communication stands mediated, the access is dependent on resources one has in one's disposal be it money or influence to critically influence the mediation and thereby the dialogue itself; and, second, content of communication and the subject of debate also stands mediated. The selection of subject for debate and the content of communication is not a free exercise but are dependent on the politics centering on the issue. The environment—social and economic, social and political and the composition of the groups involved in the dialogue as well as the issue enjoying the support of the powerful lobby at a particular point of time determines the success of the dialogue or the issue successful in entering the dialogic fray.

When talking about the public sphere that is impregnated with vast potential of freedom and a serves to be an arena that can make the state accountable through discussions, Fraser (1992) points out the requirement of the elimination of inequality as a precondition to effective discourse and communication in order to remove the exclusionary tendencies. Feminist research especially in the seminal studies by Joan Landes, Mary Ryan, and Geoff Eley has shown how that the public sphere is not so an ideal space. Exclusions due to inequalities affect deliberation. Moreover as, Jane Mansbridge, in *Feminism and Democracy* (1990) points out, deliberation can serve as a mask for domination not only concerning gender but also other kinds of unequal relations. Although doubts remain with its velocity but once the participants become more aware of their real interests, even when those

interests turn out to conflict dialogue and deliberation would become more effective.

Not wishing way the doubts, it is a fact that, PILs (and the judiciary which has often been instrumental in picking up issues for deliberation in the form of admitting PILs) in India have become instruments to initiate dialogue in those areas where neither the political establishment nor the society in general either consider it as not so important and exhibit a casual ignorance (as could be seen in matters of environment, the argument can be substantiated by the need to launch a Swacch Bharat Abhiyan in the 21st century) or the apathy towards certain individuals and their claims (for example the claims of the transgender community and the LGBT people) or the patriarchal mindset that gets reflected on issues related to women within the private sphere (the issue of marital rape) or the careful bypassing of the state to initiate reform in the personal laws of minority communities.

In 1943, Ambedkar regretted that “political reform” had taken precedence over “social reform”. Despite this, he continued to seek both legal and social changes to improve the lot of India’s Dalits and women. Today, what is getting priority is economic reform, but we would do well to remember Ambedkar’s words from the same address: “Rights are protected not by law but by the social and moral conscience of society... if fundamental rights are opposed by the community, no Law, no Parliament, no judiciary, can guarantee them in the real sense of the word”. To quote Epp (1998) “rights are not gifts: they are won through concerted collective action arising from both a vibrant civil society and public subsidy...through an interaction between supportive judges and the support structure for rights-advocacy litigation. The independence and freedom of civil society is the basis for a democratic public sphere in which matters of policy can be openly and critically debated—not only in parliaments and legislative assemblies, but also in the media, academia, non-governmental organizations, clubs, neighbourhood get-togethers, marketplaces and even bar-rooms. (Dambowski 2001:13) In the words of Dahrendorf (1996:237), Civil society describes the associations in which we conduct our lives, and which owe their existence to our needs and initiatives rather than to the State. Some of these associations are highly deliberate and sometimes short-lived like sports clubs or political parties. Others are founded in history and have a very long life, like churches or universities. Still others are the places in which we work and live—enterprises, local communities. The family is an element of civil society. The criss-crossing network of such associations—their creative chaos as one might be tempted to say—makes up the reality of civil society.

Civil society has a twofold, almost ambiguous nature. It is an instrument to enforce social order and thus an asset of governance. Yet it also involves all social strata and provides space for the articulation of discontent

and opposition. (Dembowski 2001:22) Compromise and consensus are constantly renegotiated in manifold bargaining processes that stretches down to the micro-levels of social life and these create a vibrant civil society. As it becomes more vibrant, possibilities and avenues for deliberation and dialogue that is effective is sure to emerge. A process of deliberation that makes possible transformation, both at the personal level and at the policy level, makes democracy better—more fair, more just. And judiciary in India has been creative enough to open up the dialogic field for the open interplay of hopeful voices who till now were either silent due to their uneasy and adverse positions or were silenced by the politics of so called cultural ethos or blind laws.

End Notes

- i) *Verdict reserved on appeals in gay sex case". The Hindu. New Delhi, India. 27 March 2012. Retrieved 7 December 2012.)*
- ii) "Homosexuality is criminal offense: Supreme court". The Economic Times. 11 December 2013. Retrieved 16 January, 2014.
- iii) "Centre moves apex court for review of Section 377 ruling". Chennai, India: The Hindu. 21 December 2013 Retrieved 16 January 2014.
- iv) *The Hindu, 2014*
- v) *see www.insafbulletin.net/ July 2008, No.16 Retrieved 16 January 2014*
- vi) *<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Cant-criminalize-marital-rape-as-marriage-sacred-in-India-Govt/articleshow/47102099.cms>*

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Understanding the Interface Between Multiculturalism and Postmodernism: A Nietzschean Perspective

Saikat Roy

Abstract

Postmodernism with its deconstructionist position denotes a shift of hegemonic intellectual paradigm positing the transition from one cultural context to another. Such a shift is always characterized by transformation of cultural codes and systems of values expressed in changes of cultural, religious norms, outlooks on micro and macro levels, that is, social, political, ideological as well as personal, etc. The component of the postmodern program is seen in the multicultural project, assuming the creation of a global community with a set of cultures which has the right to existence and should cause respect. Multiculturalism of the nineties draws its most important concepts from the postmodernist thought, which in turn ultimately stems from Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophy. He cherished multiculturalism and postmodernism from the value-standpoint and primarily focused on the cultural relativism. The contention of this paper is to investigate and analyse the interface between these two ideological paradigms from a Nietzschean perspective.

Key Words: Multiculturalism, Postmodernism, Culture, Pluralism, Paradigm, Identity, Value, Nietzsche

1. Introduction

Multiculturalism has arisen as a series of political responses to changing socio-demographics and market conditions, cultural diasporas, labour migrations, and the rise of consumer culture under post modernity, and as a consequence its political and moral project may be usefully interrogated through juxtaposition with the very cultural conditions with which it coheres, mainly the postmodern politics of irony, parody, pastiche, nostalgia, poaching, and simulacra (Gunew: 2004). At the heart of the matter lies a corpus of dubious ethnic narratives nested within discourse of multiculturalism that are imbued with apparent postmodern sensibilities.

While postmodernism has been widely dismissed as a passing cultural and intellectual trend, its eulogy misses its intellectual legacies. Postmodernism has a variety of meaning, many of which are contradictory and problematic but no less relevant to contemporary cultural politics in North America. As both an intellectual response to the traditions of the enlightenment and a cultural expression of a mass consumer economy, postmodernism was and remains central to the formation of multiculturalism and the legal logic of pluralism in the US and Canada.

Postmodernism, of course, is not a consistent framework of thought and the writings that self-identity as postmodern have numerous idiosyncratic

features and internal paradoxes. For some theorists, postmodernism is synonymous with an implosion of the real and by extension of ideology, representation, and meaning (Baudrillard: 1983). Postmodernism appears to embrace consumption, symbolic creativity, diversity, and hyper reality. In doing so, they tend to sponsor an enduring ideology of a global market place purged of class struggle, one in which signs of commodities are said to replace commodities themselves (Hardt and Negri: 2001). As a result, the liberation described by some proponents of postmodernism is in many ways problematic and overstated. The paradox is such that a postmodern celebration of diversity and hybridity once used to destabilize the Eurocentric worldview of modernity is now a driving force of late capitalism, transnational corporations, “Benetton multiculturalism” and nuanced forms of domination congruent with some ideologies of multiculturalism. As such, the apostles of postmodernism have been rightly accused of embellishing not only the emancipator potential of postmodernism but also its absolute break with modernity (Egletan: 1991).

2. Multiculturalism: The Concept

It is imperative to note that multiculturalism is, cosmetically, an official federal policy in Canada, introduced in 1971 and ratified in 1985 as the Canadian Multiculturalism Act (Shahat and Stam: 1994), the policy was the result of a longstanding history of Anglo/ Franco tension reflected in a report presented by the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (1969), the preceding Official Languages Act, an influx of ethnically- diverse groups, and the political tact of then- Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau. At the time of its introduction, multicultural policy was designed to “promote cultural encounters and interchange among all Canadian cultural groups in the interest of national unity” as well as “assist members of all cultural groups to overcome cultural barriers to full participation in Canadian society” (Kallen 2004: 68). Canadian multiculturalism remains to be a policy of pluralism rooted in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and designed to recognize linguistic, religious, ethnic and cultural diversity, including that of indigenous groups, in the articulation of a unified but ‘heterogeneous’ nation (Mackey: 2002).

