DIALOGUE

QUARTERLY

Subscription Rates :

For Individuals (in India)

Single issue	Rs. 30.00
Annual	Rs. 100.00
For 3 years	Rs. 250.00

For Institutions:

Single Issue	Rs. 60.00 in India, Abroad US $ 15
Annual	Rs. 200.00 in India, Abroad US $ 50
For 3 years	Rs. 500.00 in India, Abroad US $ 125

All cheques and Bank Drafts (Account Payee) are to be made in the name of "ASTHA BHARATI", Delhi.

Advertisement Rates :

Outside back-cover	Rs. 25, 000.00	Per issue
Inside Covers	Rs. 20, 000.00	,,
Inner page coloured	Rs. 15, 000.00	,,
Inner full page	Rs. 10, 000.00	,,

DIALOGUE

QUARTERLY

The views expressed by the contributors do not necessarily represent the view-point of the journal.

Contents

Editorial Perspective

Farmer's Protests: Lessons for the Government

Even after eight rounds of talks between the protesting farmers and the government, the great divide remains. The farm leaders continue to take the maximalist position of seeking the repeal of the three Central farm laws, even when the Union Agriculture Minister talks about discussing the laws clause by clause. The good news is both sides have agreed to meet again on January 15 for the ninth time to find a way out of this stalemate. The grim reality, however, is that both sides have taken rigid positions from where any early and easy resolution doesn't seem to forthcoming. While the government has made it abundantly clear that it is ready to discuss everything except the repeal of the three laws, the farm leaders won't be accepting anything but the abrogation of the three Central legislations. And as the leaders, both political as well as farm, fail to find a middle ground, it's the common farmers, hailing mostly from Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh, who have been forced to brave the biting winter in their makeshift tents at Delhi's borders since November 26.

Analysed closely, the situation is a classic case of how not to handle an issue. The government failed to comprehend the concerns among a section of farmers, especially from Punjab, regarding the three farm Bills passed by the Central government in September 2020. Farmers were uneasy about talks of MSP and *mandis* being terminated. The farmers' agitation actually gained momentum on these two points. Today the government is ready to give in writing that it is not going to end the MSP and *mandis*. But the question is:

Why did it fail to reach out to farmers when these issues were first raised and the protests were confined to Punjab alone? Why did the Central government ministers not reach out to them then, the way they are doing now in Vigyan Bhawan?

The farmers' stir could have been handled much better had the government dealt with it initially—and with empathy. The government, may be, was mislead by bureaucratic advice of letting the agitation lose steam on its own, and failed to act on time. And by the time it woke up to the gravity of the situation, the agitators were already on the borders of Delhi and the agitation had become much more than the issues of MSP and *mandis*. Whether one agrees or not, the fact is the farmers' protests have acquired certain political colour today. It has also become a prestige battle where no one wants to be seen to be conceding. This explains why even after the government's repeated assurances that the MSP and *mandis* won't go away, and also its readiness to discuss the three farm laws clause by clause, there is no movement in the talks. The farm union leaders' "my way or highway" stand won't be beneficial for the farmers' cause.

What's ironical, amid the ongoing protests, is that the track record of the Modi government on MSP isn't bad at all. In fact, on the issue, the Modi government has done much more than the previous dispensation. MSP payment to farmers for paddy rose by 2.4 times to Rs 4.95 lakh crore between 2014 and 2019 under the Modi government, as against only Rs 2.06 lakh crore under the previous Congress-led regime between 2009-2014. MSP to farmers for wheat increased by 1.77 times during 2014-19, to Rs 2.97 lakh crore, as compared to Rs 1.68 lakh crore in the 2009-14 period. Also, MSP payment for pulses rose by 75 times under the Modi dispensation, to reach Rs 49,000 crore, in sharp contrast to Rs 645 crore under the UPA-II.

To its credit, the Modi government, in July 2018, announced MSP at 1.5 times the cost of production for 14 kharif crops. This was based on the recommendations of

the Swaminathan Commission and National Commission of Farmers, 2006, which the previous dispensation failed to implement despite being in power till 2014. Here, one needs to clarify that the role of MSP in Indian agriculture is overhyped. It, after all, relates to just over 6% of farmers, with an overwhelming majority of small farmers not going to the *mandi* to sell their produce.

The current stalemate is tragic in the sense that the issues involved are serious for our agriculture and its future. Over exploration of groundwater table, consequent need to change cropping pattern, glut of procured wheat and paddy and related storage capacity and lower market price than the MSP are the core issues defying serious discussion due to the vested interest of by farmers in the MSP and Mandis and govt.'s failure to anticipate it. Any compromise, which seems probable, will only prolong the wait for the agricultural reforms. Govt. will have to find better ways to deal with the farmers and their concerns, perhaps in piecemeal.

The Modi government has failed on two fronts: One, it didn't reach out to farmers when they first raised their concerns. But even more important than that, it should have engaged farmers and their leaders while formulating the three laws. What the Agriculture Minister proposes to do now—to discuss the farm laws threadbare, clause by clause—he and his team could have done before September.

The Centre's second failure is even more significant: The battle of perception. It's something this dispensation should look at more seriously. Despite doing reasonably well for the farmers, the government still struggles to shrug off its pro-trader image. The government is often seen wanting in putting the facts across. It sometimes gives the impression that it doesn't care; at other times, it is seen as being helpless. The government needs to beef up its defences in dealing with perception wars and need for a wider consultation on such measures.

Be that as it may, first the CAA stir and now the farm protests give the government enough reason to look inwards and see where it has gone wrong. Both the measures were

desirable and well intended, yet faced resistance due to lack of sufficient communication on the purpose. It seems to be a complex function of govt's over confidence and absence of a responsible opposition at the centre to keep the govt. on toes. The country can't afford endless protests and agitations, especially when the economy is badly hit by the Covid-19 pandemic and the consequent lockdown.

