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Soumitra De

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Soumitra De

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From Editor's Desk.....

We are happy to bring out this thirteenth volume of the Departmental journal, Journal of Political Studies. We apologise for the delay in bringing out this volume but hope to have wider readership nevertheless. The diversity of the themes is a distinctive aspect of this volume, so is the coming together of scholars and researchers.

We are not satisfied with the copy editing however as the publication could not be delayed any further.

Hope this issue will reflect the current state of interdisciplinary research.

Soumitra De

The Problem of Poverty and the State in Odisha (2000-2010)

Anushuya Pal

Abstract

Odisha has been one of the poorest state's among the 29 (twenty-nine) states in India. Though the incidence of Poverty has come down from 47.15% in 1999-2000 to 39.90% in 2004-05, still the state remains the poorest state among all the major states in India. Various methodologies have been used for the estimation of poverty and from this we have come to deduce that poverty has declined. There are two important reasons that are responsible for the reduction of poverty. Odisha in recent years has experienced economic growth. There has also been intervention of the state through poverty alleviation measures. We argue in this paper that both the factors have contributed to the decline in poverty.

Keywords: Odisha, Poverty, Poverty Alleviation Measures

1. Introduction

Odisha has been one of the poorest state among the 29 (twenty-nine) states in India. It consists of 30 (thirty) districts. It is generally divided into 3 (three) regions; Northern region, Southern region and the Coastal region. A report of the Planning commission indicates that Odisha continues to be the poorest among all the major states of the country. Though the incidence of Poverty has come down from 47.15% in 1999-2000 to 39.90% in 2004-05, inspite of this Odisha still remains the poorest state among all the major states in India. The percentage of population below the poverty line at the all India level in 2004-05 was 21.8 percent as against 26.1 percent during 1999-2000. Thus what we notice is compared to many other states Rural poverty in Odisha is still very high, even though successive Governments have taken different initiatives to reduce the level of poverty (Government of Orissa, Economic Survey, 2008-09). In the state during 1973-74 the percentage of population below poverty line was 66.18% and it declined to 65.29% in 1983. But in 1977-78 it increased to 70.07%. During the period 1987-88 the percentage of population living below the poverty line was 55.58% and finally it declined to 39.90% in the year 2004-05.

The number and percentage of BPL population for the 61st NSS round (2004-05) based on mixed recall period (MRP) and uniform recall period (URP) for all the states and Union Territories, tells us that poverty has declined by 20.2 percentage points from 57.2 percent in 2004-05 (61st NSS round) to 37.0 percent in 2009-10 (66th NSS round). This clearly indicates that there is a welcome sign in drop in Poverty incidence during 2004-05 to 2009-10 (Government of Odisha, Economic Survey, 2012-13, p.263). The Planning commission has appointed so many committees for poverty estimation. But among the various committees there are 2

(two) committees i.e. Lakdawala Committee formed in 1993 and the Tendulkar Committee constituted in 2005 which are the most important ones. These Committees have estimated the number and percentage of poor.

The estimates of poverty from 1973-74 to 2004-05 are based on Lakadwala Committee Methodology and those for the year 1993-94, 2004-05 and 2009-10 are based on NSS data and Tendulkar Committee Methodology. According to Lakdawala Committee the percentage of population living below the poverty line in Odisha has declined by 19.78 percentage points from 66.18 percent in 1973-74 to 46.40 percent in 2004-05. And the poverty estimates of the Tendulkar Committee for the year 1993-94 was 59.10 percent in comparison to 48.56 percent, as per the Lakdawala Committee Methodology. In the year 2009-10, the percentage of poverty as per the Tendulkar Committee was 37 percent. Hence an analysis of the estimates tells us that from 1993-94 to 2009-10, the percentage of population below the poverty line has declined. It is observed that the Lakdawala Committee used uniform recall period Methodology whereas the Tendulkar Committee used mixed recall period Methodology to find out the poverty ratios in Odisha. The table shows the percentage of population below poverty line in Odisha as compared to other major states in India.

Sl. No.	State	Head Count Ratio (percent)						
		1973-74	1977-78	1983	1987-88	1993-94	2004-05*	2009-10*
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Andhra Pradesh	48.86	39.31	28.91	25.86	22.19	29.9	21.1
2	Bihar	61.91	61.55	62.22	52.13	54.96	54.4	53.5
3	Gujarat	48.15	41.23	32.79	31.54	24.21	31.8	23.0
4	Haryana	35.36	29.55	21.37	16.54	25.05	24.1	20.1
5	Karnataka	54.47	48.78	38.24	37.53	33.16	33.4	23.6
6	Kerala	59.79	52.22	40.42	31.79	25.43	19.7	12.0
7	Madhya Pradesh	61.7	61.78	49.78	43.07	42.52	48.6	36.7
8	Maharashtra	53.24	55.88	43.44	40.41	36.86	38.1	24.5
9	Odisha	66.18	70.07	65.29	55.58	48.56	57.2	37.0
10	Punjab	28.15	19.27	16.18	13.20	11.77	20.9	15.9
11	Rajasthan	46.14	37.42	34.46	35.15	27.41	34.4	24.8
12	Tamil Nadu	54.94	54.79	51.66	43.39	35.03	28.9	17.1
13	Uttar Pradesh	57.07	49.05	47.07	41.45	40.85	40.9	37.7
14	West Bengal	63.43	60.52	54.85	44.72	35.66	34.3	26.7
	All India	54.88	51.32	44.48	38.36	35.97	37.2	29.8

Based on MRP consumption of Tendulkar Committee Methodology (GOO, Economic Survey 2012-13, pp.265)

Given below is another table which shows the poverty lines and poverty Head count ratio using the Tendulkar Methodology and Lakdawala Methodology for the year 1993-94, 2004-05 and 2009-10 (GOO, Economic Survey, 2012-13, Odisha, Feb, 2013, p.263).

Committee	Methodology	Year	Rural	Urban	Combined
LAKDAWALA	URP	1993-04	49.72	41.64	48.56
		2004-05	46.80	44.30	46.40
TENDULKAR	MRP	1993-94	63.00	34.50	59.10
		2004-05	60.80	37.60	57.20
		2009-10	39.20	25.90	37.00

The incidence of poverty has declined during 2004-05 to 2009-10. There has been a significant or sharp decline in poverty from 57.20% in 2004-05 to 27% in 2009-10. Odisha still has a high incidence of poverty and the proportion is much higher than the national average. Still as noted earlier as per the report of the Planning Commission and also to other reports poverty ratio has declined in the State. There are several reasons that can be attributed for this decline. Two important reasons for the decline of poverty can be, first there is economic growth in Odisha in more recent times and second it is due to the adoption and implementation of several types of poverty alleviation programmes or measures. To improve the economic condition of the rural and urban poor, the Central Government as well as the State Government has adopted several poverty alleviation measures. Both the factors could have contributed to the decline in the incidence of poverty. We discuss below the rate of economic growth in Odisha then turn to examine the poverty alleviation measures that have been adopted in the state and how far the measures have been successful in its desired effect.

Though poverty has declined in all the NSS Regions of the state but the extent of poverty in Southern and Northern Regions of Odisha is still high. According to Haan and Dubey (2003) though rural poverty in the Coastal and Northern Regions has declined but in the Southern Region the incidence of rural poverty has increased from 80.76% in 1983 to 86.16% in 1999-2000 (Shah, 2010, p.6). This is to some extent because the State has witnessed wide Regional and Social disparities in development more particularly economic growth. The development of all the Regions did not go hand-in-hand or simultaneously. According to NSS data, the Coastal Region has the lowest incidence of poverty while the incidence of poverty is the highest in the Southern and Northern Regions. During the early 1980s poverty in the Southern Region increased (Amit Shah, ODI working paper 325, 2010). From the analysis of NSS data, it is seen that the incidence of poverty has experienced a large fall from 45 percent in 1993-94 to 27 percent in 2004-05 in the Coastal Region. But in the Southern Region it increased by 4 percentage points from 68.8 percent in 1993-94 to 72.7 percent in 2004-05 and the Northern Region has also witnessed the biggest rise in the incidence of rural poverty by 13

percentage point from 46 percent in 1993-94 to 59 percent in 2004-05. Among the three regions, the percentage of poverty is higher in the Southern region than the Northern and Coastal Region. In the Southern region, the very bad condition that prevails is in Koraput (undivided district), where 92% of people lived below the poverty line (Panda, 2004:14). Poverty is chronic in this region. Thus in the Coastal region, the poverty ratio has declined, whereas in the Northern region and in the Southern region it has increased.

2. Odisha's Economy

We have argued in the previous section that there has been a decline in poverty in Odisha in the recent period even though Odisha remains one of the poorest states among all the major states in the country. The incidence of poverty has come down from 57.2 percent to 37 percent during the period 2004-05 to 2009-10. Several reasons can be attributed for this reduction in the rate of poverty. This has been possible because Odisha in recent years has experienced economic growth and this is likely to have affected different sections of the population in a positive manner. It must also be because of the intervention of the state through poverty alleviation measures. Let us first in this section turn to the story of economic growth in Odisha.

Odisha's economy has been classified into three categories which are; agriculture, industry and services. If we compare the Indian economy with the economy of Odisha, we find the economy of Odisha is more agricultural less industrial and less service oriented. But now in the recent period high growth have taken place in the industrial sector followed by the service sector and the agricultural sector. The growth rate in the agricultural sector has fluctuated over the years, due to natural calamities such as cyclones, draughts and floods. But the high growth in Odisha happens to be in the industrial sector. Odisha's industry is mineral based.

Let us first start our discussion of the Odisha's economy with the agricultural sector since it is this sector on which Odisha's economy largely depends. A large percentage of people depend on agriculture. Agriculture provided direct and indirect employment opportunities to around 64 percent of the total work force of the state as per the 1991 census. Agriculture and allied sectors contribute less than 30% towards the state's Gross Domestic Product and Agriculture and Animal Husbandry contributed 28.68 percent of the Net State Domestic Product of the State in 1997-98. The production therefore is low. It is generally held that low productivity in agriculture is because of the predominance of traditional agricultural practices, inadequate capital formation and low investment, inadequate irrigation facilities and because of the uneconomic size of the holdings.

Keeping the importance of agriculture in mind the State Government formulated a comprehensive Agricultural Policy in 1996. The main aim of this policy was to double the production of food grains and oil seeds, generation of adequate employment opportunities in the rural sector and to adopt agriculture as the main

route for eradication of poverty. It stated its main objectives as: to give importance on agriculture so that young persons can accept agriculture as a means of Self Employment, to generate adequate employment opportunities, to create skilled labourer's for management of modern agriculture, to help mechanization of agriculture to increase productivity, to increase area under tea, coffee, rubber, cashew and other plantation crops, to take up extensive training in the field of agriculture and related activities, to reorient agriculture towards export (GOO, Economic Survey, 2000-2001, p.4/2).

Despite of all this effort the growth in the agricultural sector declined due to super cyclone which hit Odisha in October, 1999. Agriculture and Animal Husbandry contributed 32.88 percent of the Net State Domestic Product of the State in 1999-2000. It contributed 28.13 percent to the Net State Domestic Product of the State in 2001-02. It contributed 22.09% of the Net State Domestic Product to the State in 2002-03 at 1993-94 prices.

Production of food grains in the State has also fluctuated over the years. In 1991-92 there was a bumper harvest of production of food grains. It was 72.3 lac tones. But during 1992-93, the production of food grains was very low. It was just 59.6 lac tones which was 17.56% less than the production during 1991-92 (GOO, Economic Survey, 2000-01, p.1/4). In 1993-94, the food grain production was 72.2 lac tones which were just below the level of Production in 1991-92. But production continuously declined during the next three years. In 1994-95, the production of food grains declined to 69.0 lac tones due to unfavourable weather conditions. It further declined to 67.8 lac tones in 1995-96. In 1996-97, low production was recorded; it was just 48.1 lac tones. During 1997-98 and 1998-99, production was 66.1 lac tones and 57.9 lac tones respectively. But during 1999-2000, the production of food grains was seriously affected by the cyclones which hit the 14 fertile coastal districts of the State in October, 1999. This cyclonic storm devastated four coastal districts of Odisha, namely Ganjam, Gajapati, Puri and Khurda. The economy of the State suffered a lot. As a result the Development of the State was seriously affected (Govt. of Odisha, Economic Survey, 1999-2000, p.1/13).

Food grain production declined to a very low level of 49.75 lac MT in 2000-2001 due to draught situation. Though it had taken a long time to come back to the earlier stage, but during 2001-02 there was a record production of good grains of 75.40 lac MT as a result of bumper production of rice. Again it declined to a very low level of 35.55 lac MT on account of severe draught in the State during Kharif, 2002 (Govt. of Odisha, Economic Survey, 2003-04, p.4/3). Due to increase in population, the State's per capita availability of cultivated land which was 0.39 hectare in 1950-51 declined to 0.17 hectare in 1999-2000 and in 2002-03, it declined to 0.16 hectare (Govt. of Orissa, Economic Survey 2000-01, p.1/5, 2003-04, p.1/6).

Let us now turn to Industry in the state. The State placed an important position on industries because of various reasons. The reasons are availability of vast mineral resources, abundance of raw materials and comfortable power situation. There are many important industries which were set up in the State during the different plan periods i.e. Rourkela Steel Plant, National Aluminum Company (NALCO) Indian Charge Chrome Ltd., Paradeep Phosphate and Coal based power plants at Talcher, Kaniha and Banharpali. The State has various large and medium industries and there are three nodal agencies which are engaged in promoting these industries (GOO, Economic Survey, 2003-04, pp. 1/11). The three nodal agencies are Industrial promotion and Investment Corporation Ltd. (IPICOL), Industrial Development Corporation Ltd. (IDICOL) and Odisha State Electronics Development Corporation (OSED) etc. By the end of 1998-99, Odisha had 334 large and medium industries with an investment of Rs.1, 841.99crore and employment potential for 81,188 persons (Government of Odisha, Economic Survey, 1999-2000, p.1/9). In the same way during the year 1999-2000, the State had 339 large and medium industries with an investment of Rs. 1,880.36 crore and employment potential for 82,533 persons. Similarly by the end of 2002-03 Odisha had 358 large and medium industries with an investment of Rs.3, 584.71crore and employment potential for 85,777 persons (Government of Odisha, Economic Survey, 2003-04, p.1/11).

To improve the industrial sector, the State Government reformulated its industrial policy in March, 1996. The emphasis of the policy were as follows: harnessing Orissa's vast natural resources and the potential for accelerated industrial growth consistent with the protection of environment; attracting and facilitating large investment in infrastructure and industries both from within the country and abroad; generating employment on a large scale in industrial/ commercial activities; development of backward areas/regions of the State through industrial/mining ventures, stimulating and strengthening local entrepreneurial base/talent, development of Skills/ expertise etc. (Government of Odisha, Economic Survey,1999-2000, p. 9/1).

The State Government later on reformulated the industrial policy in December, 2001. The main objectives of Industrial Policy, 2001 are: to create a business climate conducive to accelerate investment in industry and infrastructure projects, to raise income, employment and economic growth in the State, to reduce regional disparities in economic development, to balance utilization of the natural resources for sustainable development. To fulfill the above objectives the state Government aimed to: encourage private initiative and restrict Government intervention in such areas where it enjoys a distinct comparative advantage; invite Private Investment for development and operation of quality infrastructure; promote the image of Odisha as an attractive destination for investment and tourism; encourage the creation of small scale industries (SSI) clusters in similar lines of business (Government of Odisha, Economic Survey, 2003-04, p. 9/1).

During 1999-2000, four large and medium industries have been set up with an investment of Rs.10.54 crore and employment for 968 persons. Nine large and medium industries has been set up earlier namely – Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. unit at Sunabada, Rourkela Steel Plant at Rourkela, Indian Rare Earth Ltd at Chhatrapur, Carriage Repair Work Shop at Anugul, Fertilizer Corporation of India (FCI) Units at Talcher, Heavy Water Project at Talcher, National Aluminium Company units at Angul and Damanjodi and Paradeep Phosphate Ltd at Paradeep have been set up in the State in the Central Sector. These are the Units which were set up prior to 1990-91(Government of Odisha, Economic Survey, 2000-2001, p.9/3). As a result the contributions of manufacturing sector in NSDP have been going up over the years. The net value added by manufacture in the State at constant (1980-81) prices was Rs.358.14 crore in 1980-81 which went up to Rs.726.99 crore in 1997-98. The share of the manufacturing sector in the NSDP was 10.40% in 1980-81; 11.20% in 1990-91; 7.37% in 1993-94; 5.31% in 1997-98; 4.57% in 1998-99; 4.30% in 1999-2000 and 7.88% in 2002-03 (Government of Odisha, Economic Survey, 2003-04, p.9/2).

For rapid industrialization in the State, emphasis was given and is being laid on infrastructure development. It has been realized that economic growth depends on infrastructural development. Adequacy of infrastructure in the transport and communication sector is crucial for attracting investment. The Industrial Policy, 1996 accorded special priority to infrastructural development so that more and more funds will be used for large investments in the industrial sector. Development of transportation infrastructure is also important for marketing of agricultural products and enabling the farmers to get a fair price.

It is very much important to improve the quality of life and economic conditions in rural areas in every village. To develop the agricultural condition, rural connectivity is necessary. Improvement of the rural economy is important and for that the State Government has accorded high priority to the development of rural connectivity. According to estimates available with the Planning Commission, about 40% of villages in Odisha have all weather connectivity as compared to 60% at the national level. During 2000-01, the state realized that funds are necessary for development of Rural Roads and Bridges. Rural connectivity has been given highest priority within the Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yojana and Rs.175.00 crore has been earmarked for the purpose. The State Highways, Major District Roads and other District Roads have been constructed and maintained by the Works Department of the Government of Odisha. It also maintains 2,752 km of National Highway and 30 km of Express Highway on behalf of the Government of India (Government of Orissa, Economic Survey, 2000-2001, p.12/2).

The Central Sponsored Scheme i.e. Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) has been implemented in the State. During 2000-01, Government of India sanctioned an amount of Rs.179.70 crore under this scheme for construction/improvement of 574 roads (GOO, Economic Survey, 2003-04). The State

Government proposed to implement various projects to improve the road communication between the State Capital and north-western Districts of the State. There is another project i.e. Bhubaneswar Integrated Road Net Work Project (BIRNWP) on Build Operate Transfer (BOT) basis with an estimated cost of Rs.170 crore has been implemented to remove congestion on NH 5 in the vicinity of Bhubaneswar (GOO, Economic Survey, 1999-2000, 12/3).

The contribution of the tertiary sector i.e. transport, communication, trade, storage etc. to the Net State Domestic Product of Odisha at Factor cost at 1993-94 prices was 17.97 (Economic Survey 2003-04). The contribution of the tertiary sector i.e. Transport, communication, trade, storage etc. to the Net State Domestic Product of Odisha at Factor Cost of 1993-94 prices was 17.97 (Government of Orissa, Economic Survey 2003-04).

The Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) of India increased from Rs. 18,612.73 crore in 1993-94 to Rs. 23,417.98 crore in 1998-99 at 1993-94 prices, showing a compound annual growth rate of 4.70% over the period (Govt. of Orissa, Economic Survey, 1999-2000, p.1/4). The Net State Domestic Product (NSDP) commonly known as State Income increased from Rs.15, 861.30crore in 1993-94 to Rs. 19,329.31 crore (Quick estimate) in 1999-2000 at 1993-94 prices. The increase in NSDP in 1999-2000 over the corresponding figure for 1993-94 is mainly attributable to the increase in SDP of Tertiary Sector as well as Finance and Service/ Sector (Govt. of Orissa, Economic Survey, 2000-01, p.1/4).

The Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) at constant prices (1993-94) of Odisha has increased from Rs. 18,536.66 crore in 1993-94 to Rs. 25,539.01 crore (Quick estimate) in 2002-03, registering an annual compound growth rate of 3.62 percent over the period. The Net State Domestic Product (NSDP) commonly known as State Income increased from Rs.16, 184.88crore in 1993-94 to Rs. 21,861.91crore (Quick estimate) in 2002-03 at 1993-94 prices. During 1999-2000 the GSDP at constant (1999-2000) price of Orissa has increased from Rs.42, 909.62 crore to Rs. 73,542.26 crore (as per the advance estimate) in 2007-08 registering an annual compound growth rate of 6.97 per cent over the period. It has been found that the growth rates of the agriculture sector are not always the same followed by industry and then services. It is because of natural calamities such as cyclones, droughts and floods which Orissa faced frequently. As a result the agricultural sector was badly affected. During 2008-2009 the growth rate of agriculture has remained low whereas the industrial sector has shown a tremendous growth (GOO, Economic Survey, 2009-2010, p.14).

3. The Programmes

We have stated earlier that the decline in poverty ratio can be attributed also to the implementation of poverty alleviation programmes. Hence let us look at the programmes in this section. There are several programmes that were implemented and are being implemented like the Swarnajayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana

(SGSY), Sampoorna Gramin Rojgar Yojana, Rehabilitation of Bonded Labourer's, Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP), Swarna Jayanti Sahari Rojgar Yojana (SJSRY) several housing programmes etc. We will discuss some of these programmes of poverty alleviation.

3.1 Gram Swarojgar Yojana (SGSY)

The scheme named 'Swarnajayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana' came into existence on 1st April, 1999. It is a centrally sponsored scheme and it is jointly funded by the Govt. of India and the State Government in the ratio of 75:25. There are various programmes which were in operation in the rural areas till the end of 1998-99, they were Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), Development of Women and Children in Rural Area (DWCRA); Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSE); Supply of Improved Toolkits to Rural Artisan's(SITRA), Ganga Kalyan Yojana (GKY) and Million Well Scheme (MWS) etc. These programmes it was realized were not sufficient to remove the poverty level in Odisha in a coherent manner. For this reason these programmes were merged into a single scheme called 'Swarnajayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana'.

Its objective is to bring the assisted poor families (Swarozgaries) above the poverty line by ensuring appreciable sustained level of income over a period of time i.e. increasing the income level of families (Swarozgaries) above the poverty line (with income of Rs. 2,000/- p.m. in three years by providing them income generating assets through a mix bank credit and Govt. subsidy (Govt. of India, Ministry of Rural Development and Economic Survey, 2008-09, Government of Odisha, p.8/4).

The Scheme helps the rural poor through the Self Help Groups (SHGs). It emphasizes skill development through well designed training courses. It also provides for marketing of the goods produced by the Swarnajayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana Swarozgaries. It gives importance on the vulnerable groups among the rural poor. During the 2003-04, its target was to assist 54,348 Swarozgaries, but it has assisted 59,289 Swarozgaries. During 2006-07, 68,687 Swarozgaries have been assisted under Swarnajayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana scheme against the target of 66,250 Swarozgaries in Odisha. During 2007-08, the target of SGSY programme was to assist 81,656 Swarozgaries but it has succeeded to assist 87,171 swarozgaries under the scheme which showing an achievement of 107 per cent(Government of Odisha, Economic Survey, 2007-08, p,8/4).The State Government has encouraged self-help groups (SHGs) and it has described it as an important tool for removal of poverty particularly for women living below the poverty line. The Swarnajayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana mainly concentrates on those exploited groups in the rural areas who have been deprived. In the 2000-01 Economic Survey we find that the Swarnajayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana wasto cover at least 50% beneficiaries who belong to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes etc.

In October, 1999 Odisha had faced a critical situation, a Super Cyclone had devastated the rural economy in 14 districts. The worst hit districts were Ganjam and Gajapati districts. In these 2 districts and also other coastal districts the economic condition of the people was terrible. To tackle this situation, a number of individual oriented schemes were implemented in these districts. For this reason the total expenditure during 2000-01 upto 04.11.2000 under Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana was Rs.6.84 crore (Govt. of India, Economic Survey, 2000-01). In the Gajapati district the percentage of women Swarozgaries was 67% and 5% in the Nawarangpur district.

3.2 Sampoorna Gramin Rojgar Yojana

Lack of employment is one of the main reasons for rural poverty. The Sampoorna Gramin Rojgar Yojana came into existence with effect from 25th September, 2001 for the reduction of unemployment in rural areas. The two wage employment generating schemes, namely JGSY (the Jawahar Gram Samiridhi Yojana) and EAS (Employment Assurance Scheme) have merged with Sampoorna Gramin Rojgar Yojana scheme which is a centrally sponsored scheme with funding pattern of 75:25 of the cash component between the Central and the State. The main aim of this programme is to provide additional wage employment in all rural areas and thereby provide food security and improve nutritional levels. There is another objective of this programme i.e. the creation of durable community, social and economic assets and infrastructural development in rural areas. Its programme strategy is 5% of the fund and food grains under the Sampoorna Gramin Rojgar Yojana will be kept in the Ministry for usage in the rural areas affected by Super Cyclone and flood affected.

During 2006-07, the Scheme was used in 11 (eleven) districts; Angul, Balasore, Baragarh, Bhadrak, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Khurda, Nayagarh and Puri. In 2006-07, the target of man day's employment was 183.60 lac but it created 183.61 lac man days employment. The expenditure in these circumstances was Rs.132.23 crore and it showed 100% achievement (Government of Odisha, Economic Survey, 2007-08, p. 8/5). During 2007-08, the scheme was used in 6 districts i.e. Cuttack, Jagat Singhpur, Kendrapara, Khurda, Nayagarh and Puri. In 2007-08, the target of man day's employment was 88.27 lac but it created 74.17 lac man days employment. The total expenditure in this field was Rs.68.65 crore and it showed an achievement of 84%. When Odisha was in a bad condition, the programme helped the rural landless agricultural labourers through the supply of food grains (Government of Odisha, Economic Survey, 2008-09, p.8/6).

Though Sampoorna Gramin Rojgar Yojana programme emphasizes or lays stress on wage employment and food security to poor rural wage seekers, the Government however have given more emphasis on development of village infrastructure like market complexes, village roads with drains and improvement of village water bodies under the title of 'Bazar', Sadak and Pani' (Government of Odisha, Economic Survey, 2008-09, p8/6).

3.3. Biju Gramin Bazar Yojana (BGBY)

Biju Gramin Bazar Yojana has been launched during 2003-04. It creates self-employment through the development of village structure 3,378 shopping complexes have been constructed during 2003-04. During 2004-05, it has been planned to build 15,700 shopping complexes and 314 model tanks/ ponds.

3.4. Gopabandhu Gramin Yojana (GGY)

Gopabandhu Gramin Yojana is a new scheme, which had been launched by the State Government during 2006-07. It provides additional development assistance to the targeted 11 (eleven) districts. They are – Angul, Balasore, Jagat Singhpur, Kendrapara, Khurda, Nayagarh and Puri.

The Main objective of the scheme is to provide additional development funds. It also provides infrastructure facilities like, Bijli, Sadak and Pani to the targeted districts and every revenue village in the identified eleven districts. Government has allotted Rs.10.00 crore per annum for a period of 6 (six) years i.e. from 2006-07 to 2011-12. It has been increased from Rs.10.00 crore to Rs.15.00 crore per district effective from the year 2008-09. Panchayat Raj Department has played an important role for the purpose of administration of the Gopabandhu Gramin Yojana.

Odisha Rural Housing Development Corporation has allotted an amount of Rs.646.59 crore in favour of 1,62,458 cases under different schemes. After 2006-07 no proposal has been sanctioned (Government of Orissa, Economic Survey, 2007-08, p. 8/14).

4. Housing

Like food, cloth, housing is one of the basic necessities for human survival. A house is very important for any normal citizen, because it gives economic security and dignity to a citizen in Society. There are some problems for some of the people who do not get any support to build houses. For this reason the Central Government announced a National Housing and Habitat Policy and its objective is to provide 'Housing for all' by the end of the Tenth Plan period. The scheme was meant for people in the rural and urban areas, people who live below poverty line. In the rural areas the Housing scheme is implemented by Panchayat Raj Development and in the urban areas the Housing schemes are implemented by Housing and Urban Development Department. Now let us turn to these programmes.

4.1 Rural Housing Programme

There are various programmes which are being implemented in the rural areas, like Indira Awas Yojana Normal and Upgraded and PMGY etc.

Indira Awas Yojana (Normal)

Indira Awas Yojana Scheme was launched during 1985-86 as a sub-scheme of RLEGP, IAY and its sub-scheme was Jawahar Rojgar Yojana (JRY). It is a

centrally sponsored scheme funded on cost sharing basis between the Government of India and the State in the ratio of 75:25. The objective of the Indira Awas Yojana is primarily to help construction/ up gradation of dwelling units of members of Scheduled Castes/ Scheduled Tribes, Freed bonded labourers, minorities in the below poverty line category and other below poverty line non SC/ ST rural house-holds by providing them a lump sum financial assistance. The beneficiaries under this scheme are selected by Gram Sabha/ Palli Sabha and houses are constructed by the beneficiaries themselves. During 2003-04, the Target to build houses was 66,026 and the total fund in this field was Rs.135.25 crore, 58,996 houses have been constructed in the state by utilizing Rs.126.36 crore with an achievement of 89 per cent (Govt. of Orissa, Economic Survey, 2004-05, p.8-11). During 2007-08 about 90,627 houses were completed against the target of 1,11,431 houses with an expenditure of Rs. 23,371.67 lakh. However the achievement under the IAY (Normal) was 81 Per cent.

Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) (Up Gradation)

During 1999-2000, there are some steps which have been taken to improve the Rural Housing (RH) Programme. The objective of this scheme is to upgrade the kutchha houses to pucca one with fire proof roof. The unit cost of each unit is Rs. 10,000/- only.

Additional Indira Awas Yojana (out of 5% allocation for Natural Calamities)

As per this scheme, the Govt. of India has sanctioned 4923 numbers of additional Indira Awas Yojana for Flood victims out of which 5% allocation is earmarked for Natural Calamities victims. By 2006-07, the number of houses completed was 4651 and the total expenditure in this area was Rs.930.51 lac (Government of Odisha, Economic Survey, 2007-08, p,8/13).

Additional Indira Awas Yojana (for Cyclone, Flood victims)

In 1999 the Super Cyclone severely devastated most of the houses and it affected the people severely for this reason, the Govt. of India has allotted 6 lac additional Indira Awas house to Cyclone victims. For the Cyclone victims, Govt. of India has sanctioned Rs.165 crore to construct the one lac Indira Awas Houses in 24 districts which were affected by the flood in 2001. During 2006-07, the Indira Awas Yojana Schemes have acquired a good result. It shared an achievement of 99.85% (Government of Odisha, Economic Survey, 2007-08, P8/13).

Mo Kudia Yojana

The scheme 'Mo Kudia' has been introduced on 1st April, 2008. Its aim is to provide dwelling houses to the needy rural poor those who are living below the poverty line. It shall also improve the resources under Indira Awas Yojana and increase the availability of housing for the rural poor. As per newspaper reports the achievement under the State sponsored Mo Kudia Scheme in the year 2010-11 is comparatively better than the 2009-10. During the 2009-10 only 223 houses were completed against the target of 28,355 whereas about 4280 houses were

completed during 2010-11 against the target of 40,677 with utilization of Rs. 12 crore (Express News Service, July 2010)

5. National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme

NREGS came into existence in 2005. Its aim was provide for livelihood security in rural areas. The programme came into operation in 19 districts of the state during 2006. The states are Gajapati, Ganjam, Jharsuguda, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Kendujhar, Koraput, Malkangiri, Mayurbhanj, Nabarangpur, Nuapada, Rayagada, Sambalpur, Sonepur and Sundargarh etc. since 1st April 2007, in 5 districts namely Angul, Baleswar, Bargarh, Bhadrak and Jajpur the NREGA programme is in operation and since 1st April, 2008 the programme was implemented in the remaining 6 districts namely Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara, Khurda, Nayagarh and Purietc (Ray, 2010, pp.199). Its main aim is to provide employment opportunities to the rural households by guaranteeing at least 100 days of wage employment in a year. It is used for the upliftment of the poor people from the hunger and distress (GOO, Economic Survey 2007-08 pp. 8/7). Its other objectives are to provide or generate productive assets, protect the environment, empower the rural women, reduce the rural urban migration and foster social equity (AICTE, 2009, pp.2). The NREGA provides the necessary safety-net for job seeking rural poor. The main features of NREGA are:

- 100 days unskilled wage employment to a rural family in a financial year
- Equal wage for men and women
- Ban on contractors and labour displaying machines
- Participatory planning and identification of works through pallisabha
- Payment of wage on weekly basis but not later than 15 days
- If it fails to provide work to job seeker within 15 days of application unemployment allowance will be provided to the job seeker
- Social audit by Palli/ Gram Sabha
- The participation of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in planning and execution of NREGS works
- Registration and providing the Job Card in Gram Panchayat (GOO, Economic Survey, 2008-09, pp.8/8)

The Gram Panchayats therefore play a pivotal role for the implementation and execution of this programme. Since 2009 NREGA which was later renamed as MGNREGA like the other wage employment programme it has generated employment for the poor rural households but only for about 35 to 40 days of wage employment during 2007-10. However it is found that during 2006-07 the performance of MGNREGA in 19 districts was comparatively better. During this

period the average days of employment that had been provided to the poor wage seeking households was 35 to 40 days which was lesser than the previous years. It is also found that out of the total registered households about 90 per cent have been issued job cards. During 2007-08 in 24 districts 48.95 lakh households have come under the programme out of which 42.69 lakh job cards were issued (Meher, Padhi, 2010, p. 85).

When the programme was implemented in 19 districts of Orissa in 2006-07, it is seen that about 14.07 lakh (54.26 per cent) households had demanded employment under the MGNREGA and interestingly more than 99 per cent of them were provided wage employment under the programme. But during 2009-10 the picture was different. In these years in 30 districts only 14.13 lakh households had demanded employment under the programme and 99 per cent of them could be given employment for about 40 days during the year. So it can be said that though there is poverty and lack of employment opportunity the programme has failed to attract the wage seeking households in large numbers in recent years (Meher, Padhi, 2010, p.86). During 2008-09 Ganjam district (59.94 days) recorded highest average days of employment generated per household and the lowest was in Puri district (10.92 days).

Though MGNREGA has been implemented to reduce the acute poverty of the poor in the rural areas by providing minimum 100 days of wage employment to every wage seeker but it has failed to provide the desired outcome. There are several reasons for the failure of this programme till the year 2010. It has been found that:

- i) Projects at the village /GP level are not planned properly
- ii) Though the job cards are issued to every wage worker family to generate at least 100 days of wage employment but the problem relates to the design of the job cards, their distribution and maintenance. The job cards should be reader friendly and maintained properly (AICTE, 2009, PP. 3).
- iii) Many poor people do not want to work under MNREGA programme because of unusual delay in payment of wage
- iv) Lack of adequate administrative and technical manpower at the block and GP levels. For this reason it has hampered the preparation of plans, scrutiny approval monitoring, and measurement of works and maintenance of stipulated records at the block and GP level.
- v) Many people are not aware about their entitlements under NREGA such as work on demand, unemployment allowance, worksite facilities, and minimum wages and so on. So it is necessary to make them aware about their entitlements under NREGA otherwise the demand-driven nature of NREGA will be weakened.

6. Assessment of Poverty Alleviation Programmes in Odisha

Kishore C Samal in one of his article is of the opinion that development is not enough to reduce Chronic Poverty and hunger in Odisha. There are various rural development programmes which are in operation in Odisha like IRDP, JRY, IAY, MWS, EAS, GKY, DWCRA, TRYSEM, DPAP, DDP, RWSS, NSAP but the poor have not got any fruitful result of these programmes. There are flaws in the implementation of these programmes. Most of these programmes have failed to reach the correct beneficiaries. There is another reason for the bad implementation of these programmes and these are; the leakages of benefits and inflation of mandays of employment generated. To him there is one more reason which is responsible for this-the absence of structural change in society. In Odisha the KBK districts is considered as a mostly backward and poverty stricken areas. To remove poverty in this region the State Government has launched Revised Long Term Action Plan during 1998-99 in consultation with the Govt. of India. Since this is an important programme hence let us discuss the RLTAAP programme in Odisha in brief.

The Revised Long Term Action Plan was launched by the state government in consultation with the Govt. of India in 1998-1999 for the speedy development of the KBK districts. The undivided districts of Koraput, Bolangir, Kalahandi (KBK) is considered as one of the most backward areas in Odisha. They suffer from multi-faceted backwardness. So the RLTAAP has been adopted since 1998-99 to remove disparities in these districts. It has eleven components which are agriculture, horticulture, watershed Development, Afforestation, Rural Employment, Irrigation, Health, and Emergency Feeding, Drinking water supply, Rural Connectivity and welfare of the ST/SC etc. The objective of this RLTAAP is several like droughts proofing, speeding up the socio-economic development of this region, poverty alleviation and improved quality of life. RLTAAP envisaged a total outlay of Rs.6251.06 crore over a period of 9 years from 1998-99 to 2006-07. The funds were to be utilized for the development of all these components. In spite of this the percentage of families living below the poverty line still remains the same. Not only that, it has shown an increasing trend.

The Special Area Development Programme i.e. RLTAAP has been implemented in all the eight districts of undivided KBK districts. The eight districts are Kalahandi, Nuapada, Bolangir, Sonapur, Koraput, Malkangiri, Nawarangpur and Rayagada etc. These districts are the most underdeveloped and the most backward districts with perpetual poverty. There are some indicators of these districts for that reason KBK region is regarded as the most backward and under-developed districts. The indicators are low level of literacy rate and female literacy rate, high morbidity on account of under nutrition, endemic malaria and other local diseases, scarcity of food, starvation deaths, lack of awareness about the use of family planning methods etc.

About 82.60 percent of families live below the poverty line in KBK districts as per the 1992 census, which was conducted by Panchayati Raj Department, Government of Orissa. For the development of KBK districts different departments of the state Government are implementing several developmental and welfare oriented programmes/schemes. These are watershed Development Project, Rural Electrification, infrastructure, health, rural development, tribal development etc. Its fund is to be shared between the central government and the state government in the ratio of 86.6% and 13.4%. The programme has different activities like dairy and backyard poultry. The objective of this programme is to increase the income source of rural households so that they can improve the quality of life of the people. The state government has been allocated 1008.84 lakhs during the financial years 2002-03, 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06 for utilization under different activities in the KBK region under the plan.

The Kalinga Centre for Social Development of KIIT conducted a study and found (nd) that the scheme was implemented in all districts of the KBK region in a top-down and target oriented manner. The beneficiaries of these programmes are those people who have cows and buffaloes. For their treatment they need Veterinary Dispensaries/ Livestock Aid Centres. But lack of infrastructure facilities did not provide health care services to the livestock owners. The organization found that there are a number of VDS/ LACs that are functioning in rented houses in KBK districts but the buildings are not well structured. And they are not suitable for treatment centre. It was observed that among the districts Nawarangpur district spent the highest percentage of its funds for the construction of LACs. The least amount has been utilized in Bolangir district.

Veterinary health camps have been organized in different health, deworming, heat induction camps in KBK districts under RLTAAP programme. The main aim of these camps is to provide facilities to the beneficiaries for health check-up, investigation, treatment, deworming and supply medicines for infertility of the animals at their localities. The allocation of funds for these camps was 100%. Though there are some disparities in the district wise allocation of funds. In this field Koraput have got the highest amount of allocation while the Nawarangpur district have got the least amount of financial allocation.

These camps helped the beneficiaries a lot even though the percentage of attendance of the beneficiaries in different camps was not equal. But most of the beneficiaries were in favour of frequent organization of camps. For the continuation of these camps they conducted training programmes for SHG members and unemployed youth as Pashupalan Sahayak so that the beneficiaries can get the opportunity about animal health check-up investigation, type of disease of the animals, vaccination, animal feed for enhancement of milk production etc. But the percentage of attendance of the beneficiaries in the training camps was very poor because of lack of communication and awareness of the beneficiaries. In most of the districts like Rayagada, Nawarangpur, Malkangiri,

Subarnapur and Kalahandi they do not take part in any training camps. From the animal sources milk is used for the purpose of trade. OMFED i.e. Odisha State Co-Operative Milk Producers Federation have worked in this field. They used it in the domestic markets as branded, packed liquid milk as well as milk products.

The RLTAAP programme has given more importance on institutional development in KBK districts. Ninety two VDS and of LACs have been constructed during the year 2002-06 for the expansion of the animal husbandry of farmers. The department of animal husbandry has been shifted from animal health care services for the prevention and control of animal diseases.

The study by the Kalinga Centre for Social Development also found that there are some problems of implementing agency and service provider. They focused on the guidelines, allocation of funds, utilization of funds etc. They have found that lack of clear guidelines is one of the problems in this programme. Most of the beneficiaries are deprived from the benefits from of the scheme due to inadequate resources. The expenditure for the construction of LAC building is quite low in all the districts. In the camps the supply of medicine is very limited. Though there are various problems in the implementation of the scheme of RLTAAP but it has been reported by most of the beneficiaries that the programme RLTAAP is satisfactory. The KIIT have given some suggestions in the implementation of RLTAAP programme on the basis of some relevant primary and secondary data. They have given more reliance on the development of dairy and poultry in the KBK districts. The following suggestions were made:

- i) Release of funds need to be at regular interval
- ii) Adequate modern instruments and medicines should be provided for different diseases
- iii) Adequate number of vehicle should be provided at the field level for morbidity in remote areas
- iv) More and more number of new Milk Producers Cooperative Societies needs to be formed in the remote areas and the existing one needs to be expanded in order to increase the market accessibility as well as collection of milk
- v) A good number of staff is to be provided for better delivery of services at the doorstep of the farmers

The New Indian Express in 2008 however noted that the Revised Long Term Action Plan for the eight KBK districts has failed (The New Indian Express, Nov, 2008). Though the state government has tried to improve the socio-economic condition of the rural poor through the Revised Long Term Action Plan but a quarter of the beneficiaries it is a complete failure. There are no noticeable changes seen in the KBK region. The programme has failed in the KBK region

due to corruption and maladministration which was shown in drought-proofing works. The watershed project was not fully implemented. There are some records which show that implementing agencies have failed to provide one time meal ranging from 28 days (Nawarangpur district) to 186 days (Kalahandi district) per annum. The quality and quantity of food was very bad and almost 38 percent beneficiaries were not satisfied with them. There are some villagers in this region who have migrated from one place to another due to lack of employment opportunities (Patro, Nov, 2008).

It is from The Indian Express dated Feb 21, 2004 we come to learn that there is low utilization of RLTA Funds in the KBK region. It is reported that out of a total allocation of Rs.377 crores only 111 crores has been spend by the state government of Orissa which is less than one third allocation for the financial year 2003-04(Dash, Social Change, June 2007, Vol. 37 No.2).

Health and medical facilities in the KBK districts is very poor. There are many medical and health posts that had remained vacant. So it can be said that shortage of doctors remains a major problem in the region. The KBK districts are malaria prone. State Government is trying their best to wipe out this disease and also diarrhea or water borne disease. Two more health related problems are seen in the KBK districts i.e. malnourishment and anemia (Social Change, June 2007, p. 90).

Kalahandi district is one of the poverty stricken districts. Cholera often spreads in this district. Hunger still remains a major concern in this district. A newspaper report reveals that many of the tribal people in Kalahandi district do not have food all through the year and are compelled to eat poisonous mango kernel in order to meet hunger. In this district the monthly per capita expenditure for the Scheduled Tribes has declined in the state whereas the monthly per capita expenditure of scheduled castes has increased. As a result it is found that the deprived have become more deprived in Orissa (Express News Service, 15th July 2010). Government has failed to provide adequate potable drinking water facilities, lack of medical facilities and communication network in the remote areas. The people of this region especially various tribal communities suffer from high morbidity due to under nutrition (Frontline, Jan, 12, 2007, p.44). These starvation deaths shook the conscience of the nation. It still remains a serious concern in the KBK districts. Crores of rupees are spent on poverty alleviation and development schemes but poverty have not disappeared from this area/region (The New Indian Express, 16th May, 2012). The newspaper reported that it is well known to all where the money disappeared. Lot of money was spent on development but the schemes are not implemented due to corrupt politicians, officials and contractors. As a result the region becomes poorer than it was in 1980. The developmental and welfare schemes cannot improve the condition of the poor people in this region and change the situation which they face in everyday life (The New Indian Express, 11thSep, 2009). Not only that, the communication system is a major constraint. For that reason the people of this region cannot have access to markets,

health care and educational opportunities or institutions (Frontline, 12th January 2007, p.45).

Though the Government has implemented so many development policies but the policies alone is not enough. It needs proper and appropriate follow-up action/execution. It is also to be pointed out that lack of awareness among the people in the KBK region about the government schemes or programmes is another reason for the backwardness of this region. This can be eradicated by increasing the levels of 'functional literacy' and educational opportunities (Social Change, June 2007, p.92). So it can be said that the Government has tried to perform well for the upliftment and development of the people in the KBK districts specially the disadvantaged groups (Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) but for some reason the development of the people in the KBK districts still remains a dream. The reasons are lack of dedication, sincerity, integrity, on the part of the officials and official/staff absenteeism etc. (Social Change, June 2007, p.89).

From the above discussion it can be said that the State Government has tried to reduce poverty through a number of poverty alleviation measures in collaboration with the Government of India and its own. Though it can never be denied that poverty has declined in the state inspite of these we find till now poverty remains a serious issue in the state especially in the underdeveloped region. Government has implemented so many programmes but whether it reaches the grassroots level or not government should look after this matter. Many people in the backward region are unaware about the Government programmes. So awareness campaign in rural areas is must. And the Government must look after the proper execution and implementation of these programmes so that the poor people can get all facilities which are mostly essential and the Government programmes must reach every nook and corner of the state.

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NGOs Working on Women Issues: Some Findings from Nanded District of Maharashtra

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Abstract

In recent times the number of NGOs working on women related issues has increased. NGOs are emerging as an alternative agent for social change and development. Therefore, NGOs are considered as agents and mediators between governmental agencies and communities. Governmental agencies also develop partnership with the NGOs and thus, they are called the third sector in the field of development. The study finds that these NGOs are negotiating with the community leaders, rural elites, caste and patriarchy when they are working over issues of women. Women's mobility is still controlled by these socio-cultural forces and the NGOs adopt and profess a liberal ideology and perspective to negotiate with the societal structure.

Key Words: Maharashtra, NGOs, Patriarchy, Women Issues, Empowerment

1. Introduction

In the Indian society, women have many issues related to their caste, class, patriarchy and gender. These issues are associated with the society and its structure, values, norms and culture. The village communities of Indian society are male-dominated in nature and patriarchy dominates everyday life of the village communities. Patriarchy controls women's work, freedom, choice, sexuality, body and rights. Women have no rights, freedom and choice to exercise. This is so even though they have been given equal rights and power by the Indian Constitution and since independence, the Indian state have been implementing policies and programs for the empowerment of women. But still, the state and its agents have not been able to bring about gender equality in the Indian society. The policies and programmes of the state had failed to empower women. Realising this, the state had made changes in its approach for the empowerment of women. State had sponsored semi-governmental organizations and developed partnership along with non-state actors such as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and community based organizations. Thus, NGOs have emerged as a third sector of development. The NGOs have been expected to play a vital role in the process of empowerment of women.

Women's issues are very complex and complicated and issues are also interrelated. The roots of the issues are found in the social structure of the society in which women are living. After government failures Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have been given space in the implementation of several developmental programmes. It was expected that the role of the Non-Governmental Organizations would be effective and impressive. NGOs are widely believed to be non-profitable, independent and charitable organizations. It

is argued by the NGO workers that since they work with the people at the grass roots level therefore, they know the reality better. They also follow bottom up approach and people's participatory method in the field in order to provide services to the needy. But for bringing gender equality in the village communities, study shows that NGOs are facing many issues and challenges because of the prevalence of patriarchy, caste based ideologies. Women are considered as second citizen in the society. She has no choice and freedom to exercise her power. Her sexuality, body, work and power are controlled by the caste, male-dominant culture and patriarchy.