It is important to note that multiculturalism has become somewhat of an empty signifier of late, representing “a policy rubric for business, government, civil society, and education” (Melamed 2006: 15). As Goldberg warns (1994:1), “The multicultural condition, perhaps not unlike the condition of postmodernity, nevertheless cannot be reductively defined”. As a result, it is crucial to distinguish between state sponsored multiculturalism, which depoliticizes marginalized identities through a ‘deferred promise of equal representation’; corporate-sponsored multiculturalism, which translates identity- based struggles into titillating commodities; and critical multiculturalism, which have emerged in opposition to the state’s management and containment of difference (Bannerji 2000: 9). Despite the recent buzz of

multicultural rhetoric and the inherent overlaps between multicultural projects, compulsory assimilation continues to exist in the US as well as Canada, suggesting that pluralism and homogeneity are not absolute opposites. In a multicultural discourse, the terms ethnicity and culture are often used interchangeably.

Sarah Joseph in her article, 'Do Multicultural Individuals Require a Multicultural State?', emphasised that, multiculturalism, as it has been discussed in the west, is a strategy of liberal, capitalist societies. It need not be universally applicable. The western model of multiculturalism make a difference here from asian model of multiculturalism where more attention has been paid to the social and economic disadvantages of minority groups. Caste, gender or class based influences would generally constitute a dimension of an individual's cultural identity.

As an ideology, multiculturalism is guided by an understanding and celebration of difference in ways that are perhaps good-willed but often problematic. The epistemological shift away from western intellectual and artistic traditions has sometimes resulted in a sweeping conceptualization of 'otherness' as immutable ethnic difference, in the context of which the western multicultural nation appears 'heterogeneous' and benevolent. In other words, the postmodern processes under which same marginalized groups enjoy the political perks of representation are often symptomatic of late capitalist sensibilities and an identity-based logic of difference that is both empowering and disempowering. While some theorists have used elements of postmodern theory to develop a 'resistance multiculturalism' sensitive to shifting social meaning and floating racial signifiers (MacLaren 1994: 45-75), they have rarely explored the political possibilities of 'ludic postmodernism' (parody, pastiche, irony) as a critical response to multicultural ideologies. Moreover, if part of postmodernism as an intellectual movement includes self-reflexivity, self-parody, and the rejection of a foundational 'truth', for example, the various racial and ethnic categories reified under multiculturalism are perhaps open to revision and contestation (Hutcheon:1989).

3. The Concept of Postmodernism

Postmodernism represents not only the historical, political, and economic antecedents of multiculturalism in North America, but also a possible foundation for its immanent critique. If critical multiculturalism, "interrogates the construction of difference and identity in relation to radical politics" the postmodern presence of parody, pastiche, irony, self-reflexivity, and fragmentation may offer important and novel tools of deconstruction within a wider antiracist pedagogy (MacLaren 1994: 53).

The postmodern narratives are preoccupied with the representational politics of diversified communities. They also rely on a postmodern aesthetic

that is ambivalent and controversial but potentially critical. It is the self-reflexivity and uncertainty of each text that in part allows for identification of immanent contradictions within multiculturalism. And the racial politics of the post-civil rights era. The narratives, in other words, may be read alongside and against one another as a series of reflections on the problems and possibilities of racial and ethnic identity formations. As such, they offer a particular response to multiculturalism that challenges the fixity of identity differences but attempts to deal with the unresolved tensions of pre-multicultural political struggles.

As a critical framework, postmodernism is an insightful but not unproblematic way of understanding and responding to multiculturalism. Although the postmodern offers a language with which to unpack a series of economic, cultural and political changes overlying the development of multiculturalism in North America, it is always one step from slipping into an unfettered celebration of diversity in the market place. Peter McLaren, identifies a 'ludic postmodernism' that reduces the world to representation by collapsing real politics into isolated moments of parody, pastiche, and fragmentation, While a second 'resistant postmodernism' (Peter MacLaren: 1994) is able to account for material inequality in relation to the totalizing structures of domination and corporate multiculturalism. Through a contextual cultural studies approach, these postmodern narratives of race and ethnicity may be channeled in meaningful way that are sensitive to the political, historical, and economic conditions in which they are embedded.

Postmodernism has distrust of foundational narratives, which inevitably lead to domination, coercion and repression. The post modernists value the plurality of cultural, ethnic and religious small narratives. They aim to conceptualize a pluralistic justice which will take account of the postmodern concern for the 'other', the 'stranger', the 'different', the 'unknown', 'excluded', 'unrepresented' or 'marginalized' (Sarup: 1988). The postmodern ethno-political project constitutes a response to difference, exclusion and marginalization produced by modernity. One must not simply exclude that which deviates from it. One must honour them with the same rights as oneself. One would not insist on universalizing one's own identity in order to impose it over others. One should accept the strangers and the others, with all their peculiarities, eccentricities, oddities, differences, even incomprehensibilities. Postmodernism stands for the rights of 'other' against individual. The postmodern thinkers made normative claims: the diverse views on right and wrong (or values) should not be judged by, or relocated to, other cultures; or, a culture should not impose on other cultures its own ideas. Diversity and the respect for difference are of utmost importance in understanding rights for different peoples of different cultures and communities. If one does not draw on cultural values and communal ideas which are indigenous to cultures, alternative development will not occur; or, if it does for a time, it will not be sustainable. Postmodern argument believes that, community is more important

than the individual since the individual is derived from community and lives and fulfils his or her goals through the community. But no community is monolithic or static. Each is a whole of contradictory tendencies and forces and each is ever dynamic. A postmodernist celebrate the resistance of the marginalized and the subjugated against the dominant. Individuals are part of the community and when they resist the dominating power and discourse within the community, they must be supported.

A postmodern framework helps to explain the ambivalence with which racial and ethnic identities emerge in some of the multicultural visions of popular culture. Although identity has long been considered an essential site of political empowerment, certain postmodern narratives of race and ethnicity suggest otherwise. This is not to deny the political efficacy of the subject in it's entirety; rather, it is to acknowledge the limitations of an identity that is incomplete and determined by an exclusion of alterity (Butler: 1990, McRabbie: 1994). Above all, a postmodern critique of multiculturalism draws attention to the slippages of meaning in language and representation whilst maintaining the importance and indispensability of both.

The following features of a postmodern frame as analytic devices are highlighted and their implications explored, in the understanding of questions relating to the identity of different cultural groups (Ali Rattansi 1995: 250):

1. The postmodern condition as primarily an intellectual condition characterized by reflection on the nature and limits of western modernity.

2. Modernity as a theoretical category: the form of conceptualization adopted here focuses especially on the dualities of modernity; for example, between the formation of democratic institutions and disciplinary complexes of bureaucracy and power/knowledge; between the excitement of rapid change and the simultaneous anxiety of societies seemingly out of control; and the constant destabilization of identities and continuous reinvention of traditions.

3. The role of western modernity's others, internal and external, real and imagined, especially in the context of various imperialisms and colonialisms, as potent forces in the formation and continuous reconstruction of western identities, in particular by processes of the marginalization of others as binary opposites of supposedly western characteristics. Derridean "deconstruction" strategies are brought into play to display the artifice involved in the construction of binarities in western discourses and cultural identities, and to destabilize the way in which oppositions such as male/female, active/passive, culture/nature, rational/emotional, civilized/savage, white/black and so forth have become superimposed on each other to hold together.

4. An exploration of the profound impact of new phases of globalization, theorized as uneven processes, but as corrosive of old national

boundaries and playing a creative role in the formation of new, hybrid, syncretic transnational identities.

5. The project of 'de-centering' and 'de-essentializing' both 'subject' and the 'social': the individual is no longer conceptualized as a fully coherent, 'rational', self-knowledgeable agent capable of direct access to reality and truth, and is theorized as living within the tension of a variety of potential and actual subject positions; social formation are no longer regarded as tightly knit complexes of institutions with necessary, predetermined forms of connection or logics of development.