—**J.N. Roy**

The Contagion and its Consequences: As Unfolded in Northeast India

M. P. Bezbaruah*

Since detection of the first infected case in the end of January 2020 in Kerala, the Novel Corona Virus have had a relentless spread throughout India, first attacking the economically more active globalized parts and the metropolitan cities, then fanning out to the hinterland regions and rural areas. Although the curve of incidence of COVID infections has finally shown an indication of bending downward, apprehension is rife that in the autumn festival season and the winter fog that will follow may give the virus an opportunity to resurge.

Northeast region of the country has had some natural advantage in its endeavor to withstand the incidence and impact of the contagion. First, late appearance of the virus in the region gave it some critical breathing space to tone up its health infrastructure to meet the challenges of the contagion. Secondly, for those not familiar with the geography of the Northeast region, it is necessary to note that nearly three-fourths of the region is mountainous over which a third of the region's population is thinly dispersed. People in the hills being naturally distanced, the conditions there are less ideal for the virus to spread quickly. In the plains, which comprise only one fourth of the area but accommodates about two thirds of the population of the region, the situation is however somewhat different. The population density here is high,generally higher than the all-India density; and hence physical distancing among people is more difficult to practice. Implications of these topographical and

* M P Bezbaruah, Professor & Coordinator UGC-SAP, Department of Economics, Gauhati University, Guwahati-781014, India. Email: bezbaruah.mp@gmail.com, mpb@gauhati.ac.in Phone: +91-9864055485 / 7002544996.

demographic differences within the region on incidence of COVID infection can be clearly seen in the numbers in table 1. The hill states of Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland have lower percentage shares of detected COVID 19 infected cases than their population shares in India, indicating lower incidence of the outbreak. Manipur, despite having some relatively thickly populated plains besides its hilly regions, has also recorded a lower rate of infection than its population share. The relatively lower contagious situations of these states have enabled the region to have a lower share of infected case than its population share in India. Arunachal Pradesh, the other mountainous state, has of course a slightly higher percentage share of infection than its population share. The other two states of region, namely Tripura and Assam, where population densities are fairly high[1], have higher infection rates than the all-India rate. Yet Assam with a fairly higher density of population than the density of the country as a whole has done well to keep its share of infected cases only marginally above its population share.

Table 1: COVID Situation in Northeast India as of 22 October 2020

States/ Region/ Country	% of Indian Population	Cases Detected		Cases Recovered		Fatality	
		Number	% of India	Number	% of India	Number	% of India
Arunachal	0.11	13,912	0.18	11,199	0.16	31	0.03
Assam	2.60	203,282	2.62	177,659	2.57	896	0.76
Manipur	0.23	16,276	0.21	12,197	0.18	124	0.11
Meghalaya	0.26	8,621	0.11	6,679	0.10	78	0.07
Mizoram	0.09	2,341	0.03	2,174	0.03	0	0.00
Nagaland	0.16	8,296	0.11	6,399	0.09	29	0.02
Tripura	0.30	29,922	0.39	27,229	0.39	331	0.28
Northeast India	3.75	282650	3.65	243,536	3.52	1,489	1.27
India	100.00	7,744,986	100.00	6,923,184	100.00	117,657	100.00

Source: Authors calculation using data accessed on 22 October 2020 fromhttp://statisticstimes.com/demographics/india/indian-states-population.php and https://covidindia.org/

The other important feature of the contagion in the region, which can be seen from the last column of table 1, is that the fatality rate among the infected has been much lower in the region and itsconstituent

states than in the country as a whole. This lower fatality rate is a tribute to the effort and organization of warriors against corona in the states.

As for impact on the economy, it is arguable that the situation in the region has been less adverse than for the country as a whole. This argument is founded on a couple of factors.

First, agriculture still occupies a significantly higher share in the State Domestic Products of the states of the region than its share in India's GDP. The data on the economic growth in India in the first quarter of 2020-21, shows that in the middle of almost all-round negative growth, agriculture alone was able to return a positive growth of about 3.5%. Relatively larger agricultural sector therefore must have helped the region to moderate shrinkage of its economy following the lockdown beginning on 25 March 2020. Using two alternative methods, this author earlier arrived at an estimate of 20 to 25% shrinkage of the economy of Assam in April 2020, coinciding approximately with the first month of the lockdown. The fact that the lockdown was subsequently eased enabling economic activities to revive; there must have been some recovery of the lost ground in the next two months of the quarter. Factoring in of these developments puts shrinkage of Assam's economy in the first quarter of 2020-21 at most at 15% which is much less than 23.5% of the country as a whole.

Secondly, despite doing away of the Special Category status of the states of the region as per the recommendations of the 14th Finance Commission, the states of the region barring Assam have continued to receive higher than average share in devolution of central fiscal resources due to the states being mountainous, having international borders as boundaries and retaining extensive green cover. This favorable fiscal entitlement should have given these states somewhat greater fiscal strength to counter the onslaught of the corona virus and its impact on the economy.

Yet it is necessary to note that economies of the states of the region might have been affected differently from the contagion owing to their distinctive chracteristics. For example Meghalaya, where summer tourism is usually an important activity, lost its entire tourist season due to lockdown and restrictions on movement of people. When the data on the second and the third quarters will become available, it will hardly be a surprise to find this state has had a longer stretch of shrinkage.

Apart from geography and demography the hills and the plain areas of the region have differences in their institutional set-ups regarding land-laws and movement of people. These differences have their imprints on the organization of the economies. Assam, and to a lesser extent Tripura, are senders of migrant workers to other parts of India and also the other states of the region. The other states of the region are mostly employers of migrant workers. The economic impact of migrant workers returning home has therefore played out differently in these two categories of states. In Assam accommodation of returned migrant workers meant more competition in the labour market and consequent falling of real wages and impoverishment of those engaged in the informal sectors. If revival of sectors like transport and hospitality has been slow in Assam, it is because of factors other than shortage of workers. In contrast, the states and sectors which depended on migrant workers are handicapped by labour shortage in reviving their economies. Revival of construction activities in Manipur, for instance, has been restrained as most migrant workers working there before the lockdown have not returned.