Since the 1970s, the paradigm of development has shifted from the welfare approach to development and charity approach to empowerment approach. In this process the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have been given space as agents, mediators and partner in policy formulations, implementation and evaluations. Therefore, NGOs take initiatives in the implementation of various developmental programmes such as poverty alleviation, women empowerment, water, health, education and sanitation. NGOs have applied their approaches and methods of implementations of programs at different levels in several programs, such as joint forest managements, watershed development programs, village sanitation, panchayati raj and micro-credit. NGO workers have played a very vital role as community organizers and mobilize the masses for their participation in the community development programs. Since the 1990s, micro-credit is adopted as a method of poverty alleviation and women empowerment. In the implementation of micro-credit policies at the grassroots level the role of NGOs are identified as crucial because of the methods of working. Under this scheme, NGOs are provided funds by the World Banks, IFAD, RMS and State level agencies. Thus, the NGOs-led SHGs model of micro-credit has emerged as a more successful and popular Grameen Bank model of women empowerment in Bangladesh in general and India in particular. The nature, structure, ideology and role of the NGOs in India however have varied across the states, regions and districts. These organizations are recognized by different nomenclatures such as; Community Based Organizations (CBS), Action Groups (AC), Social Movements (SM), People's Action Groups and agent of Civil Society. Voluntary Organizations (VOs) are registered under the society's registry acts (1860s) and are called NGOs, Non-Governmental Organizations by name. There is no authentic record of the number of NGOs and VOs in India. It is estimated that India has 20,00,000 NGOs. Their spread varies across the regions in India. In the case of women empowerment, NGOs have implemented many programs related to education, health, women rights and development.

This study focuses on the role of NGOs and issues related to the development and empowerment of women of the village communities through micro-credit programmes. This program is implemented for the eradication of poverty and women empowerment by providing credit to women who are poor. More

importance was given to the implementation of micro-credit policies at the grassroots level by making it more flexible, democratic and participatory. Since the 1990s, feminist scholars have engaged with engendering development with feminist perspectives. Thus, feminist arguments give birth to the different approaches on women development; such as women in development (WID) to women and development (WAD), Women Environment and Development (WED) and Gender and Development (GAD). Feminist scholars thought that micro-credit played a vital role as strategy, tools, policy and techniques which provide financial support for income generating activities. The findings of the studies carried out by social scientists on the impacts of micro-credits on the lives of the poor in different parts of the world are varied. The radicals and socialist scholars however criticize the role of NGOs on the ground that they are promoting capitalism in the south on the name of providing credit, skill, training and help to the poor women under the name of poverty eradication and women empowerment. They point out that most of the SHGs avoid talking about, which could change the very structure of the society (Korten: 1990). The other criticisms are raised by radicals and socialistic scholars that Self Help Groups (SHGs) are nothing but the agents of imperialists. In the contexts of Indian society, the arguments are coming from the dalit scholars who hold that micro-credit led-NGOs are weakening the dalit movement. They argue that Micro-credit is a policy of imperialist and capitalist countries that support local NGOs to work on the micro-credit front to expand the markets. The political economy behind micro-credit is to link women with the global market. However, these types of arguments do exist on the one hand and on the other hand, we find that there are no systematic studies that have been conducted which reveals the linkages between microcredit supported enterprises and larger issues of productivity, employment, use of micro-credit by women as per their wish and choice in sustainable manner on securing livelihood especially in the non- formal sector (Nair, 2011).

2. Review of Literature

Much of the early studies carried out on the NGOs are evaluative in nature. Mostly, the NGOs are classified and typified by them into different categories. D.C.Korten (1990) classified NGOs on different basis and called them first, second, third and fourth generation NGOs. According to his classification, first generation NGOs involve themselves in the direct delivery of services to meet an immediate deficiency or shortage experienced by the beneficiary of population, such as needs for food, health care or shelter. During emergency such as flood, earthquake or a war they give humanitarian assistance, which can be clearly distinguished from developmental assistance. The aid is given directly to the individual, to the family or the community. In this case the NGO is the doer while the beneficiary is passive. The strategy of second generation NGOs focuses on groups such as women or landless agricultural workers. The work assumes a partnership between the NGOs and the community. This generation NGOs focus

on creating new policies and institutions benefiting large areas and communities. Fourth generation NGOs strive to imbibe public consciousness with an alternative vision, adequate to mobilize voluntary action on National and Global scale. Sudarshan Iyengar (1998) classifies NGOs in Gujarat into four categories: Gandhian service delivery organizations, professional organizations and mobilization organizations. Eliot (1987) also classified NGOs into three types; such as, charity, development and empowerment NGOs. The studies carried out after the 1990s are critical and radical in the sense of their approaches and perspectives. S.P. Punalekar (2004) followed dialectical perspective to analyze the role of NGOs in social change. Other groups of scholars, Anand Teltumade and Bimrao Bansod (2010) argued that NGOs are weakening the Dalit movements in India. However, the studies carried out after 1990s criticize the work of NGOs under the neo-liberal policies in the phase of globalization. Radicals raise arguments that NGOs are working as agents of imperialism and market economy and that they are helping in the expansion of the market in the third world countries.

Most of the scholar's particularly radical scholars had raised issues and questions about the role of the NGOs in empowerment. In the context of the emergence of micro-credit and women empowerment some others feel that microcredit hardly contribute to poverty reduction. It does not reach to the poorest of the poor since the poor apprehend a risk in borrowing and also lack basic facilities thus it leads to the exclusion of core poor (Scully, 2004; Simanowitz, 2002; Ciravegna, 2005; Hulme and Mosley, 1996; Marr, 2004; Kirkpatrick and Maimbo, 2002; Mosley, 2001). In addition, some authors have criticized the impact of microcredit on women. Commonly, microfinance schemes have a clear focus on women as they are more reliable and have higher payback ratio. As they use substantial part of their income generated through this schemes for health and education of children, thus it helps in reducing poverty within the households (Pitt & Khadker, 1998). But, very often it is found that in patriarchal society women are forced to hand over the loan and income to men who substantially used this for their own purposes. Actually, this leads to an additional burden on women because they are held responsible for repayment (Goetz & Gupta, 1996).

Concern is also raised as to how to measure the contribution of microcredit or the extent of changes in the social and economic conditions of the recipients of microfinance. Three issues are of importance: first, which contribution is seen as the most important (improvement of income, accumulation of assets, empowerment of women etc.); second, does microcredit reach the core of poor or does it predominately improve the income of the better-off poor; and third, do the benefits outweigh the costs of microfinance schemes (Dunford, 2006). Most of the studies related to this approach suffer from being anecdotal. Moreover, it is observed that a trend is developing on commercialization of the microfinance sector. This has led microfinance organization on providing a wider range of

financial service in the form of both group lending and individual loans to poor than social development. Due to such a trend financial sustainability of microfinance institution becomes a priority than helping the poor to overcome their poverty. Further, the involvement of traditional commercial banks and private banks in microfinance is growing rapidly with investment of capital funds and social venture capitalist to enlarge their profit making portfolio. Their increased competition on supply of loan is resulting in higher level of indebtedness as they are availing multiple loans from different sources simultaneously. In fact, various studies show that this is leading to lower repayment rates, less favorable credit contracts on interest rates, endangering the long- term sustainability of the programmes and finally the welfare of poor people (Lakshman, 2006; Ciravegna, 2005; Vogelgesang, 2003). Other studies view that SHG is used as 'instrument' of poor women to meet the ends of neo-liberal capital expansion. It legitimizes 'long and short term credit' as an effective means to perpetuate and open up market by developing purchasing capacity of common people. In other words, consumerisms are the main gospel of microcredit rather than their empowerment and well-being. In fact, agenda for the microcredit is decided not by the poor women in village but by the powerful financial pundits of transnational financial corporation and the lobby of financial consultant. In short, this approach is purely top-down than bottom-up. In relation to this approach some studies contended that loans made to women are usually controlled by their husband, dependence on him on repayment of loan installments very often lead to dissension and violence (Leach & Sitaram, 2002 Rahman, 1990). Even lending to women benefits household and individual themselves is also uncertain (Morduch,1999; Kabeer, 2001).

In another context, so far no systematic study have been conducted on linkages between microcredit supported enterprises and larger issues of productivity and employment in sustainable manner on securing livelihood especially in non- farm sector (Nair, 2011). Hence, one should stop offering micro credit loan for the solution of poverty, since it can do more harm than good to the poorest (David Hulme & Paul Mosley, 1996). It appears, therefore, that up scaling the provision of microfinance on strength of its performance measured primarily in terms of the repayment rates and certain financial sustainability indicators of a handful of microfinance institutions without serious consideration of vital development issues may prove in the long run to be imprudent development strategies (Harris, 1991). Further, as observed the SHG-bank (private and nationalized)-NGO-microfinance institution are increasingly blurring as commercial prospectus inherent in the underlying financial services business take precedence over the social development and poverty alleviation. In fact, there is a trend visible globally 'commercialization' of microfinance, as part of the regulated financial system (Nair, 2001). However, there are some studies which highlighted that micro credit is the panacea of poverty alleviation, means of promoting economic growth,

providing opportunity of livelihood, self-employment, raising level of income, gender equality, women empowerment, financial self- sustaining and so on.

3. Methodology

This study was conducted in seven villages of the Nanded district of Maharashtra. The study is based on explorative research design. In order to fulfill the main objectives of the study, purposive sampling method was used for the selection of the NGOs and women beneficiaries of the micro-credit programmes from the Self Help Groups of the selected villages. The district was a part of Marathwada region which was under the rule of Nizam of Hyderabad. The Nanded district, which is a part of the Marathwada region formed a part of the princely state of Hyderabad attained freedom on 17th September, 1948 and later it was merged with the state of Maharashtra in 1960. After 1960s, many voluntary action groups came into existence to work on different issues relating to vulnerable, marginal and deprived sections of this district. The District NGOs charity office indicated that till 1999, 7656 NGOs were registered and gradually the number of registered NGOs increased up to 17,826 in 2009 and then to 21,518 in 2012. Thus since 1994 the number of NGOs registered for working on the different issues of child, women, tribes, dalits, farmers and women had increased in this district.

The selection of sample was made at different levels, first at the NGO level, second at the village level and third at the SHGs level. These NGOs are classified into six major categories based on their nature of work, such as A, B, C, D, E and F etc. A category NGOs are related to the (Hindu, Jain, Baud, Lingayat, Sikh etc.) religious trust, B category NGOs are dealing with Muslim trust. C Category NGOs are related to the Parsi religious trust. D category NGOs are dealing with the Jew and Christian religious trusts. E category NGOs are not covered under the above mentioned trusts. F category NGOs were registered under the 1860 registration act. It is seen that Nanded has the highest representation of NGOs from F category as compared to the A, B, C, D and E categories. Seven NGOs are selected from the F category. The selection of the NGOs is because they are engaged in the implementation of micro-credit policy under the scheme of special component plan. Thus, by keeping the study objectives in mind, the seven NGOs are selected from the seven talukas of the Nanded district. And these NGOs are Jan Chaytaiyan Mandal from Naigaontaluka, Lok Sachanlit Sadhan Kendra/Community Resource Management Centre from Deglurtaluka, Shramjivi Mahila Sanghatana from Mukhedtaluka, Lalit Vishaw Sikshan Samiti from Lohataluka, Vanshree from Bhokartaluka, Chakardhar Sawmi Samajik Prathisthan from Nandedtaluka and MAVIM from Ardhapurtaluka. After the selection of the NGOs, seven villages were selected from the above seven talukas of the same district. The selected villages were: Lalwandi, Shirur, Shivani, Dapshed, Betakbiloli, Khadkut and Pokarni. One Self Help Group of women is selected from each village that added up to seven SHGs. One Self Help Group consists of ten women members that added up to 70 women. Rapid Rural Appraisal method was used to gather

information from women of the seven villages from the field. In-depth interview, group discussion, observation and personal narratives were used as tools and techniques of data collection from the different stakeholders such as NGOs workers, field workers, SHGs leaders, executive body members of the SHGs and bankers. The analysis of field data is presented in the form of personal narratives and interpretations.

4. Women Empowerment as Process

In 2001, National Policy on Empowerment was adopted in India. The National Policy clearly underlines that its goal is to bring about the advancement, development and empowerment of women. The specific objectives of this policy are focused on the issues of creating an environment through positive economic and social policies for full development of women to enable them to realize their full potential, such as equal access to participation in decision making of women in social, political and economic life of the nation, equal access of women to health care, quality education at all levels, career and vocational guidance, employment, equal remuneration, occupational health and safety, social security and public office. Strengthening legal systems aimed at elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. Changing societal attitudes and community practices is being expected by active participation and involvement of both men and women. Elimination of discrimination and all forms of violence against women and the girl child are identified as major challenges in the way of acquiring women empowerment. Despite of these major challenges, the issues of gender inequality is also important. The gender inequality is reflected through male dominance, patriarchy and culture. Thus, women's issues are very complex and complicated which alone can't be eradicated by laws, rules, regulations, policies and programmes. There is an urgent need for intervention and active participation of the civil societies, social action groups, voluntary organizations and NGOs.

This study found out that during the last seven decades, IRDP, DWCRA, SFDA, IAY, and MNREGA etc. programs had already been implemented in different parts of the Nanded district. Moreover Jaulukar Shivar, Nirmal Gram, Village Sanitation, Watershed development and micro-credits etc. programs are still being implemented for the upliftment of the weaker sections of the societies including women. But even though the schemes are being implemented but it had had very little effects on raising the living standard of weaker sections, vulnerable groups and women of this district. The socio-economic conditions of weaker sections and women have still not improved. The District Rural Developmental Agency (DRDA) carried out a survey in the entire Nanded district during 1997-98 and had found out 1, 32, 518 Below Poverty Line (BPL) families in different parts of the same district. Hence, in order to fight against poverty and raise the BPL families above the poverty line, a greater emphasis was given on micro-credit facilities and the role of the NGOs.

5. NGOs functionaries

The nature of all NGOs functionaries is not equal even though, they are implementing the same programmes in the district. Mahila Arthik Vikas Mahamandal (MAVIM) is playing the role of nodal agencies in the implementation of micro-credit policies. MAVIM has developed collaboration with the local NGOs in the case of implementation of micro-credit policies. MAVIM has its own district headquarter and had sub-unit at the taluka level also, such as Community Resources Management Centre (CMRC). CMRC is working under the guidance, supervision and control of the MAVIM. MAVIM has its own structural hierarchy which comprises of an Executive Director or head of the organization, executive body members, program co-ordinator, supervisors, field level social workers, Managers and Sahayoginis working in this project. CMRC has one Manager which is the head of this unit and one secretary, one peon and five Sayahoginis are also associated as field workers at the taluka level. Other than MAVIM and CMRC, Jan Chaytaiyan Mandal, Shramjivi Mahila Sanghatana, Lalit Vishav Sikshan Samiti, Vanshree and Chakdhar Prathisthan etc. do not have adequate, trained and skilled manpower. Despite these lacunas, these organizations also do not have adequate infrastructural facilities. Out of seven NGOs, only two NGOs like Chakardhar Prathisthan and Vanshree have their own buildings with adequate infrastructural facilities. The rest of the NGOs do not have adequate infrastructural facilities. They have a hired place for working on a rent basis. They do not have their own buildings and other supportive infrastructural facilities which are required for any organization to carry out their functions smoothly and systematically. Vanshree and Jan Chaitayana Mandal are providing motor cycles to the field workers for carrying out field work activities. Studies have found out that Lalit Vishav Sikshan Samiti and Sramjivi Mahila Mandal are supervising their activities from their home. Thus, due to the lack of infrastructural and transport facilities, field workers, program officers and supervisors faced difficulties in approaching the targeted population and beneficiaries in time.

Study reveals that NGOs are negotiating with the social system, caste, local power and patriarchy at the field level in the villages. Ideologically NGOs are different from each other. But in practice, they adjust themselves with the social structure. In the case of these seven NGOs, it is found out that Sramjivi Mahila Mandal and Vanshree are occasionally negotiating with the local power dynamics, caste and patriarchy. In the case of these two NGO leaders, it is found that the social background of these two NGO members is from the representatives of marginal sections of this district. Out of these seven NGOs, only one founder member of the NGO Sramjivi Mahila Mandalis a lady. Apart from this all other founding fathers of the six NGOs are male. But, the study also found that the NGOs have appointed female-field workers in this project.

In some cases, NGOs are mobilizing women against caste and power politics. They are organizing and mobilizing women against their exploitation and

oppression in the communities. But other five NGOs are silent on these issues. Other NGOs had followed a liberal approach of working. It is also true that NGOs are mobilizing local people for participation in the various rural developmental programs such as Nirmal Gram, Sawchata Abhiyan, MGNREGA, Micro-Credit, Village Sanitation, Water Management and other community development programs. NGOs are also motivating women to participate in the Panchayat Raj institutions and Gram Panachayat. NGOs help in the formation of Self Help Groups of the women and provide them training necessary for Income Generating Activities. But, NGOs are not propagating the idea of restructuring the social structure; they are just working with the structure. NGOs do not have any alternative agenda to bring out changes in the local power structure. They don't want to raise questions relating to the unequal social structure of the society. They negotiate with the patriarchal ideology, caste dominance and rural power structure.

The study found that Field workers, Managers and Sahayoginis are working in these NGOs are not satisfied with their salaries. They are doing more work and getting less salary. They are overburdened with their daily works. One field worker has to cover ten to twelve villages in a single month and cover almost forty to fifty SHGs. A Manager of the CMRC said that she has to assess and verify the records of two hundreds of SHGs every month. She has to invite all leaders of the SHGs for monthly meetings. She has to take feedback from the SHG members. She has to submit monthly progress report to the MAVIM district head office. It is found that NGOs are appointing one person in place of two persons required in the project. As a result of the lack of adequate manpower, the workers are under pressure and overburdened. The NGO workers working at different levels on different positions are not satisfied with their present salaries. It is found out that Program Coordinator who has a Post Graduate qualification was getting Rs.12,000 per month .Field Work Supervisor who is also a Post Graduate is getting only Rs.8000. Field workers and Sahayoginis those were graduates were getting Rs.4000. Those who are working as field workers qualified up to School Secondary Certificates and Higher Secondary Certificates were getting Rs.3000 per month. Despite this, it is found that irrespective of burden of the works and inadequate salaries, they don't have job securities in the organizations also. It is a fact that NGOs appoint staff members in the organizations as per the requirement of the project hence appointments are also project wise and temporary in nature. However, some of them may be employed also in the next project but that depends upon the will of the NGOs president. Thus, the NGOs workers have no future and scope in these organizations.

These NGOs are depended upon other donor agencies for financial support. These NGOs are getting funds from several International, National and State level agencies. The NGOs however do not provide information regarding the source of their funds. It is revealed by NGO workers that their organizations are getting

funds from the World Bank, IFAD and other agencies. Studies find that NGOs are developing their network along with other organizations to carry out their works. But NGOs claim that they are autonomous and independent organizations, but, in real sense, it is seen that they are depended organizations, they seek cooperation and help. In most of the cases, it is seen that they are negotiating with caste, patriarchy, politics, community and power. NGOs were also negotiating with governmental organizations, departments, banks and micro-credit institutions. They have linkages with internationally and nationally reputed organizations such as IFAD, BASIX, SPANDANA, SKS and L&T and others. Out of these seven NGOs, it was told by the workers of MAVIM and Chakradhar Samajik Partisthan that they were directly getting funds from foreign agencies to work on micro-credit, watershed management and sanitation programmes. But, they hide the exact name and the amount which they get. According to one Field worker of the Chakradhar Samajik Partisthan his organization receives Rs10,000 for forming each Self Help Group of women under the micro-credit scheme. This amount is sanctioned through four installments within two years of duration. Each installment is of Rs.2500. The installments are conditional in nature; NGOs have to complete their given targets within the stipulated time period of installment for claiming the next one. Thus, in case of such a situation, NGOs are under pressure to fulfill the given target of the donor agencies. Therefore, they try to complete it in time. If they fail to fulfill the target in time, they cannot claim the next installment. Thus, NGOs give more importance to the target rather than to the restructuring of power dynamics.

6. Women Issues

The study looks at the different types of issues and challenges which are associated with the process of empowerment of women in rural communities. It focuses on the issues and challenges which are associated with women from the seven villages of the district. These issues are also associated with the village social structure, caste pattern of the villages, village economy, village politics and village patriarchal structure. At the village community level, it is seen that NGO worker's had to negotiate with the community leaders, village elite, leaders of caste associations and head of the families. NGO workers develop rapport with different types of stakeholders of the seven villages. Then, they identified ten BPL families from each village and negotiated with the head of the families and requested them to allow their women form the Self Help Groups under the scheme of micro-credit. It is seen that women were not allowed in these village to interact with unknown persons. Women did not have freedom and choice to talk with other persons and outsiders. They couldn't also cross the boundary of doorstep and village outskirts without the permission of either the head of their family or their husband. Therefore, NGO workers had to appoint women as field workers to work with women in these villages. NGOs also found it difficult to identify field workers to work in these villages. It was difficult to get Women to work as field

workers in the NGOs since unmarried girls do not get the permission from their father and married women do not get permission from their husband. Similarly women do not have the freedom to join SHGs without the permission of patriarchic power. Caste also played a very vital role in affecting the choice and freedom of women. It has been observed that women belonging to the higher caste do not actively participate in the SHG activities as compared to the women of lower castes. The lower caste women had always been out of home for physical labour for their survival. Therefore, NGO workers faced little difficulty in mobilizing the lower caste women for different types of activities such as formulation of SHGs, SHGs stalls, sale, trips and gatherings at the village level, taluka level, district and the regional level. However, lower caste women actively participated in micro-credit related activities. It however does not mean that they are not controlled by the institution of patriarchy.

Field workers, program co-ordinators and supervisors of the NGOs without negotiating with community leaders, caste and patriarchy had not entered in the villages. The rural communities have their own manners, customs, tradition, norms and values. These values, norms and traditions had impacted the members of the communities. The community leaders do not allow outsiders to intervene in community activities. NGO workers are the outsiders for these village communities. These communities have their own way of lives. These villages have caste systems, male-dominance and patriarchic set of minds. Women are not treated as equal to men. Their status and social position are considered as subordinate and are given secondary importance in the everyday lives of the villages. Thus, these villages have their own internal issues of social, economic and gender inequalities. In the villages we still have the practice of the caste system and sexual division of labour. So, under this condition NGO workers had entered and worked in these villages but, they are silent on the internal issues of gender, social and economic inequalities and the position of the women and marginal sections in the villages. NGO workers were able to identify internal issues related to the socio-economic status of the women but they followed a liberal approach and negotiated with patriarchy and power. NGO workers know the ground realities hence they failed to challenge the ongoing practices, traditions and customs of the village people.

NGO workers, bankers and developmental officers provided trainings to the identified beneficiaries under the micro-credit schemes on women entrepreneurships and income generating activities. NGOs linked SHGs consisting of women to banks and were able to get loan for them for income generating activities. NGOs also provided them trainings on saving and its importance. They motivated women for group activities rather than individual ones. NGO workers could identify that women are more interested in agricultural based occupation rather than non-agricultural occupations. Women find securities and confidence in occupations that are familiar to them. Therefore, they went for

agriculture, vegetable production, nurturing and keeping pet animals such as goats, cows and buffaloes for the purpose of producing milk and selling it. Therefore, most of the women who were provided micro-credit invested in agricultural operations; such as cultivating vegetables, agriculture on lease basis, nurturing cattle, buffaloes, goat and cows for milk production. NGOs thus linked self -help group of women with the banks and provided them training, guidance and services. At the initial level women were not allowed to attend monthly meetings of the SHGs without the permission of the head of the families. But because of the constant effort of the NGO workers, especially Sahayoginis as lady field workers who took initiative in persuading the people of the village patriarchy, hence ultimately the NGO workers were able to mobilize rural women in the formulation of SHGs, attending SHGs meetings, Gram Sabhas and motivated them for participating in the village community developmental activities such as village sanitation and other forms of activities. Thus, NGOs-led micro-credit programmes offers opportunities to the women on the one hand, but on the other hand, it seems that NGOs workers have to negotiate with the village patriarchy and culture as well. Women are being allowed to participate in various activities inside and outside the village, but without disturbing the social structure and power. Women are not free from their traditional roles, customary practices and responsibilities of daily routines. Thus, the study found that women perform a dual role. Being housewives she has to carry out her routine activities. Further, micro-credit added extra burden since they participate in income generating activities along with the groups. SHGs are offering opportunities to the women on the one hand and at the same time they are also asking them to attend regular meetings and to participate in different kinds of group activities and repayment of loan in time.

The Self Help Groups of women are identified as group of active women in all the villages; therefore, these women are called as representatives in the village Gram Sabhas, panchayati meetings and meetings of women Gram Sabhas. Despite these, women are also nominated as women representative members of the various village level committees such as water, sanitation, education, health, joint forest managements and community developments. Women are nominated as members of different committees, that is the achievement of the women SHGs but in practice, they are not allowed to exercise their power. Out of these seven villages, two women of the SHGs are elected as village sarpanch but in real sense, their husbands are taking decision and exercising power from behind. Women are nominated only for namesake to fill up the reserved seats.

In this study we conclude that NGOs do not actually practice gender equality. Even though NGOs are claiming that they are working for empowerment of women and glorify micro-credit as a tool of women empowerment but his in reality is not true. NGOs face lacunas and internal problems at their organizational level. They don't have (at least some of them) adequate infra-structural facilities,

adequate, trained and skilled manpower. They don't have their own funds and sources of income generation. They are depended upon funding agencies, national and international. Ideologically NGO workers are not gender sensitized. They are not radical and progressive in their approach, in their working rather than they are liberal. NGOs are target oriented organizations. They work only because they get funds for their work. Even though, they are claiming that they are independent organizations in their views and ideas, but in practice, they are indirectly controlled by the state and its ideology. In case of MAVIM and CMRC, these two organizations are semi-governmental in nature. They are state sponsored NGOs. They linked many other governmental programmes with micro-credits at the village community level. On the other hand, women issues are associated with the social- cultural structure and local dynamics of power at the local level. Thus NGOs-led micro-credit program fail to bring out changes in the local power structure, caste hierarchy and mind sets of the rural patriarchy.

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Citizenship for peace: Identity and conflicts in multiethnic Malaysia

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Abstract

Modern states are known as nation-states but most of the post-colonial states are made of multinational and multi-ethnic groups. It is said that the Third World States are still under the process of nation-making. Conflicts in the multi-ethnic states are often articulated on the lines of identity and culture. Identity based conflicts require proper understanding of the root causes of conflict. Basic Human Needs theory argues that there are some non-negotiable basic human needs which are distinct from the subsistence needs. Unless needs such as recognition, security, participation and redistribution are considered in the resolution process, a sustainable peace would not be achieved. On the contrary, it is bound to repeat over the time period. Citizenship is an important concept as it defines who is in and who is outside the polity. Generally, it links to the dominant majority culture of the state, consequently it excludes minority ethnic and cultural groups from the exclusive idea of the nation-state. Hence the study argues that there is a direct relationship between the notion of citizenship and identity conflicts. Liberal notion of citizenship confers on an individual a status of equal membership to the polity but it was seen that states in practice are often not able to maintain their neutral position. Thus the paper argues that articulation of demands and grievances of the different ethnic groups in a multicultural state can be addressed through a flexible liberal notion of multicultural inclusive citizenship. A case study of Malaysia is used for empirical support of the study.

Key words: citizenship, identity conflict, multi-ethnicity, multicultural citizenship, Malaysia

1. Introduction

It is said that absence of conflicts in a society is abnormal, thus it is inevitable for any society. What matters is that how state manoeuvre in accommodation and recognition of various articulations. Conflict is not violence; it is merely one of the tools of articulation. It can be articulated in many ways. Johan Galtung (1996) understand the process of peace through the help of the concept of 'structural violence' that is non-egalitarian and discriminatory practices that causes human misery like poverty, hunger, repression and social alienation. This structural violence in social systems is maintained by exploitative means through gross violation of human rights based on ethnicity, race, religion or gender. Such structural violence works slowly in eroding human dignity and values, eventually leads to severe conflicts and many times transforms into violent resistance. Hence elimination of repression and discrimination is an essential element of sustainable peace.

It is pertinent to distinguish between basic human needs and subsistence needs because a human being is not merely a biological creature but also emotional,

social and political. Often conflicts in multi-ethnic society are defined in terms of subsistence, but the pattern of most conflicts in the post-Cold War era is surrounded on the assertion of other unmet human needs, such as protection, identity, recognition, participation and accommodation of distinctiveness of minority groups. Thus understanding the root causes of the social conflict in terms of these human needs are essential for the development of human being.

John Burton (1990) is a pioneer in applying Human Needs theory in defining social and political conflicts. He argued that if basic human needs are neglected, then groups in conflict will not hesitate to use violence to claim their rights and meet their needs. Burton identified basically four types of needs in particular and defines it as universal and non-negotiable and hence should be addressed as a basis for any negotiation and peace settlements. He didn't categorise these needs in any order, however, argued to address altogether. Some of the essential basic human needs are; stability and safety; identity i.e., a perception of self in relation to the others; recognition of individual's identity as well as from the others; community development with personal fulfilment.

In a multicultural state, the perception of any injustice related to the distributive system can provide a fertile ground for the exploitation of identity because it concerns with the matter of universal needs and survival of the groups and individuals. Therefore the needs which are paramount in the understanding of social conflicts are identity and its recognition, security, and personal development.

2. Understanding Conflict

Paul Collier (2007) developed an econometric model which talked about the relationship between natural resources and the outbreak of violent conflicts. Variables such as vast reserve of natural resources, slow economic growth, undemocratic politics and primordial characters of polity are the common causes of violent social conflicts. Hence in this theory, the key element is greed for the emergence of violent civil conflicts. It is an important model, but emphasizing merely on 'resource factor' in any social conflicts won't give us a broad explanation of the causes of conflicts in a diverse society. It will provide only a partial analysis of a complex conflicting situation of countries such as Sri Lanka, Democratic Republic of Congo, Cote d' Ivory or Myanmar. Threat perception, real or imaginary and dissent in fulfilling of basic needs, can lead to conflicting situations. Also, this action would escalate further and turn into severe violence if the size of the affected group is large. In a social conflict and particularly in ethnonationalist conflict, basic needs theory identified 'identity' as one of the most crucial basic needs because it can be used as a catalyst for group mobilization. According to Rothbart and Cherubin (2009), the notion of identity mainly derived from common narratives, symbols, and sense of otherness from other groups. Many scholars stress identity as a key factor in the concept of conflict. However,

merely considering identity as a cause of social conflict would make our analysis incomplete. It is perceived that Identity is a socially constructed and a dynamic concept. It depends on the alliances, mobilizations and manipulations (Doucey, 2011, pp. 1,5).

Common perception under the modernisation process was that it would ultimately wither away the traditional values and institutions based on parochial identity in the process of creating national unity. In other words, despite the multi-ethnic character of society; it produced a nation based on modern liberal democracy and individualism. It is often argued that Third World states are still under nation building process. The term 'nation' that had emerged in the 19th century Europe had different nuances from the understanding of Third World states.

Although strong parochial identities weakened over the time but, traditional values and related institutions are still persisting and putting great pressure and influence over social life. The state tried to spawn a sense of national citizenship that ameliorates the parochial identities. This temptation to a large extent failed to recourse the complexities of deeply divided societies. Circumvent process by the state to minimise the diversity often flippant the minority culture and identity. End of cold war escalated the democratic process. The space provided by the democratic process to the marginalized group spawn opportunity to these groups to articulate their demands for the equal share and fulfillment of basic human needs vis-à-vis dominant community. Consequently, minority community often expresses their sense of citizenship in communitarian form.

Using 'identity' in the mobilization of a group is much easier and quicker. When conflicts are manifest on the basis of identities, people have a very little option to remain outside of the conflict situation because of a strong sense of belonging to their ethnic group. It is often argued that leaders and elites of the group manipulate collective identity in order to generate support or mobilisation in any inter-group conflict. But mobilisation of identity by someone does not mean that individuals of the group are not approving their collective misery. An individual of a group easily relates his/her discontent in the discourse of identity as he/she could easily relate it with the narratives of shared values and collective fears. While defining the protracted social conflicts, Azar and Moon (1986) focused on identity as an essential human need and its denial can make conflict prolonged and violent.

Human Need theory argues that unless basic needs such as accommodation, recognition, participation and security are not considered in the resolution process, identity based conflicts in the multi-ethnic society would not be resolved; on the contrary, it is bound to re-emerge after a short period of stability. But it does not mean that resources and other material factors have no stake in identity based conflicts, however, when elements of identity are present in the articulation of conflicts it overrides other issues. Hence our resolution of conflicts will focus on

how the state deals with issues of recognition, security, participation, acceptance and distribution while resolving the identity conflicts in a multi-ethnic society.

In any identity based conflict, collective identity and its security, in particular, will always be a paramount issue. Thus any agreement regarding resolution should be concomitant to element of assurance related to collective fear of all belligerent groups. Also identity conflicts are not necessarily caused by intergroup differences but could be caused by collective fear of the future about their distinct language, culture, identity in a multiethnic setting (Lake & Rothschild, 1998, p. 4).

3. Defining Inclusive Citizenship

Citizenship is traditionally linked to the state and its majority national people consequently it excludes different ethnic minority groups from the idea of the nation-state. Hence state's definition of exclusive citizenship creates identity conflicts, particularly in a multiethnic society. Hence this paper argues that there is a direct relationship between the notion of citizenship and ethnonationalist conflict and concept of differentiated and multicultural citizenship has a potential to establish peace and stability in a multicultural state.

Citizenship is a contested issue (Lister, 2003, p. 3) particularly in a multi-national or multiethnic state. Many scholars such as EnginIsin, Bryan Turner and Balibar, criticised the normative framework of citizenship formally composed of rights and obligations because it set it as a legal status associated with a nation-state. Rather than simply focusing on citizenship in terms of legal rights, there is now a consensus that citizenship must be related to social process through which individuals and social groups articulate their claim. Before going into the detail discussion on the nature of the inclusive citizenship policies in order to address the root causes of the conflicts in multiethnic state, let me discuss the changing nature of the concept of the citizenship which gives us how the notion of citizenship no more considered as merely representative of culture and identity of the dominant group of the modern multiethnic state.

The concept of citizenship has been refined throughout the period of history starting from older Greece to the modern era. It has been mooted and stretched to increase the circumference of the citizenship by incorporating civil and political rights to include groups who were excluded due to various uneven criteria. For instance, the area of citizenship was improved during the 18th century by including a wide range of common population; nonetheless, in terms of inclusiveness it was still limited to those who had certain amount of property. Even the announcement of rights of man after the French revolution, political rights were not given to all, for example, having property remained an important criteria for getting the right to have the right to vote. In other words, rights were not granted universally, it excluded women, children, slave and poor etc. In fact, women were excluded from voting right till the mid-years of the 20th century in the West. Much improvement

has been made in the field of citizenship rights since the end of World War-II. Post-war period saw the spreading of civil and political rights along with the social rights in order to curtail the entrenched socio-economic inequalities of society so that it ensures the equal participation of individuals in the national polity.

T. H. Marshall (1950) defined the concept of citizenship on the basis of three kinds of rights; the first was the civil rights developed in the 17th and 18th centuries and established the system of rule of law. The Second type was political rights, which gave the right to vote and representation. The third sets of rights developed in mid 20th century under the notion of social rights and helped in the establishment of a welfare state. Marshall's conception of citizenship was highly criticised as his understanding was based on common identity. For instance, Marshall formulated his idea from the conception of a nation-state, having a common identity, shared history, culture and language. It excludes national minorities and other ethnic communities living in the same nation state. Increase in the process of immigration from poor and developing state after the end of colonialism to developed nation-states has created multicultural societies. So the emergence of heterogeneity in the post-colonial world also escalated the demands for the separation of citizenship and nationality. Therefore, the notion of citizenship has shifted towards more inclusive in outlook by addressing the issues of identity, difference and recognition of other ethnic groups.

When the demands for more inclusiveness on the basis of the cultural differences of the minority ethnic communities within the notion of the nation-state escalated, cultural aspects were added to the discourses of citizenship. Their demands mainly revolved around their culture and express their differences in terms of race, ethnicity or native language. Some scholars like, Kymlicka even argued about the more particularistic type of citizenship rights. Kymlicka suggests a "need to supplement traditional human rights principles with a theory of minority rights" (Kymlicka, 1995, p. 5). However, Kymlicka also argued that different groups require different rights provisions. Therefore, citizenship debates shifted towards addressing the roots of the demand of the ethnic minorities, who were often denied basic human needs because of their difference in culture or religion.

Here question arises why a multiethnic state needs a multicultural inclusive citizenship when there is already a provision of the liberal notion of the citizenship which gives equal status to every individual in the society irrespective of their differences. Also, even if the number of nation-states was to increase in number, it is likely that most states would remain multiethnic and multicultural in its character. Then, the question is how can people with their different conception of good life accommodate and live together as members of the nation-state?

Recent literature on citizenship has pointed out that modern societies are ethnically and religiously diverse and theoretically no state can be called as a pure nation-state. Similarly, only majority vote cannot satisfactorily fulfil the norms of

the democratic values because outcomes of it can only represent winners and not a consensus. Consequently, ethno cultural and other marginalized minorities are excluded from the real exercise of power.

It is also evident that voices can only be effectively heard if public perception does not merely reflect the majority's cultural tradition, language, religion, but it is accessible to all ethnic and religious groups within society. As Joseph Carens (1996) argued, citizenship is not simply a legal status, but also has a psychological dimension. Citizenship represents a sense of belonging to a collectivity and for that people must have an emotional attachment, identification and loyalty (pp. 111-113). In this context, minorities must have a sense of collective participation and representation under the notion of inclusive citizenship through various accommodative provisions.

Then, what inclusive citizenship means, when it is viewed from the perspective of the excluded communities, is an important factor in the understanding of rhetoric of marginalized. Naila Kabeer (2005) argues,

“Their testimonies and actions suggest there are certain values that people associate with the idea of citizenship which cut across the various boundaries that divide them. These values may not be universal but they are widespread enough to suggest that they constitute a significant aspect of the organization of collective life and of the way in which people connect with each other” (pp. 1-3).

She identifies four vital elements of inclusive citizenship. First, doing justice in the treatment of people as equal as well as differently, second, simultaneously recognise and respect the essential value of all human beings with the recognition of their differences. Third, have some autonomy to exercise and control their affairs and lastly, harmony, means, able to acquaint with others and to act in unity with them in their claims for justice and equality (pp. 3-7).

4. Modes of Inclusive Citizenship and Mitigation of Conflict

Conventional techniques are not sufficient in the management of identity based conflicts as they do not effectively address the underlying issues related to a group's need. McGarry and O'Leary (1994) classified various methods for the regulation of ethnic conflict. For the elimination of difference, state adopts methods such as genocide, forced population transfers, partition/secession and assimilation whereas methods for managing differences they used mainly hegemonic control, territorial autonomy, non-territorial autonomy and integration (p. 94).

The first two methods for eliminating differences, that is, genocide or ethnic cleansing and mass-population transfers cannot be considered legitimate means in the contemporary world. Similarly, hegemonic control comes under the category

of non-democratic system. Even presence of hegemonic control could be seen in a democracy with formal equal citizenship status to all. In case of secession or partition as a solution, due to presence of heterogeneity in every society, it merely relocates issues of ethnic/cultural conflict to the newly formed state; therefore secession might not produce desirable resolution of issues. Similarly, assimilation advocates a complete merger of the various cultural groups into the wider national culture and eventually tries to form a single national identity. It violates the vital characteristic of individuals who have multiple affiliations.

Historically, assimilation or integration of different cultural group in the majority would never be peaceful. Conflict resolution means the transformation of the relationship between conflicting parties. Inclusive citizenship has multiple dimensions and has the ability to create an inclusive public space for all. The notion of inclusive citizenship challenged the dominant understanding of the citizenship in terms of the nation-state at various levels. It argues modern states are not a mono nation-state but multi-nations in nature. This means that there are individuals which belong to different communities with distinct 'societal culture'. It also recognises that citizenship comprises two types of allegiances, on one hand, they relate to a larger political community and at the same time, they also have a sense of membership of a particular cultural community. In other words, citizens practice two kinds of identity simultaneously i.e., political community at the national level and cultural membership at the subnational level. Therefore, it is not very conducive to presume citizens to be similar in all aspects.

In liberal tradition, states are considered as neutral in making of policies. Historically, in the process of the nation-building, race, religion and caste had been used for excluding different minority groups and individuals from the public and political platform. Democratization process has challenged these discriminatory policies and destroyed the myth of the state's neutrality in the dealing of diversity under the notion of the nation-state. Inclusive citizenship argues about the need for positive distinctions among citizens where few indicators of identity and cultural aspects should be recognised for equal treatment. Therefore inclusive citizenship has been seen as an alternative to the resolution of real or potential ethnic tension.

It provokes to rethink the idea of the unity among the different ethnic communities of a state. It helps in the development of allegiance among minority ethnic groups towards the state as they get their due recognition. On the contrary, enforcement of homogeneity will produce only counterproductive results. Robinson (2009) used the Afrobarometer data to conduct a study and found that 75 percent of respondents from 16 sub-Sahara countries of Africa have viewed no conflict between their national citizenship and distinct cultural and ethnic identity. As it was evident, the emergence of many identity conflicts in many post-colonial states was mostly revolved around the assertion of accommodation of the basic human needs particularly related to the culture and security of their collective rights.

However many considered it as a flawed view as it leads to the escalation of demands from the present demanding community as well as from other small communities. But there is no empirical evidence of this claim. It is an assumed notion that if the state tried to accommodate various claims and differences by the institutional arrangements, it would make the state weak by creating dual or multiple allegiances (Mahajan, 2010, pp. 1-5).

Multicultural inclusive citizenship is not a new concept; it is as old as human civilization. Different cultures have always co-existed and respected side by side in many empires, such as millet system of Ottoman Empire and other eastern civilization. Different kinds of the group have different histories, needs, aspirations and identities. Different groups face different kinds of challenges hence, require different kinds of accommodation policies. For example, groups like Kashmiri or Scottish demand autonomy from the central government to manage their own affairs whereas immigrant groups want measures that will make it easier for them to participate in the institutions of the state. Therefore collective rights are a contextual phenomenon.

For inclusiveness, three kinds of special measures are often cited under the notion of inclusive citizenship. These are; (a) Recognition and Accommodation: cultural and social rights in the form of affirmative action plan for the minority group and symbolic recognition and accommodation of the distinctive societal values in public space (b) Autonomy: self-government rights for national minorities and indigenous communities (c) Representation of Voice: representation of groups or their members in the institutions of state.

One of the most sensitive issues for the ethnic minority groups is the question of their language. Preservation of language is closely related to the culture and identity of the community as well as to the economic opportunity in the state institutions, thus, recognition of minority language in the form of second language or first language if demanding minority community is concentrated in a single territorial area, would have a lasting effect in the integration of minorities within the larger notion of nation-building process. Consequently, it would enhance their sense of inclusiveness within the larger community.

Again, symbolic recognition of the elements of the minority culture is an important aspect of the inclusive policies. National song, public holiday etc. all symbolised the culture of the majority group. It generates a sense of exclusion among minority groups in terms of their cultural representation in national identity as well as in the public sphere. A symbolic gesture of minorities is an important grievance in their struggle for equal status within the larger state. Under the democratic system, minorities also seek for the recognition of some community practices such as personal law especially related to family inheritance and marriage. Almost all liberal democratic countries including USA and Canada have two or more system of law operating within a single political system. Arguments

for recognition of minority legal systems are closely linked to rights for self-government, especially for the indigenous and national minority groups. In a multi-religious society, like Malaysia and India, allowing family law among religious communities can be considered as a form of autonomy or toleration. But this also raises the danger for some of their members such as women because of some non-liberal traditional legal system. Some scholar supported state intervention in case of violation of the basic human rights of the vulnerable groups such as women but, it is often seen that intervention is counterproductive. Instead of intervention, empirically it is more feasible if voices of reform come out from the community itself. For instance, Muslim women are now strongly articulating their dissents against some practices of communities such as the provision of Triple Talaq, which violates the rights of women.

Self-government rights are the most controversial among the minority rights discourse. This right is generally associated with territorially concentrated ethnic groups. Communities who are concentrated in a specific region over a long period of time have a history of self-government. In fact demand for the right to self-determination is one of the important articulations in a multi-ethnic state where there is a long history of a violent conflicting situation between the state and the minority community. One of the effective measures that have been used under the notion of inclusive citizenship is accommodation, which often requires strong measures based on the degree of autonomy to the minority (Mahajan, 2010, p. 8)

It is argued that granting these rights would weaken the nation-state. However, it is seen in multiethnic states that when centre increases its influence on the ethnic groups, it produce an adverse result. It can be argued that promotion of local government is an important aspect for the establishment of a democratic polity.

5. A case of multi-ethnic Malaysia

This section will discuss the development of Malaysia's model of citizenship and how the institutional arrangements of the different voices of the various ethnic groups have been accommodated within the notion of the inclusive citizenship during nation-building process.

Malaysian citizenship formulated on the notion of differentiated citizenship in which collective rights of ethnic groups are recognised with individual rights. In Malaysia, the Malays and indigenous Bumiputra comprises 61.8% of the population. The Chinese are the second largest ethnic group which make up 22.5% of the population and 7% are Indian. Other groups only account for 0.8% of the population with 8.1% of the population are non-citizens (Department of Statistics, Malaysia 2010).

Colonial rule of British started the ethnic division of Malaysian society particularly in terms of language, religion, and royalty. The British rulers created occupational segregation on the basis of ethnic lines, i.e. Malays for agriculture,

immigrant Chinese and Indians for commerce or trade and plantation or mine worker respectively. Consequently, it established a deep sense of interethnic divisions in colonial Malaysia. To understand the nature of contemporary inclusive citizenship in Malaysia, first, we need to review various demand and articulation of the minority groups of Malaysia.

At the time of independence in 1957, Malaysia's demographic landscape was changed from a Malay dominating homogenous society to a multi-ethnic heterogeneous society due to the acceptance of the immigrant Chinese and Indians as the citizens of a new state. Malaysian constitution adopted a federalist structure with consociational nature of the ethnic accommodation in the polity of the state. Article 153 of the constitution privileged Malays not only by guaranteeing the special position of Malays and the Malay language but also article 3 adopts Islam as the national religion and article 38 and 181 recognise a special position of a Council of Rulers composed of ethnic Malay Sultans (Arakaki, 2009, p. 81). The Constitution defines all ethnic Malays as Muslims at birth and makes Islam as the religion of Malaysian federation. Though article 153 of the Constitution asserts the special position of the Malays and the indigenous peoples it also legitimatise the interests of all other ethnic communities. At the time of the independence, Malays were basically living in the rural area and did agricultural activities only. On the other hand, Chinese were indulged in the trade and commerce whereas Indians were mostly employed in the plantations and public services. Overall, ordinary majority of Malays were very poor at the time of independence.

End of colonial era started an important turning point for Malaysian society particularly in dealing with pluralism and multiculturalism. Despite having low or not much experience in unity in diversity and parliamentary democracy, Malaysia's different ethnic communities presented a good example of tolerance on the matters of differences and evolved a sense of commonness and foster mutual respect within the pluralistic society during constitution making negotiations. Nevertheless, it does not mean that Malaysian society is free from any racial or ethnic problems and religious tensions. However, as far as violent ethnic or religious tensions are concerned, there are but not many major ones.

Postcolonial Malaysia started its national identity-making process by using an exclusive ideology of the Tanah Melayu means Malays are the Malaysian despite its multicultural society. Malaysia adopted the cultural policy which was based on the dominant culture of the Malays. Non-Malays were expected to identify with Malay culture. This policy of assimilation was opposed by non-Malays. On the other hand, an assertion of multiculturalism, which promotes cultural diversity, faced Malays resistant as it perceived as a threat to Malay privileges guaranteed under the constitution. Therefore, at the onset, Malaysia adopted neither assimilation nor multiculturalism policies in their purest forms. Instead, Malaysia crafted its policies of citizenship somewhere in between assimilation and

multiculturalism that is incorporating both Malay cultural dominance and the recognition of some non-Malay cultural rights (Segawa, 2013, p. 213).

Ethnicity is the key element in the political scenario of Malaysia. All political parties are constructed along the ethnic line. Compromises were made between the Malays and non-Malays during the constitution-making process on the questions of rights and privileges of Malays as an indigenous people of Malaysia and granting of citizenship status to all non-Malays. Constitution secures Malays' superior position in terms of language, religion and position of traditional Malay sultans. On the other hand, Malays accepted a constitutional status of liberal citizenship regulations for all non-Malays on the principle of *jus soli*.

One of the pivotal policies under the idea of inclusive citizenship for a multicultural setting is the sharing of the political power among different ethnic/cultural groups. This could be implemented with the help of federal or consociational system of governance. Lijphart identified Malaysia as a consensus democracy. Some policies of Malaysia comes under the principle of consociationalism, such as grand coalition with minorities, cultural and group autonomy to minorities to manage their internal affairs such as education and religion (Lijphart, 2004, p. 97).