6. Analyses of temporality and spatiality as constitutive features of the social, of subjectivities, and of process of identification. Neither time nor space are privileged over the other; moreover, both are seen as being in a constant state of flux, in contrast to a widespread tendency to view time as dynamic and space as static. Moreover, in conditions of 'late modernity' and its associated intensified globalization, there is an emphasis on what Harvey (1989) has called 'time-space compression', that is, the diminution of space by technologies of mass communication and travel and the increasing simultaneity of experience across the globe. There are specific postmodernist aesthetic strategies and cultural movements associated with these transformations which are crucial to a sense of the postmodern as a cultural and political formation.

7. A reconsideration of the relation between the psychic and the social which takes seriously a specifically psychoanalytic de-centering of the subject, positing it as constitutively split between a conscious self and the disruptions of unconscious desire, emotional attachments and hostilities, the operations of ambivalence, splitting, fantasy, paranoia, projection, and introjections

4. Multiculturalism and Postmodernism from Nietzschean Perspective

When we search for the philosophical roots of multiculturalism, we find that it has its origin amongst those who mix together the concepts of equality and relativity of truth. Professor Allan Bloom refers to them as the Nietzschean Left. In US, we might call them the 1960's New Left. Friedrich Nietzsche was a German philosopher of the last century who discovered the idea of value. According to Nietzsche, all values, that is what is considered important, varies from nation to nation, country to country, and culture to culture. Moreover, values are simply the projection of a people's will to power. The, which increases their strength and power is valuable and good, the, which weakens their power is bad.

It is with Nietzsche, in the 1880's that we see the emergence of historical and cultural relativism¹. Nietzsche projects that values do not have any universal validity or intrinsic worth. Nietzsche was the first major thinker to confront the loss of a religious worldview in Europe. Yet, he was always an

admirer of religion, which he referred to as 'the highest form of art'. The best kind of religion for Nietzsche is concerned, not with the nature of reality, but with the ultimate existential meaning of life. At the core of the multicultural debate in Europe are questions of values and tradition, a topic Nietzsche took lead in in his famous work, "On the Genealogy of Morals". Nietzsche held a much different definition of culture than the one that shapes our debates about multiculturalism today. He saw 'kultur' as emblematic of an entire civilization, and his work sought to establish a genealogical reevaluation of the decadent values that brought Europe to a stage of existence that he deemed weak and degraded. Hence, while discussing the various notions of multiculturalism, Nietzsche emphasised on the western model focusing on integration rather than on assimilation.

It is likely that Nietzsche would be a strong critic of certain forms of multiculturalism, especially those that promote cultural relativism and political correctness. Nietzsche found liberation is destroying all foundations of cultural values and radically questioning the foundations of tradition, so far as the crisis of Islam and multiculturalism in Europe is concerned. Based on his desire to maintain a clear distinction between Islam and Europe in his own time, it is clear that Nietzsche would prefer that Muslims retain their own culture and not passively assimilate into a secular Europe.

Nietzsche is often characterized as being one of the founders and precursors to postmodernism because he used a style of analysis which focused on the way in which claims to truth became established as truth. He illustrated the context in which a concept called truth arises, what purposes it is used for, and the consequences of doing so (Teel Sadler: 1995).

The postmodernist is directly engaged in the process that Nietzsche was trying to warn us about, or rather, prepare us for. By actively engaging our values and social structures out of a desire to expose them, the postmodernist is unwittingly a servant of the larger process of rationalizing culture. The postmodern project is not radical but is another step on the ladder of nihilism because it is essentially a moral one, that is, a modern one.

The fundamental idea of postmodernism, that all meaning is contextual and identity is perspectival, is one originally put forth by Nietzsche. Nietzsche stands to postmodernism as a recognized founder or origin of some of postmodernism's primary credos (David Allisan: 1977). Of these, the idea that truth is rooted in perspective and not in reality is the primary insight. Couple this with an understanding of power as a means to express subjective conceptions of truth, and postmodernism is born.

Multiculturalism of the nineties draws its most important concepts from the postmodernist thought, which in turn ultimately stems from Nietzsche (Melzar, Arthur M., Weinberger. Jerry, and Zinman, M. Richard 1998: 3). 1)

Multiculturalism tends to accept and build upon the Nietzschean rejection of rationalism. There is no universal truth or justice. Thus, multiculturalism fights for the rights of women and minorities in a new way: by subverting the truth-claims of all who would exclude them. Multiculturalists fight indirectly, not by claiming to have the truth themselves, but by denying that anyone else does. The premise is; where there is no truth, there can be no intolerance. The denial of truth will make us free. 2) Nietzsche argued that the defining characteristic of human beings is the need not for material goods but for dignity and self-esteem. If we have our own 'way' of life, he proclaimed, we can get along with almost any 'how'. Multiculturalism largely accepts this Nietzschean premise. Therefore, the fundamental concern of the multicultural movement is no longer economics but esteem, not income but identity, and thus not western capitalism but western culture. Multiculturalism marked a shift from political economy to identity politics. 3) Multiculturalism, in the tradition of earlier nationalist thinkers including Nietzsche, tends to focus on the welfare of peoples or cultural groupings, which are seen as the source of the socially constructed identities of individuals. It emphasizes group over individual rights. Multiculturalism could in fact be called "left-wing nationalism" it seeks not indeed the unity and exaltation of the nation-state under the banner of the majority culture, but rather the loosening of the nation-state to protect the identity and self-confidence of the multiple subcultures. 4) Among multiculturalists, there is a strong tendency to view oppression as a relatively permanent feature of human life, stemming directly from a psychological drive for esteem and cultural hegemony or something like Nietzsche's "will to power". From this perspective, all claims to impartiality came to light as deceitful, all claims to objective truth as assertions of power, consequently, multiculturalists tend to be more skeptical and grim, to lack the visionary idealism and sentiment of one world, and advocate solutions that are consciously anti-utopian, involving separatism and other forms of permanently controlled conflict.

It is worth noting that the attitude of multicultural liberalism is committed to two dogmas that appear to imply each other, yet also appear to be contradictory. The first dogma asserts that, if not in such blunt terms, "Tolerance is good". Thus the phrase "value of tolerance": the multicultural liberal has a respect for and a commitment to the value of tolerance. The second dogma, demands skepticism concerning any claim to the superiority of one set of cultural beliefs, practices, or values over another. It is related to a general moral or cultural relativism that in its more robust form asserts that there is no independent standard or standpoint from which to adjudicate the relative worth of values.

The standpoint of multicultural liberalism rests strongly upon the idea of 'values'. Values discourse reflects prominent myth of the modern age, active in popular, media, and academic culture. The idea is that you have your values

and I have mine; they have their values and we have ours, like perceptions, concepts, and memories, values and among the items that make up our overall psychic inventory, and lack any further grounding or justification. Perhaps they came from culture, perhaps tradition, perhaps from personal growth; but regardless of their provenance, there is a sense in which they are immediately given, as the bedrock for any further type of judgment. We have inherited this from Nietzsche via Weber, and it has since become a central dogma of the humanities and social sciences, and trickled down to the popular and media culture, where it is ubiquitously in use.

For Nietzsche, the innovator of values discourse, the claims of reason, and the morality it supports are unmasked as arbitrarily grounded in brute value preferences, which are reflected in the attitudes and traditions of the kinds of people who passes them. Rationality has become mere rationalization in the service of a particular value scheme. Values became the final units of analysis through which it is possible to unmask the arbitrary foundations of any normative claim.

Nietzsche undertakes this unmasking using a method calls 'geneology'. For any normative claim regarding right or wrong, just or unjust, one must look past what the content of the claim is to discern who is making the claim, with an eye toward discovering the type of values in play. The idea is to discredit the content of a normative claim by tracing it back to a corrupt value standpoint. Nietzsche accepts that the value standpoint of those who are physically or psychologically weaker is going to ground a very different conception of justice than that of the stronger.

It is based on these kinds of considerations that Nietzsche wishes to expose the futility and retrograde character of normative discourse. Only relative equals with the same kinds of values can productively engage one another. Discourse between groups with fundamentally different value standpoints can only reduce to a strategic jockeying for power, what Habermas calls 'strategic actions'. It was worth rehearsing here Nietzsche's radical views not only because he is the progenitor of 'value discourse', but also because his view brings into stark relief what is at stake in the move to ground normative discourse in value discourse: values discourse has a kind of built-in power to erode normative debate. The good faith assumption underlying normative debate is that it can proceed along rational lines, which better or worse reasons can be given for normative claims. It is the traditional assumption of rationality that mediation is possible, that dialogue between potentially hostile groups is possible. However, from a Nietzschean standpoint the 'game' of giving and asking for reasons itself becomes just one more value to be arbitrarily possessed or discarded.