The number of daily new cases of COVID infection finally started to decline in India from the middle of September. But as Prime Minister Narendra Modi reminded the nation in his address of October 20, it is not yet the time for us to lower our guards against the virus. Its spread may have slowed down a little, but it is far from being down and out. We need to learn our lesson from experiences of European nation like Spain, France and Great Britain which are currently experiencing second wave of infection following opening up their countries too quickly and extensively. India can ill-afford a similar second wave.

Notes

1   As per 2011 Census of India, Assam had a density of population of 382 persons per square kilometer. The corresponding number for Tripura was 350. The density for India as a whole was 382.

In Fighting COVID, the Manipur Government Needs to be Reminded that Answers to Problems Are Often Counterintuitive

Pradip Phanjoubam*

The path to truth can be sometimes counterintuitive, therefore often missed or dismissed by those seeking answers to problems. This thought returns in the midst of Manipur's fight against the COVID pandemic, and what are seemingly inadvertent flaws in the government's response, precisely on account not being mindful of the fact that solutions to problems do not always follow what are believed to be common sensical approach. Perhaps this is also why Italian Communist philosopher, Antonio Gramsci, was suspicious of the popular understanding of common sense, for according to him, this is not an inherent condition of nature but an interpretative conception of the laws governing natural phenomena, constructed through prolonged exposure to hegemonic ideas of dominant cultures and traditions. Hence what is common sense for orthodox Christians, Hindus, Muslims etc, can vary, and even radically so. Gramsci even suggested adoption of what he called "counter-hegemony" in the deconstruction of these existing hegemonies. But without going into these arguments, let us see where the Manipur government might have gone wrong and may still be going wrong, considering these weaknesses of common sense are not acknowledged or even noticed.

The standard operational procedure, SOP, prescribed by authoritative bodies such as the WHO and ICMR, in the fight against the spread of the COVID virus is well known now, and since there is

*The writer is Editor, The Shillong Times.

no remedial medicine found yet, the underlying principle of their recommendation is to have people avoid crowding and physical contacts to the extent possible. The government's duty therefore is to evolve mechanisms to facilitate and ensure this condition in the everyday routines of the people at large. The first of the governmental resort was the prolonged lockdown beginning March during which everybody was expected to stay home and avoid social interfaces. Much has already been written about this, and how in the case of Manipur this began much ahead of time, even when all those who may be carrying the virus were in quarantine, unnecessary fatiguing the population before the actual battle began. What should have been done was to have strict screening quarantine regime of those retuning from outside the state and who have come back with the virus, to be allowed to return home only when it was confirmed they tested negative of the virus. This way the rest of the society would have been left with a reserve of energy to fight on when the battle got tougher. Quite ironically, when the battle has become tougher now, the government is compelled to soften its strategies, when it should have been the other way around. As the scourges of the pandemic peaks, both at the national level and in Manipur, the government is in the process of unlocking in stages. The government is however putting calibrated restrictions on the market places, in the belief less shops and vending spaces open will automatically prevent crowds forming. This unfortunately is where the counterintuition question comes in to wreck the presumption.

At the very basic, there are two ways of reducing crowding. One is to restrict people coming out into public spaces, in particular market places. The more the number of people remaining home, quite obviously the less people there would be to crowd public spaces. The other is to enlarge the public spaces. The more the area of public spaces there is, the more the freedom there will be for all people to come out and yet not cause crowding. If crowding is what is to be avoided, the choices before the government is to make arrangement for either of the two options. The government has chosen the former option and as Manipur unlocks, there have been severe reduction in market spaces, as the number of shops and markets allowed to open on any given day remains restricted, and there is also mandatory closure of all shops on Sundays. Likewise, the number of public transport vehicles on the road too have been restricted, again with the presumption that there will be less people

coming out if there are less transport means. One fact ignored here is, after seven months, there are too many people who just cannot remain indoors and survive. They have to come out and earn to make a living, and most do not have cold storage facilities at home so are compelled to come out to buy their provisions of perishable goods at short intervals, preferably daily. Everybody by now knows what the challenge is, but by necessity most are now compelled to come out of home.

This being the reality, the government must reconsider its strategy of restricting public spaces as the means to prevent crowding and instead work on the counterintuitive measure of increasing market places and putting more transport vehicles on the roads. In Imphal for instance, instead of shutting down any of the three Khwairambund Keithels, the resort should have been to open all of them, though only a third of the sellers allowed to vend in them so the prescribed SOP distance of one or two meters between each can be introduced. Then in addition, government should have constructed temporary sheds at the Polo Ground and other open grounds in the city, to accommodate those excluded from the Keithels and more, again ensuring maintaining the mandatory SOP is possible.

There is another side to the problem to be dealt with – buyers crowding. Again, two reasons can be considered as primary. One, small vending spaces, therefore related to the earlier proposition of expanding these spaces. Two, shortened time for shopping. If shopping time has been restricted, shoppers' concentration will increase around the opening hours. If shops and markets are closed on some days, while these days may see not see many people in public spaces, shoppers will rush out with urgency on the days on which shops open, resulting in more likelihood of crowding. The resort therefore should have been for the shops and markets to be permitted to open longer hours and throughout the week. In fact, so long as the COVID crisis lasts, willing shopkeepers and vendors should be allowed to open even on Sundays, for there is nothing that says COVID is any more virulent on Sundays. If the shoppers know they can get their provisions anytime, they will be more relaxed and for their own convenience, tend to look for lean shopping hours rather than rush at first opportunity.

Again, when the COVID pandemic first started dawning on Manipur, the government had come up an innovative idea of setting up some sort of farm commodities stock exchange where government can

buy perishable farm produces from the farmers at government fixed rates, and then resell them at a regulated pace through vendors in different markets. This was to be aimed at easing farmers rushing to the markets and panic selling. The idea seems to have been abandoned midway, but if it is feasible to set up such a system even now, it can contribute to keeping markets from getting crowding, and also remove farmers distress that their produces may go unsold and thus waste. We do wish the government will give these suggestions a serious thought, even if they may appear counterintuitive.