Since independence, Malaysia is governed by an alliance called National Front (NF) comprised of United Malay National Organisation (UMNO), Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) and Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC). This coalition ensured that the minorities have representation in political institutions and it also protected the ethnic interests at various level of decision making process. Since it is a multi-ethnic coalition, Indians, Chinese and Malays have share of seats in different districts which lead to a kind of proportional representation of the various ethnic groups. This kind of democracy based on power sharing, spawns long ethnic peace in ethnically diverse society of Malaysia (Lijphart, 1996, p. 266).

Notwithstanding, a gradual polarization was developing among different communities particularly between Chinese and Malays during the period of 1963-1969 which led to the breakdown of the inter-ethnic consociational system in 1969. This was basically considered as a result of the widespread poor socio-economical condition of the majority Malays and many argue that common people had believed that national alliance at the centre failed to fulfil their promise of the development of the Malay community even though Malays recognized the superior economic position of non-Malay.

On the other hand, non-Malays mainly the Chinese challenged Malay political hegemony which was an essential part of the Alliance bargain at the time of constitutional making. In the election of 1969, National Front of Malays, Chinese and Indian lost many seats to the opposition although they secured the majority in the parliament but, it created a sense of fear among the Malays for their future

prospects in the polity of Malaysia. As a result, widespread ethnic violence was committed by the Malays against ethnic Chinese. Thus Alliance failed to secure ethnic harmony from perceived or real hysteria in 1969. In the past however it had been successful in the compromising on many ethnic issues with support from their respective ethnic groups.

In order to create unity on the basis of national culture in post 1969, national government formulated a national cultural policy on the basis of certain principles such as upholding the constitution, rule of law, good behaviour and morality. A National Culture Policy (NCP) was adopted in 1971 which aimed to create a composite national culture based on three basic elements namely indigenous culture, suitable elements from the non-Malay cultures and Islam as an important component because it is an official religion based on the constitution (Suhana & Jacob, 2012, p. 72).

Since this policy was more inclined towards Malays, Chinese and Indian political parties whether in government or in opposition opposed the policy. One of the outcomes of this policy was the implementation of Malay as a sole official national language. Malaysia recognises the Chinese and other minority languages as a medium of instructions up to the secondary level of schools only, but post-school education should only be permitted in Malay and English. Non- Malay's main concern against the language policy was that they see it as an attempt of assimilation in majority culture by Malay majority.

Even at the colonial times, Islam has always been a pivotal point of Malay identity but, in general, the Malays rejected the claims of imposing Malay culture on minorities as the government never force any community to embrace Islam or practice Islamic way of life. On the contrary, due to rabid interpretation of Islam by some Malay groups, religion per say emerged as a factor for clash within Malay community. As it has been evident in the political struggles between UMNO and PAS (Islamia Party of Malaysia), where state led by UMNO with the help of coercive measures often try to subvert the challenges of Islamic parties. Secondly, during Mahathir regime, Islam was articulated in terms of modern and universal progressive aspects of Malaysian society that generate broader sense of inclusive sphere among non-Malays communities (Hamayotsu, 2000, p. 356).

According to article 11 of the constitution, every community has freedom of religion and can freely practice their cultural values and activities even in public spheres such as the celebration of Dragon dance and Chinese New Year by the Chinese community or construction of Hindu temples. For instance, Malaysian Indian Hindus established Southeast Asia's biggest idols in Gombak Selangor without being a majority community. The government has officially recognised many cultural activities of the Non-Malays like, vernacular primary school, recognises public holiday during Chinese New Year, Hindu festivals like Deepavali as well as Easter and Christmas.

Beside cultural accommodation and recognition of the minority culture, redistribution of the material resources is considered as prominent policy under the social rights of the inclusive citizenship. In case of Malaysia, the situation is somewhat different because here majority community is socially and economically much marginalised and minority group mainly Chinese and Indians are in control of trade and commerce. In this matter, 1969 ethnic riots have changed the approach of the Malaysian state. Hence, Malaysia's New Economic Policy (NEP) was announced in 1970 as the policy for addressing the economic inequalities among different ethnic groups. The NEP had two aims. First, poverty eradication regardless of race and eliminate the identification of race with economic function. However, the main target was to end the socio-economic marginalisation of the Malays. In the 1960s, 74% of the poor household were Malays against the 17% and 8% of the Chinese and Indian respectively (Ahmat, 1980, p. 722).

NEP formulated the objectives to end income and wealth disparities through economic growth. To achieve the NEP's target of 30% stake of Malay in the business and trade, the government used an affirmative action of positive discrimination for Malays in education and commerce. At the same time to prevent discontent among the Chinese community who were dominating the business sector, the government actively tried to develop the economy rapidly. It was considered that high economic growth would benefit all ethnic groups (Chopra, 1974, p. 446). NEP transformed the business sector and economy radically. For example, NEP has an objective to eliminate poverty across the ethnic communities. This objective has been achieved to a large extent. In Malaysia, the poverty rate was 49% in 1970 which was reduced to 16.5% by 1990 and 8% by 2002 (Jomo, 2004). Reduction in poverty of Malays also helped in the eradication of perceived threat of the Chinese economic supremacy and provides an environment for stable peace.

As stated earlier, Malaysia tried to craft its national identity on the notion of 'Malaya for Malaysia' instead of 'Malaysia for Malaysia' at the beginning. This exclusive ideology was also one of the reasons for the separation of Singapore from the federation of Malaysia in 1965. Najib Razak, the current Prime Minister, in order to further broaden the inclusiveness of citizenship, introduced the new slogan of '1Malaysia'. The objective of the 1Malaysia is to create oneness or unity within a multi-religious and multi-cultural notion. The slogan of '1Malaysia' recognises its diversity of ethnicity, religions and beliefs and, willing to build more inclusive citizenship for all groups. 1Malaysia propounded on the principles such as acceptance of difference and the principle of social justice, which are concomitant to the idea of inclusive citizenship.

6. Conclusions

Malaysia has been able to manage its ethnic violence successfully. Measures were taken after the 1969 ethnic violence that helped in the creation of the interethnic tolerance and cooperation. Significant improvement in the economic progress has changed the socio-economic position across the ethnic groups. Also reduction in poverty level among the Malays, mitigate the threats of Chinese and Indian which were used at the time of 1969 violence. Second, although there are some restriction on press and debates on sensitive issues such as the special position of Malays and citizenship rights of Non-Malays, on the other hand, multiethnic coalition that is National Front (NF) accepted more political parties and provides a large platform for different ethnic parties to cooperate and negotiate with each other. NF coalition moreover moved beyond ethnic differences in order to create an effective coalition where all ethnic groups are represented.

This article argues that understanding the root causes of conflicts particularly identity conflict by the Human Need theory which stresses on the non-negotiable basic human needs which is other than subsistence needs, such as, safety/security, belongingness, dignity, cultural security, freedom, distributive justice and participation are pivotal for the conflict resolution. Inclusive citizenship not only gives an identity to an individual but also provides a psychological understanding of belongingness to the wider society for the minority communities. It is possible that policies of inclusive citizenship differ from one state to other state but most of these policies contain similar anti-discrimination measures. Again, these policies not only resemble each other but they are also resembled one because of their origin, as these policies emerged when minority communities rejected assimilation (Uberoi, 2008, p. 406).

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Security Mechanisms of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)

Manabhanjan Meher

Abstract

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation has adopted a comprehensive strategy to counter terrorism in the region. The Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) is a permanent institutional arrangement to enhance coordination and cooperation of special services of the SCO member states to fight terrorism. Unlike the United States and NATO, whose perception on security remain confined only to terrorism and 'terror-sponsored states', the SCO has broadened the definition of security. The approaches of SCO member states to combating terrorism are based on multilateral and international cooperation, rather than unilateralism.

Keywords: SCO, RATS, Security, Counterterrorism

1. Introduction

International terrorism and Islamic extremism still remains serious threats to the South and Central Asian region. The main objectives of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is to counter these threats and challenges in the region. The SCO highlights the “three evil forces” as the main security challenges facing the region – terrorism, separatism and extremism – but the scope of cooperation also extend to organised criminal activity and illegal narcotics trafficking. In addition to regional stability, economic prosperity and development has also been incorporated as the main goal for the SCO. Currently, the SCO comprises of Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, India and Pakistan, as member states. India along with Pakistan have become full-fledged members of the SCO at the Astana Summit on June 8-9, 2017. More than sixty per cent of Eurasian landmass is represented by the SCO, encompassing over three billion people, which is nearly half of world population. Besides these permanent members, the SCO counts four observer states, namely the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Republic of Belarus, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Mongolia; and the SCO has six dialogue partners, namely the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Armenia, the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, the Republic of Turkey, and the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

Along with Russia, China and Central Asian Republics (CARs), India also recognises the struggle of the SCO against terrorism even before the events of September 11, 2001. This will enable India to closely interact with the SCO's Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS) based in the Tashkent.

The end of Cold War and the emergence of the non-traditional security threats in the form of terrorism, separatism, extremism, drug-trafficking and environmental

degradation have led to rethinking about the concept of security. The challenges posed by non-traditional threats are also greater than traditional ones in the twenty-first century. This study will analyse the process of cooperation among SCO members to counter these threats in Eurasia and specifically the role of Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS). It would also highlight various methods employed by the United States and its allies in contrast to SCO member-states to counter the “three evils” in Eurasia.

2. Evolution of SCO’s Approach on Terrorism

Over the years of its existence, the SCO has gone through several stages of development and undergone significant changes. The “Shanghai Five” mechanism was born in April 1996 when the Republic of Kazakhstan, People’s Republic of China, the Kyrgyzstan Republic, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Tajikistan held a summit meeting in Shanghai, China. The parties signed an agreement on strengthening mutual military confidence on border issues— “Agreement on strengthening military confidence in Border Area” and a year later, at Moscow Summit in 1997, another agreement was signed: the “Agreement of Mutual Reduction of Military Forces in Border Areas”. The two inter-related agreements representing a deepening process, have laid a solid legal basis for mutual trust and common security among the five neighboring state.¹ The third summit of Shanghai Five met in Almaty in 1998. It took note of the situation prevailing in Central Asia following the takeover of power by Taliban in Kabul.

All members of the “Shanghai Five” faced forms of Islamic extremism and terrorism, in one way or another, that often have links to fundamentalist organisations and separatist movements. Both Russia and China have been waging a war against Chechen and Uyghur separatists in their respective countries for many years. Similarly, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan were worried over the influx of radical Islamists who often hide among illegal immigrants that came from Chechnya, China’s border areas and from Afghanistan.² On February 16, 1999, the extremist forces exploded six bombs that were targeted at President Karimov in Tashkent. In August 25, 1999, the “Shanghai Five” held its fourth summit in Bishkek. During the summit, they signed Joint Declaration on Combating National Separatism, Religious extremism, and Trans-border Crime. The joint declaration stipulates that “to effectively crack down on international terrorism, illegal dealing in drugs and narcotics trafficking, arms smuggling, illegal immigration and other forms of cross-border crime is of significance. Therefore, the responsible departments of the five countries will adopt measures

¹ Mingshan, C. & Xiquan, H. (2000), “The “Shanghai Five” Mechanism for Regional Security”, *Contemporary International Relations (Beijing)*, 11 (8): 3-5.

² Lukin, A. (2004), “Shanghai Cooperation Organisation: Problems and prospects”, *International Affairs (Moscow)*, 50(3): 34.

to launch practical cooperation including the consultation and working out a program of joint action during the period of 1999-2000”.³The fifth meeting was held in Dushanbe, capital of Tajikistan on July 5, 2000. President Islam Karimov of Uzbekistan was attending the summit as an observer. Subsequently, the establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) was announced on June 15, 2001 at a summit of the Heads of States of China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

3. Defining the Concepts “three evils” by SCO

The conceptualisation of three evil forces by the SCO was not accidental. It occurred in response to the changing global reality and its objective was to meet the needs of its members. Cracking down on ethnic separatism, religious extremism and international terrorism and combating drug trafficking and other transnational crimes provided a new space, agenda and dynamics for the “Shanghai Five” and also gave a new foundation for expanding security cooperation. Anti-terrorism and anti-separatism were the key driving forces behind the establishment of SCO. Two fundamental documents were signed on June 15, 2001– the declaration and the convention. The last documents –the Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism – in fact, laid the foundation of cooperation among the parties.

The terms “terrorism” and “terrorist” are highly contested concepts, with a multiple range of academic and policy definitions. In the 2001 Convention, the SCO member states defined the notion of extremism for the first time. The Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism, and Extremism is of special interest because it has provided definition of “the three evils”. For instance, Article 1 of the Convention⁴ read:

1. For the purposes of this convention, the terms used in it shall have the following meaning:
 - 1) “Terrorism” means:
 - a) Any act recognised as an offence in one of the treaties listed in the Annex to this Convention (hereinafter referred to as “the Annex” and as defined in this treaty;
 - b) Other act intended to cause death or serious bodily injury to a civilian, or any other person not taking an active part in the hostilities in a situation of armed conflict or to cause major damage to any material facility, as well as to organise, plan, aid, and abet such act, when the purpose of such act, by

³ Tao, Xu (2002), “On the SCO under New Situation”, *Contemporary International Relations (Beijing)*, 12(6):11.

⁴ The Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism, 15th June 2001, URL:<http://www.sectsco.org/EN/show.asp?id=68>

its nature or context, is to intimidate a population, violate public security or to compel public authorities or an international organisation to do or to abstain from doing any act, and prosecuted in accordance with the national laws of the Parties;

- 2) “separatism” means any act intended to violate territorial integrity of a State including by annexation of any part of its territory or to disintegrate a State, committed in a violent manner, as well as planning and preparing, and abetting such act, and subject to criminal prosecuting in accordance with the national laws of the Parties;
 - 3) “Extremism” is an act aimed at seizing or keeping power through the use of violence or changing violently the constitutional regime of a State, as well as a violent encroachment upon public security, including organisation, for the above purpose, of illegal armed formations and participation in them, criminally prosecuted in conformity with the national laws of the Parties.
2. This Article shall not affect any international treaty or any national law of the parties, provides or any may provide for a broader application of the term used in this Article

The international community has not yet coined a commonly accepted definition of terrorism despite of its several attempts on defining the term “terrorism.” In this case, the SCO convention has taken a step forward. Indian scholar L. C Kumar argued that the joint declaration of war on Terrorism and Religious Extremism by the SCO member states has undoubtedly made its contribution to the development of an atmosphere necessary to ensure success of the fight against international terrorism in Afghanistan and Central Asia.⁵ Adopted less than two months before the events of September 11, 2001, this convention was really a document of historic importance. Rejecting all hypocrisy and double standards, the convention categorically declared “Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism” as a “Threat to international peace and security”. Moreover, less than three months after the establishment of the organisation, the practicability of SCO was put to serious test after terrorist attack on World Trade Centre. Subsequently, on September 14, 2001, prime ministers who were attending the Prime Ministers’ Conference of the SCO at Alma Ata, Kazakhstan, issued a joint communiqué in which they denounced the terrorist attack while expressing condolences and sympathy for the American people.⁶

⁵ Kumar, L.C. (2010), *Shanghai Cooperation Organisation: Eurasian Security through cooperation*, Delhi: Shipra., pp.38-39

⁶ Wang, J. (2008), “China and SCO: Towards a New Type of Interstate Relations”, in Guoguang Wu & Helen Lansdowne (eds.) *China Turns to Multilateralism: Foreign Policy and Regional Security*, London & New York: Routledge., pp.104-105

4. Establishment of the RATS

In order to provide institutional and legal support for its counterterrorist activities and to implement the Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism (signed in 2001), the SCO established the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) in 2002. The SCO Charter signed in 2002 also outlined the basic aims and tasks of the organisation and determined the mechanisms allowing the concerned ministries and departments to effectively coordinate their work. The Article 10 of the Charter⁷ states:

The regional Counter-terrorist Structure established by the member States of Shanghai Convention to combat terrorism, separatism and extremism of 15 June, 2001, located in Bishkek, the Kyrgyz Republic, shall be a standing SCO body.

Its main objectives and functions, principles of its constitution and financing, as well as its rule of procedure shall be governed by a separate international treaty concluded by the member states, and other necessary instrument adopted by them.

Simultaneously, an “Agreement on Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure between the Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization”, was also signed on June 7, 2002 at St. Petersburg (Russia). This document offers concrete guidelines about its structures and functions. For example, Articles 6 of this Agreement on RATS⁸ specify the key objectives and functions of RATS which states:

- 1) Developing proposals and recommendations on strengthening cooperation in combating terrorism, separatism, and extremism for relevant SCO bodies and at the request of the Parties;
- 2) At the request of one of the Parties assisting the competent agencies of the Parties in combating terrorism, separatism, and extremism, particularly, in line with the provisions of the Convention;
- 3) Collecting and analyzing information provided to RATS by the Parties on issues of combating terrorism, separatism, and extremism;
- 4) Creating and maintaining the RATS databank, specifically regarding: - International terrorist, separatist, and other extremist organizations, their structure, leaders, members, and other individuals involved with these organizations, as well as their financing sources and channels; - Status, dynamics, and trends of the spread of terrorism, separatism, and extremism that affect the interests of the Parties; - Non-governmental

⁷ Charter of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, June 7, 2002, <http://eng.sectSCO.org/documents/>

⁸ Agreement on Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure between the Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, June 7, 2002, <http://eng.sectSCO.org/documents/>

organizations and individuals providing support to terrorism, separatism, and extremism;

- 5) Providing information upon the request by the competent authorities of the Parties;
- 6) Assisting in preparing and conducting anti-terrorist, staff and command, and operational and tactical exercises upon the request by the interested Parties;
- 7) Assisting in the preparation and execution of operational search and other activities on combating terrorism, separatism, and extremism at the request of the Parties;
- 8) Assisting in the international search of individuals alleged to have committed actions set forth in paragraph 1 of Article I of the Convention for the purpose of their prosecution;
- 9) Participating in the development of international legal instruments related to issues of combating terrorism, separatism and extremism;
- 10) Assisting in training specialists and instructors for anti-terrorist units;
- 11) Participating in the preparation and conducting of academic and practical conferences and seminars, and assisting in sharing experience in combating terrorism, separatism and extremism;
- 12) Establishing and maintaining contacts with international organizations dealing with issues of combating terrorism, separatism and extremism.

Thereafter, during the Tashkent summit in June 2004, the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) started functioning based in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan. It is a permanent institutional arrangement to enhance coordination and cooperation of special services of the SCO member countries to fight terrorism. The staff of the centre comprised 30 officials from the member-states. Funding was pulled on a shared basis as follows: Russia and China 25 percent respectively, Kazakhstan 21 percent and all others together made up the rest 29 percent contribution.⁹ The RATS is led by a council composed of officials from anti-terrorist organisations of the member states.

5. Counter-terrorism and Peace Mission of SCO

The legal framework for the cooperation of the SCO Member States in counteracting extremism was based on two documents: the Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism of June 15,

⁹ Rakhimov, M. (2014), "Shanghai Cooperation Organisation: Looking Beyond Central Asia for a Positive Role", in P.L. Dash, Anita Sengupta & Murat M. Bakhadirov (eds.) *Central Asia and Regional Security*, New Delhi: KW Publishers, pp. 317

2001, and the Concept of Cooperation between SCO Member States in Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism of July 5, 2005. The latter stipulated the main goals, objectives, guidelines, areas and forms of cooperation in combating the "three evils." Many years have passed since the adoption of the aforementioned conventions, and in the meanwhile, the nature and scope of extremism have changed. Therefore, the 2017 convention, signed during the Astana Summit, maintains the continuity of the two previous documents, aims at improving the mechanism to counteract extremism in the SCO space, expands the provisions of the SCO Development Strategy until 2025, and coincides with the main themes and issues solved under the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Moreover, Chinese scholar Col. Zhao Xiaodong¹⁰ has listed the following treaties and documents dealing with counter-terrorism cooperation:

1. Charter of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, June 15, 2002,
2. Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism, June 15, 2001,
3. The Concept of Cooperation Between SCO Member States on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism, June 5, 2005,
4. Treaty on Long-Term Good-Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation Between the Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, August 16, 2007,
5. The Convention Against Terrorism of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, June 16, 2009,
6. The process of practical implementation of the Cooperation Plan on combating terrorism, separatism and extremism for 2007–2009, June 15, 2006,
7. The agreement among the SCO member states on conducting joint military exercises, June 27, 2007, which laid long-term organizational and legal foundations for conducting joint exercises aimed at countering terrorism,
8. The agreement on cooperation among the governments of the member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation on combating illegal circulation of weapons, ammunition and explosives, August 28, 2008,
9. Programme of Cooperation among the SCO Member States in Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism 2010–2012, June 16, 2009,
10. Agreement on the Training of Personnel for Antiterrorist Units of SCO Member States, June 16, 2009,

¹⁰ Xiaodong, Zhao (2012), the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and Counter-Terrorism Cooperation, Institute for Security and Development Policy, Stockholm-Nacka, Sweden, pp. 11-12.

11. Programme of Cooperation among the SCO Member States in Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism 2013–2015, June 8, 2012,
12. The 2017 Convention on Countering Extremism, on June 8-9, 2017 in Astana.

It is interesting to mention here that SCO countries have established the practice of conducting Joint Anti-Terrorist Exercises. In October 2002, the first bilateral anti-terrorist exercises were held with the participation of China and Kyrgyzstan, within the framework of the SCO, in the Chinese-Kyrgyz border area. Subsequently, it regularly held its military exercises every year. The exercise rehearsed an SCO operation to intervene in a state that was either besieged by terrorist or in political turmoil, using combined land, sea and air elements. The last joint anti-terrorism military exercise of the Armed Forces of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation member countries "Peace Mission - 2016" finished on September 20, 2016 at the mountain training center "Edelweiss" in Issyk-Kul.

Besides this, Uzbekistan's proposal on drawing up the list of banned terrorist, separatist and extremist organisations and lists of persons wanted for specified crimes was acknowledged by other member states through the concrete results of this interaction. In the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, in accordance with the decisions of the RATS SCO Council, also approved and activate the Unified investigative register of persons declared by special services and law enforcement agencies of the SCO member states in international search for committing or suspected of committing crimes of a terrorist, separatist or extremist character (hereinafter – Register), which includes more than 3,000 individuals and a List of terrorist, separatist and extremist organizations, whose activities are banned on the territories of the SCO member states, comprising more than 100 organizations, including "Islamic State", "Jebhat an Nusra", "Islamic Movement of Eastern Turkestan", "Hizbut-Tahrir al Islami", "Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan", "Ansarullah", etc.¹¹ The List and the Register are systematically updated on the basis of information and decisions of the judicial bodies of the SCO member states adopted in accordance with their national legislation.

Furthermore, it has been reported that between 2011 and 2015, under RATS coordination, the authorities of SCO member States managed to prevent 20 terrorist attacks while still in the planning stages, averted 650 crimes of terrorist and extremist nature, and neutralized 440 terrorist training camps and 1,700

¹¹ RATS (2017), "About Information Accounts of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization", August 18, 2017, <http://www.european-times.com/about-information-accounts-regional-anti-terrorist-structure-of-the-shanghai-cooperation-organization/>.

members of international terrorist organizations.¹²

With a view to strengthening international cooperation in the sphere of struggle against terrorism, a protocol between RATS, SCO and Counter-Terrorist Centre of the CIS was signed that provided for cooperation in the sphere of ensuring a mechanism for large-scale security arrangement on the SCO territories and the CIS countries.¹³

6. Counterterrorism Policies of United States and SCO: A Comparison

The Central Asian Republics (CARS) have played a very significant and extraordinary role in the US-led 'War against Terrorism' in Afghanistan. Of the three states bordering Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan had offered base facilities for US and allied forces, while Turkmenistan due to its positive neutrality, offered access to its airspace and other humanitarian missions.¹⁴ After the events of September 11, 2001 the United States adopted a series of comprehensive legislative, institutional, law-enforcement, intelligence, border security, civil aviation safety, and other measures aimed at protecting the public from terrorist violence and prosecuting those responsible for terrorism. The establishment of a new Department of Homeland Security in July 2003 and introduction of structural changes to governmental agencies are responsible for combating terrorism in United States. It has approved two major documents, i.e. *National Strategy for combating Terrorism, February 2003* and *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism, September 2006* which highlighted principles guiding US policy aimed at combating terrorism at home and abroad.¹⁵ In an attempt to define the term "terrorism", the document stated that:

"The enemy is not one person. It is not a single political regime. Certainly it is not a religion. The enemy is terrorism-premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub national groups or clandestine agents. Those who employ terrorism, regardless of

¹² Alimov, R.(2017), "The Role of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Counteracting Threats to Peace and Security", UN Chronicle, Vol. LIV No. 3, <https://unchronicle.un.org/article/role-shanghai-cooperation-organization-counteracting-threats-peace-and-security>

¹³ Rakhimov, M. (2014), "Shanghai Cooperation Organisation: Looking Beyond Central Asia for a Positive Role", in P.L. Dash, Anita Sengupta& Murat M. Bakhadirov (eds.) *Central Asia and Regional Security*, New Delhi: KW Publishers, pp. 318.

¹⁴ Mann, P. (2004), "Role of Central Asian Republics in the US-led 'War against Terrorism'", in Mahavir Singh (ed.) *International Terrorism and Religious Extremism: Challenges to Central and South Asia*, New Delhi: Anamika Publishers, pp. 175.

¹⁵ Omelicheva, M. Y. (2011), *Counterterrorism Policies in Central Asia*, New York: Routledge, pp. 60-66.

their specific secular or religious objectives, strive to subvert the rule of law and effect change through violence and fear. These terrorists also share the misguided belief that killing, kidnapping, extorting, robbing and wreaking havoc to terrorise people are legitimate forms of political actions”.¹⁶

Nevertheless, the understanding of United States on “terrorism” and “terrorists” also keeps changing according to its interests and needs. Indian scholar Asopa argued that “the United States has a record of using nation and the people when it needs them and leaving them unprotected when its requirements are fulfilled.”¹⁷ For instance, United States had nurtured Osama Bin Laden in Afghanistan and used him as bulwark against the Soviet Union and then fought a full scale war to eliminate him and his Al-Qaida network. On the other hand, US strategists considered Iraq, Syria, Iran, and North Korea as terrorist state at various point of time. Additionally, Russian scholar Sokolov claimed that “it cannot be denied that many actions of the United States and NATO in other countries are in no way different from terrorist acts. The only difference is that they have a state character.”¹⁸ Therefore, in order to maintain its hegemony and dominance as a sole power in 21st century, the United States has utilised these conditions to export its own model of “democracy” under the mask of “war on terror” to the rest of the world.

In contrast, the approaches of SCO member states to combat terrorism are based on a significant degree of common understanding of their own governments. Chinese scholar Guang stated that “the anti-terror policy of member states based on multilateral and international cooperation, rather than unilateralism.”¹⁹ In fact, the war on terrorism has provided an exceptional opportunity for cooperation with the various multilateral regimes involving Central Asia. Undeniably, this became one of the driving forces of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). Similarly, Russian scholar Lukin also argued that “the SCO’s approach to terrorism, is much broader than that of the United States and its allies. While Washington puts more emphasis on military strikes against international terrorist centres and attacks

¹⁶ National Strategy for Combating Terrorism (February 2003) White House. Online, Available at <http://fas.org/irp/threat/nsct2003.pdf>, pp, 1.

¹⁷ Asopa, S.K. (2004). “Religious Extremism and Terrorism in Central Asia in the Aftermath of 11th September”, in Mahavir Singh (ed.) *International Terrorism and Religious Extremism: Challenges to Central and South Asia*, New Delhi: Anamika Publishers, pp.171-173.

¹⁸ Sokolov, Y. (2003), “Dangers of Unipolar World”, in Mahavir Singh & Victor Krassilichtchikov (eds.) *Eurasian Vision: Felicitation Volume on the 70th Birthday of Prof. Devendra Kaushik*, New Delhi: Anamika Publishers, pp. 82-87.

¹⁹ Guang, P. (2012), “The Role of Multilateral Anti-Terror Mechanism in Central Asia”, in Charles Hawkings & Robert Love (eds.) *Chinese Strategies on Central Asia: The New Great Game*, New Delhi: Manas Publications, pp. 135.

against state supporting terrorism, the SCO nations see direct links between international terrorism, on the one hand, and separatism and religious extremism, on the other.”²⁰Further, Chinese scholar, Liu Xin argued that “Unlike NATO members, who share great commonality in political systems, religious beliefs, values, and high threshold requirements, SCO member’s are diverse. And that diversity is an asset, not a liability.”²¹Hence, in various aspects the SCO differs from United States and its allies in combating terrorism.

7. The Issue of Human Rights and Struggle against Terrorism

Human Rights remain one of the most controversial issues during combating terrorism. The Dushanbe Declaration of the Heads of Member States of the SCO during their summit in 2008 placed at the top Human Rights and its protection during counter- terrorism policies²². Article 10 of the declaration reads:

The member states of the SCO reaffirming their commitment to basic documents and standards in the field of protection and encouragement of human rights:

- i. Promote the observance of basic human rights and civil liberties in accordance with international obligations and national legislation;
- ii. Share experiences in enforcing international treaties on human rights;
- iii. Implement existing agreement in the framework of multilateral and bilateral treaties in the field of social and cultural cooperation;
- iv. Launch active consultations and cooperation at the UN on human rights issues;
- v. Maintain interaction of the SCO with other regional organisations and integration-oriented associations on issues of social and cultural cooperation and human rights encouragement.

However, western scholars perceivedivergence between words and deeds of the SCO member states concerning human rights. For instance, Ambrosio argued the SCO nominally supports the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but has taken a firm stance against the notion of universal human rights. He further noted that, the colour revolutions in Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan which raised the spectre of further challenges to the autocratic regimes of former Soviet Union and therefore gave a strong impetus to regional, autocratic

²⁰ Lukin, A. (2007), “The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation: What Next?” *Russia in Global Affairs (Moscow)*, 5 (3): 142-143.

²¹ Xin, Liu (2018), “SCO Trilogy: Is the SCO the NATO of the East?”, July06, 2018,https://news.cgtn.com/news/3d3d414e334d544f77457a6333566d54/share_p.html

²² Dushanbe Declaration of the Heads of the Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, August 28, 2008, URL:<http://www.sectsco.org/EN/show.asp?id=90>

cooperation.²³ Similarly, Omelicheva claimed that the Russian, Chinese and Central Asian states' counter-terrorism program lacks a balanced approach to the problem of terrorism. The legislative and institutional frameworks of these states fortify a system of counterterrorism that prioritizes force and allows for the suspension of individual liberties and certain political freedoms in the name of combating terrorism. She further argued that, the United States has adopted a comprehensive and balanced approach combining preventive responses, extraordinary and punitive responses, activities aimed at mitigating the detrimental consequences of terrorist attack.²⁴ By contrast, Blakely contended that "the proponents of the invasions and occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq have repeatedly justified those wars in human rights terms. The use of torture and extraordinary rendition by the US against terror suspect in the 'War on Terror' are part of a broader imperial project to assert its position as the world's most powerful state, at a time of emerging competition from other players."²⁵ Unlike NATO, a military alliance that is still in effect, to contain the spread of communism then and now directed against Russia, whereas the SCO, is not designed to address an external threat, so it is not directed at the West. For instance, the SCO even allowed Turkey to become its dialogue partner. Therefore, it focus more to address the problems of its member states.

Under the chairmanship of Kazakhstan on November 22-23, 2016 in Beijing, the SCO Foreign Ministries held consultations on the matters of interaction among international organizations in human rights. During the interview to Kazin form News Agency, Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan in SCO Secretariat, Advisor Yerik Ashimov stated that the participants exchanged opinions and proposals of further consolidation of cooperation and interaction of the UN human rights institutions, prevention of dilution of the intergovernmental nature of the UN work, and broad interpretation of international human rights commitments. These includes creation of special protection for certain groups such as sexual minority, human rights defenders, bloggers and others, and also similar tendencies in the activity of treaty bodies.²⁶

8. The Role of United Nations in the fight against Terrorism

²³ Ambrosia, T. (2008), "Catching the 'Shanghai Spirit': How the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Promotes Authoritarian Norms in Central Asia", *Europe-Asia Studies*, 60(8): 1330, 1338.

²⁴ Omelicheva, M. Y. (2011), *Counterterrorism Policies in Central Asia*, New York: Routledge, pp. 111-113.

²⁵ Blakeley, R. (2013), "Human Rights, State Wrongs, and Social Change: The Theory and Practice of Emancipation", *Review of International Studies*, 39(3): 605-606; 618; 611-612.

²⁶ "First human rights consultations in SCO history", November 24, 2016, http://lenta.inform.kz/kz/first-human-rights-consultations-in-sco-history_a2972798

The SCO has broadened the definition of security in the 21st century. In order to resolve the problems related to security, it has placed the role of UN and its Charter on a priority basis. Continuing the legacy of Bishkek summit in 2007, one year later at the Dushanbe summit in August 2008, the SCO again expanded the concept of security where it included the dialogue mechanism and sustainable development. Article 1 and Article 5 of Dushanbe Declaration²⁷ read as:

Article 1: In the 21st century interdependence of states has grown sharply, security and development are becoming inseparable. None of the modern international problems can be settled by force, the role force factor in global and regional political is diminishing objectively.

Reliance on a solution based solely on the use of force faces no prospects, it hinders comprehensive settlement of local conflicts; effective resolution of existing problems can be possible only with due regard for the interests of all parties, through their involvement in a process of negotiations, not through isolation. Attempts to strengthen one's own security to the prejudice of security of others do not assist the maintenance of global security and stability.

Article 5: The member states of the Organisation stand up for broad international collaboration in resolving the problem of resources supply to satisfy the needs of mankind without damaging the environment, in achieving the goals of global development, e.g., closing the technological gap among states and elimination of poverty by providing all states equal access to the advantages of globalization.

The United States and its allies believe that the pursuit of terrorist requires pre-emptive strikes, dispersing their cells and capturing its members even before they act. Hence using force as one of the priority basis. In contrast, the SCO member states rejects the use of force in resolving the global and regional conflicts rather they wished to involve all the parties through the process of negotiation. Simultaneously, they argue for democratic globalization where all nations would have equal benefits from it. In this regard, SCO continues its support for an even more prominent coordinating role for the United Nations in international relations, with an emphasis upon the further development of close cooperation with the world Organization.²⁸ Chinese scholar Guang argued that any war on terrorism should not be waged by military means alone. Military means, while indispensable in quite a few cases, can never be a cure-all. He further stressed that focus should

²⁷ Dushanbe Declaration of the Heads of the Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, August 2008, <http://www.sectsc.org/EN/show.asp?id=90>

²⁸ Alimov, R.(2017), "The Role of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Counteracting Threats to Peace and Security", UN Chronicle, Vol. LIV No. 3, <https://unchronicle.un.org/article/role-shanghai-cooperation-organization-counteracting-threats-peace-and-security>

be on political, economic and social roots that have given rise to terrorism in the first place, and the necessary social measures must be taken for long term solutions.²⁹ Likewise, while criticizing US approach, Chinese scholar Jian suggested the larger role for international society in tackling unconventional security threats. According to him, the role of the United Nations in international affairs still cannot be replaced. The authority of the UN and other global institutions in the international security must be respected and maintained.³⁰

9. Conclusion

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is the world's first organisation dedicated to security and safety against terrorism. The SCO has effectively conducted several large-scale bilateral and multilateral anti-terror military exercises, which helped safety measure of its member states' security and stability. The influence of the SCO on international stage continue to rise and the expanding membership has injected fresh impetus into the organisation. In order to resolve the problems related to security, the SCO has placed the role of UN and its Charter on a priority basis. Despite its focus on security cooperation, the SCO is not intended to be a military bloc nor an alliance. The SCO agenda has broadened over the years, potentially opening cooperation in new fields.

The nature of strategic partnership between Russia and China, two biggest countries neighbouring of Central Asia, will determine the geo-strategy of the entire region in general and SCO in particular. Russia and China have increasingly diverging views on the future directions of SCO development. At one hand, Russia is keen to keep the SCO as a primarily security organization, with only a limited economic role focusing on joint infrastructure projects. On the other, China wants SCO to evolve decisively into an economic grouping which makes it easier for it to implement its business projects, including those in energy space and trade in the region. These divergent interests of China and Russia have hindered the further development of the SCO. Until today, cooperation on microeconomic projects has been insignificant. This is mainly because of the concerns among the Russia and Central Asian Republics that their economies will not be able to compete with the strength of the Chinese economy. Moreover, the existence of Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) as well as Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) in former Soviet space which includes most of SCO member states focusing specifically on security and economic issues respectively obviously weaken the basic parameter of cooperation in the SCO. As

²⁹ Guang, P. (2012), "The Role of Multilateral Anti-Terror Mechanism in Central Asia", in Charles Hawkings & Robert Love (eds.) *Chinese Strategies on Central Asia: The New Great Game*, New Delhi: Manas Publications, pp. 135.

³⁰ Jian, X. (2004), "New Challenges, New Approaches: Unconventional Security and International Security Cooperation", in K. Santhanam & S. Kondapolli (eds.) *Asian Security and China, 2000-2010*, Delhi: Shipra, pp. 28-33.

compared to China's the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the SCO possesses definitely multilateral character with a defined member base and institutional structures that evolved during the course of time. The SCO is still a relatively young organization as compared to European Union and the problems as noted above are complex and will take some more time to be resolved.

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Contesting Development: Understanding the Interface between Development Discourse and Subalterns Politics in Bihar

Pankaj Kumar

Abstract

Janata Dal (later on the Rashtriya Janata Dal) government under the leadership of Lalu Prasad Yadav in Bihar during its regime, attacked the hegemonic discourse of development by raising the slogan, 'humein vikas nahin samman chahiye' (we need dignity, not development). One should not treat this as merely slogan as the paper will show how anti-development politics has its own materiality, which can be found in concrete practices of the government. So the real issue is not whether anti-development politics is rhetorical or not but how to make sense of it. How can one imagine such a situation especially in the liberalization era, where there is tacit consensus over desirability of growth oriented development across all political spectrum and almost every state government is competing for getting maximum benefit form liberalized economy.

This paper tries to contextualize these instances of complete rupture from development through the framework of post development discourses, where the issue of dignity and self-respect overshadows the desirability of development.

Keywords: Bihar, Development, Discourses, Globalization, Liberalization, Post development, Subalterns

I

To understand such subaltern imaginary of development in general and state power in particular, one need to contextualize it with larger political processes. During the 1990's two simultaneous processesⁱ, (often contradictory to each other) one, the subalternisation of politics and the other liberalization of economy vastly changed the political and social landscape of the country. The Politicization of lower castes and their mobilization around Mandal issueⁱⁱ later on culminated in the capturing of state power by the lower castes leaders especially in North India. It was celebrated as a '**second democratic upsurge**' (Yadav 2000). This phenomenal rise of lower castes triggered one of the major debates of that decade between those who saw it as deepening of the democracy and those for whom it was decline in the democratic institutions which resulted in a 'crisis of governability' (Kohli 1990). Lower castes popular resentment against the mode and manner in which state and society was functioning in India were called identity politics and it were held responsible for halting development, causing economic stagnation, mis-governance, corruption and crime. For instance the triumph of Modi – led BJP in the national election of 2014 was celebrated as the end of identity politics (Mehta 2014).

Rhetoric of development has been celebrated and pitched against so called disruptive identity politics.ⁱⁱⁱ Almost every party and government uses the vocabulary of development, be it national or regional, to attain legitimacy for its rule. Continuous attempts are being made, especially by voices from the urban middle class, to delegitimize politicization and democratization as impediments to development.

This New Middle Class^{iv} has tried to build their hegemony through portraying free market based development to be in the national interest. For them development is irresistible, irreversible and metahistorical, which functions in what Benjamin has called ‘homogenous empty time’^v (1969: 260-61). And in this process development has become, what Mehta calls ‘rhetorical narcotic’ or an empty signifier (Mehta 2015). It has emerged as a diagnosis which can explain every problem and its failure is seen as a root cause of all deficiencies which ails modern India today. The discourse of development has achieved the imaginary of certainty in such a way that it is becoming difficult to conceptualize social reality outside the development discourse. The situation is such that most of the criticism of development is around conceptualization and practice of it and not an overall rejection of the concept itself. They talk in the language of development but with some suffix like, alternative, sustainable and people centric development.

Through this ‘colonization of reality’ the third world has been produced by the Europe. Development discourses produced its own subjects who (here third world countries) internalized themselves as underdeveloped and poor. It overlooks the crucial question of development as an arena of cultural contestation and identity construction. In this process economy superseded the other pertaining issue like culture, identity and equity (Escobar 1992).

As a result of this desirability of development and the naïve attitude towards it, development has become end in itself and any resistance to it has been and is being silenced (both epistemologically as well as in practice). It is the new substitute for ‘Dharma’ (Paraujali 2001). There are continuous attempts from developmental economists to depoliticize the development discourse, proselytizing it into a domain exclusively reserved for experts and technocrats (Escobar 1992, Sanyal 2007).

To make sense of these trends, I find Luke’s third view of power as an important conceptual tool to understand the hidden power dynamics which masquerades the developmental discourse. Lukes argues that (in the third view of power) compliance is secured through controlling thought and desire which in turn is secured through controlling the modes of information, mass media and processes of socialization. In Luke’s words,

“Is it not the supreme and most insidious exercise of power to prevent people, to whatever degree, from having grievances by shaping their perception, cognition, and preferences such a way

that they accept their rule in the existing order of things either because they can see or imagine no alternative to it or because they can see or image no alternative to it or because they see it natural or unchangeable or best they value it as divinely ordered and beneficial.” (1974: 28).

II

The trickle down model of development, where development is equated with growth, not only failed to alleviate poverty but also had devastating impact on the dispossessed population of the country. Narmada Bachao Andolon is one of the most prominent examples of how executive sponsored developmental approach can have disastrous impact on the masses and eliminate the marginalized. Bhaduri has termed this strategy of development nothing sort of development terrorism (Bhaduri 2007a: 552)

Although hegemonic discourses leave very narrow space for counter hegemony, it is not the case that hegemony can ever be absolute. So in such conditions where development discourse seems irresistible worldwide; is it be possible to imagine subaltern agency, which can not only displace hegemony of development discourse but also replace it with counter hegemonic discourse, mirroring a subaltern imagination? Is it possible to imagine a situation where this homogenous empty time get eliminated by what Benjamin calls ‘messianic cessation of happening’ and beginning of new time and discourse of the oppressed (1969: 263)

It is not the case that project of development has gone unchallenged. The post-developmental school has criticized the Eurocentric notion which implicitly clings to colonial assumptions of superiority of western societies. It questions the endeavor of industrializing, modernizing and uplifting the third world through the expert advises of the west on the behalf of poor and ignorant people (Aram 2001: 184).

The developmental polices which have been practiced since independence came under severe attack especially after the emergence of alternative discourses of development and new social movements based on various issues and concerns. There have been many democratic as well as violent struggles against the mode and manner in which it has been pursued. But somehow most of these struggles are against particular form of its projection. These are mainly against the top down approach to development which is insensitive to local culture and configuration of power resulting in new forms of exploitation and subordination. Instead of that they aspire for alternative development which is decentralized, locally articulated, formulated, ecologically sustainable and in tune with local culture and aspirations. They try to democratize the developmental planning discourse and make it more humane and inclusive (Bhaduri 2007b). Thus they are working for how to make

development better but they hardly reject the desirability of development and thus work within the dominant paradigm of it.

Such a kind of position could also be found in Mehta's articulation. He argued that there is no doubt about desirability and force of development but the problem arises when one sees development as a catch-all hope. It neglects the inner conflicts of development which is a product of its own processes. He identifies two major conflicts one with respect to imagination of development and other around victims of development. Writing in the context of the Patel agitation for demanding reservations in government jobs and education, he cautioned that even if development is inclusive, its hyper competitive instrumentalism can create vast unrest in the society. The language of development in India speaks a transactional language of goods and services, of individual advancement. It does not speak the language of freedom and citizenship (2015).

III

But most theorization of radical democratic movements has emphasized their exteriority from the party politics and state^{vi} (Witsoe 2013). But in this paper I will neither focus on anti-development politics manifested in various social movements nor on alternative development but its electoral manifestation which is unusual and has got less scholarly attention. Except for few writing, most engagements are devoid from peculiar context and dynamic and are intended to evaluate it through abstract normative principles. That does not mean that these kinds of engagement are worthless. The issue is that they are not adequate enough to explain the reality in an impartial manner, due to their false claims of universality.

The case of Bihar is unusual in two senses first contrary to the dominant trend, anti-development was pursued by the elected government, and not by social movements. It is relatively easy for social movements to take an anti-development turn but for a state government it is hard to pitch for any such intention since it might endanger their political legitimacy. Secondly the intensity and vigor of anti-development was not aimed for searching alternative development within the development paradigm but it sought to go beyond the discourse itself, where issue of dignity overtook the desirability of development.

Without too much digression it is pertinent here to deal with the question of how I use the subaltern category and why? The terminology of subaltern is itself contested and it could be debated whether lower caste could be considered as subaltern or not, especially after Spivak's intervention in the field of subaltern studies. Contrary to the earlier writing of the Subaltern Studies group (especially of Ranajit Guha, who claimed that subalterns have their own realm and language of operation), Spivak argued that by definition 'subaltern' lacks agency and the moment they get organized or attain power they cease to be subalterns. Contesting

that subaltern can speak through autonomous discourse she argued that subaltern can only speak within and through the dominant discourse (1988).

Spivak's argument has been problematized by many scholars within subaltern studies who argue that political mobilization does not necessarily results in the transformation of subaltern groups into dominant groups, neither it necessarily transforms the root causes of subalternity. Subaltern groups can only cease to be subaltern once their subalternity is addressed, once they haveⁱ transformed the relations of their subordination. Subalternity exists in degrees or levels of development (Nilsen and Roy 2015: 14).

Drawing from this third kind of understanding of subaltern politics the paper argues that politics of the lower castes^{vii} in Bihar during 1990's can neither be understood as of complete autonomy of subaltern vis-à-vis dominant discourse (as in the case of Ranajit Guha) nor as complete domination of elite discourse (as envisaged by Spivak). The Bihar experience goes against these extreme poles and compels us to think about subaltern agency and autonomy is in its own complexity. On the one hand the Lalu regime, working within the bourgeoisie democratic setup, substantiated the Gramsci's claim that political struggle and mobilization of subaltern groups do not take place in some autonomous arena but in and through the institutions through which hegemony is constituted (Cited in Nilsen and Roy 2015: 20). The act of voting by peasants and poor reflect that the subaltern can speak within the dominant discourses. On the other hand his complete rejection of development and its displacement with the question of dignity goes beyond the dominant idioms of political articulation.

IV

The question is why a political party, which champions the empowerment of lower castes, rejects the desirability of development as a whole? It is also unusual and surprising since Bihar is one of the most underdeveloped states in India. It would seem nonsensical to both the upper strata of the society and any proponent of emancipatory politics because ideally subalterns would have needed more development, albeit the nature of such development certainly would have been very different from the dominant paradigm. How to explain such unusual politics where there is a trade-off between the lower caste empowerment and development? How to conceptualize these *anti-developmentalism* and to what extent existing theories and categories, especially of western origin, are adequate? Are these attempt intended merely to bargain and get their larger share in economic pie or are they an attempt on the part of the subalterns to define their, needs, aspirations desires outside the hegemonic discourse of development? The paper identifies the three different, yet interrelated, possible frameworks through which these kinds of anti- development politics can be analyzed.

In most journalistic accounts opposition to development has been seen as a disruptive activity (while it may be interesting to look at the difference in the attitude between vernacular and English newspapers on the issue, if any). Advocates of the development discourse present this anti-development as groups seeking larger share in the economic pie. But these economic reductionists fail to understand that in India disadvantage is seen in collective terms. Resentment in Indian politics is not against poverty and if one sees modern politics as a democratic struggle against poverty it is conceptually absent minded (Kaviraj 1996: 128). Pramod Paraujali attacks this common perception that present social movements is an effort on the part of the marginalized to get a greater share in the developmental process. The basic thrust of these movements, (whether it manifests in social or political form) is to stop the monopolistic control of the rich over their resources (2001: 273-74).