Nietzsche self-consciously reverses the philosophical power and priority of reason first articulated in antiquity by Plato and Aristotle. Reason on

this sort of conception constitutes a comprehensive, organic normative framework where values are organized and ranked. For example, justice on Plato's conception is not merely one value amongst many. It is rather the highest virtue, embodied by those whose psyches are ruled by a relational principle. The genealogy of the value of justice for a thinker like Nietzsche, one of the few to have thought through the consequences of making values the principle of the human psyche, comes from a variety of natural, psychological, and historical sources, none of which include a primordial human responsiveness to reason. The value of justice rather hails from the ways in which the stronger have controlled the weaker in order to keep the destructive forces of resentment at bay; or considered from a different value standpoint, the way the weaker, who require norms of justice for their brute survival, have duped the stronger into entering perverse contracts to limit their natural power. The normative basis for talking about virtue and vice is eliminated in favor of a kind of survival of the fittest picture of stronger values knocking off weaker ones. Justice is merely a value, one among many, and like reason it, simply takes a slat among every other arbitrary value, no better nor worse than any other in any rationally defensible sense.

The so-called value of tolerance too is reduced to an unjustifiable, arbitrary attitude if it is held from the standpoint of a multicultural liberalism conceived in the terms of a values discourse rather than in those of a discourse of reason. It is the standpoint that is at issue, rather than tolerance itself; tolerance, like the historically evolved conception of justice, is arguably rational to the core. Its conceptual heritage lies in the work of Locke and Kant, and forms part of the rational basis of modern democracies as advocated by these thinkers, tolerance is not merely a value, but a rational value, what Aristotle and Plato called virtue. From rational basis, tolerance is a condition for dialogue. The capacity to allow for beliefs or proposals that may run against the grain of one's expectations or preferences in a *sine qua non* for coming to any kind of agreement or understanding. Therefore, if rationality has a normative and social significance, the virtue of tolerance must play an important role in its realization.

Further, to speak of virtue in general indicates that genuine moral commitments can receive a defense within an implicitly or explicitly shared normative framework, which now in the modern world in principle extends to all of humanity. To speak of the virtue of tolerance in particular therefore implies that one can defend with reasons.

But now speak of the value of tolerance, not the virtue of tolerance. This is not to split hairs; it rather reveals our fundamental attitude toward our own presumably highest moral commitments. From the vantage of a multicultural liberalism that deploys a discourse of value, our moral commitments are just that, ours, and so as multicultural liberals we must

allow ample space for alternative values that are no more and no less defensible than our own. This is how the first dogma of multicultural liberalism, that 'tolerance is good' gives way to the, second, 'I may not judge the attitudes, practices, and values of others'. The true logic of tolerance implies, and indeed demands, a condemnation of intolerance; it is not logically related to a terminal suspension of judgment concerning the practices of others. This latter hails from a different source altogether: a commitment to values discourse. It is the dual commitment to tolerance and to values discourse that renders this variety of multicultural liberalism incoherent, not any defect in the concept of tolerance itself.

But the perspective of Nietzsche has been criticised on various grounds. Scholars rejected his limit of tolerance that the extreme celebration of multiple values and cultures can create conflict in the existing society.

5. Conclusion

In the spirit of postmodernism and the internal contradictions of signification, there can be no conclusive remark that is not always already deferred by another. Such open-endedness and indeterminacy is the source of postmodernism's transgressive potential and its limitations. Whereas a postmodern critique of multiculturalism may offer an alternative way of contesting ideologies of fixed ethnic difference and the static racial body, it cannot help but reiterate in some ways the logic of essentialism.

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Review Article

Three Dimensions of Environmental Degradation: Conflict, Cooperation and Injustice

Anjan Kumar Sahoo

Shlomi Dinar (ed.), *Beyond Resource Wars: Scarcity, Environmental Degradation, and International Cooperation*. Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2011, 335 pp., pbk.

JoAnn Carmin and Julian Agyeman (eds.), *Environmental Inequalities Beyond Borders: Local Perspectives on Global Injustices*. Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2011, 303 pp., pbk.

Harold Welzer, *Climate Wars: Why People Will Be Killed in the Twenty-First Century*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012, 222 pp., hbk.

Global environmental change has huge implications for natural environment. There has been a common understanding that the change has been brought about largely by anthropogenic factors which impacts both state and human securities. On the one hand, environmental impact is associated with conflict and, on the other hand, there has been a debate on linkage between environment and security. Initially, the environment and conflict syndrome dominated the discourse of environmental degradation. Historically, politically and analytically, the syndrome got unprecedented attention of scholars,¹ despite a wide variation in their arguments. However, after the end of the Cold War, the linkage between security and environment dominated the discourse of environmental degradation. The linkage got political and security disposition in the work of Robert D. Kaplan (1994) and then the idea was permeated among prominent political and military elites of the United States. Kaplan argued that foreign policy would be shaped by “[s]urgings populations, spreading disease, deforestation and soil erosion, water depletion, air pollution, and possibly rising sea levels” (1994). Thomas Homer-Dixon (1994) analysed environmental scarcity and its ‘cumulative social impact’ and argues that environmental scarcity gives rise to ‘sub-national violence’; and ‘sub-national violence’ influences ‘security interests’ of both developed and developing countries. According to Homer-Dixon (1994):

Environmental scarcity has insidious and cumulative social impacts, such as population movement, economic decline, and the weakening of states. These can contribute to diffuse and persistent sub-national violence. The rate and extent of such conflicts will increase as societies worsen. This sub-national violence will not be as conspicuous or dramatic as inter-state wars, but it will have serious repercussions for the security interests of both the developed and developing worlds.

However, the conflict or security discourse of environmental degradation propelled scholars such as Paul Diehl and Nils Petter Gleditsch to rethink the linkage from the perspective of environmental cooperation. Though cooperation dimension of environmental degradation can be traced to the peace studies theoryⁱⁱ, the book by Shlomi Dinar is a fitting and an apposite work to attenuate the fear and undue emphasis on environmental conflict and to reignite the debate on environmental cooperation. International institutions are major driving forces for transferring environmental conflict to environmental cooperation. However, JoAnn Carmin and Julian Agyeman in their text *Environmental Inequalities Beyond Borders: Local Perspectives on Global Justice* are emphatically critical of the effectiveness of international institutions as instruments for promoting and leveraging the idea and practice of environmental cooperation and environmental justice. Harold Welzer in his text *Climate War* is also leery of the role of international institutions and intentions of developed countries for promoting climate justice. Thus, the common element that interlinks the three texts is both the role of international institutions and developed countries for promoting environmental cooperation and environmental justice. However, whether the claim for promoting cooperation and justice is spurious or real has been empirically examined by the authors. Despite it, Welzer is more concerned about perils of climate change and its present and future implications for society, culture, and intra and inter-states relations. In addition, the paper underlines the conceptual understanding on the use of concepts such as environmental security, environmental conflict and climate security.

In *Beyond Resource Wars*, the authors are intended to argue that environmental degradation promotes cooperation rather than conflict. Their core argument has three dimensions. At the outset, accruing of environmental degradation and resource scarcity provides impulse for environmental cooperation, coordination, negotiation, and international agreements. More resource conflict means more cooperation. The authors in the book corroborate their arguments while analysing international and regional agreements on climate change (Mendelsohn p. 25), ozone depletion (DeSombre p. 52-53), biodiversity (Rosendal p. 64), sharing of international rivers (Dinar p. 169), fisheries (Barkin p. 141), oil (Fettweis p. 201) and mineral resources (Shields and Solar p. 239).

Secondly, environmental degradation cannot be linked up with military security because any future military conflict related to resource scarcity is not indisputable (p. 8). Shlomi Dinar cites the argument of Daniel H. Deudney while arguing for the unlikely military dispute over natural resources (p. 9). In this way, the author disassociates the linkage between environmental degradation and national security.ⁱⁱⁱ Thirdly, authors like Elizabeth R. DeSombre (p. 44, 46) flesh out that environmental cooperation is very critical because developing countries are stuck with their demand for economic development and this gives them ample leeway to bargain at various international environmental agreements. Historically, developed countries are responsible for the present environmental degradation and shaping their own discourse of development and, at the same time, trying to bring developing countries to the negotiation table. Robert Mendelsohn (p. 39) argues that bringing developing countries to the negotiation table can be possible by: firstly, rendering incentives to developing countries in the form of creation of fund like the Montreal Protocol Multilateral Fund as argued by DeSombre (p. 52); secondly, drawing up a well-crafted treaty for sharing benefits; and thirdly, shaping up a long-lasting treaty.