The Ideas of Swaraj in India

Rupak Kumar*

Swaraj, as an ideal of Indian notion of freedom, has its underpinnings in the philosophical and historical writings of Aurobindo Ghosh, Rabindranath Tagore, and Mahatma Gandhi. However, in the parlance of modern Indian Nationalist Movement, Swaraj as an Indian path to political freedom and self- government gained its recognition initially by Dadabhai Naoroji in the Presidential address of the Indian National Congress in 1906. It was further carried out by Tilak who in nationalistic & radical fashion proclaimed 'Swaraj is my birthright and I will have it'.

There are different streams of Swaraj put forward by different religious and social philosophers, political leaders and several other academicians. The meaning of Swaraj varies from self-government to self-rule, self-control, self-mastery, to attain internal autonomy, to strive for universal freedom devoid of any kind of passion in life, self- reliance, discipline and self-training, spiritualization of spirit and to attain Moksha etc.

The first part of the article deals with different ideas of Swaraj as propounded by prominent philosophers like Aurobindo and Tagore. The second part, deals with Gandhi's conception of Swaraj and its differences from the commonsense understanding of Swaraj as popularized by the Congress and other leaders. In the third and concluding part, my focus would be to place these thinkers on one platform in order to negotiate and generate the critique of the idea of Swaraj along with highlighting its relevance in contemporary society.

---

* Rupak Kumar is Research Scholar at the Centre for the Study of Law and Governance, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi-110067. Mobile No. 09650654527.

Idea of Swaraj in the Philosophy of Aurobindo and Tagore

Swaraj as a struggle against external authority and domination in every terms culminates itself with the conception of self. The domain of attainment of Swaraj is located into self-i.e.,it is the individual who have to quest for the Swaraj. The onus is upon the individual agency. It is in this sense Aurobindo defined the conception of human freedom and flourishing. It is spiritual in nature. For him, true Swaraj for India is vested in the resumption of her great role of teacher and guide and self-liberation of the people for the final fulfillment of the Vedantic ideal of politics. The conception of Swaraj, here, is influenced by the traditional Hindu view of self- liberation (Brown 1984: 432). However, the invocation of Vedantic ideals invariably appealed to the cultural inheritance of the Hindu community and equated Indian Civilization with the Hinduism of the Vedic period, (Mahajan 2013: 47) whereas Tagore used a more universalistic language and invoked ideals that had a much wider appeal and were not speaking only about one community.

If the fundamental meaning of Swaraj is taken as 'self-control' or 'self-mastery', then in spiritual domain it holds the idea of achieving internal freedom or autonomy. Both Aurobindo and Tagore endorse the concept of internal freedom as opposed to external freedom. It delves into two basic ideals of individual and universal freedom (Brown 1984: 434). Both the ideals of freedom have their strings attached to the socio-political freedom as it cannot be realized or sustained without a change in the thinking of the individual (Mahajan 2013: 47). And in fact universal change has to be accomplished by the change that every individual brings into and understand their spiritual journey of life. But the failure, according to Aurobindo, in attaining Swaraj is the nonconformist approach of one's reason with that of other. Their reasoning is not in tandem to make any sort of rational adjustments of one's life with the life of others. This leads to a self-centered and self-seeking approach to individual life and thus to the community. So, Aurobindo suggests that the path of Sadhana and Tapasya becomes indispensable and essential if one wants to attain Swaraj. And the means to attain sadhana and tapasya lies in the Indian civilization. So, Swaraj is something that is closely intertwined with the reenergizing the mind and following the civilization of India. Aurobindo advocated for the Swadeshi which reflected the notion of cultural self-determination

(Mahajan 2013: 46).Unlike Aurobindo, Tagore's idea of Swaraj lies in the freedom of mind and pursuit of the universal ethic of humanity. It was neither about going to any civilization nor does it advocated for Swadeshi or Moksha. On the contrary, he challenged the social and political boundaries that were constructed by society, nation etc. & boundaries that separate one person from another on grounds of religion and caste, language and nationality (Mahajan2013: 53). His thesis argued for freedom of mind against the inertness of mind. The dormant mind makes one subordinate and others superordinate to external forms of authority such as tradition and custom. He argues for endorsing sympathy and compassion among human beings.

Tagore's view on Swaraj as self-mastery clearly urges for self-reliance and sovereignty of the mind (Brown 1984: 436). Swaraj in material arena cannot be realized unless it is achieved in spiritual domain of the individual. As the result, external freedom becomes merely the consequence and not the precondition of the internal freedom. And Tagore's Swarajas self-mastery is harmonizing freedom in the social-political and spiritual realms. Tagore chosen the path of education and emphasized upon the training of the human mind to achieve Swaraj unlike the path of tapasya or sadhana or even succumbing to moral and social code of behavior. Tagore has firm belief that education can offer 'freedom from ignorance from the laws of nature, and freedom from passion and prejudice in our communication with the human world' (Mahajan 1984: 55). Education would nurture a person for whom 'no temptations, no delusion, can induce to surrender the dignity of the intellect into the keeping of others'.

It is training to the individuals where the self is willing to give up the divisions created between human beings within society and allow everyone- the self and the other – to explore the freedom of their mind and spirit. So, Aurobindo's attempt to locate the idea of Swaraj goes with the civilizational and cultural aspect of Hindu religion whereas Tagore locates it in the understanding of self-other dichotomy. His appeal to embrace the whole universe, irrespective of any ascriptive ties, is the path to the Swaraj i.e., to overcome arbitrary boundaries and to endorse the whole world.