This takes us to a second approach which offers an altogether different picture. In order to understand the reason behind opposition to development it emphasizes the social character of the state institutions. For them social character of holders of discretionary power of the development resources is most significant to understand the politics around devolvement. Upper castes links with the state institutions historically, make them locally powerful and it has continued regardless the change in structuring of state power after independence with democracy in place. As a result lower castes try to block this channel either through installing their own loyalists or by just halting the development itself. So here they intended to weaken the ruling class by cutting their sources of power. In Bihar, Lalu Yadav tried to halt development because of the monopoly of the upper caste over bureaucracy and the discretionary use of developmental resources would have reinforced their domination. They used this mode of developmental patronage to benefit their own constituency. For a meaningful lower caste empowerment it was necessary to transform the local configuration of power and alter it in the favor of the lower castes. This was not possible through state institutions since it was neither efficient nor impartial so rejection of development was imperative. The empowerment of lower castes in Bihar came more from this halting of development than capturing of state power (Witsoe 2013: 187).

The third approach looks at the cultural dimension of anti-development discourses. It caution us that valorization of development will lead to fascism and will further subordinate the oppressed. So rejection of development is an attempt to counter the colonization of life and imagination. In order to build counter hegemony they present the different reality of the world. The emerging consciousness expresses the subaltern desire to conquer not only political and economic autonomy but also the power to define themselves, their aspirations and development process. (Paraujali 2001: 272). It is an attempt to save their local life worlds and culture. It helps us to better understand the politics of Lalu Yadav who was claiming that root cause of our problem is not economic backwardness but

social and cultural. Thus pitching for lower caste empowerment by militantly rejecting the dominant discourse of development. His politics should be framed to be one of not being a mere political opposition to development rather a cultural one. Lalu believed that development is a foreign and polluted ideology that should be rejected.

The question is not that he was rejecting development just because it had foreign origin and he was a cultural relativist but most importantly it was an attempt to break the gaze of development discourse which leads us towards internalization of ourselves as backward. Lalu's attempt could be seen as an attempt to define subaltern, determine their needs and wants (sometimes within the hegemonic discourse and sometime outside of it). It is here that we need to situate the slogan of "*we need dignity not development*" to understand this absurd looking counter-intuitive call more appropriately. Although practically Lalu was relentlessly working to break the hegemony of upper castes (in this respect the second framework is most significant) but it has profound theoretical richness which can only be captured by the third framework which sees it as site of cultural contestation. This was not a romanticisation of the local but the very foundation of their meaningful survival. Although unconscious, Lalu was doing something unusual and revolutionary (not just because he was opposing development) in attempting to redefine the meaning of politics and power for subaltern. By privileging the moral goods like dignity, self-respect and recognition over the material justice, it indicated that justice is primarily moral and not material (Guru 2010). It was assumed by the regime that once the equal social status got recognized that will automatically translate into the material benefits.

V

Having outlined the frameworks and conceptual tool, a brief historical account of the Bihar would be essential to understand why the question of dignity was more urgent than development. It is pertinent here to situate Bihar in the broad politics of passive revolution (Kaviraj 1988) that panned out at the Centre in post independent India. The central question in this section is how Lalu could manage to remain in power so long despite the lack of any substantive policy changes and rejection of development.

The Republic of Bihar, written in 1992 by Arvind Narayan Das, located the reason for persistent violence in the political economy of the state and its relation with federal government. He argued that lumpen capitalism and failure of land reforms in altering agrarian structure had resulted in lumpen development which was the main reason for the underlying structural bases for violence in Bihar. He argued that distorted capitalism was one of the modes of perpetuation of feudal violence in Bihar. Apart from this social relations were so in-egalitarian and exploitative that Harijan hunting had become the favorite game of the upper castes.

Jeffrey Witsoe's, 'Democracy against Development' is the most comprehensive study of Lalu Yadav's politics. Witsoe is of the view that decline of the west combined with the awareness that democracy in much of the world is not playing out according to liberal assumptions means that we should seriously explore alternative ways for understanding democracy in the 21st century that go beyond the liberal democratic framework. In order to understand the rationale behind Lalu's rejection of development he focused on the colonial process of state formation which resulted in the interpenetration of caste networks of landed elites and state institutions as a result of which upper castes were able to control the local sites of power. In post independent India their dominance were reinforced in the name of development (Witsoe 2013:198). The Postcolonial state was legitimized through the discourse of development as the key agent of change. The Nehruvian state came up with the promise of radical social transformation but colonial state institutions were unreformed and local radical change were contained in the name of national security resulting in the continuation of upper caste hegemony, both at the local level as well as state level. Nehruvian state pursued a passive revolution model of capitalist development and masked it with his rhetoric of socialism (Kaviraj 1988).

While on the one hand passive revolution reinforced upper caste dominance over politics and state apparatuses, on the other hand Congress system based on patron client relationship allowed landlords to control the votes of the cultivators and their local power was maintained through linking with state institutions (Frankel 1997: 373-74). This twin process provided both stability and legitimacy to the system. The case of Bihar also reflects the same story in much more severe terms. During the congress period the landed upper caste were central to the political process in Bihar, resulting in a passive revolution development regime controlled by dominant groups who enjoyed a discretionary allocation of public resources.

But both passive revolution and the congress system faced severe threat during the late 1980's both at the national and the regional level, especially due to lower caste assertion. In Bihar Janata Dal formed the government under the leadership of Lalu Yadav, when social relations between communities were highly inegalitarian and oppressive. Lalu came into power on the Mandal wave, with a promise to ensure social justice and dignity for downtrodden people.

Now the challenge before him was, how to go for lower caste empowerment, since state institutions in Bihar was neither efficient nor capable. Amidst inefficient state machinery, hostile central government, uncooperative bureaucracy (since it was dominated by upper castes) and partisan media Lalu had little choice to exercise.

So he sought to concentrate power in the political elite and halted development process. Lower castes saw development as an impediment in their empowerment precisely because of the ways in which state directed development reinforced

upper-caste territorial dominance. This politically calculated move overturned the passive revolution with his quest for lower caste empowerment and in the process, democratization and development came into tension. This rejection of development could be seen as a post-development moment. Development for what and for whom became the prominent question. Lalu asserted that he is not in power to give development to poor but ensuing *ijjat* (respect) to downtrodden (Witsoe 2013).

This gave rise to several unanswered questions like was the anti-development politics only imagination of leadership or electorate as a whole? What was the interconnection between politicization of development discourse and lower caste empowerment? Why development is seen as antithetical to lower caste empowerment when commonly it is believed as necessary to sustain empowerment? “Who were the potential beneficiaries of development process” – became the more pertinent issue. How to identify the backwardness of lower castes, are they simply poor who needs economic upliftment or are they socially and culturally marginalized, who equally needs recognition and representation? And what are the limitations of economic indicators to explain the exploitation and marginalization of the subalterns?

It is true that most of them (here lower castes) are poor but their principle self-identification is not poverty but discrimination. The problem with reducing them to poor is that, poverty is a universal category which brackets out differences in social base (Kaviraj 1996: 128). The caste system is the source of multiple kinds of dominations. In such situations where economic backwardness is inadequate to explain social reality then how can one think about growth centric development as sole thing, as an end in itself? The question that arises here is development for whom, and at whose cost. It compels us to ask the question what are fundamental human needs? Is it concerned with just material survival or meaningful human flourishing with dignity? It also helps us to understand the rationale behind Lalu’s rejection of development. He saw it as an impediment in lower caste empowerment as opposed to dominant view which treats development as necessary condition for meaningful survival because it provides material basis of self-respect and thus supplements the empowerment of subalterns. The crucial question is Can one sustain the momentum gained by social alteration of power without substantive redistribution?

The politics, be it of Lalu or Mayawati has been criticized for hampering the prospect of a proletariat class and has reduced it to issue of recognition and representation. Taking clue from Fraser, Zoya Hasan argues that group identity has supplanted class interest as the chief vehicle of political mobilization: hence the increasing dependence of all political parties on ethnic appeals. But great material inequalities have persisted in income and property. She asks “Was this democratic upsurge merely symbolic, in which questions of redistribution were absent?”

Even if one accepts that social discrimination is the major contradiction then the question emerges, how far one can empower subalterns without minimum level of economic development. I have already dealt with how the of inefficient state mechanisms and electoral compulsion make it impossible to go for radical kind of redistribution. Although no one would deny that redistribution is crucial, but the problem with these kinds of articulation is that they overlook the possibility of redistribution which can manifest without direct policy level initiatives from the state. It does not take into account the economic manifestation of democratization itself by altering the local configuration of power in the favor of subalterns. This can be said with more gravitas for a context like India where symbolic and psychological aspects are inseparable from material impacts, where lower castes faces humiliation and economic exploitation at the same time.

According to Witsoe, in a context where state institutions are intertwined with territorial dominance, issues such as voice and honor become central because of the prevalence of social exclusion, humiliation and subjugation. But we must recognize that they are not merely symbolic issues in opposition to concrete material interests of economic growth and development related public goods. Rather issues such as voice represent very material interests for the poor:

The interest of freedom from arbitrary assault, molestation, rape, economic freedom to work where one want to do (leading to labor mobility), to collectively bargain for wages, to freely cultivate one's own land, to receive a fair share of development related resources (since local power tilts in their favor (2013: 170-71).

He further argues that lower caste politics cannot be reduced to identity politics divorced from material interests and structures of power. For him the dramatic reduction in poverty rate despite adverse tendencies of capital flight, low investment, can only be explained by recognizing that democratization can have economic impacts independent of policy interventions. It shows that substantive change can occur only through change from below.

VI

Bihar's experience has shown that development practiced in the past was certainly not for the subalterns. This was precisely the reason behind the electoral success of RJD despite suchmis-governance and anti-incumbency. This shows that the politics of lower caste empowerment has gained centrality over development and law and order (Witsoe 2013: 3).

RJD was able to ensure voice and dignity of the subalterns displacing upper castes in a manner that it is very difficult for them to return into political power by their own strength. All this happened precisely because of their rejection of development discourse. But demand for development did not cease. Nitish Kumar

came up with a new hegemonic alliance of lower OBC's and with a promise to deliver material benefits to lower castes. But the electoral setback of Lalu cannot undermine his contribution to lower caste politics. Witsoe has argued that Lalu's regime provided the conditions upon which Nitish could go for his development agenda. Through restoring state institutions and law and order Nitish tried to translate symbolic empowerment into substantial one. But he has also not been able to push for land reforms which can prove to be the boldest step for lower caste empowerment.

What is the meaning of the fall of Lalu Yadav for the post-development school? A central concern of post-development is how a new social order can be grounded by a possibility that is absent in the imaginary of development. Are the alternatives to development merely poor substitutes or do they offer genuine viable perspectives for the people involved? Can post-development be satisfied with building up local alternatives or is a global strategy needed? Is it inadequate to provide any substantive alternative of the world after development? If yes, then what is the need of such theorization which is not able to provide a future society according to its own formulations? These are the questions which are part of the ongoing debate within the post-development school (Ziai 2007).

But one cannot deny the contribution of post-development thought in raising questions, motivating new debates, present alternative examples and it can be seen as a discourse in construction, open and permeable, sensitive to day-to-day realities and analysis. Critique is the first step towards an alternative served to illuminate the political and power dynamics of what was earlier seen as a neutral and practical problem: how to deliver development to poor people.

It is true that RJD experiment was episodic but it has displaced the primacy of development discourse with lower caste empowerment. This is precisely the rationale behind Nitish Kumar's slogan, *Nyayakesath Vikas*, (Development with justice). Here justice gains primacy over development. He started a new politics of development with justice which did not tried to compromise the hard earned *Ijjat* (respect) of the marginalized but tried to combine dignity with improvement into the day to day life of people. His development model is not an end in itself but a means towards the vision of an egalitarian society, which is based on populism and immediate benefit to the electorate. Caste based democratization despite its limitations did have transformative impact that has facilitated lower caste economic expansion but the shift to development discourse had unintended consequences. Avinash Kumar concluded that despite its claim of good governance and development Nitish Kumar has failed to legitimize the state and the state continues to serve being a mechanism by which the perpetuation of the exploitation of the old order continues without change. The weakening of regional political society closed opportunities for bottom- up political mobility (Kumar 2015).

I will conclude by arguing that the need is to understand Bihar politics not through abstract western categories and principles but through contextualizing these categories in tune with socio-economic specificity and power dynamics. The future of post development is uncertain and difficult due to capitalist sway of the world economy from which Bihar is not immune.

Endnotes

- ⁱ There were many equally significant events like Ram Janambhoomi issue, decentralization of power in the form of 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments, era of coalitional politics at the center level etc., but for the sake of my argument I had focused on Mandal and Market phenomenon
- ⁱⁱ The Mandal Commission headed by B.P Mandal was established by Janta Party government to identify the socially and educationally backward classes other than scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Commission along with other provisions recommended 27% reservations in employment and education for other backward castes. Prime Minister V.P Singh applied the commission recommendation in employment in 1990. Anti- Mandal agitation by upper castes triggered the counter mobilization by lower castes.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Ironically even Supreme Court in one of his verdict, dated on 4th January, has made it illegal to seek vote on the basis of language, caste, religion.
- ^{iv} New Middle Class is very ambiguous and contested category which has been posed in contrast with old middle class. The newness of middle class consists in their negative attitude towards state and their cultural practice with special reference to monopoly over English education.
- ^v Even those claimed to be champion of emancipatory politics like Marxist showed similar attitude when it comes to development? Instead of denouncing it they claim to ensure development with human face. Here I found Benjamin critique of ‘Social Democrats’ of Germany as important philosophical tool to understand the development discourse. Benjamin attacked the notion of progress (which resulted in both totalitarianism and immiserisation of labor) which was regarded as irresistible, meta-historical, and transcendental and works in ‘homogenous empty time’. He contested and argued that time is always heterogeneous and particular (Benjamin 1969: 260-61).
- ^{vi} The rationale for this could be found in Sheldon Wolin’s, conception of fugitive democracy. Democracy for him is a “moments of commonality”, where people putting their identities aside come along with others and for common cause. These moments are fugitive and any attempt to institutionalize them will kill the democratic spirit of the moment. (See Wolin, 1994)
- ^{vii} For the sake of understanding I will generalize the subaltern category and will consider lower caste as subalterns.

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People, PRIs and Rural Development: A study in the context of the hills of Darjeeling in West Bengal and Sikkim

Ramesh Dural

Abstract

Rural Development in India has been a major concern and has drawn attention since independence. It is a multi-dimensional concept encompassing every aspect of rural life, which primarily involves alleviation of poverty and unemployment through the creation of basic social and economic infrastructure, thereby, bringing a quality rural life. The necessity for rural development arises with the intent to develop the rural area as a whole in terms of culture, society, economy, technology, health, etc. and developing the living standard of rural mass. It involves the development of human resources, infrastructural development; provide minimum basic amenities; develop rural institutions like that of Panchayats, Cooperatives, Post, Banking; develop rural industries, develop agriculture, animal husbandry; promote employment opportunities, eradicate poverty; promote peoples' participation, empowerment. Since development in general and rural development in particular, involves peoples' programme; peoples' participation, through the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) is imperative to rural development. The present paper, therefore, is an attempt to interrogate peoples' involvement and participation in rural development, in the context of the hills of Darjeeling in West Bengal, and Sikkim, which exhibit similar geographical and other characteristic features.

Keywords: Rural Development, PRIs, Participation, Darjeeling hills, Sikkim.

1. Introduction

Rural Development has been an integral part of India's socio-economic and political development. At the time of nation's independence around 83 percent of the population resided in rural areas and about 60 percent of the workforce in these areas were engaged in agricultural and other allied sectors for their livelihood. According to 2011 census, 69 percent of the total population of India still resides in rural areas. Rural Development, therefore, has been a major concern and has drawn attention since independence. It has been the strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of rural poor. It is a multi-dimensional concept encompassing every aspect of rural life, which primarily involves alleviation of poverty and unemployment through the creation of basic social and economic infrastructure, thereby, bringing a quality rural life. It is about bringing change in rural community from the traditional way of living to progressive way of living. In India the launching of the Community Development Programme (1952) and the National Extension Service mark the beginning in creating awareness of the potential and means of development among the rural population. The successive Five Year Plans introduced several programmes for agricultural development,

employment generation, poverty alleviation, promoting rural, cottage and artisan based industries meeting basic minimum needs towards rural development.

The necessity for rural development arises with the intent to develop the rural area as a whole in terms of culture, society, economy, technology, health, etc. and developing the living standard of rural mass. It involves the development of human resources, infrastructural development; provide minimum basic amenities, develop rural institutions like that of Panchayats, Cooperatives, Post, Banking; develop rural industries, develop agriculture, animal husbandry; promote employment opportunities, eradicate poverty; promote peoples' participation, empowerment. Since development in general and rural development in particular, involves peoples' programme; peoples' participation, through the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) is imperative to rural development. The present paper, therefore, is an attempt to interrogate peoples' involvement and participation in rural development, in the context of the hills of Darjeeling in West Bengal, and Sikkim, which exhibits similar geographical, linguistic, and other characteristic features.

2. PRIs and Rural Development

Panchayats have been the backbone of Indian rural structure since ancient time. Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) have been proclaimed as the vehicles of socio-economic transformation in rural India. Panchayat Raj system was conceived for rural development through local participation representing local aspirations and local expectations. In India, Panchayat Raj and rural development is co-terminus as well as co-intensive. PRIs aim at incorporating Gandhian idea of village self governance and to become an effective tool of rural development and reconstruction. The Directive Principles of State Policy envisages the establishment of Panchayat Raj institutions for people's participation in rural development. PRIs, in India are expected to take the onus of rural development, and the importance of which has been reflected during the plan periods, especially, the First and the Second five Year Plans. These plans envisage PRIs responsible for village development. It mentions that the rural progress depends entirely on the existence of an active organization in the village which can bring all the people into common programmes, to be carried out with the assistance of administration.

PRIs are expected to play an important role in planning and implementing various developmental programmes. After independence, India has continuously implemented development programmes with the objective of improving the social and economic conditions of rural people. One of the major development attempts, as mentioned, was the Community Development Programme (CDP) introduced in 1952, though the programme failed to achieve the objectives of development because of the lack of people's participation. However, the government continued to introduce various development initiatives to catalyse rural development. These, apart from community development and allied programmes in the 1950's,

included target group approach programmes like Small Farmers Development Agency (SFDA) in the 1970's and employment generation and poverty alleviation programmes like Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), etc., in the 1980's.

Since independence, the government has been making several attempts towards revitalization of Panchayat system in India. Recognizing the significance of village panchayats as a part of ancient traditions and establish self governance at the village level, article 40 has been inserted in the Constitution of India, which says "the state shall take steps to organize village Panchayat and to endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as unit of self government". Accordingly, several measures were adopted by the government to look into the working of panchayats as institutions of local self government. Several committees were set up, for instance, the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee (1957), the Ahsok Mehta Committee (1978), the Committee on Administrative Arrangement of Rural Development (1985), L.M. Singhvi Committee (1987), the 64th Amendment Bill 1989, and the like. However, it was the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 which brought about a landmark change in the working of PRIs in India. The Act formally established PRIs as the third level of federal democracy. It requires the states to legislate the establishment of PRIs. It provides broad guidelines for the structure and operations of these local institutions. Accordingly, each state needs to enact legislation that establishes a uniform three tier PRI system comprising the Zilla Parishad, the Panchayat Samity and the Gram Panchayat at the district, block and village level respectively. The issue of empowering the PRIs also involves transferring of i) Funds, ii) Function and iii) Functionaries.

The role of the PRIs as instruments of rural reconstruction and development cannot be undermined. The post 73rd Amendment Act reorganized the PRIs with wider powers and functions and has made it institutions of political participation at the lowest level of governance, and at the same time institutions of development. Since the emphasis of rural development would be to bring about peoples' participation and involvement in the developmental programmes envisaged, it becomes possible only through the working of the PRIs.

As mentioned, rural development means an overall development of rural area in social, economic, political and cultural spheres so that people live a quality life. Broadly, it involves socio-economic and political development of the rural areas, on the one hand, and also to strengthen the democratic structure of rural society through the PRIs, on the other. The basic objective of rural development, however, remains alleviation of poverty and unemployment through creation of basic social and economic infrastructure, thereby bringing a quality rural life. To this end, the Government of India, accordingly, have launched several rural development programmes, which has been broadly categorized as Self and Wage Employment Programmes, Rural Infrastructure and Basic Minimum Needs

Programme, National Resource Management Programmes and Social Security Programmes.

As poverty was a major problem and main concern of the Indian Planners, therefore, eradication of rural poverty has been the major goal of India's economic policy since the commencement of planning era. Integrated Rural Development Programme was conceived during the Fifth Five Year Plan and was launched in 1978-79. The main objectives of the Integrated Rural Development Programme were the alleviation of poverty through growth and generation of employment opportunities for the poorest of the poor in rural India. These programmes were implemented through DRDAs.

In order to remove the problem of poverty and unemployment of the rural areas and to create additional employment opportunities for the rural poor, a scheme was introduced in 1976-77 popularly known as Food for Work Programme (FFWP). The objective of the programme was to offer gainful employment to the rural poor and improve their nutritional status and income level through development of infrastructure.

The National Rural Employment Programme (NREP), launched in October 1980 and became a regular plan programme from April 1981 is the modified and restructured version of FFWP. This programme was conceived during the Sixth Five Year Plan as an integrated strategy of rural employment.

The Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) was introduced on 15th August 1983. It was a centrally sponsored programme and parallel to NREP. The basic objectives of the programme were: (i) improvement and extension of employment opportunities for the rural landless labourers with a view to provide them the guarantee of gainful employment to at least one member from each of the landless households for a period up to 100 days in a year, and (ii) creation of durable assets for strengthening the rural socio-economic infrastructure and improving the overall quality of life in the rural areas.

During the year 1989-90, two employment guarantee programmes NREP and RLEGP were merged into a single programme known as Jawahar Rozgar Yojana. Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana is the restructured and streamlined, comprehensive version of erstwhile JRY, launched on 1st April 1999 with a changed focus on programmes aimed at giving self-employment and wage employment to the poorest section of the community. The JGSY was implemented entirely by Gram Panchayats at the village level to create need based rural infrastructure to boost rural economy in general and improvement in the quality of life of the rural poor in particular. The DRDAs and Zilla Parishads were the media through which the funds from the center along with the state's matching share, directly released to the Village Panchayats. And the Village Panchayats were in charge of preparation of annual action plan and for its implementation

with the approval of Gram Sabha. People living in villages below the poverty line constitute the target group of JGSY.

The Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana is the single self-employment programme for the rural poor launched on 1st April, 1999 by replacing the earlier self employment and allied programmes- IRDP, TRYSEM, DWCRA, SITRA, GKY and MWS. These programmes are no longer in operation. SGSY is an innovative and carefully thought out Yojana. It takes into account all the strengths and weakness of all earlier self-employed programme. It aims at establishing a large number of micro enterprises in the rural areas. The objective of SGSY is to establish a large number of microenterprises in the rural, building upon the potential of the rural poor.

Sampoorna Gramin Rozgar Yojana is a new centrally sponsored scheme introduced in 1st April 2001, by merging EAS and JGSY. The scheme is to provide additional wage employment in the rural areas as also food security, along with creation of durable community, social and economic assets and infrastructural development of direct and continuing benefits to rural poor.

To meet the housing need of the rural poor, Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) a component programme under JRY was introduced in the year 1985-86. The programme is being implemented from 1st January 1996 as an independent scheme. The aim of the programme is to help rural people living below the poverty line in constructing dwelling units and upgrading the existing houses by providing grant-in-aid.

The three scheme i) National old-age Pension Scheme (NOAP), ii) National Family benefit Scheme and, iii) National Maternity Benefit Scheme launched in 15th August 1995 to cater to the targeted sections whether they live in rural or urban areas.

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), previously known as NREGS, launched by the Government of India in 2006, was the outcome of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005. The significance of the Act lies in conferring legal rights to employment for the rural poor for at least hundred days, and provide livelihood security to them.

These are, therefore, some of the important programmes that the government has been launching in order to facilitate rural reconstruction and development. However, since rural development is peoples' programme, their participation becomes imperative for the success of any development programmes. The necessity for peoples' participation in developmental programmes arises mainly: (i). for better planning and implementation of rural development programmes; (ii). to mobilize resources required for rural development; and, (iii). for empowering the rural people. The Constitution 73rd Amendment Act enables and empowers the rural people to participate in developmental activities. The rural

people can participate in decision making process, monitoring and implementation of rural development programmes.

3. PRIs in the hill areas of Darjeeling

The hill areas of Darjeeling come under the administration of the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (The Gorkhaland Territorial Administration Act, 2011). The Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) was formed to establish an autonomous self governing body to administer the region (comprising the three subdivisions, namely, Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kurseong, and some mouzas of Siliguri sub divisions in the district of Darjeeling) so that the socio-economic, infrastructural, educational, cultural, and linguistic development is expedited. Darjeeling, the northernmost district of West Bengal, roughly resembles an inverted wedge with its base resting on Sikkim, its sides touching Nepal, Bhutan and the Jalpaiguri District of West Bengal. The district is divided into four sub divisions, namely, Darjeeling Sadar, Kurseong, Kalimpong and Siliguri. Darjeeling Sadar is the district headquarters. The district has twelve Development blocks out of which three are in Sadar Sub Division, three in Kalimpong Sub-Division, two in Kurseong Sub Division and remaining four in Siliguri Sub Division.

Darjeeling has a population of 1,846,823 (2011 Census), of which male and female are 937,259 and 909,564 respectively. In 2001, Darjeeling had a population of 1,609,172 of which males were 830,664 and 778,528 were females. There was change of 14.77 percent in the population compared to population as per 2001 Census. The data released by the Census 2011 shows that density of Darjeeling is 586 people per sq.km.

Over the years, the hill area of Darjeeling has experienced an enormous mixture of governing patterns. The first municipal body (Darjeeling Municipality) was established in 1850 followed by the establishment of Kalimpong Municipality in 1945. The hill area has experienced the working of rural local government in the form of Panchayats, Panchayat Samity and Zilla Parishad prior to the formation of the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC). Darjeeling witnessed a violent movement, under the leadership of Subash Ghising in the decades of 1980s, the consequence of which, led to the formation of the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC), an autonomous administrative set up for the region. Darjeeling went through another wave of movement under the leadership of Bimal Gurung and his Gorkha Janmukti Morcha, formed in 2007, which eventually, resulted in the formation of the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA).

PRIs in India are an effort to decentralize government to promote greater participation by people. The Constitution 73rd Amendment Act 1992 enabled decentralized governance through PRIs in rural areas. West Bengal is one of the forerunners in installing a 3-tier panchayati system for rural local governance in India. The present generation Panchayats in the state started its journey in 1978

i.e., 15 years ahead of the 73rd Amendment of the Constitution of India. Following the 73rd Amendment Act guidelines accordingly, the PRIs in West Bengal have adopted a three tier structure with the establishment of Gram Panchayat at village level, Panchayat Samity at Block level and Zilla Parishad at the District level.

However, the provisions of the 73rd Constitution Amendment have not been applicable to the hills of Darjeeling, the northernmost region of West Bengal, and that, it exhibits a distinct character in its structure and functions. Even though the hills had witnessed the working of the three tier PRIs prior to the formation of the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC) in 1988, presently, it is different from rest of the regions in West Bengal. After the formation of DGHC, the Zilla Parishad was divided into the DGHC in the hills and Siliguri Mahakuma Parishad in Siliguri sub-division. The hill region follows one tier panchayat system, whereas the subdivision of Siliguri follows a three tier system like the rest of the region in the state. Out of total 134 no of Gram Panchayats, 112 are in the hills and 22 are in Siliguri sub-division of the district. Moreover, it is interesting to note that the hills have not held elections to these rural local institutions for a long period of time, to be precise the last election to the panchayat bodies were held in 2000. This contradicts the spirit of the 73rd Constitution Amendment Act, which prescribes for peoples' participation at the grassroots through regular elections.

4. PRIs in Sikkim

Sikkim, which was a protectorate, became the state of Indian Union in 1975. It is a landlocked state, lying in the Himalayas with Tibet on the north and northeast, Bhutan on the east, Nepal on the west and the hills of Darjeeling of the state of West Bengal on the south. Administratively, the state is divided into four districts, namely, the North district, the West district, the South district and the East district. The district is further divided into smaller administrative division as subdivisions i.e. North district has two sub-divisions viz. (1) Chungthang subdivision and (2) Mangan sub-division. West district has two sub-divisions viz. (1) Gyalshing sub-division and (2) Soreng sub-division. In South district also there are two sub-divisions viz. (1) Namchi sub-division and (2) Ravong subdivision. But East district has got three sub-divisions viz. (1) Gangtok subdivision (2) Pakyong sub-division and (3) Rongli sub-division. Rongli subdivision was carved out from the then existing Pakyong sub-division in 1999 after the completion of 1991 census. The sub-division is again further divided into smallest administrative divisions as Block Administrative Centre.

According to the 2011 census, the total population of Sikkim state stands at 610,577 which is the accumulation of 43,709 belonging to North district, 136,435 belonging to the West district, 146,850 belonging to the South district and 283,583 belonging to the East district. The population comprises mainly of the Nepalis, the Bhutias and the Lepchas. Out of the total population 74.85 per cent of the state population lives in the rural areas while 25.15 per cent of the state population lives

in urban areas, according to 2011 census. Out of the total 400 revenue blocks (villages) excluding 51 forest blocks (villages) in the state, 136 are in the South district, 112 are in the West district, 107 are in East district and 45 are in the North district. Beside revenue Blocks, there are 51 forest blocks. Out of which 26 are uninhabited. There are 34 large Revenue Blocks having above 2000 population of which 2 falls in North districts followed by 12 in West district, 7 in South district and 13 in East district. There are only 3 Revenue Blocks which has population above 5,000 and they fall in East district only (Census, 2011).

The statutory panchayat in Sikkim is a recent phenomenon, however, the system of village panchayats in Sikkim can be traced back to the traditional tribal council or the panchayat system of the Bhutias and Lepchas called the Dzumsas and the Chhodu. These tribal societies were accustomed to regulation of their own domestic, religious, socio-economic, political, and judicial affairs at the grassroots through their traditional councils and the collective wisdom of the people. The Sikkim Panchayat Act 1965 established one-tier panchayat bodies in the name of Block Panchayat, however, incorporating the traditional tribal councils. The Sikkim Panchayat Act 1982 established a two tier panchayat system with Gram Panchayat at the village level and the Zilla Panchayat at the district level. The Sikkim Panchayat Act 1993 was enacted in compliance to the 73rd Constitution Amendment Act. Accordingly, the Act provides for the constitution of Gram Sabha, two-tier panchayat system, five year tenure of these bodies, reservation of seats for women and SCs and STs., etc. However, the Government of Sikkim has amended the Act of 1993 number of times to make institutions of local government more effective and vibrant, and also to revitalize PRIs by way of transferring power to the people at the grassroots level.

Under the existing system there are two tier PRIs in the state, known as the Gram Panchayat at the village level and the Zilla Panchayat at the district level. The Zilla Panchayats are constituted of 110 members elected from the same number of territorial constituencies. The state has four Zilla Panchayats, i.e. one in each district. The Zilla Panchayat is headed by an Adhyakshya and Upa (Deputy) Adhyaksha who are elected from within the elected members of the 108 Zilla territorial constituencies. The District Collectors have been designated as Ex-Officio (Sachivas) of their respective Zilla Panchayats. There are 907 Gram Panchayat wards/seats which constitutes 165 Gram Panchayat Units. Each Gram Panchayat has a Sabhapati, Upa (deputy) Sabhapati, Sachiva and two to six ordinary members. These officials of Gram Panchayats are also elected from amongst the elected members of the wards comprising the Gram Panchayat unit.

5. People's Participation in Rural Development: Darjeeling hills and Sikkim

Participation is an indispensable ingredient of development process. Advocacy of people's participation in rural development has been growing in stridence in recent years in developing countries (Lalitha 2004). The UNESCO has recommended

that governments should adopt popular participation as a basic policy measure in national development strategy and should encourage widest possible active participation of all individuals such as women and youth organisation, in the development process in setting goals, formulating policies and implementing plans (Commission for Social Development 1975).

People's participation in simple term implies participation at all stages of the programme viz. plan formulation, implementation, decision making, sharing of benefits of development, monitoring and evaluation (Mishra and Kumar 1983). The World Bank defines community participation as an active process by which beneficiaries influence the direction and execution of development project with a view to enhancing their well being in terms of income, personal growth, self-reliance and other values which they cherish. The rationale for people participation is that the goals of socio-economic development are not achievable unless the citizens actively involve themselves in the preparation, implementation and follow up of the developmental plans and programmes.

Since peoples' participation is imperative to rural development, it is essential for the people to actively participate in rural development activities as the failure of development attempts in the past has been to a great extent because of the lack of active peoples' participation. The significance of peoples' participation in rural development has long been realized by B.R. Mehta Committee, advocating that rural development can be possible only with peoples' participation. It was, however, the Constitution 73rd Amendment Act which brought about a landmark change in the concept of participation and provided for decentralized governance through participation and how rural reconstruction and development would be brought about. Accordingly, initiatives were undertaken by the government at the centre and the states to actively involve the rural people in their goal for rural reconstruction and development.

As majority of population of Sikkim is living in rural areas, development of rural areas under such situation receives much attention in the various schemes designed for the development of state's economy. Accordingly, rural development and alleviation of poverty have been accorded high priority in the plans for economic development. In pursuance with the central government's policies and programmes on rural development, the Government of Sikkim has also launched various rural based development programmes.

Sikkim, along with other states of the country, introduced various rural development programme which include Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA), Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY), Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS), Indira Awas Yojana (IAY), etc. The government has been taking every initiative to implement all rural based programme throughout the state. The Department of Rural Management and Development was created to this end. The

Department undertakes the responsibility of enhancing rural livelihood through a variety of programmes and projects. The emphasis is on building up of local resources through increasing the capability of the rural poor through self-employment programmes and through building up of critical infrastructure in the rural areas of Sikkim. The state government also constituted a State Planning Commission in 2000 with the Chief Minister as its chairperson.

The Rural Management and Development Department (RM&DD), Government of Sikkim has been entrusted with the responsibility of initiating and steering rural development programmes in the state. It is committed in improving the quality of life of the rural people by way of implementing different rural development programmes, including poverty alleviation and infrastructural developmental programmes like that of construction of houses, roads, bridges, sanitation, water supply, schools, playgrounds, etc.

The Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), introduced in 1978-79 and universalized from 2nd October 1980 has provided assistance to rural poor for productive employment opportunities. IRDP had several sub-programmes like Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM), Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA), Ganga Kalyan Yojana (GKY), Million Wells Scheme (MWS) and Supply of Improved Toolkits to Rural Artisan (SITRA). However, these schemes were implemented as 'Stand alone programmes', an approach which substantially detracted from their effectiveness. The Mid-Term Appraisal of Ninth plan had indicated that IRDP together with the several sub-schemes presented a matrix of multiple programmes without designed linkages. These were implemented as separate programme without keeping in mind the overall objective of generating sustainable incomes. On 1 April 1999, the IRDP and allied programmes were merged into a single programme known as Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY). In Sikkim, these programme were introduced in 1980-81 with a view to assist selected families of below poverty line in the rural areas. The main objective of the programme has been the elimination of unemployment and the eradication of poverty in the rural areas by providing income generating schemes including working capital through package of assistance comprising subsidy and other institutional credit. The target groups of the programme consisted of small farmers, marginal farmers, agricultural labourer, rural artisans, scheduled castes and tribes and women.

Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM) introduced in 1979 in India and 1980 in Sikkim was one of the main sub-schemes of IRDP. The main aim of the programme was to provide basic technical and entrepreneurial skills to the rural poor in the age group of 18-35 years to take up income-generating activities. The training was imparted in different trade like carpet, handloom, rari weaving, cutting and tailoring, knitting, carpentry, black smithy, cane and bamboo work, etc.

Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) was launched as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme on 15 April 1989 by merging National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) and Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP). The Programme was restructured as Jawahar Gram Samriclhi Yojana (JGSY) w.e.f 01, 04.1999. The primary objective of JRY was the generation of additional gainful employment for the unemployed, by strengthening the rural economic infrastructure and asset and improvement in the quality of life in rural areas. The people below the poverty line including the SC and STs and free bonded labourer were the target group. The programme was implemented by Rural Development Department in the state. Besides, the Zilla Panchayat and Gram Panchayat were also involved to implement the programme at the district and village level.

The Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) was launched during 1985-86 with the objective of providing dwelling units free of cost to the members of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and bonded labourers living below the poverty line in rural areas. The Gram Panchayat is empowered to select the beneficiaries under the scheme. The president/Sabhapati of Gram Panchayat forwards the application of the identified beneficiaries to the District Development Officer who scrutinizes and submits to the Assistant Project Officer (APO) for approval. The SGSY is financed on 75:25 cost sharing basis between the centre and the states and is being implemented by Sikkim Rural Development Agency with the involvement of the panchayats and the banks.

The Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) launched in December 2000 as a centrally sponsored scheme, aims at providing rural connectivity to unconnected habitations with population of 500 persons or more in the rural areas. In Sikkim, the Government had entrusted the Department of Rural Management and Development as the nodal department and Public Work Department (Roads and Bridges) as the executing agency for the execution of the programme. As in other states, Sikkim Government also set up Sikkim State Rural Road Agency which coordinates the execution of the programme in the field.

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS), later renamed as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Schemes (MGNREGS) was launched by the Government of India on February, 2006. This programme was the product of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) 2005, (later renamed as MGNREGA) which was passed by the parliament on 23rd August 2005 and was promulgated on September 2005. In Sikkim, initially the scheme covered only the north district but later on extended to all the district of Sikkim. As outlined in the Act, the focus of the scheme has been:

1. Water conservation and water harvesting;
2. Drought proofing (including afforestation and tree plantation);
3. Irrigation canals including micro and minor irrigation works;

4. Provision of irrigation facility to land owned by the SCs/STs;
5. Renovation of traditional water bodies;
6. Land development and
7. Rural connectivity to provide all-weather access.

The Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) i.e. Gram Panchayat at the village level and Zilla Panchayat at the district level have been assigned the role of implementing MGNREGS. The identification of projects and preparation of plan is decided at Gram Sabha. The PRIs are responsible for execution and supervision and maintenance of records pertaining to works and employment.

The Chief Minister's Self Employment scheme was launched by the chief Minister of Sikkim on 23rd March 2002 to provide self-employment opportunities to educated unemployed youth in the state. The scheme has come into effect from June 2002. The scheme has been designed to provide employment for setting up micro enterprises the educated unemployed youth. It relates to the setting up of self-employment ventures through service and business routes.

Peoples' participation is imperative to rural development, and it is a requisite for the success of any rural development programme. Peoples' participation involves participation in decision making, participation in implementation, participation in monitoring and evaluation of development programmes and project, and participation in sharing the benefits of development. The rationale for peoples' participation is that the goals of socio-economic development are not achievable unless the citizens actively involve themselves in the preparation, implementation and follow up of the developmental plans and programmes. In view of this, peoples' participation has been considered an important aspect of rural development in Sikkim. Accordingly, the working of the PRIs through elected representatives in the implementation of the developmental programmes in rural areas of Sikkim has been highly appreciated.

The Government of Sikkim has taken effective measures to ensure peoples' participation in rural development programmes through the PRIs. The institution like Gram Sabha has been strengthened by giving more powers and functions. This body is the forum that provides direct participation of people in the formulation and implementation of need based programmes. The various rural development programmes like SGRY, RHS, MGNREGS etc. are now implemented through panchayats. The beneficiary groups of the area are also involved in the implementation of projects.

Following the Constitution 73rd Amendment Act (1992), the Sikkim Panchayat Act 1982 was amended and new Act came into force in 1995. The new State Act considerably enhanced the responsibilities of the PRIs to areas mentioned in the Eleventh Schedule. The state Panchayat Act besides (devolving some

responsibilities and) making provisions for constitution of Gram Panchayat and Zilla Panchayat at village and district respectively, also made provisions for Gram Sabha (Village Assembly) at the Gram Panchayat level. This institution is corner stone of rural decentralisation as it gives opportunity to each and every adult eligible voter of the Gram Panchayat to participate in decision-making of decentralised governance, planning and development. The Gram Sabha is expected to meet and to make recommendation and suggestions on development programmes, identification of beneficiaries, etc. The function of the Gram Panchayat has been enhanced by adding the list of items included in the Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution. In 2003, the State Government transferred major functions of eight line departments to the panchayats in a measure to accelerate the speed of devolution in the state. These devolution measures undoubtedly increased the powers and responsibilities of the Gram Panchayat and Zilla Panchayat giving them a much greater role in the delivery of important social services such as primary school, public health, social security programmes like old age pension, and rural development/poverty alleviation programmes. To implement the designated programme the financial resources of the Panchayats were also augmented. Thus since the 73rd Amendment Act and the Conformity Act of State, a change has been engineered in the democratic rules governing Panchayats which now have greater powers and resources to design and implement rural development programmes. The Act also reduces the political and bureaucratic interference in rural development programmes.

However, the concept of peoples' participation in rural local governance, and the working of the PRIs in the hills of Darjeeling differ significantly with that of Sikkim. The concept of rural local self government in the context of the 73rd Constitution Amendment Act is unique to the hills of Darjeeling. Unlike the rest of West Bengal, the hills do not follow the three tier panchayat system. The Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC), until it got replaced by the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA), had been functioning in place of Zilla Parishad, since its formation in 1988.

The different programme for rural development in hill areas of Darjeeling have been executed through the PRIs like the rest of the region in the state, until the formation of the DGHC. However, since the last election to panchayats in the hills was held in the year 2000, ever since, the rural people in the hills do not have their elected representations in these bodies. Therefore it is the gram panchayat officials who have the responsibility of carrying out and implementing the programmes pertaining to rural development, under the supervision of the Block Development Officer and the District Panchayat and Rural Development Officer, at the block and district level respectively. The different rural development programmes under the broad category of Self and Wage Employment Programmes, Rural Infrastructure and Basic Minimum Needs Programme, National Resource Management Programmes and Social Security Programmes, are being

implemented in the hills of Darjeeling by the Gram panchayat officials. This include programmes like the MGNREGS, SGSY, PMGSY, PMGY, etc.

The Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) Act, 2011, under which the present administration of the hills of Darjeeling is being carried out, prescribes that the GTA shall have administrative, financial and executive powers to various activities of different departments including Panchayats and Rural Development department and the concerned District Rural Development Cell. It further prescribes that the GTA shall implement the MGNREGS through the BDO, the panchayats, the DPRDO etc. It also mentions that the DRDC shall function under the administrative control of the GTA and that the DRDC shall implement the SGSY, restructured as NRLM. The IAY, NSAP etc, shall also be implemented by the GTA through the panchayats and the DPRDO.

6. Concluding Observation

The concept of peoples' participation has gained much significance in the context of rural development and rural development programmes. Participation of people, since the 73rd Constitution Amendment, has become a buzz word in the development of the community at the rural level. The failure of past development efforts was largely attributed to the lack of peoples' participation. Peoples' participation is needed for better planning and implementation of rural development programmes, for mobilization of resources for rural development and for empowering the rural people to play an effective role in rural development.

Following the 73rd Amendment Act, the Sikkim Panchayat Act 1982 was amended and new Act came into force in 1995. The new State Act considerably enhances the responsibilities of the panchayat institutions to areas mentioned in the Eleventh Schedule. The state Panchayat Act besides devolving some responsibilities and making provisions for constituting Gram Panchayat and Zilla Panchayat at village and district levels also made provisions for forming Gram Sabha at the Gram Panchayat level. This institution is corner stone of rural decentralisation as it gives opportunity to each and every adult eligible voter of the Gram Panchayat to participate in decision-making of decentralised governance, planning and development. Various studies reveal that the concept of peoples' participation and rural development in Sikkim has been to a great extent realized in theory and practice. The objectives of rural reconstruction and development have been carried out through elected panchayats with people participating in every aspect of rural development, planning, decision making or implementation. The PRIs, to a large extent, has been successful in promoting social welfare, rural infrastructure, providing employment, and improving the conditions of the people of rural areas of Sikkim. Moreover, the implementation of rural development programmes through the PRIs has produced desired results.

However, the working of the PRIs and the implementation of the rural development programmes in the hills of Darjeeling differ largely in comparison

to that of Sikkim. The rural people in Darjeeling hills have not been able to experience the working of the Panchayati Raj system, the way it has been carried out in other parts of India. The creation of Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council in the year 1988, led to the bifurcation of the district of Darjeeling into two divisions, the DGHC and the Siliguri Mahakuma Parishad. Therefore, it was not possible for the establishment of a three tier PRIs in Darjeeling hills. Further, the single tier system functioned till 2008 and presently it also is defunct. It can, therefore, be understood that the rural people rarely participate in Gram Sansad/Gram Sabha or any of such meetings held in locality, where the formulation of development programmes are decided i.e. with regard to who will take the benefits, how the benefits be percolated down, and how the overall decision making process be carried out. Moreover the rural people are also ignorant of various development programmes and schemes provided by the government due largely to lack of opportunity of participation.

Therefore, the philosophy and principle of the Constitution 73rd Amendment Act, which emphasizes participation and empowerment does not find room in the hills of Darjeeling. Though the institutions of rural local government is working through the officials, and various rural development programmes are being carried out by these institutions, however, peoples' mandate does not have any recognition as they do not have the opportunity of participation. Under the circumstances, whether the spirit of rural reconstruction and development through peoples' involvement in the process is significant, remains contested.

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Workers' Resistances in the Indian Railways and the General Strike of May 1974

Sanghamitra Choudhury

Abstract

Indian Railways has always been a significant factor in regulating the economic and political life of the Indians. Indian Railways might not have any revolutionary effect on people's life but since independence it has become an enormously big industrial sector and popularly is branded as heart and life blood of the nation. Therefore, a strike of long twenty days in May 1974 halted the economic, social and political pace of the country.

This study is an attempt to examine the reasons behind the grievances and resentments of the railwaymen in India. It observes the preparation of the trade unions for launching an indefinite strike and the situation existed during the days of the struggle. It also intends to enquire the attitude of the State in dealing with the railway workers' movement in 1974.

Keywords: Indian railways, Trade unionism, working class, grievances, struggle, railway workers movement

1. Introduction

Indian Railways was the single largest nationalized undertaking with a separate ministry and railway workers were a significant component of the organized working class in India employing nearly 15 lakh regular and approximately 2.8 lakh casual labourers in the year 1974. It employed numerous kinds of labourers ranging from skilled to unskilled, literate to illiterate workers. Ironically however this large section of the workers of the Indian Railway industry had never been able to persuade the authority in their favour. Since its inception during the colonial period the workers had to fight with the management to get their demands fulfilled and the situation remained almost the same even after independence. Indian Railways workers were well known for their innumerable struggles since its establishment. But the Railways workers' strike in May 1974 might be considered as an unprecedented event in the history of labour movement in India. The workers made a history by waging the longest strike in the Indian Railways.

The political and economic situation of India from the early 1960s up to 1974 was marked by crisis. There were numerous strikes, go slow, mass sick leave, lockouts etc. during this period which indicated the unharmonious relationship in the industrial front. There were several reasons behind the strained relationship between the employers and the employees in the Indian industries. The industrial workers specially the railway workers were aggrieved because of the failure of the negotiating machinery due to the emerging situations such as the inflation or the price rise of daily commodities, decline in real earnings, and absence of wage link with Dearness Allowance, non-payment of Bonus, absence of leave with pay etc. Workers disappointments grew up from late 1972 and touched the sky in early

1974. Thus the relations between the two had deteriorated and shown a breakdown of socio-economic equilibrium. However, the May 1974 Strike was a united struggle of more than two million workers of the Government of India and it was such an outstanding event that no one could dare to disregard it. The determination and the unity achieved by the railway workers were unparalleled in the history of Indian working class movement.

The objective of the study is to find out the reasons behind the strike of the railway men in 1974 and to find out their grievances which compelled the railwaymen to go for an indefinite general strike throughout the country. This study also attempts to analyze the preparations and activities of the railway trade unions for launching an all India indefinite general strike. It also looks at the situation in the different railway Zones during the days of the struggle. The present study seeks to measure the intensity of the strike action led by the Indian railwaymen in May 1974. It tries to examine the reaction of the Union Government towards the demands and the agitations of the railway workers. The study reviews the role of the railway trade unions and their performance during the strike of May 1974. We also make an investigation of the impact of the indefinite strike of the Indian railway men in May 1974. Keeping the objectives in mind the paper has been arranged in the following manner. The first section of the study enquires the reasons behind the grievances of the railway men which caused the strike of 1974. In the second section we discuss the nature of the preparations by the railway trade unions and their members. The third section focuses on the situation of the struggle in the various railway zones of the country. Then we analyse the response of the State towards the strike. We conclude the paper by assessing the impact of the struggle.