The cooperative dimension of the authors and their arguments for justifying their stand is not a new development. Their arguments are beneficial for the advancement of the field which is set up by peace research studies. However, the first limitation of their argument is that the authors have failed to draw the line between environmental conflict and environmental security. These terms are discrete, but inseparable. Dinar cites the arguments of both Deudney (p. 9) and Diehl and Gleditsch (p. 289) while looking at the environmental cooperation. Daniel H. Deudney^{iv} argues for environmental conflict and is quite emphatic against the use of environmental security and Diehl and Gleditsch (2001) use both environmental conflict and environmental security interchangeably without defining and drawing the line between the two. In the words of Diehl and Gleditsch (2001: 4): "...establishing if, when, and under what conditions environmental factors are associated with conflict would be a big step forward, but the environmental security field remains handicapped in its theoretical focus on only one side of the conflict-cooperation coin".

However, environmental conflict is primarily state-military dominated discourse and conflict-driven; and environmental security is both state and individual dominated discourse and is primarily concerned with human security (Detraz and Betsill 2009). The interchangeable use of environmental security with environmental conflict (as Diehl and Gleditsch did), disassociation of environmental conflict from environmental security^v (as Deudney did), and taking into account both the views interchangeably (as Dinar did) show a narrow conceptual understanding of the terms and their implications. Thus, the differences between environmental conflict and environmental security shall be

conceptually defined and clarified. In addition, authors favour creation of funds for transfer of money (DeSombre p. 52) and technology (Rosendal p. 65) from developed countries for speedy implementation of environmental programmes and reduction of emissions of green house gases of developing countries. However, they ignore issues such as source and availability of funds, operational criteria and issue of transparency. This is the second limitation of their argument. The 2009 'Copenhagen Accord' was mired by these issues. At the same time, developed countries fail to fulfill their commitment for funding environmental programmes. The third limitation is that the authors failed to develop a theory based on cooperation. Environmental cooperation based on any theoretical explanation can give a particular perspective for understanding environmental degradation. Though scholars use international agreements as means of environmental cooperation, it shows their proclivity for regime formation or neo-liberal institutionalist theory of environment. However, they have failed to convince the readers whether they are in favour of regime or neoliberal institutionalist theory. Despite these limitations the work is very much commendable as it reignites the debate on environmental cooperation. This can remove the fears of Diehl and Gleditsch which they raised in the early 2000s and can render a new dimension to environmental scholars to rethink environmental degradation as an opportunity for environmental cooperation.

In *Environmental Inequalities Beyond Borders*, nature of global environmental injustice is pre-eminently analysed where environmental inequalities are the outcome of dominating views and values of particular groups. In addition, global environmental inequalities also intertwine with the rise of global economic, social and political institutions. There are three instruments through which environmental injustice prevails: international institutions or international agreements, multi-national companies (MNCs) and the discourse of development which is shaped by developed countries. Firstly, Agyeman and Carmin (p. 1) observe that despite the 1989 Basel Convention on the Trans-boundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes and the European Union's (EU) 2002 Restrictions on Hazardous Substances, European countries have been disposing unused and useless technology to developing countries like Ghana. Alison H. Alkon (p. 188-89) argues that international institutions like International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB) formulate policies against the interest of developing countries and how permeation of Green Revolution practice as a part of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) ignores the local social and political contexts of small farmers. Alkon (p. 189) underlines the fact that the Mexican government was forced to terminate its facilities for their farmers and the government encouraged farmers for export of crops instead of food self-sufficiency. Saskia Vermeylen and Gordon Walker (105-7) underscore the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the way of benefit sharing agreement between government and people that resulted into two consequences: firstly, the traditional plant *Hoodia* was patented by the

South Africa government without the consent of the San community; secondly, it also engendered injustice within the San community and manufactured divergent and disparate groups: notions of “elite” San and “ordinary” San, particularly in Namibia (p. 114, p. 116).^{vi} The argument is that international agreements and international institutions increase environmental inequality and injustice. Institutions undervalue rightful rights of traditional community. It is also observed that some developing countries go along with the development discourse shaped by developed countries and are engaged in the same exploitative strategy within developing countries. According to Vermeulen and Walker (p. 111):

While the CBD creates the obligation to respect, preserve and maintain traditional knowledge, innovations, and practices, and promote their wider use with the approval of indigenous and local communities, it does not describe how this is to be achieved. Fair and equitable remain undefined in the CBD.

Secondly, MNCs are primarily responsible for the present environmental degradation in developing countries. Both Max Stephenson and Lisa A. Schweitzer (p. 55), and Saleem H. Ali and Mary A. Ackley (p. 76-77) lacerate the parlous activities of MNCs in Niger Delta and Fiji respectively. Thirdly, Tammy L. Lewis (p. 90) pins down that developed countries shape the environmental agenda in the South using both international institutions and infusing funds or environmental aid. Developed countries give environmental aid to selective rich bio-diversity country so that they can get optimum gain from resource-rich developing countries. Stephenson and Schweitzer (p. 47) analyse that rules are framed and reframed by developed countries to suit their interest.

Global environmental injustice has resulted into disproportionate share of environmental burden (p.3), derecognition and dearth of voice of local people in the decision-making process (p. 5) and creation of dependence-domination syndrome (p. 20). However, environmental injustice prevails not only across states or between global North-South but within a state or in developing countries. Patricia Widener (160, 162) argues that China’s technological strides and failure of reducing green house gases has created environmental inequality within global South. Alkon (p. 187) mentions how the United States federal policies were structured by racial and economic inequalities that compromised the food sovereignty of African-American community.

Global environmental injustice is the thrust of the book and authors have strongly argued for the minimisation and elimination of the injustice. Authors argue that this can be possible through demand for greater transparency and accountability in the use of public funds (p. 63), social movement and

disruption of existing social relations (p. 263-64) and creation of democratic and legal mechanisms (p. 271).

Authors in the book argue about the growing environmental injustice both at the national and international levels. Arguments are empirically sound and analytically well delineated. However, not a single author put the environmental injustice within a particular theoretical framework. For the sake of the argument it can be rightly mentioned that there are two approaches for securing justice: firstly, 'transcendental institutionalism' or 'arrangement-focused approach' of justice; and secondly, 'realization-focused' justice. The former approach underlines formation of just institutions or 'certain organizational arrangements' for securing perfect justice and the latter emphasizes both institutional and non-institutional features (Sen 2009: 5-6). According to Amartya Sen (2009: 6, 10):

The nature of the society that would result from any given set of institutions must, of course, depend also on non-institutional features, such as actual behaviours of people and their social interactions...The question to ask in this context is whether the analysis of justice must be so confined to getting the basic institutions and general rules right? Should we not also have to examine what emerges in the society, including the kind of lives what people can actually lead, given the institutions and rules, but also other influences, including actual behaviour, that would inescapably affect human lives?.

Though the authors are unable to explain their argument without taking into account to any theory of justice, but their arguments can be framed within the 'realization-focused' approach of justice. How? On the one hand, Carmin and Agyeman argue for the setting up of democratic institutions and legal mechanisms and, on the other hand, David N. Pellow avers on social movement and disruption of existing social relations, and articulation of 'socially just institutions' (p. 248). It is not only institutions, but social interaction in the forms of race, gender, class and other inequalities that are the roots of environmental injustice (p. 247). Thus, it is important to emphasize the institutional and non-institutional aspects of environmental injustice.

Over and above, Pellow argues for social movement as a means of minimising environmental injustice. However, he fails to explain diversified nature and intentions of social movement in different political systems. In industrialised countries, social movement mulls over 'value-shift' in society (which is explained both in post-materialist and post-industrialisation perspectives) and in East European countries green movement, emerged as a political movement, transmitted into market economy and subsequently the green movement became faltered (Doyle and McEachern 1998: 59, 74).

However, recently, the discourse of environmental degradation, environmental security and environmental social movements has been subsumed under the discourse of climate change. The discourse of climate change has been metamorphosed into 'climate crisis' (Human Development Report 2007/08: 1) or 'climate security' (Beckett 2007; Human Development Report 2007/08: 58) as it is considered as an extraordinary challenge or a 'fierce urgency' (Human Development Report 2007/08: 1) which exacts extraordinary response.