Gandhi on Swaraj

Gandhi's concept of Swaraj has deep underpinnings in his understanding of human beings. The time when Gandhi was formulating the conception

of Swaraj, there were already several meanings of the concept available in the socio-political realm of the freedom struggle. Largely, for many of the leaders, Swaraj meant for national independence or independence from British rule i.e., a replacement of foreign domination by self-government. Gandhi in his book 'Hind Swaraj' clearly argues while trying to define Swaraj that you can drive English rulers out physically out of India, but if you continue endorsing their culture and system of rule, then the independent India will be referred to as Englishtan in the place of Hindustan. So, for Gandhi 'Swaraj or freedom would mean Indians learning to rule themselves in terms of their civilization' (Kaviraj 2002: 132). Swaraj, for Gandhi, never stood for replacement of one form of coercive rule by another. The essence of it lies in independence with self-rule, it would mean nothing more than the rule of the strong (Parel 2002: 05). The moment Indians realize that they do not want western civilization, the cultural authority of the west, and consequently British rule would become redundant (Kaviraj 2002: 132). So, Gandhi's notion of freedom was positive in nature. The domain of struggle was located into the self only. There lies an obvious difference between Swaraj and independence in Gandhi's philosophy. Independence carries along it the meaning of negative freedom whereas Swaraj or self-rule carries the notion of positive-freedom (Parel 2002:07). Though, for him, independence is necessary but not sufficient condition for the realization of full human flourishing. Human flourishing is possible only when "one's rule over one's own mind" and it is real Swarajfor Gandhi (Parel 2009: 118). It is the self-control over one's passion and desires. In other words, it is the process of removing the internal obstacles to freedom. The crux of the matter is "….that mind is a restless bird; the more it gets the more it wants, and still remains unsatisfied. The more we indulge our passions, the more unbridled they become." (Parel 2009: 68)

Gandhi attacked western civilization by saying that it has infected us by the 'desire', 'want', and 'passion'. The modernity that it brought along corroded the fabric of Indian civilization. So, one has to strive for self-rule, it has to be achieved by constant practices like 'passive-resistance', 'non-violence', 'soul-force', 'Swadeshi', 'truthfulness', etc. as unlike external obstacles which can be removed by some transforming material conditions, whereas, internal obstacles need regular practice of virtue. These practices will inculcate virtue to the individuals which

is a precondition in order to attain spiritual freedom and self-rule. With these practices, gradually, individuals get acquainted with self-transformative activities and a spiritually integrated person will no longer be the slave of the passions (Parel 2002: 16). Gandhi defined Swaraj as "a state of mind to be experienced by us. We've to win it by our own strength…..Swaraj consists on our efforts to win it". (Parel 2002: 16)

Gandhi never wanted to confine the idea of Swaraj as something limited to a theory or a doctrine. He strived to make it an experiential entity (Parel 2009: 73). Perhaps, due to this commitment towards his goal that he brought path breaking conceptual change in the Indian notion of spiritual freedom. According to Indian tradition, spiritual freedom was supposed to be an apolitical and asocial domain of achieving moksha (Parel 2002: 17), hence requiring withdrawal from the socio-political world. Even Vivekananda was opposed to take any part in politics while carrying on his project of spiritual freedom (Parel 2002: 4), however, Gandhi interpreted self-rule in such a way as to give spiritual freedom a social, political and even economic profile.

Gandhi succeeded in doing so as political and economic conditions of any society impeding the path of spiritual freedom, one has to deal with the socio-political realm of daily life and if it is dominated by any foreign rule, it will act as an obstacle towards the human flourishing. Individual cannot be indifferent to the socio-political bondages of the community. It must go together, hand in hand, that's why, in 1939, Gandhi declared "Swaraj of a people means the sum total of the Swaraj (self-rule) of individuals" (Brown 1984: 436). Gandhi's ideal of Swaraj would only be holistic when there is continual reciprocity and participation among each and every member of society. He used the analogy of Ramrajya for describing his intention of Swaraj,

"Swarajand Ramrajya are one and the something…..we call a state Ramrajya when both the ruler and his subjects are straightforward, when both are pure in heart, when both are inclined towards self-sacrifice, when both exercise restraint and self-control while enjoying worldly pleasures, and when the relationship between the two is as good as that between the father and son. It is because we have forgotten this that we talk of democracy or the government of the people. Although this is the age of democracy, I do not know what the word connotes; however, I would say that democracy exists where the people's voice is heard, where love of the people holds a place of prime importance.

In my Ramrajya, however, public opinion cannot be measured by counting of heads or raising of hands."

In the concluding chapter of Hind Swaraj, Gandhi laid out the ways to attain Swaraj or self-rule, he argued that soul-force or love-force is the path and for this, Swadeshi becomes the necessity of the time. Most importantly, Gandhi reminded us that while dissenting against western civilization, we bear no enmity or hatred towards the English. But towards their civilization which is demeaning for Indian Civilization.

While trying to materialize the ideals of Swaraj, Gandhi presented a model of village Swaraj and begins to explain that

"….It is a complete republic, independent of its neighbors for its own vital wants, and yet interdependent for many others in which dependence is a necessity…….education will be compulsory up to the final basic course…. there will be no caste such as we have today with their graded untouchability. Non- violence with its technique of Satyagraha and non-cooperation will be the sanction of the village community……here, there is perfect democracy based upon individual freedom. The individual is the architect of his own government. The law of non-violence rules him and his government. He and his village are able to defy the might of the world." (Harijan; 26-07-1942; Village Swaraj)

After independence, staunch socialist like J P Narayan resonated in same frequency while defining his model of village Swaraj. He stressed on the concept of the Sarvodaya in order to attain Swaraj. He argued that currently the democracy in India is found to be resting on a very narrow base i.e., similar to an inverted pyramid (Prasad 1980: 244). The people have not been able to experience the sensation of Swaraj, hence democracy in post-independent India is shrinking. So, the urge is to rush for Panchayati Raj or Swaraj from below which will lay the foundation of participatory democracy in India.