2. Grievances of the Railway Workers

End of the Second World War and the end of colonial rule in India required a speedy growth of industries for the purpose of all round socio-economic development of the country. Railways played a vital role in this sphere by ensuring a rapid growth in the transportation industry. But the employees of the public utility department remained lowly paid thus their resentment and annoyance revolved around the pay structure. The rise in prices of basic commodities made the situation worse for them. In this situation the ineffectiveness of the trade unions aggrieved the railwaymen. It was true that the workers in all the industries especially in the railways had been suffering from relative decline in real wage since the past two decades. But in the year of 1960-61 the gross traffic receipts increased from 1950-51 by 73.68% which indicated an improvement of Railway revenues. The central government employees including the railway workforce had abided by the recommendation of the Central Pay Commissions. Therefore they were not in a position to bargain with their authorities on the matter of payment. During the years 1970-73 when the Commission deliberated and the government dithered, India experienced its worst inflation since independence, under the impact of drought and oil price increases, wholesale prices increased by 70%

between 1968-69 and 1973-74, with a 30 % increase being recorded in 1973-74.¹ The Times of India analysed that the price of the consumer goods in fact, had climbed steadily in the last few months and the latest budget levies had given the price curve rather a sharp swing (Times of India, 28th March,1974; p.1).

Minimum Monthly wages in comparable Public Sector Undertakings and Industries

Sl. No.	Industry/ Sector	Minimum Monthly Wages (in Rs.)		
		Basic	D.A.	Total
1.	Central Government (including Railways)	196.00	112.60	308.60
2.	Life Insurance Corporation	125.00	285.00	410.00
3.	General Insurance Corporation	125.00	285.00	410.00
4.	Nationalized Bank	116.00	260.00	376.00
5.	Coal	286.00	131.00	417.00
6.	Iron & Steel (Hindustan Steel Ltd.)	300.00	129.00	429.00

[Source: Indian Railwaymen: official periodical of AIRF; Vol.14; No. 6; 1978.]

Rising prices, shortages, corruption, parallel black money economy and incompetence have come to reinforce one another in such a manner that it has become extremely difficult to break the vicious circle (Jain, 8th May, 1974; Times of India). The prices of edible oils, food grains, Kerosene etc. augmented by 23% in 1973 but the Third Pay Commission had increased the wages very meagerly from Rs 170 per month to Rs 196 per month and Government declared that D.A would be disbursed in installments and the workers became furious when they found an absolute decline in their real income. The living conditions of the railway workers were so unhygienic and poor that the railwaymen's discontentment had increased a lot. In Lumding the workers were aggrieved because of the poor condition of the quarters, specially the quarters of the 'Group D' staff known as 'gang hut' had only one room with one kitchen and a separate bathroom. Nikhil Bhattacharjee a Guard in Badarpur, Lumding Division of Northeast Frontier Railways, member of United Committee for Railwaymen, and the convenor of Local Action Committee of NCCRS corroborated that the quarters of the gang man were poorly ventilated and rooms were so small that it was impossible to stay there for a family of five or six members, some of them did not have even

1 Sherlock, S., Economic and Political Weekly, 1989; p.2312.

electricity. He added that the quarters in which they lived, were very old thus required urgent renovation, but the authority did not pay any attention to the minimum requirements of the workers.² This was more or less a common scenario that prevailed in almost all the railway zones. Shuvendu Mukherjee, a technician in Kanchrapara Loco Workshop and the member of Eastern Railwaymen's Union, informed that the workers were disappointed on the issue of frequent disciplinary actions taken against them by the authority on small and insignificant matters. Authority resorted to penal transfer, retrenchment, disapproving the promotions etc.³

Another reason of workers' grievances was related with the dual role played by the recognized unions in the Railway industries; the Unions were AIRF (All India Railwaymen's Federation) and NFIR (National Federation of Indian Railwaymen). It was alleged that they developed an alliance with the bureaucrats which brought a halt to trade union activity specially in ventilating the grievances of the workers in the industry. By the end of 1960s a new trend had emerged in this industry, several categorical associations were formed, such as Fireman's Council, Guards' Association and finally All India Loco Running Staff Association (AILRSA) had appeared in August 1970. The life of the loco men became miserable; a large number of loco running staff had to work for long hours, fourteen to sixteen hours per day. They had to work under sun and rain, dirt and grease which led them to disease stricken life. In the month of May 1973 AILRSA had agitated against the long hour of work, harsh working and living conditions, poor quality of uniform provided by the authority etc. Majority of the drivers struck against the authority, not only that more than 50,000 of the loco running staff joined hands for their demands which forced the management to bow down. As a result of the prolonged talks, a settlement was finally reached on the night of the Sunday 12 August 1973 between the railway minister and the striking workers' action committee in the presence of the labour minister (Siddhanta, 1974; pp. 9-10). Railway Minister L. N. Mishra talked with the AILRSA members and agreed at ten hours of duty and assured that no victimisation would take place.

Indian Railways was the largest employer of casual workers. More than two lakhs workers were being exploited by the authority and deprived of minimum rights of the workers. A casual worker was employed for 119 days, purely on temporary basis and paid only Rs 3.5 per day. They were not entitled to get any facilities and benefits from the industry. They were usually termed as "Murgir deem", it meant that if any mishap took place like accidents or sickness, they were simply

² Interview with Nikhil Bhattacharjee on 22nd December, 2016 in the Office of the Pensioners' Association, Siliguri Town Station at 11.30 am.

³ Interview with Shuvendu Mukherjee on 19th January, 2018 in his Kanchrapara Residence at 2.30 pm).

terminated from their services and got no benefits from the authority.⁴Therefore, the casual workers were extremely annoyed with the authority and had demanded for security of their jobs.

Disappointments also grew among the workers relating to the question of promotion. Skilled workers with long years of experience were only promoted to the posts of Supervisors or Foreman and ended their carrier up to the local levels only, never reached the posts of Divisional or Zonal management. Apart from these issues, bonus was considered as another cause of workers' resentment. Along with several other reasons which led the railwaymen to revolt against their authority, the financial crisis in regular life played a vital role. The overall crisis in the economy marked by shortage of food grains and domestic fuel, charges of corruption against members of the ruling establishment and the rising tide of militancy in the trade union movement laid the basis for a strike (Ananth, 2016; p. 17). AIRF leadership in this situation was forced to launch any movement to regain its lost legacy of militant unionism and also to retain in power. The potentialities of the workers as an instrument of revolutionary social change remained untapped, what was accomplished by the moderate leadership was promotion of trade union consciousness but not revolutionary class consciousness (Krishna, 1980; p. 22).

3. The Preparation of the Railwaymen for the Strike of May 1974

Industrial relations in India from 1965 to 1975 had lost all its past dignity and glory. The situation and the industrial relation in the railways became so poor and workers' grievances had touched the sky and their life became intolerable due to the economic hardship. The success of AILRSA movement revitalized the recognized unions. NFIR though always remained loyal to the ruling government, AIRF declared to go on direct action because it realised that the workers had lost their faith and conceived the unions as impotent. AIRF had a tradition of militant activities and ability to mobilize the workers. But during the entire 1960s the AIRF had suffered from indecision and self-contradiction. Therefore it faced tremendous erosion in its membership and support base. In the early 1970s the AIRF understood that to retain in power, they needed to lead a mass movement in the industry. It initiated a change in its leadership and George Fernandez became the President of AIRF. Fernandez, a stormy petrel trade unionist in and around Bombay and Chairman of the Socialist Party, was brought into AIRF by the sections that were desperate to reinvent the federation as a fighting organization (Ananth, 2016; p.17). In October 1973 at the Secunderabad Annual Convention the delegates took the decision of organizing a nationwide strike without

⁴ Interview with Pallab Kumar Majumder, a casual labour (construction of bridge and signalling system under Northeast Frontier Railways) and a member of Casual workers' Association affiliated with Majdoor Union under AIRF on 23rd December 2016 at 6.30 pm at Pensioners' Association Siliguri Junction Unit.

considering the strength of the union. He said “Taking the platform at the conference I pleaded with the delegates not to take a decision without first possessing the requisite the organizational strength to go into action, but my appeal was in vain” (Fernandez, 1984; p.29). Then he decided to build a broad based unity and tried to strengthen the financial position of the union. On November 24th and 25th 1973 Fernandez convened a special loco running staff conference under the auspices of the AIRF to focus on the special problems of loco men and mobilize them in view of the possibility of the current agitation, culminating in a strike of railway men on February 27th (Sherlock, 1989; p.2318).

Meanwhile, in January, 1974 in South Central Railway all the class II and III staff of the Headquarter, Divisional and Accounts Department demonstrated in the General Manager’s Office, Secunderabad for almost three hours in protest of the discriminating attitude of the Railway Ministry in the matter of up grading the posts. In the month of February, 1974 in South Eastern Railways the movement of trains was heavily disrupted when the carriage and wagon staff went on ‘work to rule’ and Assistant Station Masters on ‘mass absenteeism’ in Adra Division. Sporadic agitations continued to take place in different zones with full of unity and enthusiasm. Therefore on 27th February, 1974 in New Delhi a National Convention was held which was attended by the representatives of one hundred and ten recognized and unrecognized unions except the members of NFIR. Nearly two thousand delegates participated in the conference. For the first time in the past few years, AIRF was able to provide a sense of unity, solidarity and determination among the railway men. The Convention had ended with the decision that if the Railway Ministry did not negotiate with the unions by 10th of April 1974, the unions would go for an indefinite general strike. The National Coordination Committee for Railwaymen’s Struggle (NCCRS) was formed with one representative from each of the participating organisations while Comrade George Fernandez was elected its Convenor; an Action Committee was also formed to conduct negotiations (Chakroborty, 1975; pp.8). This Action Committee consisted of thirteen members. Following were the members:

George Fernandez	Convenor
J.P Choubey	AIRF
Priya Gupta	AIRF
Parvati Krishnan	AITUC
Sri Krishna	AITUC
N.S Bhangoo	All India Railway Employees’ Confederation
K.P Ramaswamy	All India Railway Employees’ Confederation
H.S Chowdhury	AILRSA
S.K. Dhar	AILRSA
Samar Mukherjee	CITU

N.N.Chakroborty	CITU
G.S Gokhale	B.M.S
N.M Pathak	B.M.S

[Siddhanta, 1974; p.30]

The Convention had appealed to the Railway Ministry to accept the following demands of the railway men:

1. a) All Railway men should be treated as industrial workers with full trade union rights including the right to negotiate.
b) The working hours of the Railway men shall not exceed 8 hour.
c) There shall be job evaluation of all the railway men through a scientific system to be followed by their reclassification and re-gradation with the need based minimum wage for the lowest paid workers.
d) Pending the completion of job evaluation and reclassification, immediate parity in wages with those of the workers in the central undertakings, viz. H.M.T, BHEL, HSL, HAL etc.
2. Dearness Allowance linked to cost of living index with full neutralisation for every rise of four points in six months period.
3. Bonus at the rate of one month wage for the years 1971-72 and 1972-73.
4. Decasualization of all casual Railway men and their confirmation in service with all benefits given to them with retrospective effect.
5. Adequate and subsidised food grains and other essential commodities through departmentally run shops.
6. All victimization cases should be withdrawn (Indian Railwaymen, 1974; pp.14-15)

For launching any mass movement Fernandez emphasised on certain issues like fund raising and capacity building of the railway workers. He gave thrust on the building of unity and solidarity of the workers at all levels. Inter union rivalry; lobbying and the hierarchical system were the main constraints in building unity among the trade unions in the railway industry. Fernandez directed all the unions and their affiliates to form Action Committees in all the railway zones to lead the strike. Interestingly, the decision of united struggle brought several differences of opinions among the union leaders at every level. The leaders of the loco running associations were divided on the question of reliance on the national leadership of the AIRF and the unity under the same umbrella. Sabapathy, the President of AILRSA; Mewa Lal and R.P Sharma of Northern Railway etc. went openly against the decision of united struggle under the banner of NCCRS on the one hand and on the other, S.K. Dhar, the Secretary and H.S.Chowdhury, Joint

Secretary of the Association attended all the meetings of the Action Committee. According to S.K Dhar when the preparation for the united struggle was “advancing in full swing”, “a small section of leadership of AILRSA” opposed the movement and “engaged in disruptive activities” simply because of “their anti AIRF stand” (Dhar, 1999; p.20). A section in these category wise associations did however realise the deficiencies and they made strenuous efforts first to stop the category-wise associations to move away from the path of united struggle of railwaymen (Chakroborty, 1987; p.79).

The NCCRS had decided to go on strike from 8th of May 1974 and the strike notice was to be served on 23rd of April if the Government didn't express its willingness to talk with the trade unions. The Railway Minister showed firmness to deal with the workers and tried to resist any kind of opposition to the government. Interestingly, both the parties – the ruling party and the trade unions aimed at examining their own power and strength. However in the midst of negotiation, treacherously the national leaders like Fernandez, P.K Barua, Srikrishna etc. were arrested on 2nd of May. In this situation, on 3rd May in Delhi and Bombay a ‘bandh’ was observed in protest of the arrest. Life in these two cities became standstill as the train in Central and Western Railways didn't move. As a result of this bandh, the establishments like banks, insurance companies, central and state government offices including Post and Telegraph, Port and dock, textile mills etc. had become paralysed. The Action Committee of National Coordination Committee for Railwaymen's Struggle has in a statement declared that as all attempts for a negotiated settlement of their demands having been frustrated by the ‘adamant attitude’ of the Government, the strike shall begin at 6.am on May 8 (Hindu, 7th May; 1974). NCCRS announced that all the works from the I.R would stop, no wheels would move and the trains would terminate at the next station at 6 a.m. on 8th May. All the important leaders of AIRF went underground in order to avoid arrest. The situation became so unfavourable and disagreeable that the railway Trade Unions had no other option but to go on a strike though Mishra warned that the striking workers might lose their jobs if they joined the illegal strike.

4. Situations during the Strike Days and its Impact

The struggle of the Indian railway workers began from 6 am morning on 8th May 1974. But the decisions and measures taken by the Government had ignited the flame of the agitation among the workers. The provocative arrests in the midst of the negotiations throwing to the winds all norms of democratic behaviour incensed the workers (Siddhanta, 1974; p.63). According to the ‘Times of India’ the arrests ‘showed that the Government has made up its mind to have a showdown with the railway unions’ and that the timing of the arrests has been somewhat unfortunate (Siddhanta, 1974; p.64).

Before the strike started, the Government deployed armed forces to handle the situation. Day by day the police and paramilitary forces made it difficult for the

railway workers to stick to their strike decision. Nevertheless, the largest railway system of the world spreading almost every corner of the country was paralysed. By the united action of the four million 'hands', bringing to a halt the life line of the Indian capitalist system, cutting across at the appointed hour all the barriers of geography, state, language, caste, religion and their own internal job competition, has shown to the capitalist - land lord exploiters what working class power is – when it becomes united and acts for its common class interests (Dange, 1974; p.1). During the first few days of the strike in almost all the zones of the IR, the strike was intense and complete. In the main railway centres of the country like Bombay, Central Madras, New Delhi, in Calcutta both the Howrah and Sealdah, Gorakhpur, Mugholsarai, Guwahati etc. no train had moved and services were almost motionless. The entire Southern region had exhibited similar picture. In the railway workshops such as Kanchrapara, Jamalpur, Perumbur, Golden Rock near Tiruchirapally, Chittaranjan locomotives etc. remained deserted. The 'Times of India' of 11th May printed the Railways' claim of "major breakthrough" in running trains through Mugholsarai, while at the same time reporting that the "nerve-centres" of the railway system in the state of Uttarpradesh, Mugholsarai, Izatnagar and Gorakhpur, were "virtually paralysed" and railway workers in the whole state remained "defiant" (Sherlock, 2001; p.365).

The Railway Board Chairman M.N. Berry claimed that normal situation persisted in all the nine zones of the railways throughout the country except minor disruptions in few major stations. 'Times of India' of 9th May reported that railway officials claimed that there was no impact of the strike on the train services at all, and they released a press notice that only 8% of the total train services were affected. Nearly 70% of the already cancelled passenger trains and 65% of goods trains had been running (Times of India, 9th May, 1974; p.1). But the fact was not all the same. Workers in Delhi Main station and other offices including the Northern Railway Headquarters, the Divisional Superintendent's office and the office of the Commercial Superintendent joined the Strike (The Statesman, 9th May, 1974). Hindustan Times reported that at Tughlakabad Yard 'A loco inspector' told that 'not a single diesel engine had gone to the shed for check or servicing (New Age, 1974; p.4). Mugholsarai which was considered as the nerve centre of the railways in North India, during the first week of the strike had been deserted and the train movements in the directions towards east-west and north-south have been very much restricted. The areas covered by the railways in Mugholsarai, was near about 15 km. spread, were completely seized by police and Central Police Force. The family members of the striking workers especially the women were threatened and sometimes beaten up badly by the police force. The reason behind this action was to create an indirect pressure on the railway men who fled away from their quarters in order to avoid arrest. The Ananda Bazar Patrika on 27.5.74 calculated that an estimation of rupees of 75 crores was spent on the "running of train by T.A and Patrolling by State Government Police" and the total "expenses to break the strike" was approximately "187 crores". The

Statesman reported on 25.7.74 that it used “20 lakhs” as an “advertisement cost on Radio and T.V” and “79 lakhs” as an “advance increment to the Loyal Staff” and 12 crores as a “cash rewards to the Loyal Staff” (Chatterjee, 1988; p.112). Therefore it can be said that the government preferred to exhaust hundreds of crores to crush the railway workers’ struggle instead of paying the amount of only “9 crores” to the railway men as the “staff wages”.

In Bombay on the first day of the strike, the workers of both the Central and Western Railways had immobilised the normal activities of the regions. In the first week, the entire Southern Railways was shut down. Even one day before the strike started the fear of disruption of train services, hundreds of commuters travelled even on the roof of the trains to reach their destination, several hundreds of employees of the Western Railways walked out of their workshops at different places in the city, hours before the scheduled strike; the loco shed staff and the yard staff at Bandra Marshalling Yard conducted their agitation at the noon while the car shed staff at Mahalaxmi began their strike at the mid night last night (Times of India, 8th May 1974). In the south, the strike was more intense and the workers’ participation was massive. The booking counters both at Madras Central and Egmore were open but only a handful of persons were seen standing there mostly seeking refunds on their tickets (The Hindu, 9th May, 1974). In the agricultural states like Punjab or Haryana or Orissa the problem of disordering of train services did not affect much but in the industrialised areas especially in the south it hampered a lot.

In the Union Parliament the Opposition leaders walked out from the Lok Sabha in protest because the matter had already been discussed and was of “continuing nature” (Times of India, 9th May, 1974). The Opposition asked some clarification from the Government regarding the turmoil circumstances throughout the country created due to railway workers’ agitation. Mr. Berry was very careful in the choice of his words: At Mughalsarai the “recovery” he stated; at Tughlakabad, the yard was getting back to its feet; in Delhi the situation was “back in trains” and at Jolarpet the situation was “getting into swing” (Statesman, 10th May,74; pp.1). The Action Committee of NCCRS demanded that the strike was to be nearly complete and 98% of railway men participated in the strike all over the country. The suburban train in Kharagpur area came to a halt; coal movement had been affected heavily. Meanwhile the NCCRS convenor George Fernandez has proposed the resumption of the talks of the railwaymen’s demands with the railway minister L.N. Mishra, if necessary in the prison itself (Times of India, 9th May, 1974).

5. The State and the Strike: Impact

On the third day of the strike the Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi met the Opposition leaders to discuss the strike issue. The meeting concluded by resolving a three point formula which included:

release of arrested leaders of NCCRS,
resumption of negotiations,
withdrawal of the strike.

She stated that for Government it could not be possible to meet all the demands of the railway workers in the perspective of national economic condition. The Action Committee rejected the proposal of calling off the strike. Amrita Bazar Patrika of 11th May 1974 stated that the hope of an early end of three days old nationwide Rail strike “dimmed today” with the National Coordination Committee for Railwaymen’s Struggle as well as its Convenor George Fernandez virtually rejecting the three point formula and urging the workers to ‘continue in a peaceful and determined manner their historic strike’ (Amrita Bazar Patrika, 11th May, 1974; p.1). Instead of taking any constructive decision to an early end of the strike, all the parties - the Railway trade unions, Opposition Parties or the Government, tried to take advantage of the situations in their own favour. The Government had well resorted to various kind of tortures, repressions, arrests, removal from service, suspensions, so that the workers had surrendered unconditionally. A ‘reign of terror’ existed in almost every railway station, colony, and office throughout the country. Because the authority considered it as an attack on democratic government and an effort to create anarchy over the country. Goray, Member of the Rajya Sabha and Socialist Party, asked how the railway men had become suddenly enemies and unpatriotic when earlier this railway men braved bullets and artillery fire during Indo-Pak War (Chatterjee, 1988; p.74).⁵

The call for all Central Government Employees’ general strike on 15th May 1974 received an undeniable industrial solidarity and encouragement throughout the country as they intended to support the striking railwaymen. The All India Defence Employees’ Federation called solidarity tools down strike of civilian defence employees in Ordnance factories and elsewhere, the Banks including State Bank, Life Insurance Corporations and General Insurance employees participated in the solidarity strike action (Siddhanta, 1974; pp.76-77).

By the end of the first week (from 14th May 1974) of the agitation, Northern Railways claimed that there was an improvement in the passenger traffic and enough staff were resuming their duties in the different departments such as booking counters, yards, loco sheds, and other offices, even in the construction sites and food grains and coal movement by this time had stepped up. Railway

⁵ B.T. Ranadive had put the following as a foreword in Nrisingha Chakroborty’s book “The great Railway strike and After” that “the brutalities perpetrated against the Railway workers had become an international scandal and a number of workers’ organisations in other countries were realising the real character of the Indira Government” because “the Government dared not allow a delegation of transport workers from abroad to visit the country” (Ranadive, 1975; p.2).

management demanded that from the mid of second week i.e., 20th May onwards the railway departments offered nearly a pre-strike services. The improvement helped them to withdraw the Territorial Army from several places like Delhi, Kanpur, Baroda etc. Few long distance mail and express trains started moving from Howrah station on 19th May 1974. Different Divisions of Eastern Zone reported gradual increase of the staff in their duties and in movement of trains. Coal rakes proceeded towards steel plants, wagon mobility in Dhanbad Division had increased too. In the three metropolitan cities of Bombay, Calcutta and Delhi the suburban train services began slowly. The 'Times of India' reported that though some long distance trains were running far behind the schedule, the railway strike had become "almost ineffective" in Madhya Pradesh (Times of India, 20th May 1974).

The strike started to fizzle out from the beginning of the third week. All the organised actions and unity of the railway working class could not stand before the authoritarian attitude and reaction of the government. The police raided the houses of the railway workers and tortured those who fell into their hands; workers were mercilessly beaten and tortured to go back to their duties, some even at pistol point (Chakroborty, 1975; pp.10-11). A family of a Central Railway employee complained that the police continuously coming and threatening them for the male members who participated in the indefinite strike and as the police were not able to find the workers, they started torturing the families of the striking railway men. Many hundreds of trade unionists and railway workers were arrested and removed from their services which inevitably weakened the strength of the struggle. Hindustan Standard reported that six hundred and sixty five employees of the Eastern and South Eastern Railways had been dismissed from service up to 15th May on the charge of indulging in violence and dereliction of duty (Hindustan Standard, 15th May 1974).

The Action Committee of NCCRS intended to continue the strike with 'full vigour'. But the trade Union leaders like S.M. Joshi, Socialist leader like Madhu Dandavate, Madhu Limaye expressed their desire to end the strike without causing any mark of bitterness among the workers. At the end of the second week the railway authority agreed that serious inconveniences existed in running the trains - both the passenger and goods. In North-East it had been difficult to maintain uninterrupted goods traffic which actually impeded tea trading in this region especially in Assam. As per Hindustan Standard-news reporters, two goods sheds in Eastern Railways Ultadanga and Chitpur faced a serious problem of congestion and a large number of wagons containing rap seed and other oil seeds, grains, pulses and miscellaneous goods were standing unloaded for many days (Hindustan Standard, 21st May 1974). In Calcutta and Bombay the suburban electrical multiple rakes were abandoned and inoperative due to the absence of the maintenance clerk whose duty was to check and repair the coaches in the car sheds. Link reported that prices of edible oil, vegetables, building materials and

electrical goods have gone up by thirty percent; cement and sugar have vanished from market although the sale of cement is regulated by the Government (Link, June, 1974; p.15).

In this critical background the senior trade union leaders discussed with the Public Affair Committee of the Parliament to revise the three point formula and to include modification of wage structure of the railwaymen. They also talked with the Bonus Review Committee to consider the question of the bonus. At this juncture all felt that an amicable settlement was necessary. Brajesh Prasad Choudhury, posted at Ranaghat since 1955 as a Chief Commercial Clerk and a member of Eastern Railwaymen's Union and Zonal NCCRS informed that in this situation the Railway Trade Unions, unanimously decided to contribute their one day's salary to the striking railwaymen. They got massive support from most of the trade unions from all over the country even NFIR members who didn't join the strike, contributed to raise the fund.⁶ Gradually, it had become difficult for the railwaymen to resist the repression and maintain the same morale and strength to pursue the struggle. A war-like atmosphere existed in the country. J.M. Biswas, the Secretary of Eastern Railway Workers' Federation felt that it was fairly natural and normal railway workers to lose heart and spirit at a time when the avenues for negotiation at the Government level seemed to have disappeared, when the majority of the Action Committee members locked up in jail making thereby the possibility of correct and joint decisions for the railway workers practically impossible, when the strike situation itself had been gradually deteriorating since the 15th May, which could not however be resisted (Biswas, 1977; p.19).

In this situation the rail strike was called off unconditionally, on 28th May at 6am in the morning. The decision was taken by the Action Committee unilaterally. The trade unions didn't have any other option other than to withdraw the strike as it was only "on papers". The Defence of India Rule (D.I.R) was designed was applied vengeantly against the railway workers. The use of brute force, immense torture, innumerable repressive measures, terrorisation of the workers and countless cases of victimisation were the factors that led the leaders to take this decision. So far the circumstances were concerned the Action Committee had published a resolution in support of their decision. The resolution said 'The Action Committee having given deep consideration to the strike situation on all the Zonal Railways and in other railway establishments and being aware of the economic consequences of the further prolonging the action and conscious of the responsibility thrust on it in the circumstances, hereby resolves to unilaterally call off the strike (Hindustan Standard, 28th May 1974; pp.1 & 4).

The news of the termination of the strike had relieved all the sections of people of the Indian society. The daily wage earners, hawkers, vendors, peasants, small

⁶ Interview with Brajesh Prasad Chowdhury on 19.01.18 at 10:30 am at his Muchipara Lane Residence, Sealdah.

traders, daily commuters etc. became glad and relaxed. According to Fernandez the strike was successful but the greater cause of the nation had compelled them to reach this decision. And at the same time he opined that it was most crucial time to stand united. He greeted the workers for their heroic battle and glorious struggle. Assessing the intensity of the strike Fernandez mentioned that out of fourteen lac permanent employees almost twelve lac faced break-in-service and fifty thousands were dismissed from their jobs.⁷ There was one factor that the Government and the railway bureaucrats had failed to overlook when they set about on their task of beating the railwaymen that was the indomitable courage and determination of the railway workers (Fernandez, 1988; p.31). He analysed the strike as an incident which had provided strength, solidarity, tolerance and experience for future action.

6. Conclusion

However this movement had suffered from some inherent weaknesses. The first and foremost condition of any successful agitation was the unconditional unity on common demands of all categories of workers. The second was that the railway trade unions must be financially strong. The support base of AIRF should be broad and must be strengthened. The railway workers were potentially an important factor in the country's political scenario but they were ignorant of this fact. Even George Fernandez stated that "a large part of the present day leadership on the railways had no commitment to trade unionism, to speak nothing of militant trade-unionism", they were extremely "opportunist" and sought "privileges" for their own benefits (Fernandez, 1988; p.32).

Thus the biggest ever action of the Indian working class - the twenty days long strike by the two million railwaymen ended in an apparent defeat but to many it yielded invaluable insight into the present political situation (Marxist Review; June 1974). It is felt particularly by the leftists that this was the first time the railway workers irrespective of political colours, who were representatives of Indian industrial working class participated in the strike which gave them an extra constitutional strength and self-confidence to face violent repression. Though the withdrawal of the strike marked the victory of the capitalist role of the Congress administration, but the strike shook the root of authoritarianism in India.

⁷ The railway workers were beaten but they were not broken, their will and determination could not be broken. (Fernandez, 1984; p.31).

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Collective Mobilisation for Shelter: Politics of Informal Housing in Chandigarh Slums

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Abstract

The Major aim of the paper is to examine the patterns of collective mobilisation taking place in urban slums through a case study of grassroots mobilization around evictions and unavailability of security of tenure in selected slums of Chandigarh city. The biggest problem being faced by informal settlers in urban cities in the present times is the lack of adequate shelter and security of land tenure. Demolition drives and rehabilitation process started at large scale for the so called 'city beautiful' during the year 2013-2014 have compelled the slum dwellers to have more collective efforts. The paper uses an analytical narrative approach to account for patterns in collective behaviour, drawing on both quantitative and qualitative data gathered through interviews with 200 slum dwellers residing in Chandigarh city. Inferences drawn from the study reflect that dissent over demolition act and rehabilitation process for shelter gave significant rise to the collective mobilisation in the slums. Slum colonies are enjoying more exposure to outer world and support of local leaders or various grassroots organisations provide more potential for collective mobilisation.

Key Words: Collective Mobilisation, Eviction, Demolition, Urban Poor, Informal Settlements, Rehabilitation, Adequate

1. Introduction

Across the globe, there is growing evidence of frequent espousal of collective efforts by relatively powerless groups, specifically informal settlers in defending particular urban spaces and influencing urban development. Collective community efforts in contemporary period became an inevitable aspect of socio-political and economic life of marginalized section in the urban societies. The groups associated with poverty reduction recognised collective mobilisation as a meaningful political instrument to fulfil the basic demands of poor people. Among the various approaches to define, assess and solve the problems of informal settlements, collective mobilisation is considered as the most effective way to solve the day to day problems. Within the literature of urban studies an important sub-discipline, concerning the role of urban movements or collective efforts as initiators of social change, holds the central place.

One popular viewpoint in existing studies on this aspect reflects that poor people living at the margins of socio-economic structures do not share similar norms and values of mainstream society. Edelman (1964), Verba, Schlozman and Brady (1995), Krishna (2002), Klesner (2007) and Perlman (1976, 2004) in their studies mentioned that socio-economic marginality leads to lesser participation in political activities and sometimes encourages use of improper means. Poor people share a very low level of social capital. This viewpoint suggests that government

assistance serves as a lifeline for many poor citizens and thus, suppresses any anger or resentment that might inspire any collective social and political efforts and participation. Brady, Verba and Schlozman (1995:275) in their study has mentioned that low-income citizens often do not possess the financial resources, free time, civic skills, to participate effectively in the political actions and the socio-political activities. Activities, such as contacting a public official or working on a campaign, require certain “civic skills” that can be acquired in various nonpolitical settings. But, because poor citizens are so poorly endowed with these participatory factors, over time they have become a very inactive group.ⁱ Along with this perspective there are two more theories ‘The Culture of Poverty’ and ‘Concept of Marginality’. These theories also provide explanations for less participation of slum residents in the collective and political activities. These theories shows that the slum dwellers have little interest and awareness of political events and they lack an internal political organization. Oscar Lewis in his thesis of ‘Culture of Poverty’ also puts forth the idea that poor people are characterized by low aspirations, political apathy, helplessness and disorganization.ⁱⁱ Theory of Marginality claims that disorientation of poor people towards collective efforts and political activities are due to their baggage of traditional (rural) norms and values which prevents their successful adaptation to the urban style of life.ⁱⁱⁱ

After going through the above given theories, it becomes clear that in these studies slums are seen as places which are socially and politically disintegrated and unorganised. These theories propose that poor people residing in squatters’ lack internal organisational qualities and have little interest in collective actions. The theories claiming lesser participation and disorientation of slum residents in collective actions may not be pertinent in many poor urban set-ups in contemporary period. Street people in urban set-up now seek more visibility in associational and political activities as it help informal settlers in urban areas to acquire many governmental benefits. Their visibility can enable them to associate with allocation of funds, infrastructure and facilities.^{iv} Therefore, another set of literature on participation of urban poor in collective efforts and political activities offers the contrary perspective regarding participation. This viewpoint sees urban poor as active participant like any other group in the society. Lawless & Fox (2001:365) and Low (1999:15) in their studies saw that urban poor shows large extent of involvement in political activities and collective actions for adequate shelter and security of tenure which involve the conflict among government institutions, planning experts and local communities. Similar kind of views are provided by Castells (2012:15) in his theory on collective consumption that some issues, such as housing and environment have great impact on collective actions of all the groups in the society. The shared experiences of living in an illegal colony and common interests for security of tenure lead to the formation of collective identity. Fear, emotions and vulnerable position of slum residents play a really important role in creating collective actions /efforts in the informal settlements.^v

Investigation of literature in detail reflects that the notion of the urban poor including the ones living without shelter or in slums has changed and they are now recognized as a vital section of the contemporary society. Literature also reveals that consciousness of collective identity stems from the common grievances of the families, largely regarding inaccessibility of adequate shelter, demolition and eviction process in the informal settlements. Fear, emotions and vulnerable position of slum residents insist them to take collective actions against authorities in the informal settlements. Modern cities in the world remain a mystery to the poor migrants, as they accept migrants only as workers to get services for middle classes and upper classes, but do not consider them full citizens by denying them housing rights. Residents of informal settlements attempt to make city inclusive for them by showing their collective strength against the exclusionary nature of the city authority.

In the above given context this research paper analyzes the nature of collective mobilization taking place in urban spaces through a case study of grassroots mobilization happening around evictions in selected slums of Chandigarh city. In order to explain the nature of collective mobilization, this paper focuses on the nature of protests, demonstrations and campaigns made by slum residents against authority, role of local leaders in these collective efforts, exclusionary process occurring in the slums, various attempts made by authority to provide basic amenities. The present study helps in finding out about those circumstances which mobilize people around urban issues and factors that either restrain or encourage potential urban protects. This study helps to find out what motivates the slum dwellers to take participation in urban social movement activities.

In the present study data is generated by using a mix of quantitative and qualitative method. Semi-structured questionnaire is used to collect relevant information. To get views from the slums residents, the personal in-depth interviews and focus groups discussion were followed. For the field study, four slum informal settlements Labour Colony Number-4, Janta & Labour Colony Sector 25, Nehru Colony and Madrasi Colony were selected. All the four slums are geographically scattered (the sample scattered in different direction of city) and among the largest slums (most populated slums of the city) of Chandigarh city. From these 4 colonies; 200 slum residents (50 from each) of different ages, works, gender and different places on the basis of random sampling were interviewed. Most questions asked were kept open-ended for the residents. Along with primary sources information has been gathered from CRRID reports, Chandigarh Housing Board, Planning Commission Reports, City Planning Development Department, Ministry of Housing and Poverty Alleviation Reports and Chandigarh Administration. This research paper has been divided in mainly two sections, the first part attempts to explain the problems for shelter and politics of dissent in slums, second part of the paper deals with the collective efforts made by informal settlers against demolition and for providing adequate housing facilities in slums.

2. Politics of Dissent in Informal Settlements: An Evaluation

The frequent choice for collective action or mobilisation by relatively powerless groups in recent period suggests that protest and demonstration represents an important aspect of low income group politics in the society. Alternative of protest has been recognized as a meaningful political instrument for the fulfilment of basic amenities in the low income group politics. For most of the urban poor, mobilization means fighting for and defending a place to live in the city and more broadly, the right to maintain and maybe to enhance their livelihoods. When the urban poor come across a problem at community level, specifically regarding public services or basic amenities, they attempt to solve it collectively. Collective mobilization can be defined most simply as any broad social alliance of people who are associated in seeking to influence authority for change. Community efforts of low income groups are essentially the products of discontent of residents against unavailability of basic services. Through their collective actions/efforts low income groups attempt to transform the public authorities to become more humane and responsive to the sufferings of slum residents. Collective actions in slums are mainly exhibited in the forms of protests, direct confrontation, demonstration, agitations, rallies and participating in self-help programmes of neighbourhood communities. Mobilisation process in slums expressed through wide range of practices is strongly connected with ground level organizations to contest the dominant forces (governmental institutions and administrative authorities) in urban spaces. Socio-economic and political conflicts and expectations of the people are reflected through these collective efforts/movements.

In their collective efforts, slum residents either make demands for basic services or show dissatisfaction against administration and government authority. Field visits demonstrated that slum dwellers were involved in protests and demonstrations against authority while demanding the shelter and other civic amenities (water, electricity, public distribution system, health facilities, educational services, sanitation facility, street lights and roads etc.) in slums. In order to make the Chandigarh administration hear their voices, they came and protested on the roads multiple times. While analysing the participation of slum residents from selected colonies in demonstration against authority, it was found that around 60% had participated in demonstration/protest once and more than once in last five years.

Table 1: Participation of Respondents in Protests and Demonstration

Name of Colony	Number of Respondents Participated in any Demonstration/Protest in last five years
Labour Colony No. 4	41
Slum Colony at Sector 25	29
Madrasi Colony	39
Nehru Colony	21

Total -200 (50 from each slum)	130
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Source: Field Visit of Four Slum Colonies (January to April 2013)

Out of 60% slum residents around 45% respondents answered that they had participated in protests more than five times. While providing more information on collective efforts 54 % of respondents mentioned that they participated against demolition/eviction process, water and electricity supply, and delay/un-availability of ration through public distribution system. Very few (15%) respondents participated in protests against better roads, sanitation, street lights, health facilities and educational facilities.

Analyzing the nature of collective mobilization in urban slums of Chandigarh by researching various protests and demonstrations reveals that collective mobilization is a very effective method in slums to fulfil the demands of basic services. The type of demonstration, agitation and protests occurred at the slum colonies were economic in nature as they were prominently for the fundamental civic amenities (water, electricity, shelter) and security of tenure. Social issues such as women security and protection of social rights are taken up rarely for protests in the selected slums. Informal settlements in city do not show equal aptitude to put demands effectively and make protests against authority. A bigger number of slum residents at Labour Colony and Madrasi Colony have participated in protest and demonstration in comparison to the residents of Nehru colony. A large number of residents of Nehru colony did not remember any demonstration that may have taken place in the last few years. Labour Colony -4 has shown immense orientation for protest and agitation against authorities as residents are quite assertive when it comes to their demands. A huge chunk of slum dwelling population in the Madrasi and Labour Colony-4 are factory and industry workers and they get more exposure to the outside world. They get experience for participation in associational activities through trade unions and labour unions. Slum colony at Sector-25 and Nehru colony have less number of industrial/factory workers and more domestic workers. Therefore, they lack the experience and inclination needed for collective actions.

Conversation with slum respondents further revealed that collective actions in slums often depend on local leaders, neighbourhood associations, influential persons and political parties for the initiation and development. Local leaders of bastis take the credit for mobilising slum residents for making demands for water tanker, constructing pavements in arranging street lights, proper electricity and water facilities. Field visits demonstrated that pradhans in all the four slums play important roles in mobilizing low income rural migrants for collective actions. Community leaders are the persons who gather slum residents and decide the day and place for demonstration and protest for any issue.

Table 2: Mobilisation of Slum Residents by Local Leaders for Various Activities

Mobilisation of Slum Residents by local leaders	Rallies	49%
	Demonstration /protest	51%
	Meetings	34%

Source: Field Visit in four Slum Colonies of City (January to April 2013)

Local leaders are always ready to invest their efforts in these activities as it helps them in gaining popularity among slum dwellers and political parties. Slum dwellers vote en bloc and act as vote bank (easy target) for political parties therefore, political parties and leaders attempt to patronise them by providing them help to find secured tenure. This section reflects that collective actions in slums often depend upon local leaders, neighbourhood associations, influential persons and political parties for the initiation and development. Factory and industry workers who get more exposure to the outside world and experience in associational activities through trade unions and labour unions take active participation in protests and collective efforts.

3. Collective Mobilisations for Shelter: A Critical Perspective

Idea of informal sector and manifestation of informality in the domain of housing and settlement in India has gained attention in the present period. In the process of urban regeneration, informal settlement residents are often evicted. The government sometimes justifies the displacement of informal settlers with the rhetoric for the collective good. Process of demolition and denial of housing rights of slum residents has become an issue of concern for all in the present period. Demolition and rehabilitation process affects the politics in Chandigarh slums with full force as administration is committed to make the city slum free. Most of the slum colonies in the planned city are built at those places which were meant for the construction of buildings for developmental purposes. Therefore, the demolitions of the huts of such squatter are expected actions to be taken by the city administration. Fear of eviction and non-permanency (insecure land tenure) led many residents to take part in protests. Threat of eviction in Chandigarh slums gained momentum with the demolition of Labour colony-5 (17,000 structures have been demolished) in November, 2013 to make city slum free. Demolition drive of informal settlements took widespread form in city after this. In the second phase of demolition drive 37 acres of land was reclaimed in sector-52 and 51 on May 10, 2014. The demolition in four colonies namely Pandit Colony, Kuldeep Colony, Mazdoor Colony and Nehru Colony has been undertaken where 3,700 structures were demolished. In the third phase of demolition drive around 3,000 structures have been pulled down from Madrasi Colony. Not only demolition drives but failure of proper rehabilitation process also encourages protests in slums. The act of Chandigarh administration to demolish unauthorized colonies without rehabilitating all the slum residents invited protests from the residents

along with leaders, social activists and Non-Governmental Organisation workers. Various social groups, NGOs are making demands for a new scheme which covers citizens who have been residing in Chandigarh until 2014, without the insistence on one single biometric survey (biometric survey of 2006) as is being currently done. *Ghar Adhikar Sangharsh Samiti* and some other social activists are asking administration to grant property rights to poor people and in-situ settlement in central locations of cities. Demands for in-situ rehabilitation have been neglected by the city authority and all the colonies are built in the periphery of the city. All the rehabilitated places except rehabilitated colonies at sector-49 and *Vikas Nagar* fall in the outskirts of the city. This type of rehabilitation make slum dwellers realise that they are being socially and economically excluded from the parlance of planned city. Eviction and failure of proper rehabilitation compels slum residents to opt for violent methods and protests. Around 69% of interviewed respondents from four sampled slum colonies mentioned that they come out on the road shouting slogans against ruling party, authorities and administration on several occasions in recent years. It has been found during the interviews that in the collective efforts for shelter in slums were accompanied by the local community leaders. Slum dwellers need to get some initiative from outside for collective efforts which are performed by local leaders or any influential person /social worker. There is a growing and influential lobby against eviction.^{vi}

The role played by local leaders in slums gets ambiguous from time to time as sometimes they act on the behalf of slum residents and ask authorities to fulfil the demands and sometimes they try to manipulate the things and keep the residents away from the reality. For instance, local Pradhans are the persons who inform slum residents about the demonstration and notices regarding evacuation. Slum dwellers assemble for a meeting along with local leaders and social activists where structure of protest is discussed. Local leaders support residents to secure stay orders from courts and to organize protests, demonstration and other visible newsworthy events to derail any plans for displacement. Slum dwellers from informal settlements at sector-25 and Labour colony no-4 in their interview stated that famous political and local leaders have supported them in protest against demolition. But some of the incidents narrated by slum residents from Nehru and Madrasi colony reflected that sometimes leaders manipulate local residents to make compromises in demonstration and protest. They misguide the residents for their own interest and support state and its agencies for their benefit. Residents from Nehru and *Madrasi* colony confirmed the occurrence of such incidents. They recollect the episode when notice has been issued for demolition local leader assured them for sustenance of *Jhuggis* as they have confirmed it from city officials; but demolitions took place and many of slum residents lost *jhuggis*. Interviews with residents reflect that leaders get various incentives in the form of house at rehabilitated colony, money and employment opportunity for their dear ones for supporting state agencies/city authorities. These leaders create a wide communication gap between residents and political leaders/ concerned authority.

Studies further reveal that all the slum colonies do not show equal propensity to make collective efforts against eviction and rehabilitation. More number of slum residents at labour colony-4 and Madrasi Colony has shown large orientation towards protest and agitation than the Nehru colony. People are very assertive about their rights and demands. One reason for the large participation of residents of Colony-4 and Madrasi colony is that they get more exposure than the residents of Nehru colony. Residents in these two colonies are factory and industrial workers they get more exposure as trade unions and labour unions keep making protest and demonstration to fulfil their demands. On the other hand, Slum Colony at sector-25 and Nehru colony has fewer industrial and domestic workers resulting in very few persons who participated in protests and demonstration for housing facilities. Nehru Colony is the area with the least respondents who took participation in protest and demonstration places itself at the last among four slum colonies.

Various grassroots or civil society organisation like *Gharadhikar Sangharsh Morcha*, Students for society, *Lokaawaz* and others are working to protect the interests of slum colonies. Only strong protest and agitation can stop the demolition of slum colonies before providing enough and adequate housing facilities to the slum residents. This can be exemplifying with the incidents of Labour colony no-5 and Sector 25 colonies. Slum people in these colonies came together and made *gherao* of the administrative officials and stopped the demolition machines. Some people showed up with weapons and rods as well. This protest was so effective and strong that the administration stopped demolition drive at that time. All the residents come up on streets/roads and started raising slogans against demolition. Slum colony-5 could not get removed in 2003 as the city authority had to face a strong agitation from the residents. But this slum was demolished in 2013. The major reason for this failure was lesser participation in protest. Many slum residents got rehabilitated in authorized colonies under small flat schemes. Another reason for the less participation was many went to *jail* under *Jail Bharo Andolan* and nobody left to make a strong protest against the administration. This made the work of administration easier and the slum got demolished without facing any strong demonstrations in 2013. The demolitions drive in 2013 demolished the colony completely and around 7000 houses were destroyed leaving many slum residents without any other option/place to live. The protests fell weak over time and not just in Labour colony number-5; but this trend has been seen in other slums like Nehru, Kujheri and Madrasi. Slums which put strong opposition (eg. labour colony-4 and Sector-25 colony) against city authority along with the social activist and political leaders protected their colonies but slums with weak strategy and support get demolished. While analysing the nature of collective mobilisation for shelter it has been found that large number of women residents (79%) take all these protests, rallies and strikes for accessibility of secure tenure quite seriously. This is because lack of adequate housing facilities is more problematic for the women than the men. Women living

in the slums without proper water facilities and bathroom face more challenges than men. Among interviewed women around 79% of women accepted that they had participated in one or other protest against eviction and adequate shelter facilities. Mahila Mandal Pradhans of the selected slums put great efforts to gather women in slums and mobilize them for protest. Women along with the male members of slums raised slogans against authority. Whereas, woman's participation in demonstration against unavailability of health facilities, better educational facilities and better streets were quite less in number.

During the protests not only the residents of notice served slums came together but residents of all the slum colonies along with authorised colonies came together and demonstrated against demolition activity. Slum dwellers demanded alternative accommodation and right for housing before the colonies get demolished. Most of the protests and *Morchaas* appeared recently are a result of the combined efforts of the slum residents along with intellectuals, lawyers, professors, students and some opposition political parties. Several groups and political parties including the CPI and CPI (Marxist) as well as the representatives from the Aam Aadmi Party also participated in the protests. Residents from other colonies also come to support the protest. In these protests various slogans like '*Bastiyo Ko Ujadana Band Karo, Ujdo Ke Liye Ghar Ka Prabhand Karo*' and "*Har Zor-Zulm Ki Takkar Mai; Sangharsh Hamara Naara Hai*" has been raised against the administration. Though all the protests and demonstrations do not achieve success to stop the demolitions of colonies but remaining slum colonies and residents have become active and aware. Members of many organisations like the SFS and *Ghar Adhikar Sangharsh Morcha* distribute pamphlets, show street plays and provide information by visiting the slum colonies to make slum dwellers more informed. Protests groups also demand for more transit colonies (established in the peripheries of the city) to accommodate those who became shelter less after demolition drive.

Even the potential beneficiaries in their interview have shown disappointment that they are getting rehabilitated in those areas which are far away from their working places. In these rehabilitated colonies even the basic amenities are not present. The strategy of city authorities to rehabilitate slum dwellers at peripheries reflects that in order to accommodate the accelerated urban growth, cities are thus expanding into peripheral agricultural areas around planned city. In this peripheral growth, the land is being appropriated from farmers or former land owners for public purpose.