The climate change discourse took a dramatic shift when the Security Council (SC) of the United Nations (UN) held its first-ever debate on impact of climate change on international peace and security on April 17, 2007. However, this debate formed two opposing groups: one group, particularly developed countries such as the United Kingdom, France, Germany etc, considers climate change as a security issue and, another group, particularly India, China, Pakistan, opposes the security dimension of climate change. In such a situation, the book *Climate Wars* by Welzer will certainly further the debate on security and non-security tenets of climate change.

The book *Climate Wars* was originally published in German in 2008. However, its translation in the English language by Patrick Camiller in 2012 has certainly helped the intensity of the discourse of climate change security. At the outset, Welzer argues that climate change is an urgent issue and a social problem as it affects human beings (p. 32). Climate change and violence cannot be drifted apart (p. 5). The ruthless and relentless consumption of natural resources by industrialised and emerging economies are the harbinger of present climate catastrophe. This results into unequal consequences and distribution of climate change impact and the asymmetric capacity of contending with the problem (p. 82, 115). This raises the issue of justice at the national as well as international levels. Unprecedented and unequal consumption of natural resources has denied justice to and caused diminution of human culture of poor and underprivileged people (p. 56). However, the author is virtually convinced that climate war is a reality and the direct link between climate change (p. 168) and violence is palpable in Darfur conflict (p. 5, 104). According to the author: "We shall see not only mass migration but also *violent solutions to refugee problems*, not only tensions over water or mining rights but also *resource wars*, not only religious conflicts but also *wars of belief*" (p. 6).

The climate war thesis of the author is invariably interlinked with national security of a country. Climate change impact will force countries for taking measures for mitigation and adaptation. However, adaptive measures can have implications for interstate relations. For example, building of dams by upstream countries can beget tensions between upstream and downstream countries (p. 80).

Climate change conflict and national security are intimately intertwined with military security (p. 66). Climate change catastrophe affects functions and performance of military build-up and its operation. The rise of sea level can affect military bases which are set up in the low-lying areas or islands. At the same time, climate change challenges bring the linkage between environment and military organisation. Involvement of military or army militarises environment and the glaring instances are United State's wars against Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan. There is also increased intervention of government supported troops and militias in the case of Darfur conflict. Thus, the objective of development and climate change policy must be comprehended from the perspective of 'preventive security' (p.11).

The author also questions the utility of international agreements on climate change. He argues that agreements are only self-imposed obligation on the part of countries; there is no sanction against countries for violation of international agreements (p. 167). The objective must be to get away from the as usual mindset and to think beyond it. It requires redefinition of climate change as a cultural issue and greater participation of people in the decision-making process (p. 177). It exacts formation of 'third modernity'^{vii} based on vision for good society (p. 178).

The nature of climate change and its repercussion, as argued by the author, is more intense. War, conflict, security and violence are the inherent characteristics of his climate change discussions. He is out rightly convinced that climate war is a reality. This is an exaggerated notion of his analysis. His argument for climate war lacks analytical explanation and the author forcefully tries to put the climate war thesis in order to convince readers. In addition, his argument lacks theoretical argument and conceptual analysis. Theoretically, the author fails to claim his climate war thesis without looking into any theory of International Relations or social sciences. For instance, the argument for climate war or climate security can be framed within the securitisation or social constructivist theory.^{viii} It means whether the climate war is the outcome of 'speech act' of political leaders or shared understanding of people at the international levels. Author also used different concepts loosely. Author relates climate change with war, security, violence and used these concepts interchangeably. Thus, the arguments of the author lack theoretical explanation and are replete with conceptual weaknesses. Sometimes the author argues that climate change is a social and cultural issue and sometimes considers it as a security issue.

The effect and intensity of environmental degradation has generated a debate on different dimensions of environment. Some scholars argue that environmental degradation causes conflict and some observe that it promotes cooperation. However, climate discourse has added a new dimension to environmental degradation and the climate discourse, as espoused by Welzer, is

more prone to security issue. However, the three above mentioned books are unique in their analysis and observation. Shlomi Dinar refutes the environmental conflict approach of environmental degradation and emphasizes more on environmental cooperation. However, Carmin and Agyeman set out environmental injustice at the national and international levels. Dinar observes the utility of international agreements for enhancing environmental cooperation, but Carmin and Agyeman and Welzer vehemently criticise international agreements as these are instruments for fomenting global environmental injustice. Welzer blames both developed and emerging developing countries for the present climate injustice, conflict and violence.

Dinar's book is an important work in the field of environmental literature which will give more impetus to environmental and International Relation scholars to work more on environmental cooperation rather than environmental conflict and environmental security. Carmin and Agyeman's work will certainly help to rethink the utility of extant international institutions for promoting global environmental justice. Welzer's book will further the debate on whether climate change is a security or non-security issue and what is its implications for shaping the nature of understanding on climate change between developed and developing countries and its implications for society, culture, nature of civil war and inter-state relations. The three dimensions of environmental degradation-conflict/security-cooperation-injustice- are invariably interlinked. However, whether global environmental injustice is a result of environmental conflict or environmental cooperation or both is still a debatable issue among scholars. The crux is how to minimise and eliminate environmental injustice and what shall be the priority and objectives of international institutions for managing environmental conflict and promoting environmental cooperation or climate security. Nevertheless, before looking into the environmental justice, it is worthwhile to distinguish between environmental conflict and environmental security. Environmental conflict is primarily understood in terms of scarcity and it is military- centric and vouch for the role and security of state (Detraz and Betsill 2009: 306). In order to promote national and global environmental justice, discourse and practice of environmental security is more beneficial because it is concerned with 'human welfare' or human security, the role of both state and non-state actors (Detraz and Betsill 2009: 308). Even the discourse of climate security or climate-related conflict has been historically associated with environmental security (Detraz and Betsill 2009: 304, 310). Looking into the Security Council debate on climate change, Nicole Detraz and Michele M. Betsill (2009: 311) argues that eighty per cent of all the speakers linked climate change concerns which are consistent with environmental security discourse.

Analysing the arguments of the authors of three books, it can be said that the sincerity, integrity and effectiveness of international institutions for promoting environmental cooperation have been questioned. In addition, the

article argued for conceptual clarity on concepts like environmental conflict, environmental security and climate security. It is the onus of academic scholars to remove the conceptual misgivings. It can only help to engender environmental justice and minimise environmental conflict.

End Notes

- ⁱ See Bachler (1995); Homer-Dixon (1991); Homer-Dixon (1994); Peluso and Watts (2001); Swain (1996)
- ⁱⁱ Conca prefers ‘environmental peacemaking’ as an alternative or a counter-productive to the environmental security debate. See Levy (2011)
- ⁱⁱⁱ The main scholar of the argument is M. A. Levy. Levy dissects that the nexus between environment (or/and climate change) and security argument as espoused by Mathew, Myers and Renner is a ‘rhetorical flourish’ to gain public support for environment. This approach is indefensible and inadequate. But Levy reluctantly admits the issues of climate change and ozone depletion, rather than other environmental problems, as the national security issue and it requires a ‘grand strategy’ the way the Soviet Union was contained. This policy of containment of climate change impasse demands for and hinges on defence policy, than environmental policy. At the same time, he concedes that this linkage engenders ‘risks but not benefits’. See Levy (1995). However, the linkage of environmental degradation with military and national security has been widely accepted by a number of scholars. See Diamond (2005); Matthew (1999); Stern (2005); Wirth (1989)
- ^{iv} Deudney argues that linking of environment with national security certainly prevents global cooperation to deal with environmental problems. According to Deudney (1990), “thinking of national security as an environmental problem risks undercutting both the globalists and common fate understanding of the situation and the sense of world community that may be necessary to solve the problem”. See Deudney (1999).
- ^v Deudney argues that environmental security rather than environmental conflict is state-military discourse and he, thus, prefers environmental conflict.
- ^{vi} The intra-community violence argument has been corroborated by the empirical works of Nandini Sundar and Bela Bhatia. While looking at the Government of India’s policy on Joint Forest Management (JFM), Sundar (2001) argues that local people are used as participants for the execution of government plans without benefiting people. She fleshes out that the policies of the post-colonial state lead to resistance of the village people against state and then their own community, and state internalises the violence both structurally and ideologically. Bhatia (1997) in his study finds that the households of Antras village of Gujarat in India were the part of Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA) and when the question of displacement came few people agreed to go and, at the same time, they wanted to cut trees as the wood was needed for fuel at the new sites. However, those were willing to stay opposed

such move led to a physical fight. State policies force people to fight among themselves.