It is indispensable to mention here, that Gandhi used the concept of Swaraj in prouder sense. He applied Swaraj in four different contexts such as national independence, political freedom of the individual, economic freedom of the independence and also spiritual freedom of the individual or self-rule (Parel 2002: 01). But, he gives primacy to the self-rule whereas other nationalist leaders confined themselves to the first three conceptions of Swaraj only. Gandhi viewed self-rule as

an opportunity for India to be unlike modern western societies, to retain her traditional social forms with some reform, as it was true civilization for Indians (Kaviraj2002: 133).

Swaraj in Ideas

One more fascinating variant of Swaraj can be found in an essay "Swaraj in Ideas" written by Prof. Krishna Chandra Bhattacharya in 1931. He presented a different dimension of Swaraj which has to do with the freedom from cultural domination. He begins to argue that political subjection primarily restraints the outer life of the people but gradually it sink into the inner life of the soul by controlling the means of cultural apparatuses of the society. It controls the mode of education, curriculum etc. and make the people mental slaves a tutelage of foreign culture. The cultural adulteration slowly leads to cultural subjection in an unconscious manner. It plays with the indigenous ideas and people's sentiment with the help of vernaculars. It induces a 'shadow mind' which lacks the genuine creativeness. Whenever, 'a person can shake himself free from it, he feels as though the scales fell from his eyes and experiences a rebirth and that is what he referred to as Swaraj In Ideas.'

The foreign cultural elements induce an illusionary progressiveness in contrast to the conservatism of the existing tradition, hence establishing a hegemony that cannot be experienced in practical life. Once hegemony of external authority established over us, there seems uniformity in reason which leads to docile acceptance of everything without any sort of criticism and thus, strengthening the mental plight further. Bhattacharya's ideal of Swaraj depicts the penetrating capacity of political domination that how much it can harm the social fabric of India in terms of culture, tradition and civilization. So, merely the political freedom is not going to make us free but freedom from cultural and ideological bondage of the oppressor in true sense stands for self-determination of India. And in reality Gandhi stood for this purpose only. He adopted the means of reawakening the Indian civilization in the minds and soul of the common masses. He understood the intricacies of the dominating structure and Swaraj lies in breaking the hegemony and structure of domination of western civilization. Hence, his quest was always directed towards the goal only with the formulated path.

Contemporary Resurgence of Swaraj and Conclusion

The idiom of Swaraj, once again, resurged in India during the struggle against corruption after 2012. But what is disappointing about it is that even in this time, it remained woven around participatory government by organizing Muhalla-Sabhas. It would seek the opinion of the masses through different mechanical as well as technological helps, directly approaching the masses or even indirectly establishing a link between government and the people etc which has been totally abandoned as of now. Even in 21st century, Gandhian Swaraj is still considered as esoteric in nature as well as in practice. In the popular culture, Swaraj stands for making hue and cry about greater participation in policy making and larger stake in the process of governance. The inception of this trend can be traced back to the movements led by JP during 1970s demanding more transparency and corruption free India. The flaws of this kind of Swaraj in which decision making takes place at the local wards or colonies regarding the policies of that particular area lies with the fact that it has a tendency to tilt towards the majority community.

Conclusion

it can be argued that the beauty of the idea of Swaraj remains as long as it is congregational in its aspect. It represents the Indian idea of freedom loaded with the unique civilizational values. Some advocated about keeping socio-religious arena aloof of political domain, whereas several others left no stone unturned in balancing the intermingling of political and socio-religious domain. Gandhi's idea of Swaraj and the how he himself practiced throughout his life can be seen as an exemplar. To use it as an exemplar may signify that the importance of *Swaraj* will be further amplified as Gandhi himself followed it. However, the dream of Swaraj is still not even configured in its nascent sense as we stopped experiencing the essence of it. Gandhi warned us that

"Do not consider this Swaraj to be like a dream. Here there is no idea of sitting still. The Swaraj that I wish to picture before you nd me is such that, after we have once realized it, we will endeavor to the end of our lifetime to persuade others to do likewise. But such Swaraj has to be experimented by each one for himself." (Gandhi: Hind Swaraj : 73)

References:

Brown, C.M. (1984). "Svaraj, the Indian Ideal of Freedom: A Political or Religious Concept?". Religious Studies, 20:3, Sep 1984: 429-441.

Brown, Judith M. & Anthony J. Parel (eds.) (2011).The Cambridge Companion to Gandhi.USA: Cambridge University Press.

Mahajan, G. (2013). India: Political ideas and the making of a democratic discourse. London: Zed Books.

Mukherjee, R. (2009). "Gandhi's Swaraj".Economic and Political Weekly, 44:50, Dec 12-18. 2009: 34-39.

Parel, Anthony J. (ed.) (2002). Gandhi, Freedom, and Self-Rule.New Delhi: Vistaar Publications.

Parel, Anthony J. (ed.) (2009 reprinted). Hind Swaraj and Other Writings: Gandhi. New Delhi: Cambridge University Press.

Prasad, B. (ed.) (1980). A Revolutionary's Quest: Selected writings of Jayaprakash Narayan. Delhi: Oxford India Press.

Taylor, Robert H. (ed.) (2002). The idea of Freedom in Asia and Africa.Stanford: Stanford University Press. Cited Kaviraj, S. "The Idea of Freedom in Modern India". Pp. 97-148.

Understanding Spirituality and Modern Science

Prof. (Dr.) Dinesh Mani

Since time immemorial, mankind has been struggling to find definite answers for some of its most pressing problems: the meaning of life, the aim of experience, man's real work on earth to name a few. The material conditions of the world seem to be worsening day by day and human ugliness and pettiness is emerging in new forms and identities. There are few who believe that by raising a new political philosophy, opening a new school of thought or by efforts to reform the society things will change. But all such methods are doomed to fail unless they are initiated by true spiritual means and beings. Religious bigotry, political hatred and ugly rivalry, systemic corruption, rage, rancour and hunger, gender and birth status based discriminations are silently poisoning the gentle and genial current of life.