4. Conclusion

Inferences drawn from the study reflects that dissent over the acts of demolition and inadequate rehabilitation process has given significant mount to the collective mobilisation in the slums. Mobilizations occurring at grassroots level primarily focus on the problems of basic amenities and specifically to eviction. In these

protest most of the ordinary working-class persons, labourers and domestic workers come together under the leadership of any organisation, leader or social activists. Study reveals that slum dwellers enjoying more exposure to outer world (as factory and industrial workers) are more inclined for collective mobilisation as they have more experience of protests and demonstrations as labour union members. Unconventionally, large number of women residents has participated in the protests/strikes for accessibility of secure tenure. Local Pradhans and grassroots organisations show great influence over collective actions of slum dwellers. But the role played by local leaders in slums is quite ambiguous as sometimes they act on the behalf of slum residents and sometimes they try to manipulate the things for their own interest. Demands for adequate shelter and in-situ rehabilitation are coming from various social groups, leaders of NGOs along with residents. Though rehabilitation processes proved successful up-to some extent as many slum residents have been rehabilitated but it had not met with complete success as rehabilitated colonies are again excluded from main city and located in the peripheries of the city with limited facilities. It became very difficult for slum households to get rehabilitated at different places and continue with their earlier work and adjust with the old routine (schools for kids, aanganwadi, old neighbourhood and acquaintance with the place) in the new place. The rehabilitation process needs to provide a sense of citizenship to them as they contribute in the political and economic sphere of the society.

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End notes

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- ⁱ For details see Henry E. Brady, Sidney Verba and Kay Lehman Schlozman (1995). Beyond SES: A Resource Model of Political Participation. *American Political Science Review*, 89. 2. pp 271-294
- ⁱⁱ According to Lewis There is a lack of participation and integration of the poor in the major institution of the larger society. He declares poverty as a way of life, which is remarkably stable and persistent, passed down from generation to generation along family lines. For details see Oscar Lewis, "The Culture of Poverty", *Scientific American*, 215 (October 1966), pp. 19-25.

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- iii Theory of Marginality predicts that slum dwellers rarely participate in electoral politics, avoid direct action politics, and frequently attempt to pursue individual goals through administrative channels. Slums have no internal political organisation. The theory of marginality is defined by the concept of disintegration. Dominant in these areas are isolationism and dispersion; these make them appear as disorganized groups, without internal links or coherent social expression to define them positively in front of the society as a whole. For more details see See Alejandro Portes, "Rationality in the Slum: An Essay on Interpretive Sociology," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 14 (1972), pp. 268-286 and Janice E. Perlman, *The Myth of Marginality Revisited: The Case of Favelas in Rio De Janeiro*, *Perspectives from the Middle East, South Asia, and Latin America* (Lexington Press, 2005), pp. 105–146.
- iv According to Anna Zimmer the visibility, from residents' perspective, is associated with allocation of funds, infrastructure and facilities. Furthermore, knowledge of the population totals might help residents establish claims for more meaningful political participation as citizens. For details See Anna Zimmer, "Enumerating the Semi-Visible: The Politics of Regularizing Delhi's Unauthorized Colonies", *Economic & Political Weekly* 47 (30) (2012: 90).
- v For more details see Castells (2012:15), In his study of power structure relationship mentioned that there is an innate state of conflict for urban spaces, as government and landowners do not want squatters on prime land; while informal communities perceive these places as their homes and sources of livelihood. The origins of collective efforts/movements are to be found in the emotions of individuals and in their networking on the basis of cognitive empathy. Castells, M. (2012) *Networks of outrage and hope: Social movements in the Internet age*. Cambridge. UK: Polity Press.
- vi Bipasha Baruah in her study of 'Women and Property in Urban India' argued that slum dwellers or poor seek out the support of local political leader who can act on their behalf to secure stay orders from courts and to organize protests, demonstration and other visible newsworthy events to derail any plans for displacement. According to her in addition to support from local politicians there is a growing and influential lobby against eviction as well as media and judiciary support for the right of squatters as citizens. Bipasha Baruah, *Women and Property in Urban India* (The University of British Columbia: UBC Press: 2010), p. 114

Media and its role in curbing corruption in Nigeria

Sarabjit Kaur

Abstract

Corruption is considered as the most important factor impeding the socio-economic transformation of developing countries. It is threatening the existence of countries like Nigeria. Every sphere of life is affected by corruption. To counter the menace of corruption, various agencies have played a significant role, one such being the Media-Print or Broadcasting. The fight against corruption is not an easy one but with greater autonomy, media can certainly play a significant role. This will not only lead to trickling down of benefits of development to the masses and enable them to improve their economic position but will also benefit the country by way of improving its economic status at the world level.

Key words: Development and Corruption, forms, causes, effects, role, media, Nigeria

1. Introduction

Corruption is a worldwide phenomenon and there is hardly any society without one form of corruption or the other. Corrupt practices did not begin today; its history is as old as the human race. The destructive impact of corruption in the lives of nations is acknowledged. It is considered the most important factor that is impeding the accelerated socio-economic transformation of developing or less developing countries of the world. Infact, this is very well seen in case of some countries like Nigeria. Scholars like M. Watts have pointed out that “effects of corruption in the Nigerian society cannot be overemphasized” (2008:47). Corruption is indeed a cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabric of Nigerian society. In the year 2000, Transparency International carried out a survey on the corruption levels of 90 countries and it ranked Nigeria as the most corrupt country. In 2001, Nigeria was ranked the second most corrupt nation in the world. This ranking in terms of corruption continued even in 2001, 2002 and 2003. 2004 ranking showed a little improvement when compared to the past four years. Nigeria was ranked the third most corrupt country in the world. In 2005, Nigeria was ranked the 6th most corrupt nation. In 2006, Nigeria was ranked as the 18th most corrupt country in the world. As per the 2007, 2012, 2013 and 2014, the ranking of the country was 32, 37, 33 and 38 respectively in terms of corruption in the world (see, <http://hubpages.com/education/Corruption-in-Nigeria>). It is one of the most important factor which is responsible for the economic woes of the country. Scholars like Akpeninor (2007:116) has pointed out that even when the state government’s revenue has been increasing geometrically since June 1999, it has actually not positively impacted the lives of Nigerians nor provided the much needed infrastructural development. He cited a survey carried out by the United Nations Development Programme which shows that “impoverishment of Nigeria has vastly increased proportionately as revenue collected by the governors also

immensely increased” (2007:116). Corruption therefore is threatening the existence of Nigeria as an entity. Nearly every sphere of human endeavor is affected by corruption and no profession is spared either.

It therefore becomes pertinent to counter the menace of corruption. Of the various agencies that have played a significant role in countering corruption, one such being is the media-Print or Broadcasting, The ability of the media to pre-determine what issues are important gives the media an edge to fight corruption since they can easily lay emphasis on the atrocities being committed by public figures in the country. It raises public awareness about corruption, its causes, consequences and possible remedies. This study is of relevance not only because it brings to the fore the role of media in curbing corruption in Nigeria but it also identifies the obstacles faced by media in the fight against corruption. But before understanding the role played by media, it becomes pertinent to have a conceptual understanding of corruption and also of various forms of corruption which have been dealt in Section A of the paper. Section B of the study examines the history, causes and effects of corruption in Nigeria and in Section C, a discussion of the role of Media in combating corruption in Nigeria that been undertaken. The details of each section follows-

2. Meaning and Forms of Corruption

Corruption has received an extensive attention in the communities and perhaps due to the fact that it has been over-flogged in the academic circles, corruption has received varied definitions. Corruption is coined from the Latin word; *corruptus* which in essence means ‘to destroy’. According to Stople (2008), United Nations Convention against corruption recognized corruption as a multi-faceted, dynamic and flexible phenomenon and therefore does not define, but describe corrupt practices (Sowunmi, Raufu, Oketokun, Salako and Usifoh, 2010:8). Klitgaard broadly viewed corruption as misuse of office for unofficial ends. According to him, a “catalogue of corrupt acts includes-but not limited to – bribery, extortion, influence peddling, nepotism, fraud, the use of “speed money” (money paid to government officials to speed up their consideration of a business matter falling within their jurisdiction) and embezzlement” (Adeyemi, 2013:121). Macrae sees corruption as “an arrangement that involves an exchange between two parties (the demander and the supplier) which i) has an influence on the allocation of resources either immediately or in the future and ii) involves the use or abuse of public or collective responsibility for private ends” (Macrae, 1982:28). Sternberg relates corruption with bribe when he states that a “bribe is an incentive offered to encourage someone to break the rules of the organization he nominally represents and deliver an (unfairly) favorable outcome”. In broader terms, Windsor and Getz define corruption as “socially impermissible deviance from some public duty or more generally some ideal standard of conduct” (Ayodele, 2012:2).

The corruption prevailing in the society can take many forms like-

- i) Political Corruption
- ii) Bureaucratic Corruption
- iii) Electoral Corruption

The details of these are-

- i) Political Corruption: This takes place at the highest levels of political authority. It occurs 'when the politicians and political decision-makers, who are entitled to formulate, establish and implement the laws in the name of the people, are themselves corrupt.' It also takes place when policy formulation and legislation is tailored to benefit politicians and legislators. Political corruption is sometimes seen as similar to corruption of greed as it affects the manner in which decisions are made as it manipulates political institutions, rules of procedure and distorts the institutions of government
- ii) Bureaucratic Corruption: This occurs in the public administration or at the implementation end of politics. This is a low level corruption with which citizens are encountered daily at places like the hospital, schools, police and so on.
- iii) Electoral Corruption: This includes purchase of votes with money, promises of office or special favors, coercion and interference with freedom of election.

Other forms of corruption include-

- a) Bribery: This is a payment that is taken or given in a corrupt relationship
- b) Fraud: This involves some kind of trickery, swindle and deceit, racketing, smuggling and forgery
- c) Embezzlement: This is a theft of public resources by public officials
- d) Extortion: This is the money and other resources extracted by the use of coercion, violence or threats to use force.
- e) Favoritism: This is a mechanism of power abuse implying a highly biased distribution of state resources. It involves favor to friends, family and anybody close and trusted.
- f) Nepotism: This is a special form of favoritism in which an office holder prefers his kinfolk and family members.

These various forms of corruption are seen to be existing in the case of countries like Nigeria. All these different forms have contributed to aggravating the problem of poverty and squalor in the society inspite of being the sixth largest exporter of oil in the world. It therefore becomes pertinent to understand history, causes and the effects of corruption in Nigeria. These issues have been examined in section B.

3. History, Causes and Effects of Corruption in Nigeria

Before identifying the causes of corruption in Nigeria, it becomes significant to have an insight into the country's experience with corruption.

Historically, the origin of corruption in Nigeria predates the colonial era. In 1956, the Foster-Sutton Tribunal of Inquiry investigated the Premier of the defunct Eastern Region, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, for his involvement in the affairs of the defunct African Continental Bank. As per the code of conduct for government officials, a government officer should relinquish his holdings in private business when he assumes public office. But as per the Foster –Sutton Tribunal, Azikiwe did not sever his connections to the bank when he became a Premier. The Tribunal reported that Azikiwe continued to use his influence to promote the interests of the bank (Report of the Foster-Sutton Tribunal of Inquiry, 1956:42; Sklar, 2004: 185). Moreover, Azikiwe, his family and the Zik Group of Companies were the principal shareholders of the African Continental Bank. As indicated in the report of the Tribunal of Inquiry, the bank loaned over 163,000 dollars to the Zik Group of Companies at a lower interest rate and over an extended period which meant that the Zik group did not have to repay the loans until 1971. Thus even before independence there have been cases of official misuse of resources for personal enrichment. After liberation, the problem of corruption continued with little concern for the citizens of the country. The First Republic under the leadership of Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the Prime Minister and Nnamdi Azikiwe, the President, was marked by widespread corruption. Government officials looted public funds with impunity. The Federal Representatives and Ministers flaunted their wealth. It appeared that the political leadership of the First Republic did not have men of good character. They were interested more in making money and living well.

The high level of corruption provided the pretext for the young middle rank army officers to sack the Nigerian First Republic politicians from power through a coup d'état that took place on 15th January 1966, on the ground of corruption. The strong support that the military received for the coup showed that Nigerians were long expecting such a wind of change to free themselves from the clutches of the politicians of that era.

The General Aguiyi Thomas Ironsi military government that replaced the sacked civilian regime instituted a series of commissions of inquiry to investigate the activities of some government parastatals and probe the widespread corruption that characterised the public service sector of the deposed regime. The report on the parastatals, especially the Nigerian Railway Corporation, Nigeria Ports Authority and the defunct Electricity Corporation of Nigeria and Nigeria Airways revealed that a number of ministers formed companies and used their influence to secure contracts. Moreover, they were found guilty of misappropriation of funds as well as disregarding laid down procedures in the award of contracts by parastatals under their Ministries. The corrupt leaders were not punished as the

reins of government came in the hands of the military leaders. The military leaders were no better than the ousted civilian leaders in terms of corruption.

Military leader General Yakub Gowon ruled the country at a time Nigeria experienced an unprecedented wealth from the oil boom of the 1970s. Gowon's regime was also enmeshed in deep seated corruption. By 1974, reports of unaccountable wealth of Gowon's military governors and other public office holders had become the crux of discussion in the various Nigerian dailies. It was mainly for corruption that Gowon administration was toppled by General Murtala Muhammed through a coup d' etat. General Murtala Mohammed began by declaring his assets and asking all government officials to follow suit. He instituted a series of probes of past leaders. Ten of the twelve state military governors in the Gowon regime were found guilty by the Federal Assets Investigation Panel of 1975. The guilty persons were dismissed from the military services and were also forced to give up ill acquired properties considered to be in excess of their earnings (Gboyega, 1996:3).

Other cases of corruption were reported by the Belgore Commission of Inquiry which indicted the Gowon government of inflating contracts for cement on behalf of the Ministry of Defence for private profit at a great cost to the government. In its Report, the Commission noted that the Ministry of Defence needed only 2.9 million tons of cement at a cost of N 52 million as against the 16 million metric tons of cement, it ordered at a cost of N557 million (Ogbeidi, 2012:8). General Murtala was assassinated after only six months in office. He was succeeded by his Chief of Staff, General Olusegun Obasanjo, who did not show the same zeal as his erstwhile boss in the prosecution of wrongdoers. Obasanjo, however, ensured that the reins of government were transferred to civilians in October 1979.

The second republic under President Shehu Shagari, witnessed a resurgence of corruption. The President did nothing to end the looting of public funds by elected officials. Corruption greatly increased amongst the political leaders owing to the availability of funds. Over 16 billion dollars in oil revenues were lost between 1979 and 1983 during the reign of President Shehu Shagari. His weak administration was unable to stop the corruption (Ogbeidi, 2012: 8). The increasing corruption prevalent amongst the ministers and the political lieutenants provided a ground for the occurrence of a coup that was led by General Muhammadu Buhari. General Buhari promised to bring corrupt officials and their agents to book. Consequently, state governors and commissioners were arrested and brought before tribunals of inquiry. But the regime of Buhari was overthrown by General Ibrahim Babangida in a bloodless coup. Under Babangida's thirteen year of rule the corruption reached its alarming rate. According to Maduagwu:

Not only did the regime encourage corruption by pardoning corrupt officials convicted by his predecessors and returning their seized properties, the regime officially sanctioned corruption in the country and made it difficult to apply the

only potent measures, long prison terms and seizure of ill-gotten wealth for fighting corruption in Nigeria in the future (Maduagwu quoted in Gboyega, 1996:5).

Owing to severe public opposition, General Babangida handed the reins of government to a non-elected military-civilian Interim National Government on 26th August 1993 which was later ousted from power by the military under the leadership of General Sani Abacha on 17th November 1993. The Abacha regime only furthered the deep seated corrupt practices, which already characterised public life since the inception of the Babangida regime. General Abacha and his family alongside his associates looted Nigeria's coffers. It was estimated that the embezzlement of public funds and corruption proceeds of General Abacha and his family amounted to USD 4 billion (International Centre for Asset Recovery, 2009). Corrupt practices therefore became blatant and systematic. Successive military regimes subdued the rule of law, facilitated the wanton looting of the public treasury and instituted a secret and opaque culture in running of government business. Corruption became the dominant guiding principle for running the affairs of state.

The study of political history of Nigeria therefore indicates that corruption and leadership have a close nexus. All the leaders assumed power with the sole purpose of enriching themselves and their cronies rather than contributing to the development of the country. However the magnitude of corruption during the era of the various civilian and military regimes cannot be determined with precision because the trend, ways and means of illegal self enrichment were not similar. The military took corruption to its highest levels ever. The military often came to power accusing the ousted military/civilian regime of corruption and incompetence.

Corruption became endemic in the 1990s during the military regimes of Babangida and Abacha but a culture of impunity spread throughout the political class when democracy returned to Nigeria in 1999. In fact, corruption took over as the engine of the Nigerian society and replaced the rule of law. The civilian politicians, their allies in public institutions and collaborators in the private sector, particularly the financial institutions were not any better in corruption.

The transition process from military to civilian rule saw the second coming of President Olusegun Obasanjo in 1999 who assumed office as poor person with all his bank accounts of about N20,000; but eight years later he had expanded agricultural farm at Ota to be worth hundreds of millions of naira (Bankole and Olaniyi, 2014: 31). He now possesses educational institutions that run from primary to university and has over 200 million of shares in various conglomerates (Ibid:31). He sold government property to himself and his cronies below the cost price and House of Representative probe revealed that his administration wasted

16 billion US dollars in power sector with nothing to show for it (Bankole and Olaniyi, 2014:31)

Obasanjo successor, President Umaru Yar' Adua also talked about zero tolerance to corruption but not much was done to curb the menace of corruption. His successor's regime was also known for corruption and hence had little creditability.

A survey on the level of corruption in Nigeria carried out in 2003 by the Institute of Development Research of the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria ranked political parties in the country third in the list of thirty most corrupt public institutions in Nigeria (Adekeye, 2003:29). Political parties have been the main avenues for promoting corrupt practices in the country through god fatherism, extortion to mention a few.

There is a consensus among well meaning individuals and foreign nations that corruption has largely retarded the quest for sustainable growth and development in Nigeria.

3.1 Causes of Corruption in Nigeria

Several reasons have been adduced for corruption in Nigeria, one of which is the sudden disappearance of good moral and ethical values. Nwaobi posited that Nigeria must be one of the very few countries in the world where a man's source of wealth is of no concern to his neighbors, the public or the government. Wealthy people who are known to be corrupt are regularly courted and honored by communities, religious bodies, social clubs and other private organizations. This implies that people who benefit from the largesse of these corrupt people rarely ask questions.

Sociological and cultural factors such as customs, family pressures on government officials and ethnicity constitute potential causes of corruption. In Nigeria, although traditional values of gift giving and tributes to leaders often lead to what Brownsberger describes as "polite corruption", the extent of such corruption is relatively small. Dandago revealed that traditional chieftaincy titles and membership of Boards of Directors of government owned corporations are only for the 'influential' individuals in the society who have 'made it' economically or politically. Most of those people made it through enriching themselves fraudulently, but enjoy public respect and accolades. The most annoying thing is that honest and dedicated public servants, who have not accumulated dirty wealth, do not command much respect from the society. These attitudes serve to encourage a new breed of public servants who engage in corrupt practices.

A weak enforcement mechanism like lack of judicial independence: weak prosecutorial institutions is another major cause of corruption in Nigeria. The forces which deter corruption are often weak as some if not most of the law enforcement agencies are themselves corrupt. In addition rulers, politicians and

civil servants are highly corrupt and professional organizations may be incapable of sanctioning their members (Ayodele, 2012:2).

One needs to focus on some systemic conditions in the Nigerian polity that promote corruption. To start with, it is unfortunate that power is concentrated in the hands of decision makers who in reality are not directly accountable to the people as is often seen in non-democratic regimes. This is a direct result of Nigeria's inability since independence to always conduct credible, free, fair and uncontroversial elections to political offices in the country. With political office holders acquiring power through disputable if not illegitimate methods, the situation is not helped by perennial lack of government transparency in decision making. Again costly political campaigns in recent times, with expenses exceeding normal sources of political funding mean that elected officials' first priority on assuming office is to recoup their election expenses. This is facilitated by the design of marginally relevant prestige project requiring expenditure of large amounts of public capital. In the subsequent award of contracts for these projects, self-interested closed cliques, ethnic-cum-family members and "old boys" networks are favoured. The bulk of the bureaucracy with below-living wages and supported by apathetic, uninterested or gullible become actors and accomplices in the public contracts gravy train (Okoye, 2).

But the crux of the present Nigerian corruption problem is the overarching crude oil economy and politics. According to allegations made by some members of the House of Representatives, the Nigerian oil industry appears to be a den of corruption. None outside a certain restricted inner circle of government knows exactly how much oil income flows into the national coffers. Not even the legislature could compel the executive to exhibit total transparency in the handling of Nigeria's oil resources.

3.2 The Effects of Corruption

Corruption with its deep roots has serious effects. It poses a serious developmental challenge. Corruption aggravates poverty, eats up funds that would otherwise have been used to rescue a lot of people from the pain of starvation. In the political realm, it undermines democracy and good governance by subverting formal processes. Corruption in elections and in legislative bodies reduces accountability and fair representation in policymaking; corruption in judiciary undermines or suspends the rule of law and corruption in public administration results in the unequal provision of services. Corruption erodes the institutional capacity of government as procedures are disregarded, resources are siphoned off and officials are hired or promoted without regard to performance. Corruption undermines the legitimacy of government and such democratic values as trust and tolerance. Corruption also undermines economic development by generating considerable distortions and inefficiency. Corruption also generates economic distortions in the public sector by diverting public investment into capital projects where bribes and kickbacks are more plentiful. Corruption also lowers quality of

standards of compliance with construction, environmental or other regulations: reduces the quality of government services and infrastructure. It also increases budgetary pressures on government. This may be the reason why in spite of the unprecedented hikes in crude oil prices that have led to the so-called excess oil revenues, the federal government is still finding it quite difficult to balance its annual budgets.

The above discussed effects indicate that corruption is an evil which must be combated as fiercely as possible with all the resources available. The media therefore has to be in the fore front in this fight. According to Stapenhurst, the way in which media serves as an impediment to corruption can be divided into tangible and intangible effects. Tangible effects is made up of the readily identifiable way in which the news media perform these functions that include those in which some sort of visible outcomes can be attributed to particular news story or series of stories on such subjects as: launching of investigation by authorities; scrapping of a law or policy that foster a climate ripe with opportunities for corruption; impeachment or forced resignation of crooked politician and firing of an official, launching of judicial proceeding and issuing of public recommendation by a watchdog body like transparency international. Intangible effects on the other hand, are referred by Stapenhurst as those checks on corruption which are inevitably the by product of hard hitting independent news and can be characterised by broadened sense of accountability amongst politicians, public bodies and institutions (Sowunmi, Raufu Oketokun, Slako, Usifoh, 2010:18).

However for the media to discharge its role effectively and wage a successful war against corruption, it must be armed with the tools and ingredients of the profession.

Independence of the media is not only desirable but a very important factor in the fight against corruption. The political leadership of a nation desirous of fighting corruption must ensure that legislations are put in place to ensure free and unfettered press.

Journalists must be well kitted with adequate Investigative Journalism skills in order to navigate the complex web of highly sophisticated corruption crimes. Since corruption perpetrators are more often than not the highly positioned individuals, journalists must have the necessary training to obtain facts and figures to blow whistle on corrupt practices. Further, journalism requires lots of financial and human resources to function. Media workers must be adequately remunerated to get the best from them and to reduce the possibilities of their being compromised. The journalists reporting corruptions are especially in danger of various forms of attacks and threats. They need to be protected by proper law enforcement agencies (Oyewole, 3).

4. Role of Media in Combating Corruption in Nigeria

Media in Nigeria as in other country has played an important role in informing the public about government programmes and policies, on erring institution and member of the public (private or government employees). Government projects that involve huge sums of money are not only reported to the public but also monitored and reported in both print and broadcast media. Any noticeable mismanagement of resources during or after the completion of such project is reported mostly in newspapers with different front page headlines. They also ensure that such a misdemeanor is not only reported but it is also given necessary follow up. For instance, the monthly held Federal Executive Council meeting in Nigeria usually ended with government approving multi- billion naira projects that will impact positively on the life of the populace, such as rehabilitation of railway, construction of roads and power generation among others. The following day, the media will be flooded with the news on these projects-the location, the amount involved as well as the contractor engaged (Sowunmi, Raufu, Oketokun, Salako and Usifoh, 2010:13).

Not all reported cases of corruption involved only Nigerians; there are other cases with foreigner's collaboration. A very good example is the award of contract to Halliburton, a US construction firm by the Nigerian government. *This Day* Newspaper (Adebowale and Ali, 2009) reported that the firm won the contract after giving 180 million dollars bribe to top Nigerian politicians and government officials, including those of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation. Three former Nigerian Presidents were also said to have benefitted, allegedly spanned the period from 1995 when the nearly 7 billion dollars contract was awarded to 2004 and possibly beyond. After more than five years of investigations covering half a dozen countries, a man named Tesler was arrested early year (2009) at the behest of US authorities and accused of being the person who conveyed the 180 million dollars in bribes to the Nigerian officials (Sowunmi, Raufu, Oketokun, Salako and Usifoh, 2010:13-14)

Cellular News (2009) reported that a court in Munich found Siemens guilty of bribing officials in Nigeria and two other countries for lucrative contracts for telecommunications equipment. The Munich court ruling said EUR 10 million went to Nigerians, including Cornelius Adebayo, Mohammed Bello, the late Alhaji Haruna Elewi and Tajudeen Olarewaju, a retired army major general (Ibid:14). According to *The Economist*, in 2000, Shell companies reported four instances in which a total of seven employees were detected soliciting/accepting/ bribes directly or indirectly. The total financial value was estimated to be 89,000 dollars (Ibid:14)

The problem of corruption has therefore prevailed throughout the history of Nigeria. If corruption existed during the military era; the past and present civilian governments have also their share of corruption in Nigeria. Ribadu (2006) gave a

graphic summary of the situation. He termed the period between 1979 and 1998” the darkest period” in Nigeria’s history of corrupt regimes.

The media has played therefore a significant role in keeping the public informed about the activities of the anti graft body and giving clues about corrupt individuals and organisations. In performing its role, the media has experienced numerous challenges particularly during the military era for the military enacted various decrees to check and suppress the press. These decrees include the Newspapers Prohibition of Circulation Decree 1967; The Newspapers Public Official Reporting Act, 1976; Public Officer’s Protection Against False Publication Decree No.2; The Treasonable Offences Decree No.35 of 1993; The Newspaper Proscription and Prohibition Decrees 48 of 1993. The government of General Abacha also promulgated Decrees in 1994. According Malunzen (1995), perhaps the harshest decree ever promulgated by the military was Decree 4 of 1984, which succeeded in rolling up-defamation, sedition and proscription laws-all in one. Apart from laws such as defamation, sedition and contempt of court which the successive governments in Nigeria have used to put criticizing journalists at bay, there were other laws against the practice of journalism that are contained in the penal code.

However, during the democratic period-1999-2008, President Obasanjo with the establishment of two Anti- graft bodies- The Independent Corrupt Practices and Related Offences Commission and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission gave an impetus to the press to perform its role effectively.

The fight of media against corruption is not an easy fight for challenges do exist in its struggle against corruption. However, with greater autonomy, with adequate technical, legal, economic expertise, with its ability to reach as much population as possible, the media can play an important role in countering the evil of corruption. This will not only lead to trickling down of benefits of development to the masses and enabling them to improve their economic position but will also benefit the country by way of improving its economic status at the world level.

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Protection of Natural Resources and Proactive Role of Grassroots Institutions in Goa

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Abstract

Natural resources play a significant role in our lives; hence their proper governance becomes a pertinent issue. There are various approaches towards its governance. Some advocate complete control by state agency over natural resources, while some other propose on bottoms-up approach with community involvement toward natural resource management. The present study proposes a Model for State-Community Partnership, suggesting devolution of more powers to Panchayats and Gram Sabhas as these are community oriented institutions. This model is tested with a Case Study of Goa. Goa is today facing the crisis of resource exploitation and misuse. Can grassroots institutions check these trends by being alert and proactive? The paper attempts an answer.

Key words: Natural resources, governance, Goa, community, Panchayat, Gram Sabha

1. Introduction

‘Earth provides enough to satisfy every man’s needs, but not every man’s greed.’

Mahatma Gandhi

Natural resources form an integral part of any society. They are a source of income, industry and identity. They play a central role in the wellbeing of local community. The community is dependent on them for their livelihood. These resources are also a point of pride to them as a part of village patrimony. Besides its economic value, natural resources also have historical and cultural significance. People have attachment to these resources as they and their forefathers have invested labour and sweat in them. And therefore growing misuse and depletion of these resources is a matter of great concern. Natural resource degradation is not a new thing but it is now occurring at a much faster rate, therefore not leaving enough time for the environment to recover and regenerate (Gogoi, 2013). There are various reasons for this degradation. Some of these reasons are; demographic growth which has increased pressure on resources for consumption, penetration of market forces which linked local use of resources to larger network of demands, and conflict over ownership of these resources because of which onus of responsibility cannot be ensured (Agarwal, 1997). Conflict over resources depends on ownership, as well as how the resources are extracted, distributed and traded. The stakeholders are the state, local communities and outside actors. The conflict is all the more grave on revenue

producing resources. If the resources are scarce and non-renewable it discourages diversification, and increases volatility of prices and revenue. However sometimes even abundance of resources can lead to mismanagement and corruption. Lack of clear ownership and management of natural resources often lead to problems like environment degradation, human rights violations, lobbying by business houses and other powerful groups, lack of accountability, capture of resources in few hands which results in widening the gap between rich and poor, pushing the marginalized group to periphery. There is an opinion building which proposes that increasing inclusion, involvement and participation of local community (the major stakeholder), can reduce these conflicts over natural resources.

2. Why Community?

In the last few decades, there has been a growing awareness that community has a larger role in ownership, preservation and management of resources. A wide range of policy makers and development and conservation practitioners have supported efforts to revive or bolster local natural resource management institutions in response to various economic, social, environmental and political pressures and increasingly, debates over local communities' ability to manage their lands and natural resources are a part and parcel of broader struggles over political and economic power and authority (Roe, 2009). Even though the earlier belief upheld was that people were major obstacle in management of natural resources (Ives & Merserli, 1989), thinkers like (Ostrom, 1990) strongly advocated community ownership and emphasized on bottom up approach.

The arguments in favour of community involvement are:

- Local populace is in need of these resources for livelihood, and would contribute in resource conservation as it is in their interest to do so.
- People from the locality possess time and place specific knowledge, which can be best used for resource utilization.
- People are aware of multiple uses of these natural resources and hence are in best position to explore ways of linking conservation and livelihoods.
- People are attached to these resources and have common territorial affiliation and communal bond with these resources.
- There are various customs, traditions, practices and guidelines evolved over a period of time about utilization of these resources, and the local people are aware and abiding these practices and therefore are in better position to manage these resources in a suitable manner.
- The natural resources also act as a binding factor, where the people in the locality get attached with each other and start sharing common experiences. These common experiences often give rise to the concept of

common good. Individuals give up some of their individuality to behave as a single entity to accomplish goals (Kiss, 1990). Common sharing of problems can result in awareness that problems are not personal/private but affecting the whole community (Miller, 1987). Active participation in deliberation, decision making and implementation process at the grass roots can pave way for benefit of many (Kothari, 1998).

- Community participation can also reduce administrative and management costs due to proximity of local participants (Ribot, 2004).

3. Grassroots Democracy – Impetus for People’s Involvement

There is growing emphasis on grassroots democracy for development. In grassroots democracy, state cannot impose on people unpopular or lopsided development programmes and policies. The state has to function with the consent of the ruled. And this is possible with Panchayats as mediator and Gram Sabhas as ‘hybrid communities’. This is a structure based entirely on people’s power, *Lokshakti* expressing itself in the form of village power, *Gramshakti* (Buch, 2012). Thus Panchayats and Gram Sabhas can be institutions which can mediate and facilitate better outcomes of resource utilization and conservation. Panchayats are democratically elected bodies. Panchayats can make necessary rules, implement them smoothly and also can exercise adjudicative authority to settle the disputes that may arise. In fact Art. 243(G) of the Indian constitution have made it mandatory that Panchayats have to take the responsibility of 29 subjects, which include important natural resources like fisheries, water, forests, mining etc. There is provision through 73rd Amendment that interests of different marginalized sections are represented at Panchayat level. Panchayats can ensure outcomes of the decisions taken in Gram Sabhas. It can create data base which can help in mapping the achievements, and also aid in future decision making. It can also ensure accountability through periodic meetings.

Gram Sabhas are often referred to as fourth tier of Panchayati Raj. Effective Gram Sabhas possess the capacity to satisfy the desires and aspirations of the people. The much needed transparency at the grassroots is possible through these institutions. Gram Sabhas are described as ‘watch dogs’ and ‘a force to reckon with’ (Kothari, 1998), and as a soul of Panchayat. Gram Sabha is the pivot of functional participatory democracy. Gram Sabha provides basis for autonomy to the people and promote cooperation. It ensures distribution and effective control of power. It inculcates value of responsibility and moral obligation in people towards their village. Collective interaction creates incentives for individual to participate in collective actions. Initially there is every possibility that subjective/personal interest may motivate and direct behaviour when people respond, but over a period of time one cannot deny the possibility that they may be guided by substantive ends regarding justice and public good (Salgaonkar, 2013). (Chhatre, 2007) emphasized on strengthening ‘community agency’ that is

at the heart of natural resource management that is the Gram Sabha and Ward Sabha.

4. Experiences from different states in India

Studies conducted in different states to assess the functioning of Gram Sabhas in resource management and conservation has shown positive results. In Madhya Pradesh, Gram Sabha is entrusted with different functions and powers right from safeguarding and preserving the traditions and customs of the people, their cultural identity, community resources and the customary modes of dispute resolutions. In fact Gram Sabhas are so powerful that they exercise control over institutions and functionaries in all social sectors transferred to Gram Panchayat (Singh, 2002). In Karnataka, there exists a system of social audit called *Jamabandi* where officers and the members including the general public can participate in an open system of audits whereby they can visit even the work spots and can inspect the progress and quality of the work. The *Jamabandi* report has to be placed before the Gram Sabha along with action report, so that the transparency of the work is ensured (Bandopadhyay, 2000). In Tamil Nadu, Grama Sabha is an instrument through which public directly enjoy the power and feel the pulse of administration. Collective wisdom of Grama Sabha guides the Panchayati Raj Institutions in their planning and execution of developmental functions. Apart from this, social auditing is an integral part of Grama Sabha in Tamil Nadu, which ensures transparency in administration and accountability to all in the village development (Dwarakanath, 2013). In Kerala Gram Sabhas also undertake mass development works. Various committees are formed to incorporate the suggestions in the developmental programmes such as watershed, agriculture and related sectors, drinking water, women development, schedule caste development, etc. There is also a samiti established called the '*Karmasamiti*' of the ward members, retired engineers or technicians and the senior persons of that particular ward, to lend their help in the designing and implementation of development project. The Kerala experiment made a big impact on resource mobilisation and people's participation in planning (Ramakrishnan, 1997). These reforms represented the most ambitious effort to build local institutions of participatory democratic governance (Heller, 2007). In Odisha different legislative instruments have entrusted definite powers and functions to the Gram Sabha and different layers of Panchayati Raj for natural resources management and resource preservation. Odisha Forest Rights Act (2006) has endowed Gram Sabhas with Powers of important natural resource-forest(Rath, 2012). A study carried by NIRD in 2005 presented a hope for future by concluding that the institution of Gram Sabha has begun affecting the decision-making process at the Panchayat level and the elements of transparency and accountability are slowly and steadily creeping into the grass roots level democratic institution of Schedule V Area States of Indian Union (Buch, 2012).

5. Goa: Increasing Scramble for Natural resources

Goa is the smallest state of the Indian Union. Small size of the state has its own benefits. Key decisions can be taken closer to the ground, it promotes easy administration, enhances accessibility between rulers and ruled and thus has potentials to promote good governance. Goa is a land of abundant resources. For Goa, natural resources mainly compose of land, water (drinkable as well as water bodies), minerals, forests, beaches, fish and wildlife. These resources are part of identity of Goa. People of Goa hold a powerful attachment to these resources as they have invested their labour and sweat in them for generations together. There are also religious and cultural traditions evolved over time and thus there is emotional bond established in the people of Goa over the natural resources of State. For example fishing community in Goa has developed elaborate cultural and religious traditions that accompany work. When we turn the pages of history of Goa, much before the advent of Portuguese colonial rule, there were ancient grassroots institutions called 'Gaunkari' (which later were referred to as Comunidades) that took the onus of looking after the natural resources and thus maintained balance between society and its natural resources. There was also the existence of concept of CPR (Common Pool of Resources) managed by these institutions.

However after Goa was liberated from Portuguese Rule in 1961, the political, demographic and economic changes that it was undergoing, began to affect the natural resources of the state. Goa, most sought after tourist destination, began to witness a dramatic change. The socio-economic changes, demography and development in this otherwise '*susegado*' (content) state began to have tremendous implications for its natural resources, both renewable as well non-renewable. Ruthless mining carried out in seven talukas out of twelve talukas of Goa adversely affected the natural resources in the state. Poorly regulated mining activities resulted in incessant removal of mud surface threatening the very demography of the village. Goa is occupying just 0.11% of India's total geographical area, and yet it produced over 50% of the country's iron ore exports. This was 460 times its geographical capacity of ore extraction. This is ecologically destructive.

Concrete jungles are coming to stay in this small state. These include massive residential projects, huge resorts, building of industries and companies. These mega projects are an immense strain on already inadequate infrastructure such as road, electricity, water, sewage and solid waste management. Due to massive cutting down of trees the villages give a deserted look besides ever reducing natural resources in the locality. To add to the agony the coconut trees which are an essence to the identity of Goa, are now given the status of 'palm' which makes it easier to axe them as and when concrete buildings are to be raised. Water resources in Goa also are polluted and drained. There is sand extraction, and shacks and other structures raised at every nook and corner of the beaches are

robbing the beaches of their pristinely beauty. Increasing influx of the migrants, capital centric development policies, and booming of tourism industry has resulted in strain on the natural resources of the state. Various stakeholders are asserting their claim on the rich natural resources of the state. The government, business houses, industry, landowners, NGOs, Comunidades, Church, migrants, and the local populace, everybody is involved in hoarding of access rights to resources. Today Goa has become a 'pie' or an 'egg' and there is scramble for its natural resources for revenue (e.g. mining) on one hand and destruction of resources (e.g. incessantly falling of trees) in the name of development on the other. The central question is who will control and manage the natural resources of Goa? Can the Panchayats and the Gram Sabhas play a proactive role in this endeavour?

6. Research Objectives:

The objectives of this study are twofold:

- i. To propose a Model for state-community partnership for management of natural resources, suggesting for devolving more powers to Panchayats and Gram Sabhas as these are community oriented institutions.
- ii. To test the practicality of this model with a case study of Goa.

7. Research Hypotheses

- i) Gram Sabhas can reduce the misuse of natural resources of the village.
- ii) There is positive relationship between attendance at the Gram Sabhas and trust of the people that Gram Sabha can protect the natural resources.

8. Research Method

The data for the research is based on both primary as well as secondary sources. The secondary data consist of newspaper reports, and reports of NGOs and other active groups. The primary data is collected by survey method where in a questionnaire was administered to members of Gram Sabhas across Goa. A total 900 respondents were interviewed. Case studies of some of the Gram Sabhas were also undertaken to substantiate the findings.

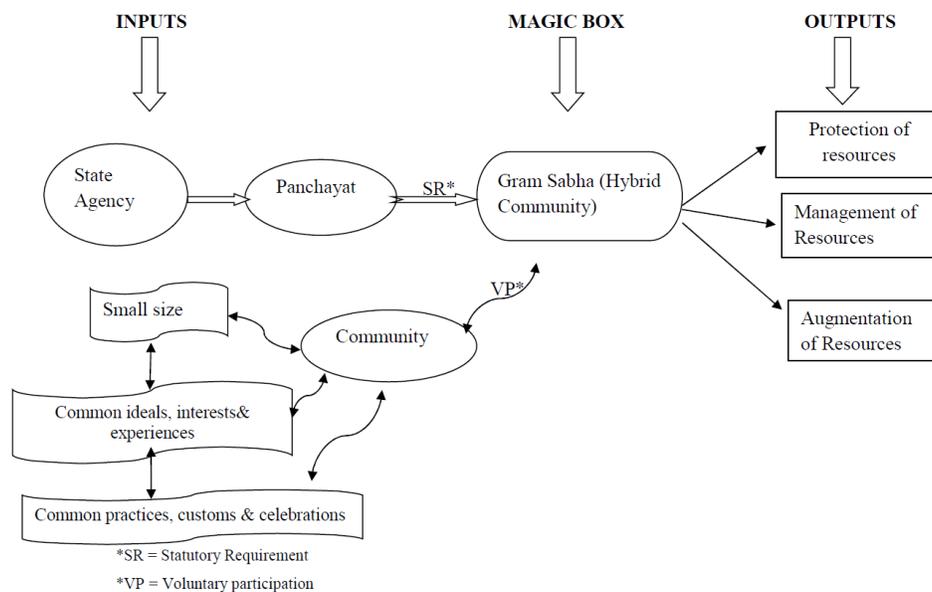
9. Model for State-Community Partnership (SCP)

The experiences of different states in India, as mentioned earlier, clearly reflect that the grassroots institutions, the Panchayats and Gram Sabhas, are emerging as effective institutions in managing the resources of the state. In fact there is statutory provision in the constitution of India for forming such institutions. The state agency can exercise control over natural resources through these institutions. On the other hand there is community with important features such as small size and population, common interests and experiences, and common norms, customs and practices. These features which are interrelated create core beliefs in the

community which results in voluntary participation of the people in the Gram Sabhas. This results in SCP model (State Community Partnership) between State and Community which has the capacity to ensure optimum utilization, conservation and management of natural resources. Gram Sabhas are Magic box of David Easton, through which important deliberations, decision making and governance of resources can take place. This can result in desirable output of management and conservation of natural resources. Thus this model proposes a proactive role to Panchayats and Gram Sabhas towards governance of Natural Resources. So instead of focusing only on community, focus on grassroots institutions that is Panchayats and Gram Sabhas (which can be described as hybrid community) one can ensure community based natural resource management. There are locally evolved norms and practices to manage these resources. These practices can get legal sanctity through approval in Gram Sabhas.

An attempt is made, by expanding David Easton’s input–output model, to explain the proactive role the grassroots institutions can play in protecting, maintaining and augmenting the natural resources of the village.

Management of Natural Resources



10. Can Gram Sabha Protect Natural Resources?

The indiscriminate hoard for resources in Goa has posed a challenge to seriously think about the future of the state. Villages in Goa are small, both in size and population. Most of the village Panchayats is of nine or eleven wards. There is growing resistance by the people for various developmental projects, whether it may be Ingo’s flea market in Assagao, Bardez Taluka or Raheja Project in Benaullim, Salcete Taluka. The strength of Panchayats and Gram Sabhas was

witnessed by the state when various meetings were held across the state, and Government of Goa was forced to scrap the Regional Plan 2011. The Gram Sabhas which were so lackluster all this while, today are taunted as ‘Garam Sabhas’. A survey was conducted with 900 respondents who were the members of Gram Sabhas across the state to study whether the Gram Sabha can protect the natural resources of the village. The questions were closed ended questions with five point scale. The respondents were asked how often they attended the Gram Sabhas with five options of Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Regularly, and whether they agree with the statement that Gram Sabha is effective in protecting natural resources of the village with five options namely; Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, and Strongly Agree. Ten forms were rejected as they were incomplete and therefore analysis was done with the help of 890 replies. The analyses are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Protect natural resources and attendance at Gram Sabha

		PRONATRES					Total
		1	2	3	4	5	
AttendanceatGS 1	Count	2	12	14	30	8	66
	% within AttendanceatGS	3.0%	18.2%	21.2%	45.5%	12.1%	100.0%
2	Count	0	4	0	4	2	10
	% within AttendanceatGS	.0%	40.0%	.0%	40.0%	20.0%	100.0%
3	Count	4	24	14	104	32	178
	% within AttendanceatGS	2.2%	13.5%	7.9%	58.4%	18.0%	100.0%
4	Count	12	38	26	238	110	424
	% within AttendanceatGS	2.8%	9.0%	6.1%	56.1%	25.9%	100.0%
5	Count	10	12	10	142	38	212
	% within AttendanceatGS	4.7%	5.7%	4.7%	67.0%	17.9%	100.0%
Total	Count	28	90	64	518	190	890
	% within AttendanceatGS	3.1%	10.1%	7.2%	58.2%	21.3%	100.0%

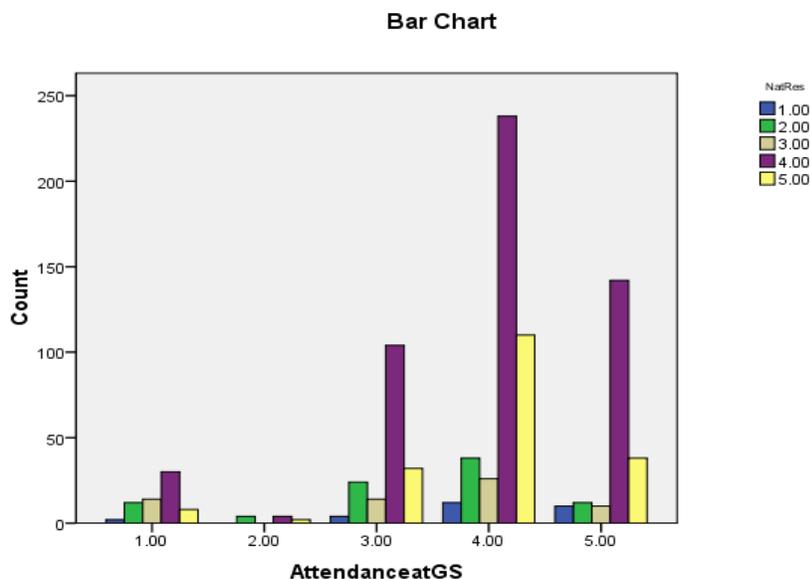
Attending GS: 1-Never, 2-Rarely, 3-Sometimes, 4-Often, 5-Regularly.

PRONATRES (Protection of natural resources): 1- Strongly disagree, 2- Disagree, 3 – Neutral, 4 – Agree, 5 – Strongly Agree

It was amazing to note that 708 respondents (79.5%) agreed that the Gram Sabha is empowered to protect the natural resources of the village. In fact this trust in the Gram Sabha has led to increase in participation at Gram Sabha as 528 respondents from 708 respondents said that they attended Gram Sabha regularly or often (See Table 1).

Figure 1 clearly reflects that in general people felt that Gram Sabha can protect the natural resources of the village. In any category of attendance viz. ‘Never’, ‘Rarely’, ‘Sometimes’, ‘Often’ and ‘Always’ it can be seen that the ‘agreed’ category is more, and in the category of ‘often’ and ‘regularly’ the ‘agreed’ and ‘strongly agreed’ is definitely more. Therefore it can be concluded that people are attending Gram Sabha as they trust that Gram Sabha can be active in protecting natural resources of the village. The study reflected that the people in Goa, who are the components of Gram Sabha, strongly believed that the Gram Sabhas can protect the natural resources of their village.

Figure1
Protect natural resources and attendance at Gram Sabha



Attending GS: 1- Never, 2- Rarely, 3- Sometimes, 4- Often, 5- Regularly.

PRONATRES: 1- Strongly disagree, 2- Disagree, 3- Neutral, 4- Agree, 5- Strongly Agree

11. Case Studies

Some case studies are presented below as to how Gram Sabhas have tried to protect the natural resources in the state and have even been successful in thwarting certain projects which were harmful for the demography of the village.