- vii Welzer divided modernity into three kinds: the first one is based on past developments, the second one is present climate change development and the third one is formation of a good society in the future.
- viii Climate change as a security issue has been framed within the securitisation theory. See Brauch (2008); Sahu (2011); The social constructivist nature of climate change has been well delineated by Denise Garcia. See Garcia (2010); Pettenger (2007)

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Book review

**K Natwar Singh, 'Is One Life Enough for 'Profession',
but not for 'Politics'?**

**One Life is Not Enough: An Autobiography, New Delhi:
Rupa Publications India Pvt. Ltd, 2014; pp 410 + xiii**

S Swaroop Sirapangi

Political Background to the Autobiography

K Natwar Singh was India's former External Affairs Minister during 2004-05 under the Indian National Congress (INC) headed coalition United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government headed by Manmohan Singh as Prime Minister. He was forced to leave this position on account of allegations over 'Oil for Food Scam' in the Iraq during the tenure of former President Saddam Hussein, as revealed by Paul Volcker, who investigated this scam, which was appointed by the United Nations Organisation (UNO) the then General Secretary Kofi Annan. Paul Volcker included many persons across the globe in his report over this scam and Natwar Singh was one among them. The report created lot of political sensation in India. His political party INC and its leadership headed by Sonia Gandhi did not back him and asserted that Natwar Singh alone was responsible to clear his innocence in this scam. This made Natwar furious and in the subsequent events he was forced to leave his Cabinet position and had to face investigations by different agencies and at last he even left the INC, with which he had a long association.

Since his disassociation from the INC over this scam; he faced many hurdles from various investigating agencies and remained silent till 2014 general elections. When it became clear that neither INC nor INC headed UPA will not be able to capture political power anymore at the national level, but Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) or its alliance National Democratic Alliance (NDA) headed by Narendra Modi would be able to win over the election, Natwar became vocal and revealed that he was authoring an autobiography. Thus, the timing chosen for this autobiography is politically significant.

When it was revealed, the INC President Sonia Gandhi became alert along with her daughter Priyanka Gandhi and requested him not to mention about her intention to become the Prime Minister immediately after the 2004 general election. Because, Sonia Gandhi was praised for declining the post of

Prime Minister due to her Italy birth, but for choosing Manmohan Singh to lead the UPA government headed by INC. Natwar was an 'insider' testimony to various developments at various points of time either in the INC or governments headed by the INC etc. In the same way Natwar was an insider who knew very clearly in 2004 that Sonia Gandhi was much interested to become the Prime Minister of India, but on what grounds she gave up such a wish!! Revealing of this 'inside' would diminish the stature of Sonia Gandhi considerably, as she was praised and exalted for not becoming the Prime Minister of the country. So, Sonia Gandhi along with her daughter Priyanka Gandhi requested Natwar not to disclose this 'inside' story. But, Natwar asserted that he would not hide the 'truth'. Thus, the authoring of this autobiography by Natwar made Sonia Gandhi and some others highly uncomfortable.

The other significant unfolding in the last chapters and pages of this volume is Natwar's assertion how he was innocent, but, how he was made a scapegoat in the 'Oil for Food Scam' and went-on to attack the INC and its leadership primarily headed by Sonia Gandhi and the Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. Thus, he attempted to prove his clean image through this autobiography, which he chose to author and release after the INC's drastic decline at the time of 2014 general election to the Lok Sabha and when the position became clear that INC will not be able to form government at the national level. Thus, the timing of this autobiography's release is politically significant.

Natwar was inclined towards the INC prior to India's declaration of independence. Since then he had close association either professionally or personally in various capacities with various top leaders of Nehru – Gandhi family, like: Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi, etc. Both his professional and political life revolved considerably with these personalities and more. But, since the end of 2005 his fate changed drastically and he became aloof from the INC and the Nehru – Gandhi family members too. At the end of the book Natwar denounces Sonia Gandhi and held her responsible for the poor performance of the INC which could not bag even fifty seats in the Lok Sabha and showed his 'silent inclination' towards BJP headed government by Narendra Modi!! But, Natwar fails to justify on what 'political ideological terms' he shifted his political alliance from INC to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who belongs to the right wing BJP. Thus, this book, in one way attempts to expose his 'undisclosed silent shallow ideological shift from INC to BJP, i.e. from Centrist to the Rightist'. In-fact, his son Jagat who also started his political career in the INC shifted his alliance to the BJP after 2005 Volcker report and the subsequent hurdles that he faced from the INC.

Two Innings in Natwar's Life: Professional and Political

Natwar was an Indian diplomat by profession. In his professional diplomatic career he had a satisfactory innings. But, he gave up his Indian Foreign Service in 1984 in-order to enter politics, which he considered as one of his most interested field to serve and prove. With the blessed approval of Indira Gandhi, the former Prime Minister of India, and a towering personality of INC, he entered politics. But, his second life innings in politics was not that satisfactory, when compared to his first innings as a diplomat.

Though the author calls this volume as his autobiography; I consider this as partial. More than autobiography, at first this work is an attempt of an insider's narration of certain significant international political events to which he was a witness during his diplomatic professional career, primarily. Thus, this volume would be certainly interesting and insightful to various persons involved in the diplomatic career, seriously.

Secondly, the second innings (since 1984 to 2005, i.e. up to his ouster from the INC) of Natwar Singh as a politician is a turbulent one. During this duration he was a close associate of the Nehru – Gandhi family and he relied much on this family to succeed politically. This second innings of him coincided with the drastic decline of INC over the years on the one side and the rise of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on the Indian political scene on a drastic scale, on the other side. The readers can certainly benefit from his narration of the role of certain key politicians while dealing with various national and international issues and shades of various political personalities at varying points of time.

This book has a total of twenty two chapters and most of them are devoted on international affairs in which Natwar took part or which occurred during his diplomatic and/or political career. So, the book is mostly about an insider's account of various international and national incidents, to which mostly Natwar was a close witness or he was one among the key players in certain formal and informal decision making process and deliberations. Thus, the work informs us about various political decisions which were taken or deliberated upon, on behalf of India or the INC or government/s at various points of time.

Concluding Observations

Natwar failed to convey us why he felt 'One Life is Not Enough', which is the title of this autobiography. However, I feel his first life innings as an Indian diplomat was a successful one, when compared to the second innings as a 'politician'. In-fact, Natwar too somehow acknowledged great satisfaction over his life's first innings. His utmost satisfaction in first innings made him to move-on to next cherished ambition of proving in politics, which can be considered as a second innings.

In order to turn this volume as a full-fledged autobiography the author should have attempted to focus much more on two primary issues in detail, like; first, on the formation and shaping of his political ideology at various points of time, along with his family members too. And, secondly, turbulent issues in the family which made him to face and realize various shades of life, etc. A clear focus on these two issues are missing, I would regard this as 'partial political autobiography'!! The autobiography however is very interesting.

Book Review

Annapurna Shaw, Oxford India Short Introductions: Indian Cities, 2012: Oxford University Press, pp 200

Gauri Kopardekar

Indian Cities authored by Annapurna Shaw gives a good summary of complexities of urbanization process in India. Though it is titled as a short introduction, it tries to cover wide range of historical and sociological reflections of Indian Cities. This kind of survey supplemented by a lot of data and maps is certainly a good starting point for understanding the urbanization process in India.

Oxford India Short Introductions claim to be concise and stimulating guides to different aspects of India that discuss topical and still enduring subjects and also emerging areas of study and debate. Introduction on Indian cities is as per the claims of the publisher, unravels different and complex elements of urbanization process and presents an evolutionary process of Indian cities. The author points out how urbanization of the developing world and its giant expanding cities is different from that of the West.

A genuine exercise by the author presents methodological difficulties like difficulty in defining a city and fitting it into particular category due to wide differences of population size, economic and social composition of Indian cities. A standard for defining a city in Western and Northern India may not be suitable for the North East region. Also, the census definition of city is old and the cut-off decided in 1950s is not realistic in current scenario. These cities are not comparable as they are different from each other and present different structural and demographic complexity.