The modern science doesn't see the world as a collection of isolated objects, but rather as a network of phenomena that are interconnected and interdependent. It recognizes the intrinsic value of all living beings. The experience of being connected with all of nature is the very essence of spirituality.

Science and spirituality are no longer bound or cabinied by national boundaries or by language hurdles. They are of Universal human interest and today the whole humanity itself is trying to pulsate as one family- 'Vishva Kutumba' or 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'. It is inwardly aspiring for an unbroken peace on earth for being able to coordinated and cooperative march towards a common glorious destiny which must be waiting for it. With this perspective it seems necessary to study and

*   Prof. (Dr.) Dinesh Mani, Professor, Department of Chemistry, University of Allahabad, Prayagraj. E-mail: dineshmanidsc@gmail.com Mobile: 9415235493.

carry on research about the insights of the past and modern discoveries, so that a body of language and literature may emerge which would acquaint us with the flow and continuity of effort of human mind to know things for the advancement and enrichment of life.

Culture has played a very vital role in man's life. One cannot achieve happiness and peace of mind without faith and devotion. Faith and devotion are free gifts of culture. Indian culture is rated among the foremost cultures of the world which upholds the best traditions conductive to human welfare. River water, remains pure so long as it continues to flow down. A culture which keeps pace with changing time and moulds its customs and traditions suiting itself to changing circumstances can always remain in the service of humanity. All developed countries are engaged in a keen race to contribute more and more to human welfare and happiness through modern scientific knowledge and scientific researches. In the light of these facts, we should look to the chief characteristics of our culture which, even today, attracts many countries of the West.

The progress of Science and Technology has altered and is even now altering the conditions of our life and places at our disposal vast powers and potentials. There is also endless scope for further progress in the various fields of scientific activity. Our scholars in the past have noticed that there were striking insights in the ancient texts and that they open new vistas for research. Sporadic efforts in this direction had been done and continue.

Science has not only provided man with abundant material needs and amenities, it has also influenced his thought. In other words, science, particularly the modern science, is not only the generator of modern civilization, it is also the prime-mover of culture, not only our daily life and social prosperity but also the philosophy and quality of life largely depend upon science and technology.

Our country is specially gifted with the capacity to see the underlying harmony behind the world of division and discord. That capacity we need to retain; for the world of knowledge acquired by the human mind is vast and varied today, but modern man has not been able to relate all these bits of knowledge to each other and bring harmony to his own life-neither between his external and inner life, nor between what are termed as ancient and modern, faith and reason, religion and science. Everywhere, there is a conflict and division; and this has its impact on human life which becomes fragmented, and on men and women who become alienated. In this context, it is good that

we ponder together and try to understand what all these mean- this human distortion in the context of the abundance of scientific knowledge and spiritual insights. In fact, Science is not only compatible with spirituality, but it is a profound source of spirituality.

"Spirituality is in its essence an awakening to the inner reality of our being, to a spirit, self, soul which is other than our mind, life and body, an inner inspiration to know, feel, TO BE THAT, to enter into contact with greater Reality……." (The Life Divine: p.889)

"Spirituality cannot be called upon a deal with life by non-spiritual method or attempt to cure its ills by the panaceas, the political, social or other mechanical remedies, which the mind is constantly attempting and which have always failed and will continue to fail to solve anything. The most drastic changes made by these means change nothing. (The Life Divine: p.917)

Spirituality is perhaps the most humane, sensitive and dignified method to restore and reestablish the harmony. But the ideal of Perfection can never be achieved by an 'imperfect instrument' like man who is, despite enviable outer sophistication in life, still battling with his animality. All glorious glories and pomps aside, man is still,

> A thinking being in unthinking world,
> An island in the sea of the Unknown,
> He is a smallness trying to be great
> An animal with some instincts of a god.
>
> Savitri: p.78

Sri Aurobindo says: "Our ideal is not the spirituality that withdraws from life but a conquest of life by the power of the spirit. It is to accept the world as an effort of manifestation of the Divine, but also transforms humanity by a greater effort of manifestation than has yet been accomplished, one in which the veil between man and God shall be removed, the divine manhood of which we are capable shall come to birth and our life shall be remoulded in the truth and light and power of the spirit".

According to Sri Aurobindo, all socio-political chasms, economic disparities, intellectual and religious divisions and gender based discriminations are born of our imperfect vision of Existence. We are perpetually on ego-drive and cherish to live in our separate ivory towers and havens of megalomania, while millions cry and die around us.

By uttering four magical words which are "All life is Yoga", Sri Aurobindo tried to visualize and beautify the very core of our existence.

When we believe and try to live the reality that all our life is nothing but 'Yoga', then new dawns of understanding flood us, giving us the fragrance of realization. Every detail of life must be changed and sublimated, and be made an effective instrument of divine manifestation. In one of his aphorisms, the Mahayogi Sri Auroindo says, "There is nothing small in eyes of God; let there be nothing small in thine". 'All is yoga' means all is God. At more than one place, Sri Aurobindo categorically stated that his yoga and spirituality are meant for the transformation of earth and are of earth. He wanted to create a heaven on earth, the chosen place of the Maker.

Remember, spirituality is not an occasional pastime. It calls for the constant consciousness, an uninterrupted awareness. As the religious consciousness grows to maturity, the outer forms gradually lose their relevance and rigidity until the religious consciousness finally merges into the all encompassing fold of spirituality. That is the reason why all religious people are invariably spiritual. No doubt, rituals are but outer forms of religion, not its essence but religion needs these outer forms or symbols because the mass followers of any religion cannot grasp its abstract truths; they crave for their concretized forms. But this superficial difference between religion and spirituality is of form only, not of essence.

In fact, spiritual experiences are only a stage on the journey. What is beyond is indescribable. The most one can say about it is that it is just nothing. It is an accepted fact that the goal of spiritual life is union with God and it is also an accepted fact that God is infinite. How can we talk of a goal to infinity? The spiritual path is an ever-revealing one. It is not possible to get to the end of it.