- In Velim, Salcete, South Goa, Gram Sabha called on February 8th 2009, the members opposed any move to convert water bodies and asked the authorities to retain economically sensitive zones and save the village hills and paddy fields.
- Gram Sabhas of Benaolim as well as Ambelim, from Salcete, South Goa, vociferously voiced the need to retain identity and demography of the village. They also demanded protection of beaches, sand dunes, paddy fields and water bodies.
- Special Gram Sabha called by Navelim Panchayat in August, 2012 called for 12 hours bandh on 13th August, 2012 to protest against the pollution allegedly caused due to activities at Sesa Goa's pig iron plant at Amona. People complained that thick particulate matter had filled the air, and dust had settled on their houses, vehicles, vegetation all around. Villagers, numbering hundreds voiced concern over the project, which they claimed had no permission from Goa State Pollution Control Board or the Central Ministry for Environment and Forest.
- Socorro Gram Sabha, Bardez Taluka, in almost every Gram Sabha have requested Water Resources Department not to issue any more permission for sinking of bore or tube wells in the village as this had led to depletion of ground water level and it is affecting the existing open wells.
- The Gram Sabha of Carmona village thwarted the ambitious real estate project worth crores of rupees. In its 88,000 square meter area project on the banks of river Sal, Construction Giant, Raheja, had divided the area in 15 plots of 2,000 sqmt. and 6,000 sqmt. and was intending to build 700 flats. In the village of 300-400 houses, such a mega-housing project would not only change the demography of the place, but would also create water, electricity and other infrastructure issues. A study of all the subsequent Gram Sabhas held in these villages reflected that the villagers have consistently raised their voice against mega projects.
- Bhirondhe Gram Sabha from Sattari Taluka held on August 17th 2012 took a unanimous decision that not even an inch of land of the village will be sold to any outside party, and if any such deal was struck by any party, Panchayat would not give any NOC for such sale or purchase. The villagers felt that such resolution was necessary to secure the lands of the farmers of their village and also that of other people.

- Hundred and twenty villages came together and formed ‘Village Group of Goa’ and demanded for constitution of local Committees and taking local people into confidence while drafting the new regional plan 2021 and they opposed any move to convert water bodies and asked the authorities to retain economically sensitive zones, Khazan lands, and save the village hills and paddy fields. They opined that it was necessary to retain identity and demography of the village. They also demanded protection of beaches, sand dunes, water bodies and protecting the agriculture and orchard lands from settlements.
- In a classic case of Ingo at Assagao, Mapusa, a foreign national named Ingo, wanted to set up a flea market in this area. He began with clearing the mountains for this purpose. People were not aware of this project. On seeing that their village hills were brought down with bull dozers the villagers got together and opposed this project tooth and nail till the project was shelved.
- Efforts at various Gram Sabhas in mining affected villages (Rivona, Cavrem, Vagurme, Usgao, Pilgao etc) proved very successful in pressuring the state to put a ban on mining activities in Goa. Though mining has resumed again in the state, but hopefully with some stringent rules and regulations. But the fact remains that mining has left irreversible impact on resources in the state, and further deterioration can be checked only by proactive Panchayats and Gram Sabhas.
- Colva is located on the coastal belt of south Goa. Tourists flock to this place, and as a result this place faces hazards like garbage problem, water shortage, clogging of drainages, huge mega projects and tourist resorts etc. Cutting of hills and trees is affecting environment. People from this area have been agitating for cleaner and greener Colva for a long time now. In one Gram Sabha, issue came up on one such resort which closed down the traditional access to beach to the locals, and as a result it became difficult for people to have access to sea and to carry out their traditional fishing activity. The Resolution was adopted that the access to beach would be opened to locals with an immediate effect.

Thus the data analyses supplemented with various case studies gives a ray of hope that the State Community Partnership can be best realised by giving more powers to the grassroots bodies i.e. the Panchayats and Gram Sabhas. These bodies have statutory standing as well as are integral part of the community. The Gram Sabhas are rightfully addressed as ‘hybrid community’. The small size of the villages in Goa, the social affinity among the people, smaller distance between the ruler and the rule, peer pressure can be a guiding force for the grassroots institutions in protecting the natural resources of the state.

12. What more can be done?

The Panchayats could implement the following policy options and actions towards better preservation and augmentation of natural resources:

- **Policy of Inclusion**

The Panchayat should strive towards policy of inclusion, where different sections of the village community are involved in resource management. The NGOs, women, Women Self Help Groups etc. can play very proactive role in management of resources.

- **Identify Common Property Resources (CPR)**

The main role of the Panchayat should be to identify the resources which can be categorised as CPR. These can be forests, mountains, water bodies etc. The Panchayats should make the community realise the significance of these CPR through Gram Sabhas and need for their preservation and effective utilization.

- **Capacity building**

The Panchayat should focus on capacity building to manage and develop natural resources. There can be major projects undertaken, such as watershed programmes. The schemes like MGNREGS can be effectively implemented in this direction. This will also provide employment to the people in the villages. It will create durable assets for socio-economic development too. Common guidelines can be framed, and committees can be formed from among the Gram Sabha members for monitoring and evaluation.

- **Promote cooperation and symmetrical growth**

The Panchayat should promote cooperation between various stake holders in the natural resources. Promoting symmetrical growth can arrest and reverse the trend of degradation of natural resources.

13. To conclude

Natural resources play a significant role in our lives; hence their proper governance becomes a pertinent question. There are various approaches to it, while some advocate complete control by state agency, there is also a large pool of research that emphasizes on importance of bottoms-up approach toward natural resource management. The recent trends in the country reflect an interesting shift in management paradigms from strict agency control to collaborative management. Excellent example could be state-people partnership, and this is possible by devolving more and more powers to Panchayats and Gram Sabhas. These are community oriented institutions and therefore needs to be strengthened. Interaction and decision-making regarding the use of natural resource requires developing a solution that is fairer and more effective and equally acceptable by all and therefore such decisions may be rested in grassroots bodies. It can also

reduce evils like corruption, nepotism, ambiguous policies, lack of proper policy implementation and unequal resource distribution which often result due to centralized resource governance. A proactive Panchayat body can overcome these evils. Goa is today facing the crisis of resource exploitation and misuse and therefore fear of resource degradation and depletion looms large on this beautiful state. Proactive and alert Panchayat and Gram Sabhas which are hybrid communities can check these trends and therefore a very active role to these bodies is proposed.

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The Evolution of BRICS in International Political Economy

Shameem C.C and K. Jayaprasad

Abstract

In an era of regional integration and interdependence, organisations like the Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) can play a meaningful role in not only the international level but also regionally. The recent summit of the BRICS reiterates that more cooperation is needed at various levels.¹ It calls for a more representative international financial architecture demanding an increase in the voice and representation of developing countries. The establishment has also improved international monetary as well as trade systems which can serve the interests of all countries and support developing economies. This paper analyses the tendency of BRICS towards economic integration, its evolving nature in global political economy both political as well as economical aspects.

Key Words: BRICS, International Political Economy, Political Interdependences, and Economic Interdependences

Introduction

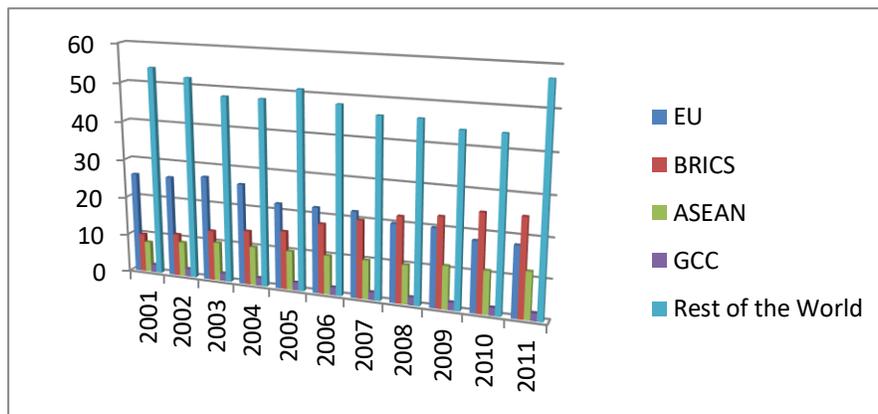
In an era of regional integration and interdependence, organisation of countries like Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) can play a meaningful role in international level as well as regional in years to come. The recent summit, (2016) of the BRICS reiterates that more cooperation is needed at various level. The BRICS focused on more representative international financial architecture demanding an increase in the voice and representation of developing countries and the establishment improved international monetary as well as trade systems that can serve the interests of all countries and support developing countries. Moreover, these economies are experiencing large scale growth and are now significant contributors to the global economy. One must acknowledge the fact that the BRICS countries are composed of various political systems in various subcontinents, but in a changed context, came together under the category of ‘developing countries’ in broader terms (Jayan, 23, January, 2013).

The BRICS is a group which promotes the interest of the global South within a multilateral system. It constitutes of different political system which are authoritarian, totalitarian, democratic and federal characters. This consensus gives them the ability to influence global decision making and safeguard developing countries interests and concerns. The BRICS has projected itself as an independent group in a fast changing world. The BRICS is a relatively new group and its institutional structure is still evolving. A number of cooperation mechanisms have been developed, including the Action Plan and meetings of foreign, finance and trade minsters as well as central banks governors are taking place on a yearly basis to further enhance the working of this institution.

The BRICS economies have grown quite resilient to global shocks due to flexibility of their markets and economic policy frame works. Through increased trade and investment linkages, the BRICS countries are also increasingly growth drivers of low income countries (IMF report, 2011). The rich flow of FDI within this group, trade flows, and migration flows have substantiated their economic growth and development. These factors are considered to be evolving growth factors of their economic growth and development.

The BRICS does not represent a region (against a well- known gravity model)². Moreover mutual concerns and interest forms the core of this group in which regionalism is promoted through economic integration and interdependence among member states. The BRICS is usually referred to as a ‘Three trillion dollar trade’ club. In fact the total trade of BRICS is recorded as 3.41 Trillion USD, although it may be a convincing argument to consider the BRICS as a major trading bloc in international trade (IMF report, 2011). Thus trade is one of the integral factors uniting BRICS countries as a group.

Figure 1
BRICS share of World Trade (% of Share)

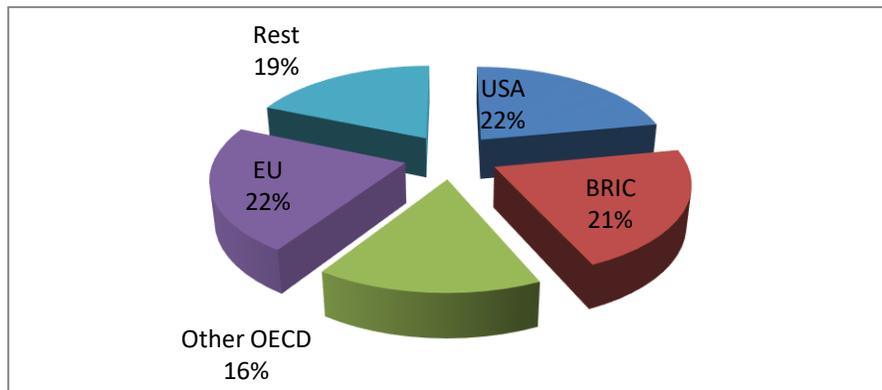


Source: IMF report, 2012.

However, the above figure 1 looks at the BRICS in comparison with other trade and economic blocs such as the EU, ASEAN, GCC, and Rest of the world. The BRICS trade has increased significantly since 2001 and have overtaken the EU, which reflects the importance of BRICS as an emerging trade bloc. The published statistics support the view that the BRICS is indeed a trade bloc, with China being the major player (IMF report, 2012). The above (figure 1) provides statistical evidence that the BRICS is evolving itself by contributing to world growth and development. According to Goldman Sach’s estimate from 2012, the BRICS countries would continue to show strong economic growth rates in post global financial crisis period (Wilson, Burgi and Carlson, 2011, p.4). This estimation also substantiated the argument for BRICS economic growth and development.

While it is difficult to predict exactly how it will look like in 2050, there is no doubt that a ‘great economic convergence’ is taking place between the economies of developed and emerging markets (Beausang, 2012). In the year 2000, the GDP, in terms of PPP (see figure 2) of US was at 22 percent in the world while the GDP was slightly larger than 21.4 percent of combined BRICs.

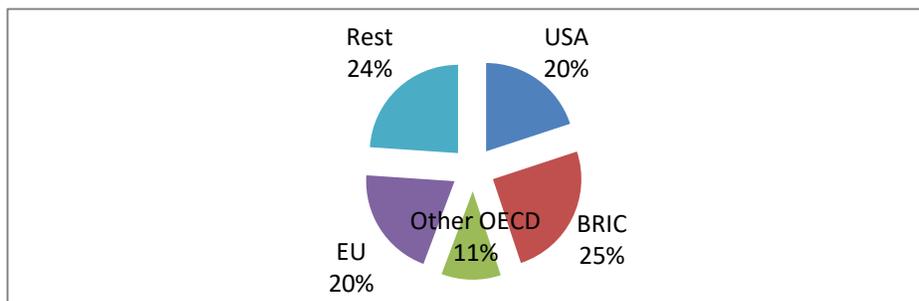
Figure 2
Percentage Share of Global GDP at PPP in USD, 2000



Source: IMF, World Economic Outlook, May 2001.³

Ten years later, the combined GDP of BRIC’s was (see figure 3) 12 Trillion USD, or approximately 25 percent of world GDP, larger than US contribution of 20 percent. These changes in the BRIC’s contribution to world GDP was accomplished by consistently high growth rates in the BRIC’s, particularly in China and, to a lesser extent India. This dramatic change is the evidence that BRICS countries have influenced international economic growth which over take EU, and USA. In this context financial crisis made apparent change in BRICS economies for less effective rather than the EU and USA. This was one of the reason BRICS is one of the largest credential factor of global economy.

Figure 3
Percentage share of Global GDP at PPP in USD 2011



Source: IMF, World Economic Outlook, October, 2011.

In this group China is the leading player and according to Magnus, China claims on being a global super power based on the following factors (World Economic Outlook, 2011).

- 1) It is the world's largest creditor nation.
- 2) Its economy is sufficiently large to have material impact on the global economy.
- 3) It is engaging consistently with global trade and capital markets.
- 4) It is a major consumer and participant in global energy market.

Moreover India and Russia are holding second position in this list. Brazil and South Africa are holding next position respectively on the above criteria. In this context China and India are given largest market access for Russian, Brazilian, and South African natural resources. These factors play a major factor to create strong solidarity and cooperation.

1) Trade Profile of BRICS

The trade is one of the growth parameters of any countries economic development. The free flow of goods and services (within the region) leads to strengthen their economic interdependence. The individual composition of exports reflects the diverse resource endowments present within BRICS (figure 4). This presents a significant opportunity for leveraging existing trade ties and cooperation while serving the economic growth and development agenda, a necessary precursor to faster socio-economic convergence with advanced economies (Saran, and Singh, 2013).

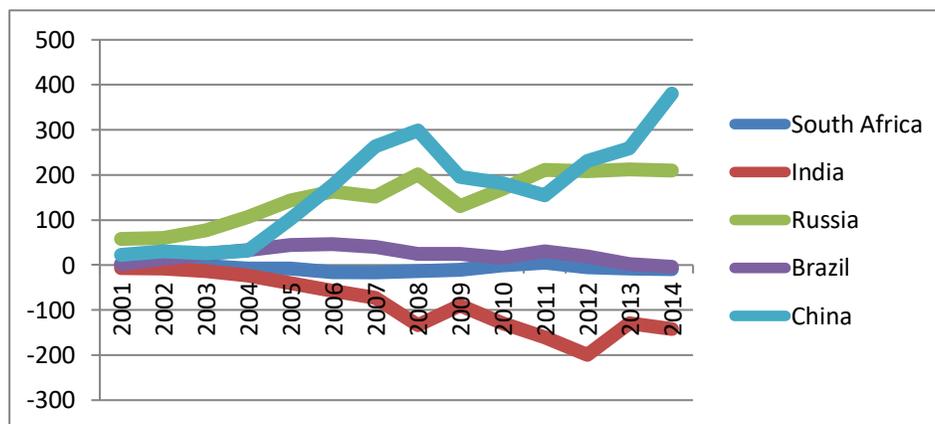
Trade in goods and services provide opportunities in multiple sectors for cooperation among the BRICS countries, which can be mutually beneficial (figure 4). Brazil is currently a major producer of bio-fuels and may eventually be a major energy provider to the Chinese and Indian economies, which have significant energy demands. Brazil also dominates the export of agrochemical products, which feature prominently in the import baskets of Russia, India and China. Russia's vast natural gas and oil reserves can help sustain the energy demands of the other BRICS economies. India's robust service sector growth gives it a competitive advantage. China's export of manufactured goods, machinery and textile products feeds the global consumer markets. South Africa holds vast mineral deposits essential for industrial development in other countries, and its growing service sector makes it an increasingly investment-friendly destination.

The share of BRICS in global trade has increased significantly over the last two decades. In 1990, BRICS accounted for only 3 percent of global trade. This share doubled by the turn of the century in 2011, BRICS accounted for 19 percent of global exports and 16 percent global imports of goods and services in 2013 (Mathur and Gupta, 2013 pp.80-85).

The year –on – year double digit growth in merchandise trade made China the largest exporter and second largest importer of merchandise goods in 2011. Russia and India have also entered into the list of top 20 world merchandise exporters and importers. In merchandise export trade, Brazil falls in the top 20 list. China, Russia and Brazil have surplus on merchandise trade balance; India and South Africa have deficits.

On the trade related to service, all the BRICS economies including South Africa have recorded robust double digits growth in exports and imports. China and India are in top ten rankings for trade in services, while India has a trade surplus in services. It is not enough to offset its merchandise trade deficit; other BRICS economies have a deficit in the trade balances in services. The trade balance (merchandise) of the BRICS has been mapped in figure 4. China and Russia has the sizable trade surplus, in excess of 200 Billion USD. On the other hand, India is running a trade deficit of same magnitude (Mathur and Gupta, 2013, pp.80-85). South Africa balanced trade balance among this group in 2014.

Figure 4
Trade Balance (Billion USD)



Source: Based on World Bank and IMF web sites, <http://data.worldbank.org>

2) BRICS’s Engagement in Global Environment

The first meeting of the BRICS grouping took place between leaders from Brazil, Russia, India and China, in Yekaterinburg, Russia on 16 June 2009. At the first meeting, the BRIC (not included South Africa) countries discussed the situation of the global economy and other pressing issues of global development, and also prospects for further strengthening the BRIC group.

The first meeting took place in the context of emerging global financial crisis, and in the first summit communiqué released after the summit the BRIC leaders stressed the central role played by the G20 summits in dealing with financial

crisis. In doing they emphasized that financial crisis had brought about a recognition that global economy could no longer be managed by the G8⁴ alone, but that a wider grouping of states, including the BRIC countries was now critical to co-managing the global economy, and especially the global financial system.⁵

The second meeting of the BRICS leaders was held in Brasilia on 15 April 2010. The summit communiqué released after this summit said that the leaders had met to discuss major issues on the international agenda as well as to take concrete steps to improve cooperation and coordination within the BRICS group.⁶ In this statement the BRICS countries underlined their support for a “multi-polar, equitable and democratic world order, based on international law, equality, mutual respects, cooperation, coordinated action, and collective decision making of all states.”

The third summit took place in Sanya, China on 14 April 2011, and at this meeting the Republic of South Africa joined this group and it was renamed the BRICS group.

The Sanya declaration joint statement stated that “... the world is undergoing far reaching, complex and profound changes, marked by the strengthening of multipolarity, economic globalization and increasing and interdependence”. While facing the evolving global environment and a multitude of global threats and challenges, the international community should join hands to strengthen cooperation for common development. Based on universally recognized norms of international law and in a spirit of mutual respect and collective decision making, global economic governance should be strengthened, democracy in international relations should be promoted, and the voice of emerging and developing countries in international affairs should be enhanced.⁷

The fourth summit of the BRICS countries took place in the capital of India, New Delhi; on 29 March 2012. The fourth summit communiqué further articulated the BRICS visions as: “...of a future marked by global peace, economic and social progress and enlightened scientific temper. We stand ready to work with others, developed and developing countries together, on the basis of universally recognized norms of International law and multilateral decision making, to deal with the challenges and the opportunities before the world today. Strengthened representation of emerging and developing countries in the institutions of global governance will enhance their effectiveness in achieving these objectives”.⁸ The above statement gave a clear picture about BRICS concerns and interests arising out of a multilateral system. This statement gave the meaning of BRICS protecting and promoting developing countries concerns and interests.

Moreover this reflected a gradual shift in the focus of the BRICS, away from its origin as an aspiring group that had in common an alternative vision for the future, to a group that was more present in current international affairs, and that actively

cooperated to pursue common interests in a broad range of international forums in multilateral system.⁹

The fifth summit of BRICS leaders was held in Durban, South Africa on 27 March, 2013. The summit communiqué stated that the discussion at the fifth summit reflected the growing intra BRICS solidarity as well as its shared goal to contribute positively to global peace, stability, development and cooperation. Moreover the summit communiqué also stated the BRICS aim to develop itself progressively into a full -fledged mechanism of current and long term coordination on wide range key issues of the world economy and politics.¹⁰

The last summit (8th) held at Goa, they strongly condemn several terrorist attacks, against some BRICS countries, including that in India. They strongly condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and stressed that there can be no justification whatsoever for any acts of terrorism, whether based upon ideological, religious, political, racial, ethnic or any other reasons. They agreed to strengthen cooperation in combating international terrorism both at the bilateral level and at international forums (8th BRICS Summit Reports, 2016, p. 12). To address the threat of chemical and biological terrorism, they supported and emphasised the need for launching multilateral negotiations on an international convention for the suppression of acts of chemical and biological terrorism, including at the Conference on Disarmament. In this context, they welcomed India's offer to host a Conference in 2018 aimed at strengthening international resolve in facing the challenge of the WMD-Terrorism nexus.¹¹ This will emancipate BRICS role in counter terrorism, which aimed to seek demoralizing terrorist activities in global arena.

They acknowledged the recent meeting of the BRICS High Representatives on National Security and, in this context, welcomed the setting up and organising the first meeting of the BRICS Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism on 14 September 2016 in New Delhi.¹² They believed that this will further promote dialogue and understanding among BRICS nations on issues of counter terrorism, as well as coordinate efforts to address the scourge of terrorism.¹³ This initiative provides substantial evidence of the BRICS action against terrorism for the creation of a peaceful global atmosphere.

To conclude that the communiqués released after first eight summits of the BRICS countries articulate an alternative vision for a new global order that is more democratic, just, fair, rule based, and which requires the collective decision making and co-management of all states, both when it comes to the specifics of international financial system and its institutions, but also more broadly as it pertains to international trade and the political system, including global institutions like the UN.¹⁴

With concepts like democracy, fairness and rule governed behaviour, the BRICS countries are signalling that they perceive that current global order to be

undemocratic, unjust and arbitrarily manipulated by a dominant super power supported by an alliance of developed countries in the North. The BRICS hold that the existing global governance architecture is regulated by institutions that were developed to deal with a very different set of challenges and opportunities. As the global economy is being reshaped, the BRICS should explore new models and approaches to global governance which strives for more equitable development and inclusive growth.¹⁵

3) Global Threats and Challenges: The Political Perspective of BRICS

BRICS has a political aim namely to redefine global inequality at the level of the International political economy. The BRICS vision for a new global order according to the communiqué released after the first summit states that BRIC countries should “underline our support for a more democratic and just multi-polar world order based on the rule of international law, equality, mutual respects, cooperation, coordinated action and collective decision making of all states. We reiterate our support for political and diplomatic efforts to resolving disputes in International Relations.”¹⁶

The BRICS leaders went on to express their strong commitment to multilateral diplomacy and they recognize the central role played by the UN in dealing with global challenges and threats. At the same time, they also affirm the need for a comprehensive reform of the UN with a view to making it more efficient. Two of the BRIC countries China and Russia, are permanent members of Security Council, and other two Brazil and India have been strong advocates for the reform of the Security Council, and have at times expressed an interest in serving on such a revised security Council. China and Russia, although in favour of Security Council reform, also have vested interest to maintain in their current privileged position. Explaining their views after the first summit, they mentioned that “we reiterate the importance we attach to the status of India and Brazil in international affairs and support their aspirations to play a greater role in UN.”¹⁷

The communiqué released after the second summit express the strong commitment of the BRICS countries to multilateral diplomacy, with the UN playing the central role in dealing with global challenges and threats.¹⁸ The BRICS countries again reaffirm their support for comprehensive reform of the UN, with view to making it more effective, efficient and representation.¹⁹

The reference to multilateral diplomacy and a central role the BRICS countries assign to the UN for managing conflicts reflects on a deep unease, what these countries view as unilateral action by west to resolve conflicts by either imposing its norms and values via manipulation of the UN, or by bypassing the UN altogether. The first two communiqués indicate that the BRIC countries are especially critical of the action by the West that involves support for specific movements or political parties in non- western countries.

In the communiqué released after the third summit, the BRICS again expressed its strong commitment to multilateral diplomacy with UN playing the role in dealing with global challenges and threats.²⁰ The third summit communiqué again reaffirmed this need by mentioning about the Security Council. However, it does not mention anything specific on Security Council reform other than the present standards sentence within the existing permanent members of Security Council like China and Russia, acknowledged the important role of Brazil, India and South Africa and their aspirations to play a greater role in international affairs.

4) **BRICS and Post Financial Crisis**

In the communiqué released after the first summit it is stressed that BRICS countries are committed to advance reform of international financial institutions, so as to reflect changes in the world economy. The summit communiqué states that emerging and developing economies must have a greater voice and representation in international financial institutions, and that their heads and senior leadership should be appointed through an open, transparent and merit based selection process.²¹

In the communiqué the BRICS leaders call for a stable, predictable and more diversified international monetary system, and they go on to suggest a set of principles on which a reformed financial and economic architecture should be based, namely; democratic transparent decision making and implementation process in international financial institutions ; a solid legal basis; compatibility of activities of effective national regulatory institutions and international standard setting bodies; and a strengthening of risk management and supervisory practice.

These principles were the first indication of collective BRICS vision for a new financial and economic order, namely one that is rule based, democratic and transparent. These are all things that reflect the desire to constrain the dominance of West in the international financial system and its institutions, and these concepts take on wider meaning and also apply to the political dimension of the BRICS vision for a new global order.

In the communiqué the BRICS countries also stress the important role that will be played by international trade and Foreign Direct Investment in the recovery of the world economy, and the Chinese and Indian economies were regarded at the time as critical to recovery of the world economy. The BRICS leaders also use this opportunity to call for significant changes in the international environment by calling for a more stable multilateral trading system, and curbing of trade protectionism. They are thus once again signalling that they perceive the current system to be dominated and manipulated by the West, and that they want to see a new global order that is more stable, predictable and fair.²²

The communiqué released after the second summit again stresses the central role played by the G20 in combating the global financial crisis. The BRICS countries

state that they welcome the fact that the G20 was confirmed as the premier forum for international economic coordination and cooperation of all its members' state. When they do so they are reflecting back on the previous decades, when the G8 dictated global financial and economic policies. The communiqué goes on to articulate clearly that compared to previous arrangements, the G20 is broader, more inclusive, diverse, representative and effective with regard of BRICS.

With regard to the reform of the global financial institutions, the BRICS countries regard the Breton Woods institutions, as currently managing the global financial system in its interest. The second BRICS summit communiqué goes further than the first one and states that the BRICS countries will strive to achieve an ambitious conclusion to the ongoing and long overdue reforms of the Breton Woods institutions. It states that the IMF and World Bank urgently need to address their legitimacy deficits, and goes on to make specific suggestions. For instance, the communiqué states that reforming these institutions governance structures requires a substantial shift in voting power in favour of emerging market economies and developing countries to bring their participation in decision making in line with their relative weight in the world economy.

The communiqué also says that the BRICS countries agree on need for an open and merit based selection method, irrespective of nationality, for leadership positions of the IMF and World Bank, and that the staff of these institutions also needs to reflect better the diversity of their membership.

The communiqué then states that the BRICS leaders have asked their finance ministers and central bank governors to look into regional monetary arrangements and to discuss modalities of cooperation between their countries in this area. The frustration the BRIC leaders have expressed with the slow reform of these global financial institutions has resulted in the BRICS countries establishing their own intra-BRICS financial arrangements as well as an alternative development bank that is intended to serve the interest of the developing rather than the developed world. This decision at the second summit can thus be seen as the starting point of this development.²³

At the third and fourth summits the communiqués concluded that whilst the BRICS countries recovered relatively quickly from global crisis, growth prospects worldwide remain low due to market instability, especially in the Euro Zone. The communiqués make it clear that the BRICS countries blame the building sovereign debts and concern over medium to long turn fiscal adjustment in advanced countries for creating uncertain environment for global growth. The BRICS state that it is critical for advanced economies to adopt responsible macro economic and financial policies, avoid creating excessive global liquidity and undertake structural reforms to lift growth that creates jobs.

The BRICS also express concern about the risk of large and volatile cross border capital flows being faced by emerging economies, and they call further

international financial regulatory oversight and reform, strengthening policy coordination and financial recognition and supervision cooperation, and promoting the sound development of global financial markets and banking system.

In this context, the communiqués reaffirm the primary role of the G20 as the main forum of international economic cooperation, and argue that its role at this juncture is to facilitate enhanced macroeconomic policy coordination, to enable global economic recovery and secure financial stability, including through an improved international monetary and financial architecture. The BRICS communiqué also calls for more representative international financial architecture, with an increase in the voice and representation of developing countries and the establishment and development of a just international monetary system that can serve the interest of all countries and support the development of emerging and developing economies.

The summit communiqués again singled out the IMF for particular action and call on the urgent implementation of the 2010 governance and quota reform, as well as a comprehensive review of the quota formula better to reflect economic weights and enhance the voice and representation of emerging market and developing countries by January 2013.²⁴

Moreover the BRICS communiqué also argues that the nature of the World Bank should be that of an institution that efficiently mediates North-South cooperation to an institution that promotes equal partnership with all countries as a way to deal with development issues and overcome an outdated donor – recipient dichotomy.

At the fifth summit, the BRICS countries evaluated the policy actions of Europe, the US and Japan aimed at reducing risks in the world economy. The communiqué notes that some of these actions produced negative spill over effects in other economies, it argues that significant risks remain and that the performance of the global economy still falls behind the BRICS expectations. The BRICS also underscore the need for appropriate action to be taken by advanced economies in order to rebuild confidence, foster growth and secure a strong recovery.

The various BRICS summits also address the central role of energy in world economy, and its implications for the global climate. The summit communiqués say that the BRICS countries welcome a constructive dialogue on how to deal with climate change based on the principle of common but differential responsibility given the need to combine members to protect the climate with steps to fulfil the socio-economic development projects of the BRICS countries. In the field of energy and climate change the BRICS countries are thus signalling a vision for co-management of new global order that seeks to find a balance between the concern and interests of both the North and the South.

In the 8th BRICS summit held at Goa, during this summit they reaffirmed their commitment to a strong, quota based and adequately resourced IMF (borrowed resources by the IMF should be on a temporary allotment). They strongly committed to support the coordinated effort by the emerging economies to ensure that the Fifteenth General Review of Quotas, including the new quota formula, will be finalised within the agreed timelines so as to ensure that the increased voice of the dynamic emerging and developing economies reflects their relative contributions to the world economy, while protecting the voices of least developed countries (LDCs), poor countries and regions.²⁵ Moreover they welcomed the inclusion of the RMB into the Special Drawing Rights (SDR) currency basket on 10 October 2016.²⁶

The summit of WTO, BRICS reiterated their support for the multilateral trading system and the centrality of the WTO as the cornerstone of a rule based, open, transparent, non-discriminatory and inclusive multilateral trading system with development for their core agenda. They noted the increasing number of bilateral, regional, and multilateral trade agreements, and reiterate that these should be complementary to the multilateral trading system and encourage the parties there on to align their work in consolidating the multilateral trading system under the WTO in accordance with the principles of transparency, inclusiveness, and compatibility with the WTO rules.²⁷ They appreciated the progress in the implementation of the Strategy for BRICS Economic Partnership and emphasise the importance of the BRICS Roadmap for Trade, Economic and Investment Cooperation until 2020.²⁸ They believed close cooperation between the sectoral cooperation mechanisms, BRICS Contact Group on Economic and Trade Issues, the BRICS Business Council, New Development Bank and the BRICS Interbank cooperation mechanism is crucial in strengthening the BRICS economic partnership.²⁹ They welcomed, in this context, the continued realisation of the major BRICS economic initiatives such as enhanced cooperation in e-commerce, “single window”, IPR cooperation, trade promotion and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). They recognised non-tariff measures (NTMs), services sector, and standardisation and conformity assessments as possible areas of future cooperation. They noted the meeting of BRICS Trade Ministers in New Delhi on 13 October 2016 and welcome its substantive outcomes.³⁰ These economic initiatives are the evidence of their inclusiveness in this group through promoting synergies and complementarities among this group, which lead to institutional integration process.

They welcomed India's initiative to host the first BRICS Trade Fair in New Delhi. This is an important step towards the implementation of Strategy for BRICS Economic Partnership. They believed that this will further consolidate trade and commercial partnership among BRICS countries The BRICS trade fair will help in future through promoting start up projects and increasing capabilities among

the young skilled population within the BRICS. This trade fair help to promote people to people contact within the BRICS countries,

The BRICS leaders are agreed that Medium-Small Scale Market Enterprises (MSMEs), which provide major employment opportunities, at comparatively lower capital cost, and create self-employment opportunities in rural and underdeveloped areas. MSMEs thus help assure equitable wealth distribution nationally and globally.³¹ They commend organisation of BRICS second round-table on MSMEs by India with a focus on technical and business alliances in MSMEs Sector. They agreed to work for greater integration of MSMEs in Regional and Global Value Chains.³² This initiative will attract foreign direct investment on Medium and small scale industries in BRICS countries which make strong economic growth in grass roots level of economy. This would be reducing poverty eradication in rural and urban areas of BRICS countries through given mass employment opportunities.

Moreover they stressed the importance to foster an innovative, invigorated, interconnected and inclusive world economy. They enhanced their consultations and coordination on the G20 agenda, especially on issues of mutual interest to the BRICS countries, and promote issues of importance for the Emerging Market and Developing Economies (EMDEs). They will continue to work closely with all G20 members to strengthen macroeconomic cooperation, promote innovation, as well as robust and sustainable trade and investment to propel global growth, improve global economic governance, enhance the role of developing countries, strengthen international financial architecture, support for industrialisation in Africa and least developed countries and enhance cooperation on energy access and efficiency. They stressed the need for enhanced international cooperation to address illicit cross-border financial flows, tax evasion and trade mis-invoicing.³³ They considered that G20 is a good platform for protecting developing countries concerns and interests, capable to change international order. This platform will enhance South–North cooperation in global affairs like on international issues terrorism, refugees’ issues, and environmental and sustainable development issues.

In addition they strongly emphasised the importance of enhancing intra-BRICS cooperation in the industrial sector, including through the BRICS Industry Ministers Meetings, in order to contribute to the accelerated and sustainable economic growth, the strengthening of comprehensive industrial ties, the promotion of innovation as well as job creation, and improvement of the quality of life of people in BRICS countries.³⁴ These made the peculiar initiative for job seekers and fulfil their dreams within the BRICS countries through industrial cooperation between themselves.

They commended during the Goa summit that their Customs administrations on the establishment of the Customs Cooperation Committee of BRICS and on

exploring means of further enhancing collaboration in the future, including those aimed at creating legal basis for customs cooperation and facilitating procedures of customs control.³⁵ They noted the signing of the Regulations on Customs Cooperation Committee of the BRICS in line with the undertaking in the Strategy for BRICS Economic Partnership to strengthen interaction among Customs Administrations.³⁶ These initiatives are enhanced simplifying customs rules and regulations related with trade which leads to reduce tariff and non- tariff issues between BRICS member states.

With an evaluation of the above given facts, it can be said that the macroeconomic, financial, energy, climate change and development policies of the BRICs countries, as reflected in the outcomes of the eight summits held between 2009 and 2016, thus clearly reflects a strategy aimed at bringing about a world order that will reflect a new system that is no longer central around serving the interests of the Western developed world, but instead seeks to find a balance between North and South. The vision of BRICS for economic, financial and development dimensions towards a new global order are thus closely aligned with the goals it seek to achieve.

Conclusion

To conclude that the economic growth of BRICS is unquestionably the stepping stone to its development, which is going to benefit around 43 percent of world population dwelling in the five member countries. One of the major objectives of the group is the development of a multilateral system which supports developing countries interests and concern in global level. It can be seen that regarding certain issues, the BRICS act as coalition block within a multilateral system on issues related to IPR, antidumping, environment, food subsidies and IMF quota reform. Another important power orientation of BRICS is that the memberships of countries like Russia and China had veto power (permanent members) and rest of the countries as non-permanent members in the United Nation Security Council, having a say on global security issues. This is the one of the aspect BRICS should promote shared democratic values in multilaterals institutions. Moreover the BRICS nations are members of major international institution like WTO, IMF, World Bank, G20, and UN which also influences the group on having the power to determine and negotiate on matters of international importance. The continental accessibility of countries such as like in Latin America, Africa, South Asia, Asia, and Eurasia enhances the increased role BRICS's in a global trade system and global politics. Moreover the authoritarian, totalitarian, democratic and federal interests working towards common concerns and interest makes it a unique group. In this context BRICS's intra-regional trade relations have made it possible to achieve trust and cooperation among the member states especially through the promotion of economic interdependence. As well defined institutional mechanism needs to be build in order to better evaluate and manage strong economic ties among the member states.

The geographical and political supremacy of the constituent countries in their own region should be used to further assert the role of BRICS, thereby giving it a strong voice in global politics. The BRICS Summits could be effectively used as a platform to promote bilateral discussions among other regional or non-regional groupings to which the constituent countries are part of. The new trend which can be noticed in the last few BRICS summits is the inclusion of neighbouring states of the member countries as partial stakeholders. These relations are visible in various summits held on Fortaleza (Mercosur countries), Durban (African countries), Goa (South Asian countries), and Ufa (Shanghai Cooperation members). This will further enhance the possibility of cooperation through bilateral and multilateral engagements and can be used to reinstate the BRICS identity in a complex and highly interdependent global arena. The BRICS association will become more transparent and division of powers within the institution will be ensured with by constituent bodies such as like New Development Bank, Contingent Reserve Arrangements, Business Forum, and Trade Union. It will help foster greater intra-regional trade among BRICS countries and in the setting up of a strong institutional architecture. This will help BRICS to solve and effectively negotiate political tensions among member states, thereby giving it legitimacy and a strong voice in a multilateral world order.

The BRICS's evolution on multilateral trade system is that it protects developing countries interests in multilateral forums like UN, IMF, WTO and G20 summits. The BRICS act as a bargaining coalition bloc for various causes like IPR, environmental issues, anti-dumping issues, labour standardization, and tariff issues. It aims at protecting developing countries interests and concerns against Western dominations in above mentioned multilateral forums. The countries like India and Brazil alone can't influence multilateral forums for which this organisation gives them a reasonable negotiating space in a multilateral system. So that major international institutions are like IMF, WTO is compelled to admit BRICS suggestions in their negotiations. The BRICS nations act as a bargaining coalition bloc in IMF meetings with regard of quota reforms. The next example is in the matter of Intellectual Property Rights issue (IPR), the BRICS nations considers it as a common issue which generated developing countries interests and concerns in IPR issues. At the first meeting itself, the BRIC countries discussed the situation of the global economy and other pressing issues of global development, and strengthening collaboration within the BRIC group. This results in BRICS synergies and complements with each other in terms of their economic cooperation. The concludes of the various communiqués released after first five summits of the BRICS countries articulate an alternative vision for a new global order that is more democratic, just, fair, rule based, and which requires the collective decision making and co-management of all states, both when it comes to the specifics of international financial system and its institutions, but also more broadly as it pertains to international trade and the political system, including global institutions like the UN. The macroeconomic, financial, energy, climate

change and development policies of the BRICs countries as reflected in the outcomes of the eight summits held between 2009 and 2016 clearly reflect a strategy aimed at bringing about a world order that will reflect a new political economy that is no longer central around serving the interests of the Western developed world, but instead seeks to find a balance between North and South in global politics. The vision of BRICS for economic, financial and development dimensions of a new global order are thus closely aligned with their vision for the political dimension. In this context BRICS summits and released communiqués are referred as integral part of their integration not in terms of economic dimension but in terms of political dimension. While considering the overall economic dimension of BRICS, its economic growth that is the stepping stone of its development. It gives the organisation a power over multilateral power which supported developing countries interests and concern at global level.

Another evolution factor is that the BRICS Business council coordinates multinational companies from BRICS countries for the adherence of deep integration among the group. Countries like India, Brazil and South Africa might give a good platform for receiving strong investment from China and Russia. The linkages between multinational companies and BRICS countries help in reducing tension and fostering deep cooperation among them.

For India, BRICS initiatives help in resolving bilateral issues with China in terms of border conflicts. The Chinese initiatives like One Belt One Road (OBOR) programme helps to resolve border conflict with India and supports India–China economic relationship. China is willing to start student exchange programmes with India which will take the sophisticated Sino-Indian relationship to a new dimension. The Sino-Indian relationship should be viewed more in economic rather than military and social terms. Here economic relationship becoming mutually benefiting for each other reduces conflict and finally leads to synergetic cooperation with two rich civilizations.

The Sikkim border between China and India has been a source of diplomatic and military tensions in bilateral relations since decades but India and China has grabbed international attention lately, as tensions escalated over Doklam border issue. Growing tension between these emerging powers is a threat to the entire region and might have negative implications on the global economy since it is highly interdependent. By evaluating the occurrence of events in the current scenario, it can be said that the BRICS is the most effective forum for discussing and negotiating this issue. On the backdrop of accumulated tension between both countries, it is the responsibility of BRICS, as a political and economic alliance to retain its legitimacy and safeguard its member's interests.

The Chinese President Xi Jinping during the Seventh meeting of BRICS senior representatives on security issues in Beijing called for more cooperation among the BRICS countries on economics, finance and security. The security heads of

the five-nation grouping, including India's national security adviser Ajit Doval, was present there. With a military standoff on the Sino-India border, such bilateral negotiating forums can be opened up only through an organization like BRICS. Discussions were also made on this occasion between National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and his Chinese counterpart Yang Jiechi to discuss a way forward in resolving the dispute between two countries and promoting peace. It is to be noted that even during previous BRICS meetings, the host country encourages the heads of the delegations to hold bilateral meetings in which they exchange views on bilateral relations, BRICS cooperation and multilateral affairs. Hence the BRICS meetings should be strategically seen as a platform to discuss political and security cooperation among nations, especially India and China.

The 9th BRICS Annual Summit will be taking place at China, Xiamen on September 2017. Considering the changing dynamics of international relations, the summit has adopted a global approach this time and invited five non-member states. However it will be a challenge for the group to safeguard the multilateral trade system and oppose protectionist policies that will have an adverse effect on developing economies. It is under these circumstances that the BRICS group becomes important in the current global scenario. In order to safeguard the interests of developing countries, the members should be able to resolve bilateral issues within the framework of the group and stand united in the forefront against various international issues. The withdrawal of troops by China and India prior to the 9th BRICS Summit gives green signal to this trend, providing a temporary resolution to Doklam issue.

The Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA) is another milestone initiative from BRICS summit which emphasized financial stability among the member states. Under this initiative trade transaction is calculated through their own currencies, for example India can import from BRICS countries using Indian currency which makes appreciation tendency of Indian currency. Moreover India can import largely manufacturing products from China using Indian currency which satisfy our large domestic demand. Same way India can largely import crude oil from Russia to satisfy our domestic consumption through the medium of Indian currency. In other way India can import Brazilian minerals and metals to reduce raw material scarcity in our industrial sector using Indian currency. The same way India can largely import South African gold for maintaining financial stability using Indian currency. The CRA helps BRICS member states to reduce the use of US dollar in their trade transaction, which is good for their economy to reduce financial and macroeconomic instability. The CRA is a positive influential factor in BRICS intra-regional trade. It is these facts that make the CRA an integral part of regional integration in BRICS group which promote economic regionalism. This is a new dimension of regional integration in international political economy which does not emphasise geographical proximity. The BRICS is on an ongoing process of new dimension of regional integration, becoming possible through

mutual interests and concerns. The BRICS intra-regional trade facilitates the member countries national interests into mutual interest. These factors play a vital role in BRICS regional integration process in the backdrop of the concept of economic regionalism. Moreover CRA becomes an important trade creation factor of BRICS regarding intra-regional trade, which results in member states becoming further economically interdependent.

The next major initiative from BRICS is an export credit arrangement which gives a favourable platform for trade to take place. For a country like India with balance of payments not favourable, this initiative greatly benefits exports growth and reduces the burden of trade deficit. The world trade depends on dollar terms trade, so that we can access anything from BRICS through credit bases. It is also an influential factor in India's foreign trade with regard to BRICS. This may favourer in the initiation of trade relations for BRICS member like Brazil, South Africa, and India along with Russia and China. This initiative will facilitate by reducing the trade gap between India and China, Brazil and China, South Africa and China, India and Russia, Brazil and Russia, and South Africa and Russia.

To conclude, the BRICS countries are home to 42 per cent of the world's population. Their total share in the global economy has risen from 12 per cent to 23 per cent in the past decade, while contributing to more than half of global growth with strong international voice on power politics and that is good for the countries of the BRICS in the international political economy.

End Notes

- ¹ www.risinigpowersinitiative.org
- ² The gravity model of international trade in international economics, similar to other gravity models in social science, predicts bilateral trade flows based on the economic sizes (often using GDP measurements) and distance between two units.
- ³ Accessed data from <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2001/01/>.
- ⁴ G8 became G7 in March 2014 when Russia was excluded due to its annexation of Crimea.
- ⁵ De Coning, Mandrup.andOdgaard (ed.). op. cit., p. 30.
- ⁶ Joint statement of BRIC Countries' Leaders. (15, April, 2010). <http://en.kremlin.ru/supplement/524/print>.
- ⁷ Joint Statement by the BRICS Countries leaders. (14 April 2011). Sanya: Hainan. China. Paragraph 7.
- ⁸ Joint statement by the BRICS Countries leaders. (29 March 2012). New Delhi: India. Paragraph 4.
- ⁹ De Coning, Mandrup. And Odgaard. (ed.). op. cit., p.29.

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- ¹⁰ Ibid., p.30.
- ¹¹ 8th BRICS Summit reports.op.cit.
- ¹² Ibid.,
- ¹³ Ibid.,
- ¹⁴ Ibid., p.29.
- ¹⁵ 8th BRICS Summit reports. op. cit
- ¹⁶ Joint statement by the BRICS Countries leaders. (16 June 2009). Yekaterinburg: Russia. Paragraph 12.
- ¹⁷ Ibid., Paragraph 14.
- ¹⁸ Ibid.,
- ¹⁹ Ibid.,
- ²⁰ Joint statement by the BRICS Countries leaders. Yekaterinburg.op.cit., Paragraph 14.
- ²¹ De Coning. Mandrup, and Odgaard. (ed.). op. cit., p.38.
- ²² Ibid., p.38.
- ²³ Ibid., p. 39.
- ²⁴ Ibid., pp. 39-40.
- ²⁵ 8th BRICS Summit reports.op.cit., p.7.
- ²⁶ Ibid., pp.7-8.
- ²⁷ Ibid.,
- ²⁸ Ibid., p.8.
- ²⁹ Ibid.,
- ³⁰ Ibid., P.8.
- ³¹ Ibid.,
- ³² Ibid.,
- ³³ Ibid.,
- ³⁴ Ibid., pp.10-11.
- ³⁵ Ibid., p.10.
- ³⁶ Ibid., p. 9.

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Simultaneous Elections: A Sure Recipe for Democratic Disaster

Sumit Howladar

Abstract

The journey of India's democracy has been an exciting and remarkable one. It has traversed several uncharted and difficult paths. Elections have been one of the core components and drivers behind this project of democratic expansion and consolidation. With changing times both the scale and mode of conducting elections have also changed drastically. While in the earlier years simultaneous elections of both the Lok Sabha and the State Assemblies took place, in the last fifty years this system became defunct. But recently the present incumbent government has pushed for renewing this system of conducting simultaneous elections. This paper argues that with the changed socio-political scenario revival of this system is not in the best interest of the nation's democratic fabric. It highlights that the arguments put forward behind the desirability and feasibility of the said proposal largely based on faulty assumptions and lack sound argumentative base. Delving into the various layers of the issue, the paper underlines the core point that though on a technocratic level conducting simultaneous elections might seem highly appealing, but from a perspective of democratic fructification, this system is bound to prove regressive and counter-productive.

Keywords: Simultaneous, Elections, Democracy, Constitution, Policy, Federal, Government

1. Introduction

The idea of conducting simultaneous elections, interestingly, is not a new idea and was also a promise in Bharatiya Janata Party's (hereafter BJP) party manifesto for the Lok Sabha elections held in 2014. The basic argument presented behind this idea is to save precious time which gets wasted in the process of repeated elections and instead devote it to actual developmental work. Earlier also this idea was floated by the veteran BJP leader Mr. LK Advani. Interestingly, the Model Code of Conduct (hereafter MCC) has been cited as a major hindrance in carrying out developmental work and has been used as a justification for the implementation of the said proposal.