With a look at the map showing geographical distribution of cities of all sizes, one finds dense distribution of cities whether small, medium or large, in the plains of Uttar Pradesh. Western Rajasthan being the desert and interiors of Orissa and Andhra show sparse distribution of cities. Remaining India shows a network of cities throughout the territory. Though mere establishment of cities can't ensure balanced regional development, the map showing horizontal vertical expanse of city network visually supports the claim of the author that such a strong network of medium and small sized cities could hold a key to

balance national development due to presence of cities in all corners of the country.

Indian City and Indigenous Modernity

This is a story of India's urban awakening that unravels a different trajectory traversed by Indian cities. It touches upon a debate of Indigenous Modernity or Alternative Modernity.

Cities of developing world can't be represented as they are misfit into western definitions and categories. Indian cities can't be measured by the yardstick of borrowed modernity as the cities in India present a contrast to cities in the West. Indian urban reality is full of slums, squatter settlements, lack of rules, are rather chaotic and show disorderly growth. But a new interest in the cities of developing world was aroused as some cities began to do better and exceed the economic growth of the West. The book brings out a journey of the western experts from a normative outlook towards Indian cities to a positive one. The urban base of cities of developing world was questioned initially, and then a U turn taken by these scholars for accepting the unique nature of these developing cities after studying them from a new and neutral lens and an effort to understand these cities as they are, considering their complex nature and different past.

The author uses this alternative lens to reconcile with the urban reality of India especially with its informal economy, an informal process of city-building in India through centuries. The book sheds light on visible and not-so-visible changes in Indian cities. It explores the expanse and depth of Indian city.

Changing cityscape

Even the cities and their complexities in India are undergoing a change. Pune of eighties has not remained same in 2010. It has changed with globalization. While explaining the **Generic city**, the book talks about its buildings, façade of the city, lifeline i.e. transport system, entertainment and industry, physical and non-living aspects, signs of prosperity and also a struggle for upward mobility among the city dwellers. It also covers how cities are changing with global influence and internationalization.

Annapurna Shaw examines concepts like kinetic and static city depending on the dynamism of cities. **Kinetic City**, a city of impermanence and temporary structures, according to the author, is coexisting with the established and permanent city. The book presents a city not as a conglomeration of population but a way of life. It presents different practices that influence the form and growth of the city and also diverse forces that shape the city.

Seven chapters present past, present and future of the phenomenon called a city. It starts with a historical perspective that presents a brief history of

Indian city, its development in pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial era. City expansion was largely ad-hoc and informal as also organic response to changing requirements. Dual pattern of urban development was inherited by the post-colonial state. In early decades of independence, more new towns were created. City building process was a planned response by the authorities as also unplanned extension made by poor and middle classes to get rooted in the cities.

Urban Growth in the Post-liberalization Era reveals drivers of economic growth and their effects on the city. Cities changed to encompass the growing income and aspirations of emerging middle class. Growth of new economy industries on the peripheries of metropolitan area brought about growth of cities. It tries to show that only Foreign Direct Investment has not been a major contributor to urban projects in the last fifteen years. Investment patterns in large metropolitan region spilling over from the urban cores indicate rapid growth of cities. Also the chapter present different growth pangs and land acquisition conflicts occurring in Indian cities.

Economic Activities of Indian Cities highlights the formal and informal economic activities of cities. It underlines coexistence of formal and informal economy ensuring supplemental phenomenon that make up an Indian city and also notices that there is a gradual formalization of the informal sector is seen in domestic service sector. The book presents a case-study of redevelopment of Lake Market in Kolkata Municipal Corporation and impact of new market on the old market vendors thereby underlining the economic conflict between formal and informal segments of the city.

In the chapter on Identity, Class and Migration, an effort is made towards understanding social fabric of these cities. The author identified two processes of change viz. gentrification and informalization occurring simultaneously to produce hybrid cities of developing countries. Gentrification is transforming older and manufacturing sites into shopping centres, office complexes, middle and upper income residential areas. Informalisation is responding to the needs of poor and middle class for living and working space in the cities and its peripheries.

It also focuses on the role of developers and other actors from the city in changing its face and nature. Also it focuses on city dwellers and their residential clustering based on class, caste, religion etc. It tries to uncover pluralistic cultural history affects the city development process. Also it brings out a shift in city-modeling, changes in building style, acceptance of cosmopolitan global ambience and cities having gated communities with high security and restricted entry. It shows different axes of residential separation in cities, a shift from ethno-lingual residential clustering to an income based one showing a transition from ascription based residential clustering to achievement and status based. An example of Mumbai shows residential differentiation

taking place over decades and how a gradual separation as one of the cosmopolitan and liberal cities started to change making it a sectarian, violence-prone and sons-of-the-soil-driven city harming its plural diversity. The book discusses the quality of life of city dwellers and the limitations in an urban scenario of uneven access and scarce resources. It observes that it is a long way to go for Indian cities if justice needs to be given to the urban poor.

Future of Indian Cities and role of the State

Liveability of cities, their future trajectory is an important aspect that has been discussed along with different challenges that have grappled the cities like providing universal access to basic services, prioritizing, taking care of concerns about health and safety of urban dweller, ensuring inclusive growth and making Indian cities a satisfactory living habitat for urban dwellers.

Integration of public and private actions is essential to tackle major problems of cities in order to make them inclusive and sustainable. Selection of a growth strategy for cities catering to the needs of different socioeconomic classes is the responsibility of the state. Informal ways of city expansion need to be recognized and facilitated so as to manage the haphazard growth.

Though the book states that the role of the state is diluted due to privatization, the state can't remain aloof in the urbanization process. The book claims that 84% of housing sites in Indian cities has been created by the private sector, but such facilitation has certainly been supported by the state itself. Vote-bank politics is connected to city growth. Unauthorized buildings and settlements outside the purview of planning are seen to get promises for regularization. Lack of proper land records and maps are responsible as no open spaces can be traced especially on the fringes. Land regulations are so ambiguous that give the state greater discretionary powers and deciding legality of the land. Also middle class tries to legalize unauthorized structures while poor need support of NGOs or experience eviction and displacement.

Communalization of politics is a common feature found in cotemporary cities. Political parties are seen divided along religious lines engaging in competitive politics. Here the state has an important role to play in aligning diverse and conflicting interests to promote strategies of urban growth and practices of urbanism that allow for equitable and sustainable development of its cities. As the ideas of citizenship and right to the city are changing, a state has a definite role and responsibility of keeping the cityscape together.

Indian Cities: a heterogeneous reality

The whole book revolves around Indian cities. The author has divided cities as large, medium and small based on broad categories of population. But still Indian cities can't be classified into three categories. Some are megacities,

some are metropolis, some are state capitals, some got developed in British era, some are newly emerging cities, some are consciously planned cities, however all are clubbed together. Their development trajectories are different. Cities like Chandigarh and Hyderabad like shared capitals have different dynamics. Politics of investments, attracting FDIs give different flavor altogether. Such subtleties have not been considered. Plural and diverse past is reflected but plurality of forces of development does not get reflected in the analysis.

Though the book brings out political dimension, it talks about general political aspect however, politics of core city and of suburbs show changing dynamics, it gives the shape to city, but that has not been captured by the author. Also the book is silent on urban renewal though it discusses future of cities. A programme like JNNURM which was launched with an objective of urban renewal does not find a place in the analysis presented in the book.

Though the book focuses on the aspect of quality of life, due to the limited scope of the theme, it concentrates on basic needs and services. Considering the complexity of urban reality, analysis of higher needs would have supplemented the analysis and brought out areas that need policy measures for improvement.

It is interesting to see the phenomenon of urbanization of India with the help of a unit of city. But surprisingly there is no mention of rural or hinterland development that affects the city's growth. Peripheral growth has been included in the analysis, however, **urban reality** of India, semi-urban nature of regions surrounding cities doesn't get reflected to the required extent.

The book is full of data about urban population, its distribution, growth rates, investments with their sources and its distribution among different sectors, tables showing concentration of poverty, slum population, migration and its patterns supplemented by maps and other visuals prove to be very handy resource for further research. Author's effort of giving definitions and clarifying different terms leads to clarity about different concepts for the benefit of readers also it helps in demystification of certain myths related to urbanisation.

With the economic transformation and technological advances, magnitude of transition of cities is very high and also has many-layered impacts which are far reaching. The book tries to catch the essence of complex nature of urbanization and simultaneously captures the human and social dimension that makes the city a complete and interesting phenomenon.