2. What is this idea of Simultaneous Elections?

The idea of Simultaneous Elections to the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies is not something new both in theory and practice. This practice has been in force in the country till the late 1960s where after it got disrupted. The first general elections to the Lok Sabha and all State Legislative Assemblies were held together in 1951-52. However, with the premature dissolution of some state assemblies in 1968 and 1969, this cycle was disrupted. In 1970, the Lok Sabha itself was dissolved early and fresh elections were held in 1971. The term of the 5th Lok Sabha was extended till 1977 under article 352 of the Constitution (emergency). The 8th, 10th, 14th and

15th Lok Sabha could complete their full five-year terms while the 6th, 7th, 9th, 11th, 12th and 13th Lok Sabha was dissolved prematurely. As a result of premature dissolutions and extension of terms of both the Lok Sabha and various state legislative assemblies, there have been separate elections to Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies and the cycle of simultaneous elections has been disturbed in the last 48 years. The Niti Aayog in its paper has talked in details regarding the technicalities. Simultaneous elections do not mean that voting across the country for Lok Sabha and State Assemblies needs to happen on a single day. This can be conducted in a phase-wise manner as per the existing practice provided voters in a particular constituency vote for both State Assembly and Lok Sabha the same day (Debroy and Desai, 2016).

3. Recommendations by government bodies in favor of Simultaneous Elections

Several bodies of the government have recommended in favor of conducting simultaneous elections. Some prominent among them have opined in the following manner.

- A- **Law Commission of India 170th Report on Reform of Electoral Laws (1999):** In the year 1999, the Law Commission of India headed by Hon'ble Justice B.P. Jeevan Reddy in its One Hundred Seventieth Report on Reform of Electoral Laws recommended simultaneous elections to Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies while examining measures for improving the electoral system in the country.
- B- **79th Report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice:** The Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice (Chairperson: Dr. E.M. Sudarsana Natchiappan) submitted its report on the Feasibility of Holding Simultaneous Elections to House of People (Lok Sabha) and State Legislative Assemblies on December 17, 2015. The Committee supported the idea of simultaneous elections and said that it would reduce expenditure, help in countering policy paralysis due to the imposition of Model Code of Conduct, improve delivery of essential services, etc.
- C- **Election Commission of India:** Six months after a parliamentary standing committee recommended it, the Election Commission of India (hereafter EC) told the law ministry that it supports the idea of simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and Legislative Assemblies.
- D- **The Niti Aayog's Discussion paper on Simultaneous elections:** In a discussion paper titled, 'Analysis of Simultaneous Elections: The "What", "Why" and "How"', authored by Bibek Debroy and Kishore Desai, the Niti Aayog has argued that simultaneous election system is good for the Indian polity as it will improve governance and initiate electoral reforms.

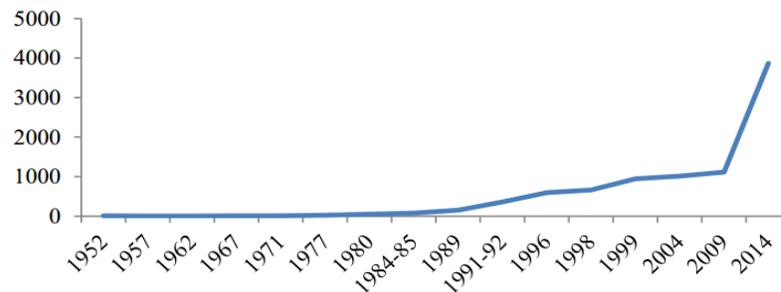
4. Arguments surrounding the idea of simultaneous elections

Since the re-inception of this idea of conducting simultaneous elections, there has been a volley of arguments both in its favor and opposition presented by the various stakeholders and the general public.

Arguments in favor of simultaneous elections

- A. **Reduces massive expenditure:** The government has argued that simultaneous elections will heavily reduce massive expenditure incurred in conducting separate elections as is the present norm. In this context, the Niti Aayog has presented an analysis of the Election expenditure incurred in the previous years.

Figure: Election expenditure (Provisional) by Government of India towards Lok Sabha Elections (Figures along Y-axis are in INR Crores)



Source: Figure 8.1, Election Commission of India Pocket book 2015-16

As evident from the figure, there has been a stiff rise in election expenditure. The Niti Aayog paper has further emphasized that compared to the cost incurred for conducting 2009 Lok Sabha elections at about Rs. 1115 crores, the same for the year 2014 more than tripled to about Rs. 3870 crores.

- B. **Checks the policy paralysis caused by MCC:** The 79th Report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on ‘Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice’ talks about the problems faced due to the imposition of MCC at regular intervals. The Committee states that this puts on hold the entire development programme and activities of the Union and State Governments in the poll-bound State. Frequent elections lead to the imposition of MCC over prolonged periods of time. This often leads to policy paralysis and governance deficit (Debroy and Desai, 2016).
- C. **Solves the problem of crucial manpower deployment:** The introduction of simultaneous elections will help the effective deployment of crucial

security personnel who otherwise get tied up for prolonged periods because of the periodic conduct of elections. Even in the 16th Lok Sabha elections, the EC had to avail the services of 10 million personal to conduct the election, which included the deployment of 1349 Companies of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF). With the introduction of simultaneous elections, this manpower problem will be solved.

- D. **Checks corruption and use of black money:** With the prevalence of the system of frequent elections, the political parties are tied up in the efforts of ensuring inflow of funds and contributions which act as the key drivers of corruption and circulation of black money. The introduction of simultaneous elections will help to check this vicious circle and will promote a clean economy and polity.
- E. **Helps in the ushering of better governance and policy-making:** The immediacy of electoral gains forces the political class to compromise on the idea of good governance. Frequent elections act as a blockade in taking up difficult structural reform programs and encourage populist measures. Simultaneous elections will help make policy-making more focused, consistent and bold, thus leading to better governance.

Arguments in opposition to simultaneous elections

- A. **Risk of misuse of the Constitution:** There is a risk of the misuse of the Constitution whereby the Parliament and State assemblies might be dissolved prematurely for specific political gains. This will also violate Articles 83(2) and 172(1) of the Constitution which provides for a set term for the Lok Sabha and the Assemblies respectively.
- B. **There is a risk that it will benefit the party in power:** In a scenario where the dominance and deployment of national issues are on the rise, the implementation of simultaneous elections has the potential of affecting the voting behavior of the voters whereby the important and specific state-level issues might get side lined. The voter might end up voting for the same both at the Centre and the State. In this connection, IDFC institute has published a study where by it has argued that there is a 77% possibility of the voter voting for the same party at both the Centre and the State if simultaneous elections take place. The authors analyzed electoral data for four rounds of Lok Sabha elections- 1999, 2004, 2009 and 2014 and they chose states where the state elections coincided with the Lok Sabha elections. Interestingly, this fear is not totally unfounded as proved by India's electoral history itself. A look at the electoral scenario back in the 1960s (particularly the 1962 Lok Sabha elections) when simultaneous elections were in vogue, proves that it is the incumbent government which benefits the most.

- C. **It will be an operational nightmare:** Implementation of simultaneous election can be an operational nightmare for the Election Commission and more importantly holds the potential of severely undermining democratic fundamentals. Even after the conducting of phased election coupled with Election Commission's enormous efforts, there have been allegations of nepotism, highhandedness, and use of corrupt means in the elections. In such a scenario the obvious question which arises is whether it is feasible for the Election Commission to conduct simultaneous elections whose scale will be massive from the perspective of logistics, security, and manpower.

Though in its reply to the Law Ministry in May, 2016 the EC has supported the government proposal of simultaneous elections but it has cautioned the government of the enormous expenditure to execute this idea. There are two major issues involved in this process. First, there is a requirement of purchasing on a massive scale of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and Voter Verifiable Audit Trail (VVPAT) machines. This according to the estimates of the EC would require a massive amount of 9,284.15 crores. In addition to this, there will be an additional cost to be incurred on replacing these EVMs after every 15 years. There will also be warehousing cost to store these machines. The second problem is regarding the availability of adequate manpower and security personnel for the effective conduct of the elections. That this is highly improbable and can lead to ineffective monitoring can be gauged from a simple fact. According to the Election Commission of India in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, it required 10 million personnel as polling officials across 9,30,000 polling stations. Apart from this, it required the help of 1349 Companies of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs). This gives us a fair idea of the mammoth arrangement required to conduct simultaneous elections and raises severe questions regarding its feasibility.

- D. **Misuse of Article 356:** There is a fear of the misuse of President's Rule by the Union Government. As seen in the judgment by the Constitutional Bench of Supreme Court of India in *S.R. Bommai v. Union of India*, the dissolution of State Legislative Assembly by the President of India is subject to the approval of both houses of Parliament. In a scenario where a particular political party has a majority in both the houses of Parliament, Article 356 can be grossly misused and it might act as a centrally sponsored toppling operation.
- E. **Further Discourages politicians from being accountable:** Accountability of political representatives has been a major issue in Indian politics. Periodic elections somehow acted as a meeting point for the represented and the representatives which ensured some accountability. With the introduction of simultaneous elections, even this minimum accountability will get affected.

- F. **Challenges the ‘Basic Structure’ of the Constitution:** The system of simultaneous elections will act detrimental to the ‘basic structure’ of the Constitution as it involves certain exercises which encroach upon the established federal principles defining the relationship between the center and the states. If this system is applied today then there is a risk of many features under the rubric of ‘basic structure’ getting violated, some primary among them being: the principle of separation of power, Federalism (including financial liberty of the states), etc. The fundamental right of the citizen to choose the government will also be tampered with by the dissolving of the state assemblies for the sake of maintaining consistency and reducing the expenses.

5. Major loopholes in the arguments of the Government

- A. **The 79th report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee is based on assumptions and gives rise to dangerous precedents:**

The Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law, and Justice in its 79th report observed that of the 16 (sixteen) Lok Sabhas that have been constituted so far, seven were dissolved pre-maturely due to the coalition governments but of late the legislatures have been completing their full term. There are severe problems in this sort of observations which lack a solid argumentative base and are largely hinged on pure speculation. Though, factually true, but this observation or inference has two major problematic areas: **(a)** Portraying coalition governments (which is a democratic development) in a bad light and blaming it for pre-mature dissolution of Lok Sabha somewhere reflects the urge towards a notion of majoritarian government and, **(b)** It is in no way equipped to guarantee the course of future political developments.

In order to maintain the stability of the Lok Sabha and the State Assemblies, the Parliamentary Standing Committee has given some suggestions. Some of them are:

The committee suggested that the Lok Sabha would commence and expire on a particular date and the election to constitute the new House has to be conducted in such a way that the Lok Sabha and assemblies could commence their term on a predetermined date. To avoid any pre-mature dissolution the committee suggested primarily four broad steps:

- Any ‘no-confidence motion’ against the government has to be accompanied by a further ‘confidence motion’ in favour of a government to be headed by a named individual as the future Prime Minister and voting should take place for the two motions together. This also applies to the Legislative Assemblies.

- In spite of this if a situation arises, where dissolution of Lok Sabha cannot be avoided, then the following options can be considered: **(a)** If the remainder of the term of the Lok Sabha is not long, there could be a provision where the President can carry out the administration, on the aid and advice of his Council of Ministers to be appointed by him, until the time the next House is constituted, **(b)** If the remainder of the term is long, then fresh election may be held and the term of the House in such case should be for the rest of what would have been the original term.
- If following a general election, none of the political parties is able to form a government and another general election becomes necessary, the term of the House in such case after the election should be only for the remainder if what would have been the original term.
- As far as the issue of bye-elections is concerned, two windows of one-and-a-half months each may be fixed for holding them that become due in a particular year.

On examining the suggestions of the Parliamentary Standing Committee which it claims to promote stability, there are some serious questions which certainly arise. They are:

- First, on the suggestion of placing a parallel confidence motion, the basic question is whether this arrangement is in tandem with the Constitutional ethos where the power to choose the government lies solely with the people. The political representatives are constitutionally equipped to represent in matters of governance and administration only and not to form governments on people's behalf. The amendment to Rule 198 of the Lok Sabha thereby introducing the system of a parallel confidence motion is in direct contrast to the cardinal principle of democracy that is a government formed by the people through periodic elections. It will also lead to distortion of Article 75(3) of the Constitution as the council of ministers who will be collectively responsible to the House are technically appointed through the backdoor mechanism and will not necessarily enjoy the support of the people.
- Second, this practice of forming alternative governments will further encourage defections on a large scale and resultantly massive corruption and use of black money.
- Third, the proposal that the President can carry out the functions of the Lok Sabha by appointing a council of ministers is a blatant misuse of the powers of the President. The concept of President's rule can in no way be an alternative to a democratically elected government by the people.

- Fourth, the suggestion that if the House gets dissolved and fresh elections are held to form a new House, then the tenure of the particular House will be of only for the remainder of the days of the previously dissolved House will be a sheer wastage of money, time and manpower. Interestingly, these were the very factors which the simultaneous elections tried to deal with in the first place.

If disruptions happen more than expected keeping in mind the multifarious nature of politics in the country how does the government intend to defend the imposition of MCC and the expenditure which are bound to happen?

B. Anti-Defection Law has little bearing on the term of the legislature:

The claim by the ‘The Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice’ in its 79th report that the introduction of the Anti Defection Act, 1985 has prevented political defection in the ruling party and that this has had a direct bearing on the term of the legislature is factually wrong. The reality is that though the 1985 law was to make politics cleaner this has instead taken a toll on our legislative and political systems. It originally made it illegal for individual legislators to take voting decisions without the permission of their whip. Though this was supposed to minimize corruption what it actually did was that it transferred the process of government formation to the level of party high commands away from public scrutiny.

C. Simultaneous elections will have little or no bearing on the use and circulation of black money in the electoral process: The argument of the government that the re-introduction of simultaneous election will help combat corruption and use of black money does not hold much ground and there are specific reasons for that. Even if the system of simultaneous elections is reintroduced, there is no guarantee that the use of black money in the elections process will be stopped. This argument makes more sense after the drastic changes made by the government in the Representation of the People Act, 1951, the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934 and the Income Tax Act, 1961. With the amendment in Subsection (3) of Section 29C of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 cash donation to political parties has been slashed from Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 2000. But this in no way stops the misuse of the law by political parties who can still tame the system by enhancing simply the number of receipts for the donations they receive. In addition to this the Finance Bill, 2017 also made amendments in the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934 and the Income Tax Act, 1961 whereby political parties have now been exempted from disclosing the identity of individuals and companies who make donations through electoral bonds bought from the commercial banks. Moreover, the RBI and the Income Tax department now have practically no means to probe the funding of political parties. In addition to this, a political party’s treasure and where it spends

the money is still beyond the reach of the RTI Act. If transparency is to be brought about in the real sense that it demands the revising of the government's affidavit in the Supreme Court- which upholds the Central Information Commission's full bench decision in 2013 to consider the six national political parties public authorities under the RTI Act. In this scenario of anonymous corporate funding and policy of anonymity, the introduction of the simultaneous election will have no impact on the use of black money in the elections process.

- D. Government's take on simultaneous elections that it is a do-able proposition betrays the facts on the ground:** The government's position that simultaneous elections can be conducted seems impractical keeping the ground realities in mind. After the debacle in the Srinagar Lok Sabha by-poll elections, the EC had asked the Home Ministry to deploy 750 companies (75,000 central forces) of central forces for the Lok Sabha by-poll in Anantnag, rescheduled for 25th May, 2017. In a situation where logistics are still such a huge problem, claiming that conducting simultaneous elections is feasible does not seem to hold much ground. In addition to this keeping in view, the fact that tenure of the Jammu and Kashmir assembly is of six years, how the government plans to bring it under the synchronized arrangement is anybody's guess.

6. Some Constitutional questions

There are some serious Constitutional questions which need to be answered before the implementation of simultaneous elections. Some broad questions include:

- To implement the idea, the tenure of some of the State Assemblies needs to be curtailed. How to do it, when the government of the day enjoys the legitimate confidence of the legislature?
- How to maintain simultaneity especially in the event of a no-confidence? Will the amendment to Rule 198 of the Lok Sabha to introduce a parallel confidence motion be in tandem with the democratic principles?
- How far can be the idea of 'collective responsibility of the council of ministers to the House' stretched for the maintenance of stability under the scheme of simultaneous elections? Will it not be a distortion of Article 75(3) of the Constitution?
- How can the system of simultaneous elections work without changes being brought to Article 83(2) and Article 172(1) of the Constitution which presently only talks about the existence of Lok Sabha and state legislatures respectively for five years from the date of its first meeting unless dissolved earlier and not guarantee fixed terms for them? Simultaneous elections are not possible without fixed terms.

7. What will be at stake?

There are some fundamental issues which will be at stake if simultaneous elections are introduced.

- A. **The fundamental ethos of the Constitutional provision of elections:** The fundamental ethos of the Constitutional provision of elections in a democracy is the rule of the people and a proper representation of their wishes and demands. The basic ethos behind this exercise of elections is the primacy of people's mandate over any other technocratic preferences. What this simultaneous election scheme does is to undermine or rather challenge this very central Constitutional ethos and tries to subsume it under the spurious argument of economic benefit and administrative efficiency.
- B. **Plurality of Indian Democracy:** Post-independence and especially after the discontinuation of simultaneous elections, the socio-political scenario of the country has gone fundamental and drastic changes. Reintroducing simultaneous elections in the present times will hit at the concept of plural democracy which has evolved over-time and has now entrenched in the political system of the country. With this system in place, there is a high risk of the dominance of a single political force.
- C. **The fairness of the election process:** For democracy to be really meaningful and profound, the implementation aspect is as important as the concept itself. As far as the logistical aspect of conducting elections, simultaneous elections will increase the risk of use of corrupt practices as the monitoring capacity of the EC will get severely limited. This is going to have a profound impact on the democratic credentials of the system of electing political representatives.
- D. **Democratic accountability of the representatives:** Reintroduction of simultaneous elections will further shrink the already paltry democratic space when the electorate and the representatives can meet and have to some extent a fair discussion. With elections taking place in one go, the representatives will not have to face the electorate at regular intervals. This has the potential of having a negative impact on the sense of accountability of the representatives.
- E. **The federal structure of the polity:** In a country like India, especially whose formation has witnessed the amalgamation of diverse socio-cultural groups and identities', maintaining the federal structure of the polity is important. The basic idea of maintaining uniformity and in the process compromising on the tenure of state assemblies (which represent regional aspirations) goes against the federal structure of the polity and even crosses the quasi-federal mechanism on which there has been some agreement.

8. Conclusion

The proponents of this idea of simultaneous elections seem to undermine the fact that elections are a blend of both subjective and objective conditions and are not merely a sanctified legal-constitutional exercise. The fundamental question is whether the concept of technocracy can be privileged over the idea of democracy. Utmost care needs to be taken that the federal structure and the diversity of the country are not compromised for the sake of bringing technical uniformity. Having structural reforms is not a bad thing in itself but one needs to be confident that it will have the desired effect as proclaimed. But at the present stage, the arguments presented by the government seem to be based more on assumptions and hope rather any concrete logic. One need not forget the effects of demonetization which was also pitched as a great structural reform but has not yielded any significant results till now as interestingly evident from continuously emerging government reports itself. If the government is sincere about good governance and particularly curbing election expenditure, then it should seriously look for alternative ways such as reforms in the expenditure of political parties, issue of funding of political parties, etc. The solution lies in cleaning up the political system and enhancing the legitimacy of political parties and not in technocratic solutions like simultaneous elections.

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Government Policies for Development of Floriculture and its Impact in Sikkim: A Socio-Economic Study

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Abstract

The Government of a State takes policies as initiatives to develop socio-economic condition of its people by supporting them in doing special types of economic activities. In the state, there may be some professions practiced by its people which are unique and the government takes initiatives to encourage and flourish those professions. Floriculture is such a unique profession practiced by several ethnic communities in Sikkim. They are cultivating different kinds of flowers in a large quantity for commercial purposes that may be not possible without the assistance by the Sikkim government. This paper tries to explore how far the policies of the Sikkim Government are responsible for the growing interest among people of Sikkim in cultivation of flowers; consequently in developing floriculture as a commercial venture.

Keywords: Ethnicity, Floriculture, Biodiversity, Green House, Poly House, Flower Growers, Government Policies, Technology Mission.

1. Introduction

Sikkim is a biodiversity hotspot blessed with abundance flora and fauna. The climatic condition of Sikkim also has played an important role in blessing this Himalayan State with immense greenery and beautiful varieties of flowers. Sikkim has its own attraction for its beautifully grown varieties of flowers in almost every part of the state. The people of Sikkim are emotionally attached with the nature and as nature lovers they are fond of cultivating different kinds of ornamental plants (non-flowering plants that are kept inside house) and varieties of beautiful flowers. The fresh look of Rhododendrons, the scented pansies and premolars and the richness of wild orchids enhance the beauty of this small state of Sikkim. Nearly about 4500 species of flowering plants are found in Sikkim (Sikkim, India: Sanctuary to Horticulture Estate 2008, p.5). Therefore exports of flowers and the passion of growing flowers seem to have been alive among the people of Sikkim from the time immemorial. However, one cannot claim with authenticity the reasons behind the growing of flowers and the reasons behind the sudden interest of the people who have taken this to a commercial level because there is a dearth of literature in this area.

2. British Patronage for Floriculture in Sikkim: A Preview

Flowers hold an important role and are part of rituals or festivals among different ethnic communities of Sikkim. As culture and ritual are imbibed among the people of Sikkim, flower also plays a significant role in keeping the same intact. Flowers also hold a symbol in itself and it speaks for itself. Growing flowers was hobby which later, with the growing values of flowers must have developed as a means

to earn. John Claude White (1909) who came as the first Political Officer in the then small Himalayan Kingdom of Sikkim has written in his book titled '*Sikkim and Bhutan: Twenty-one years on the North East Frontier 1887-1908*' that Lepcha people who are said to have entered Sikkim from the east along the foot hills from the direction of Assam and Burma had the knowledge of the plants and flowers. And the climatic condition of Sikkim is also a boon for growing flowers that also must have acted as an enthusiasm for the people to gradually take interest in growing flowers at their home and gardens. J.C. White also mentioned that the first work to be done in this kingdom was building a house that was then called Residency presently known as Raj Bhawan. He had narrated beautifully about the garden surrounding the Residency in which flowers like Daffodils, Primroses, Polyanthus, Daisies, Pansies, etc. were grown in different seasons. He also mentions about importing some of the flowers from France. He was a nature lover and when he came to Sikkim he bought along with him different flowering and non-flowering plants so it can be said that probably that is how these flowers must have reached Sikkim. The growing of flowers eventually may have caught the interest of the people living in Sikkim because of the beauty that flowers could present. Later, people may have realized the commercial value of flowers when sold and this must then have led the people to pursue cultivation of flower on a commercial level. Chandra Nursery (Pradhan K.C 2008) named on Chandrabir Newar, who was honoured by the British for being a man of an example in the society, located at Rhenok is one of the oldest nurseries in Sikkim. The nursery was started by his two sons namely Ratna Bhadur and Durga Shamsher at Rhenock, East of Sikkim at 1910. Chandra Nursery reached its height as it had a contact and a good rapport with the British Political Officers therefore several guests from Britain visited Sikkim frequently. The nursery reached its peak during the 1930s. Traces have been found that the Chandra Nursery is one such Nursery in Sikkim which have been exporting flowers and were involved in the trading of flowers all over the world. Therefore, one can say that Chandra Nursery has definitely made its name in the history of Sikkim in terms of flower production and flower trading.

3. Objectives of the Study

The present study has the following objectives:

- (i) To study the policies undertaken by the Sikkim Government in developing floriculture as a commercial venture in the state.
- (ii) To look at the impact of those policies on the socio-economic status of the flower growers in Sikkim.

4. Methodology of the Study

In order to understand the present study both primary and secondary data have been used. In order to collect primary data, semi-structured interview schedule

which included both close and open ended questions for collection of quantitative and qualitative data respectively have been used to collect the needed information from the respondents who are flower growers in a face to face situation. Government data also have been collected as primary data. This study tries to highlight the policies of the Sikkim Government in order to develop floriculture¹ as a means to develop the economy of the state and also to analyze the impact of these policies on the socio-economic status of the flower growers in Sikkim. Whereas secondary data have been collected from periodicals, journals and magazines, published research papers in order to highlight the achievements and overall progress of floriculture in Sikkim.

4.1. Study Area and Selection of Respondents

Flower cultivation in Sikkim is spread in different areas of east, west and south Sikkim. Total 90 (ninety) flower growers/farmers, 30 flower growers from each of the three districts, are selected as respondents for collection of data by using stratified random sampling technique. These farmers are chosen from the districts of East Sikkim, South Sikkim, and West Sikkim owing to the fact that flower growers from these districts are ahead in floriculture. The selected areas for this study are Gurpesay, Kamrang, Tinzir from the South Sikkim, Daramdin in the West Sikkim and Kartok, Assam linzey and Basilakha in East Sikkim.

5. Government Policies for Development of Floriculture in Sikkim

The Sikkim Government has taken up several policies and programmes so far to encourage the farmers who are engaged in floriculture. The Floriculture Section under the then Agriculture Department of Sikkim was established during 1985-1986. This indeed acted as the blessing for the flower growers as gradually they took up cultivation of flowers not only as a hobby but as a means of earning a livelihood. Some of the colossus steps taken by the government of Sikkim have proved to be a backbone to these farmers who now are involved in floriculture. The establishment of Model Floriculture Centre, National Research Centre, two Joint Venture Companies, Tissue Culture Laboratories, Wholesale-cum-Retail Outlet in Delhi etc. all accelerated the pace of floriculture in Sikkim and changed the mindset of the flower growers in Sikkim.

After its establishment, the Horticulture Department under Floriculture Section held many mega programs. One of those programmes was the flower festival during 1990's which served as a huge occasion for Sikkim and at the same time it

¹ The term is used for the cultivation of flowers and other ornamental plant materials scientifically and commercially, and production of their by-products such as oils, scents and medicines etc. Floriculture characteristically comes under the aesthetic branch of horticulture (Roychowdhury & Mishra 2001, p.3). Growth of ornamental plants, plants breeding (to produce off springs) for the development of flowers and floristry (the production, commerce and trade of flowers) are by and large involved in floriculture.

encouraged people to grow flowers and plants. Another major step was taken by the Sikkim government to establish the Model Floriculture Centre in the state in 1992-1993 with the financial assistance of the Government of India. The establishment of the National Research Centre for Orchid in the year 1997-98 and two Joint Venture Companies along with the establishment of Tissue Culture Laboratories under Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) during 2005-06, and also the opening of Wholesale-cum-Retail Outlet in Delhi heighten the expansion of floriculture in Sikkim.

The Government of Sikkim has taken several steps to provide training for the flower cultivators so that the flower growers are aware of the climatic condition and soil of Sikkim and also to get the right method to be used in order to grow a particular flower with a particular setting under the various programs of capacity building. They are also exposed outside Sikkim to the places like Pune, Karnataka, and Delhi etc. in order to gather more experience in terms of flower cultivation. Government of Sikkim has also been providing with saplings to the families who are engaged in floriculture. Along with the saplings the Department of Horticulture also provides them with the organic spray like Rich Field, Kelbrick which are eco-friendly. Therefore, with such proactive government as a backbone for the flower growers, floriculture is definitely paving its way.

Sikkim Government has adopted several policies in the recent years for the development of floriculture in the state. The government is taking initiatives for developing more clusters and improving and strengthening the existing clusters through new and modern technology and the support of inputs. Particularly, the Department of Horticulture and Cash Crops under the Government of Sikkim has taken up a number of plans and programs to spread out floriculture in the state. The concept of 'Protected Cultivation' has proved to be one of the successful measures for cultivation of flowers in Sikkim. The government has taken initiative to establish and supply the Green Houses² to those who are interested in flower cultivation. The green house of low cost which is designed to fit the hilly landscape like Sikkim has become very popular among the flower growers. So far, 10,360 numbers of low cost Poly Houses³ have been constructed. Presently, capacity building is another important aspect by which farmers are trained within the state, in the country and also send to foreign countries like Netherland, Australia for more exposure.

² A building or room, usually made up of glass in which the temperature, humidity, light and carbon dioxide concentration in air is maintained within a desired range, used for cultivating tender plants or growing plants out of season.

³ Some of the green houses are made of plastic and bamboo which is a low cost green house often found in common use for growing flowers.

Several infrastructure facilities have also been provided by the state government in Sikkim by making available the following facilities:

- i. Cymbidium Development Centre
- ii. Model Floriculture Centre
- iii. Tissue Culture Laboratories
- iv. Integrated Pack House
- v. Cold Storage Facilities
- vi. Rose Demonstration Unit

As discussed above, the major objective of this infrastructure development is to promote floriculture up to the level of industry. Varietal screening, technology validation, imparting training and skill development of flower cultivators are also met. Model floriculture centers have been established with the aim of improving coordination of floriculture activities particularly in the South and West district of Sikkim. Tissue culture laboratories have been set up to generate Cymbidium clones. In addition, cold storage facilities are provided to the flower growers for keeping the freshness and also to maintain the quality of the cut flowers⁴ for export as well as marketing outside the state. So, many infrastructure developments such as model floriculture centre, cymbidium development centre, tissue culture laboratories, integrated pack house, and cold storage facilities have been provided in the state to promote floriculture up to the level of industries (Ibid, p.30).

An Integrated Rose Demo Unit covering 5000 sq. meters area has been set up at the Rose Valley in Daramdin, West Sikkim, for imparting training and coordinates activities to the flower growers related to quality Rose production and marketing. Two export units, one for Cymbidium and other for Anthurium have been established at Assam Linzey and Mazhitar respectively under the joint venture program. Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR) has funded the establishment of the National Research Centre for Orchids at Pakyong near Gangtok for conducting research on orchids. East Sikkim has been declared as Agri Export Zone (AEZ) for cultivating Cymbidium hybrids commercially for supply in other countries. Cymbidium orchids are the ones found in the cooler areas of the world and it is one of the strength for floriculture as these are found in Sikkim. Model floriculture centers have been constructed at Namli in the East District and at Maniram in the South for the production of Rose, Gerbera, and Lilium etc.

⁴ Flowers which are cut from the main plants and is loosely made into bundles, generally use for decoration mostly sold and counted in numbers.

To promote Sikkim as an Agri Export Zone for floriculture, two Joint Venture Companies (JVCs) have been established by Sikkim Government in PPP (Public-Private-Partnership) model.

- i. Sikkim Himalayan Orchid Ltd (SHOL)
- ii. Sikkim Flora Ltd (SFL)

Sikkim Himalayan Orchid Ltd was launched during 2003-2004 through an agreement between M/s Natsyn Flora of Chennai and Government of Sikkim. Its main aim is to produce Cymbidium cut flowers for domestic and export markets. The total area for Cymbidium cultivation in Sikkim at present is 28 hectare which is highest in India, Sikkim Flora Ltd has been started on during 2004-2005 by a contract of partnership between Government of Sikkim and M/s Flora of Bangalore for production and marketing of Anthurium, Liliun, and Gerbera.

The Government of Sikkim also organizes an international flower show in every five years to put an encouragement among the flower growers. It also holds an annual flower exhibition at White Hall in Sikkim. In these events prizes are often given to the best growers so that their hard work and effort are recognized. Recently held event Sikkim Organic Festival 2016 by the Department was a huge event where in Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi inaugurated the event. He had nothing but praises for Sikkim. He went on to say that he had heard a lot about organic farming and was overwhelmed to see the orchids and the beautiful and colorful flowers. He also said that Sikkim can be an exemplary state. The event was a great success in itself therefore this reflects that the Department of Floriculture with the support of Government of Sikkim is trying to take commercial floriculture to a different level all together. The impact of these innovative ideas are not only paving its way and encouraging people here but it is also helping them to gain an international exposure. Flower cultivation and the farmers of Sikkim are also being promoted outside through the international events like these flower shows.

6. Flower Growers of Sikkim: A Brief Discussion

The farmers of Sikkim have considered cultivation of flowers as a means to earn income and have however shifted from the traditional practices of growing of crops to that of the growing of flowers. The reasons are simple and clear as it gives them high economic return from per sq. meter of land which becomes a good source of income as compared to the vegetables and crops. Consequently, the farmers of Sikkim have also been encouraged to grow flowers at a large scale and take cultivation of flowers for commercial purpose. Some of them found this as a better opportunity to earn money and be self-employed. With the growth of educated youths in Sikkim every year and the level of competition increasing day by day in service sector some of the youths have also chosen to dedicate their time and effort in growing flowers. This makes them self-employed. It is amazing to

note here that about 5,000 families in Sikkim are engaged in floricultural activities like cultivation, packaging, marketing etc. (Joint Director, FHCCD, and Government of Sikkim). Thus, floriculture has created a way of self-employment in Sikkim. Flowers in Sikkim are grown in an area of about 150 sq meters to that of 1000 sq meters. The farmers earn Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 60,000 sum of money in an area of 150 sq km and the money earned, goes up to 4 to 5 Lakh per annum with the area of cultivation being as large as 1000 sq meters (Joint Director, FHCCD Govt. of Sikkim). Some of them take up cultivation of flowers as a job after retirement giving a feeling of re-employment as well as providing them with supplementary income. Therefore flower growers of Sikkim have chosen floriculture for several reasons.

7. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The existing research work has generated some interesting findings. The collected primary data has been statistically analyzed and shown through tabular representations. The Government of Sikkim has extended its helping hand by different ways and means to the flower growers. The analysis of data which have been collected through field survey confirms the availability of infrastructural facilities provided by the Sikkim government to the flower growers also highlights the impact of government policies on their social and economic lives.

Table 1
Supply of Green House

District	Yes (%)	No (%)
East Sikkim	29 (96.6)	1(3.33)
West Sikkim	30 (100.0)	-
South Sikkim	30 (100.0)	-
Total	89 (98.9)	1 (1.1)

(Source: Field Survey)

Table 1 show that green-houses have been supplied to a vast majority (98.9%) of the flower cultivators by the Horticultural Department under Floriculture Section of the State Government. Only 1.1% of the respondents mentioned that the green house was not given to them. This has been due to some errors in the beneficiary list.

Table 2
Supply of Bulbs

District	Yes (%)	No (%)
East Sikkim	30 (100.0)	-
West Sikkim	30 (100.0)	-
South Sikkim	30 (100.0)	-
Total	90 (100.0)	-

(Source: Field Survey)

Data in the Table 2 show that all the selected flower growers have got bulb supplied by the government.

Table 3
Training if any by the Government

District	Yes (%)	No (%)
East Sikkim	30 (100)	-
West Sikkim	28 (93.3)	2 (6.7)
South Sikkim	24 (80.0)	6 (20.0)
Total	82 (91.1)	8(8.9)

(Source: Field Survey)

Data in Table 3 show that in general 91.1% of the selected flower growers has under gone training which has been provided by the government. District wise, it can be observed that 100.0% of the selected flower growers in the district of East Sikkim have taken the training.

Table 4
Collection of Fertilizers

District	Market	Horticulture Office
East Sikkim	-	22 (73.3)
West Sikkim	-	22 (73.3)
South Sikkim	-	25(83.3)
Total	-	69(76.7)

(Source: Field Survey)

The given data in Table 4 show that 76.7% samples/respondents in general collect fertilizers from Horticulture Department of Sikkim government. Also it is to be noted that the state has been declared as Organic so the fertilizers provided by the government are also organic. Some of the flower cultivators also use the manually made fertilizers like cow dung and urine of cow, vermin compose etc.

Table 5
Table Sex wise distribution of the Respondents

District	Male (%)	Female (%)
East Sikkim	24 (80.0)	6 (20.0)
West Sikkim	23 (76.7)	7 (23.3)
South Sikkim	20 (66.7)	10 (33.3)
Total	67 (74.4)	23 (25.6)

(Source Primary Survey)

Table 5 shows that most (74.4%) of the selected flower growers are males and 25.6% are female. So, it is evident that this profession is dominated by the males.

Table 6
Annual Income of Flower Cultivators through all sources

District	10001-15000	15001-20000	20001-25000	25001-30000	Above 30000
East Sikkim	2 (6.7)	6 (20.0)	1 (3.3)	2 (6.7)	19 (63.3)
West Sikkim	1 (3.3)	-	4 (13.3)	-	25 (83.3)
South Sikkim	1 (3.3)	1 (3.3)	1 (3.3)	3 (10.0)	24 (80.0)
Total	4 (4.4)	7 (7.8)	6 (6.7)	5 (5.5)	68 (75.6)

(Source: Field Survey)

Table 6 shows the yearly income of the flower growers/respondents. It is evident from the data in the table that 75.6% of the selected flower growers have an annual income more than Rs.30000, 12.2% of the respondents' annual income ranges between Rs. 20001 to Rs. 30000 whereas 12.2% respondents have annual income between Rs. 10001 to Rs. 20000. It is important to understand the variation in terms of the scale of flower cultivation as some have taken flower cultivation at a small scale. Also flowers are seasonal and the cost varies according to season and off season. It has also been found that some of the respondents have taken up this profession as their primary occupation whereas others have taken it as their secondary occupation.

Table 7
Availing of Loan

District	Loan
East Sikkim	6 (20.0)
West Sikkim	3 (10.0)
South Sikkim	1 (3.3)
Total	10 (11.1)

(Source: Primary Survey)

Data in Table 7 show that only 11.1% of the selected flower growers have taken loan from the government funding agencies.

Table 8
Form of Housing

District	Kachha	Pucca	Half Pucca
East Sikkim	1 (3.3)	24 (80.0)	5 (16.7)
West Sikkim	4 (13.3)	26 (86.7)	-
South Sikkim	5 (16.7)	15 (50.0)	10 (33.3)
Total	10 (11.1)	65 (72.2)	15 (16.7)

(Source: Field Survey)

Table 8 illustrates that majority (72.2%) of the respondents have pucca house, 16.7% have half pucca house which indicates that they are living in good housing conditions.

Table 9
Management of Daily Expenditures

District	Men	Women	Both	Head of the family
East Sikkim	10 (33.3)	3 (10.0)	14 (46.7)	3 (10.0)
West Sikkim	20 (66.7)	4 (13.3)	4 (13.3)	2 (6.7)
South Sikkim	17 (56.7)	8 (26.6)	3 (10.0)	2 (6.7)
Total	47 (52.2)	15 (16.7)	21 (23.3)	7 (7.8)

(Source: Field Survey)

Data in Table 9 show that male respondents are in majority (52.2%) to manage their daily family expenditures whereas 16.7% of the respondents are the females who control the management of the family expenditures.

8. Discussion and Concluding Remarks

In this study we found that the practice of floriculture is made easier in the state due to the policies of the government that encourage the flower growers every now and then providing infrastructural facilities and by recognizing the efforts by prizes given during mega flower festivals held on several occasions. Farmers in Sikkim are all set to take up floriculture at a different level with energy and the hard work all put together. Also there has been an encouragement from the government to accelerate the pace. The flower growers of Sikkim, majority of them are males along with few women have found a new source of earning at present. They have shifted from growing crops to growing of flowers. This is simply because there is a high economic return. Cultivation of flowers at one point of time was seen as a laborious and time consuming work and people were not keen to take up cultivation of flowers as a profession. But, with times the very notion of farming flowers has changed. People grow flowers not only for home gardens but to export outside and sell them off. It also has been observed that most of the financial transactions are done by the male flower growers. Along with the enthusiastic and hard-working farmers, the Department of Floriculture under the Government of Sikkim has taken keen initiatives for the development of flower cultivation. The idea of protected cultivation has been playing an effective role for cultivation of flowers. The farmers are also getting training so that they can use their practical knowledge for cultivation of flowers. They get training not only within the state but at many times they also are sent to other states even to other countries to get better knowledge for cultivation of flowers. Tissue culture laboratories, integrated package house along with cold storage facilities has also been provided in various regions of the state. The farmers also get infrastructural facilities for exporting flowers outside the state of Sikkim as flowers are

perishable and needs to be handled with care. Flower cultivation has opened new rays of hope to the flower cultivators in different regions/districts in Sikkim.

It has also been found through this study that there is a gap in coordination among the cultivators and the floriculture department which makes the existence of floriculture as a large scale industry little difficult. Along with that, also the maintenance of green house is a major problem that most of the farmers face as the cost of it is high therefore once a green house is destroyed due to any reason then it becomes difficult for the farmer/s to bring it back to use because of its high cost. It is also realized that in some of the areas flower cultivators to some extent lack the dedication and patience which is very much needed for growing of flowers. So, it can be concluded that the infrastructural and other facilities exist for the flower growers but how much of it is availed by them is a fact to be found out. If incase they are not using the opportunity and the facility then what could be the reason, is an interesting fact to be figured out. However reasons like lack of awareness among the farmers about the trainings, the distance of the place, minimum market place within state are some of the reasons to be known. Also declaration of Sikkim as an organic state has to some extent discouraged the flower growers for growing flowers. According to them it is difficult to protect flowers without the use of insecticides and pesticides. Also the flower growers are of the opinion that it becomes difficult to treat those plants and save them with the organic fertilizers and pesticides which has already been treated with non-organic pesticides and fertilizers. For a large scale flower growers to make use of the facilities like cold storage, packaging etc. becomes a little difficult because of the distance to where these facilities are provided. Hence, it is important to understand the various visible and invisible difficulties faced by these flower growers of Sikkim and act accordingly to solve their problems.

9. Recommendations

It has been realized during the field survey that the flower growers in Sikkim are facing a major problem in marketing their flowers. The flower growers either have to send flowers to Gangtok or Namchi for sell. It is a long distance to cover for many of the flower growers. Particularly for those farmers who are engaged in small scale farming this distance becomes a problem. They have to pay for the transport. Many times, they have to pay the middle man also. Sikkim State Co-operative Supply and Marketing Federation Ltd (SIMFED) should intervene to solve these issues by arranging pick-up vans which will collect cut flowers from different pick-up points close to the flower farming areas so that flowers can be sent to the market.

Flower cultivators are also of the opinion that Government should take initiative to improve the packaging, storage and export of flowers and also to provide training to them. This could be done by giving them training every month by the departmental experts. More of practical training could be given by taking them to

the places where the packaging is done so that they get well acquainted with the idea of packaging.

It is also recommended that government should find a way out to remove the middle man when it comes to marketing so that the flower cultivators can get the genuine price of the flowers. This could be either done by the Floriculture Department or Sikkim State Co-operative Supply and Marketing Federation Ltd (SIMFED) by collecting or by purchasing flowers directly from the flower growers.

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Book Review

Dr. Nandini Basistha, Politics of Separatism, New Delhi, Vaibhav Publications, 2017, pp xiv + 296

Trivikram Tiwari

The book under review, '*Politics of Separatism*' is an anthology, which explores a much-neglected theme in South Asian history and politics, namely, the politics for separate '*statehood*'. This is also a kind of '*separatism*', which generates continuous disturbance in everyday life. The author tries to make a holistic study of this '*problem*' with two case studies – viz. Rajbanshi-led movement and Gorkha-led movement. Thus this Study tries to theorize the evolution of identity politics leading to separatist mentalities in India. This is the first comparative study of this kind, where two separate but parallel ethnic movements are discussed in detail with their cause, magnitude and fall-outs.

In different chapters how the author has elaborately discussed the issue of intermingling self-interest with separatist mentality is really appreciable. The writer has done a commendable task of bringing together primary sources and secondary sources with overlapping data and contradictory view-points.

With a bias-free manner, this Study revolves around hundred years' (1910-2010) history of movement of two most prominent groups of identity seekers of Northern part of West Bengal – viz. Gorkhas and Rajbanshis. The Study elaborates how it took various forms with changing scenario & circumstances, and submerged with favourable governmental approaches. But every time phoenix-rise of their movement can be seen. Thus, in different chapters, the author tried to analyse the actual condition of the '*activism*' and tries to validate the question of '*marginality*'.

Chapter 1 basically theorise the scope and eruption of politics for statehood in the India's federalist structure and how Indian Government tries to cope up with these separatist mentalities with federal policies. With different case studies in the Indian scenario, this Chapter tries to point out the challenging nature of India's nation-building process and gravity of the situation.

Chapter 2 tries to establish a co-relation between multiculturalism and justice in Indian perspective and hiccups in creating a '*just society*'. Elaborating the debate between '*pluralism*' vis-à-vis '*multiculturalism*', here the uniqueness of Indian circumstances is located.

Chapter 3 is about historical separate identity, economic backwardness and changing demographic set up of North Bengal that can be supportive to

understand the notion of relative deprivation of this region and marginalization of minorities with the influx of Bengalese in every sphere.

Inhabited by a vast variety of tribes and nationalities, North Bengal is a place with a great variety as well as versatility. One may question on its integrity as a 'region'. But the author describes its uniqueness. North Bengal is a term used for the northern parts of Bangladesh and West Bengal. However, this Study deals with only the Northern part of West Bengal, comprising six districts – viz. Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, Cooch Behar, Malda, Uttar (North) Dinajpur and Dakshin (South) Dinajpur. The landscape, history and cultures of each district have a distinguished character. The geographical area of North Bengal is 21855 square kilometers, which is 1/4th of West Bengal. This region attracts importance in both national and international sphere for its strategic location. It is bounded by three states (viz. Assam, Bihar and Sikkim), three countries (viz. Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal) and it is the only connecting link between Northeast India and the rest of India. How different socio-political and ethnic movements are becoming a threat to national security has also been discussed.

Chapter 4 illustrates why and how Rajbangshis got united on casteist line and ultimately took the path of separatist politics. Caste in West Bengal has been notoriously understudied for at least three reasons. Firstly, the political culture of postcolonial West Bengal has tended to make all talk of 'caste' a taboo. Secondly, West Bengal, unlike many other regions in India, has not experienced major caste-based social movements since 1947. Thirdly, the ruling elites of this eastern Indian region, the *bhadralok*, though internally differentiated along many axes, have exercised a virtually uncontested social dominance that is rather unique even in a country where the reproduction of power relations is anything but uncommon. In this Study, the author address each of these intellectual and political concerns by taking an interdisciplinary perspective that draws on cutting-edge scholarship in the fields of history, anthropology, sociology, and cultural studies. She not only interrogates why caste continues to be neglected in the politics of and scholarship on West Bengal, but also discusses how caste relations have, in fact, permeated the politics of the region in the colonial and postcolonial eras. In fact, caste in West Bengal has overt and covert aspects. On the one hand, there is the obvious issue of upper-caste dominance in the domain of formal politics despite the sway of communism for more than three decades. On the other hand, there are hidden, even insidious, ways in which a modern caste society has flourished since colonial times and shaped academic, journalistic, and popular understandings of Bengali society, culture, history, and politics. This Chapter, instead, sustains an intellectual conversation that is both timely and relevant for those interested in understanding the nature of politics in contemporary South Asia.

This Chapter explores, in an interdisciplinary way, the making and maintenance of a modern caste society that has implications well beyond the case of West Bengal. It is divided into three sections, which correspond to the key arguments

we wish to make. The first examines caste formations and organised resistance to these in colonial Bengal. Hidden histories of caste come into conversation here with fine-grained studies of caste-based movements. The second probes the extent to which partition in 1947 served as a political watershed moment in the transformation of caste society in West Bengal. This section seeks causal connections between decolonisation, the physical displacement of populations, and *bhadralok* dominance in postcolonial West Bengal. The third and final section focuses on communist and post-communist political trajectories of the region. We see here how the ethnographic present is shaped by the many parts of a caste-ridden society, albeit in ways that are neither obvious nor pre-determined.

Chapter 5 underlines different identity of Rajbangshi/Kamtapuri language and importance of inclusion of this language in the education policy of West Bengal. Here the whole controversy regarding the Rajbangshi/Kamtapuri language and politicization of the matter have been discussed.

Chapter 6 focuses three major problems of Rajbangshi-led democratic movements – viz. overlapping territorial demands of statehood, confusion over ethnic origin and linguistic status of Rajbangshis, and conflict between leaders.

Chapter 7 underlined the Genesis of the Gorkhaland Movement where the Study explored different reasons for movement and also underlines how upliftment of leaders (viz. Subhash Ghising and Bimal Gurung) in socio-economic sphere diverted their mentality against the main spirit of the Gorkhaland movement and subsequently new personalities took leadership.

Thus, this collection of co-related essays can become a benchmark for the future as well as spur new research agendas and projects that will put the region into a much-needed conversation on the politics of separatism with the rest of India.