The material fact to be remembered is that in almost all spiritual centers we find splendid, loving, selfless, humble, pious souls personifying righteousness and virtue. Whatever path one adopts according to one's mental capacity and temperament, one is bound to live a spiritual life. What is the spiritual way of life? Is it any different from the way we normally live? Not quite. It does not take anything away from your life, rather it adds up to your life a new flavour, a new consciousness of what you have been always- the immortal soul which in essence is omniscient and blissful. Once you assimilate it to become a part of your being, all your weaknesses, debilities and belittling sense of finitude are gone and new vistas of joyful possibilities are opened up to you. You are no longer weak, miserable and sorrowful being but

vivacious and vibrant spark of life. "Arise and Awake" was the message given by Swami Vivekananda to the humanity at large over a century ago and this message is as relevant today since it has been an everlasting appeal.

Science, as we know, has proved to be a great boon to humankind. Apart from the numerous benefits it has given to the world, it has endowed mankind with the capacity to think rationally and therefore, no branch of human knowledge can qualify it to be called as such unless it imbues sufficient amount of scientific spirit and scientific temper. In the modern age, we have come to a stage when science and religion, howsoever divergent their methods may be, cannot be completely divorced from each other. The marvelous findings of science need to be synthesized with the heart-warming experiences of religion. And herein comes the role of philosophy that alone can successfully accomplish this task because philosophy, though speculative in nature, is not devoid of reason. But its reason is not cold reason; it has the capacity to grasp the warmth of religion. As a matter of fact, religion and philosophy, though apparently standing in isolation from each other, always go together hand-in-hand. What we conceptualize in philosophy, we seek to realize through religion. If religion is a way of life, philosophy is the view of life. As we view, so we realize. It is specially so in India where temples have been the abodes of great philosophers and saints. Thus we find that religion, spirituality, philosophy and science all can march together in a spirit of harmonious homogeneity for the redemption of mankind and also for the universal well-being of the world.

Spirituality is complementary to materialism just like spirit is complementary to body. One who focuses on body alone cannot focus on spirit. So a spiritual person is indifferent to the physical appearance of himself and others. He does not identify a person from its exterior appearance but identifies him from his soul. Hence, if a person wears designer clothes and focuses on being physically attractive, he has least chances of being spiritual. It is no surprise that most spiritual people keep beard which actually covers the physical attractiveness of the body.

A spiritual person is one whose soul has become one with God or Spirit. Thus he knows the world from a much wider perspective. His mind is in peace like the water in the depth of sea. He knows that everything that happens in the world has some logic in it. Hence he is always at peace and does not feel disturbed by the mundane things of the world, which are like waves on the surface of an ocean.

The actions of a spiritual person are always in harmony with his words. He speaks only what he truly believes. Most people preach equality, yet they treat themselves as superior to others. While they may ask people to lead a simple life, yet they themselves live in palatial houses and wear expensive clothes and ornaments. A spiritual person does not say anything which is impractical. He demonstrates the practicability of his principles by following the words spoken by him.

Love is the most important characteristic of a spiritual person. He does not hate anyone including the criminals and terrorists. It may sound weird and impossible to an ordinary man but not to the spiritual person. Just as we all like everything about ourselves including our not-so-perfect body, in the same way, for a spiritual person there is no feeling of 'otherliness'. So he can identify even with his enemies.

God has created everyone equal even though he had given everyone a different role. However, man puts material value on human beings on the basis of demand and supply. For example, the President of the nation is far more valued than an ordinary sweeper because there is only one President and a large number of aspirants. However, it cannot be denied that both are essential for the nation. A spiritual person, however, never distinguishes people on the basis of their religion, caste, economic status or position in the society as he is able to see everyone with equal vision.

One has to make a distinction between a scholar and a spiritual person. Any person with good memory can remember each word of a scripture and prove anything by the strength of logic. A scholar always supports his arguments with some references to others' studies or scriptures. However, a spiritual person is a self-realized one whose knowledge has emerged from within. Thus he, instead of "having knowledge", has "become knowledge" as his persona has become one with God. Thus his explanations emerge directly from the soul and convince people rather than asking people to get convinced because someone has said so, or something is written in the scripture or some study has proven something.

A spiritual person is never in a hurry as he does not have lust or passion for anything. A man of passion always has to do something; thus he feels restless all the time. However, a spiritual person knows his role in the scheme of things and does what is in the best interest of the world.

A spiritual person is always humble as he sees God in every being, and he considers every being as the extension of his own self. He

knows that he is merely a tool in the hands of God and that he has been sent in this world to perform a particular function. There can never be an element of pride in him.

A spiritual man is the most forgiving as he knows that everyone will be judged as per the deeds of God. He never puts himself in the place of God and never judges a person by his own standards. Thus, even if someone has wronged him or wronged other persons, he always seeks forgiveness from God for him. Thus instead of hating a person whose action is not in conformity with his desires or with the scripture, he shows compassion for all.

The spiritual power of man can be improved by man in the same way as we improve our physical and mental powers. Just like every person has a body and mind, every person also has a soul which is the essence of the person. This soul is the manifestation of God in man, which connects every single being in the world. All souls of the world are, therefore, connected with each other through the invisible spirit just like all flowers of a garland are connected by an invisible thread.

Everyone is born with a pure soul. However, as man gets involved into more and more worldly affairs and focuses on his body and mind and makes less use of his soul, his body and mind gets stronger while his soul gets weaker. The result is that the invisible connection of man with the Reality gets weakened. Thus man gradually loses the power to influence others or get influenced by others. He loses sympathy and empathy. The enhancement of soul power connects man with the world and helps him develop the capability to influence the souls of others. The power of the soul can be enhanced by the help of spiritual exercises.

Faith is the essence of spiritualism. However, a spiritual person does not have faith in a deity or saint but in the Supreme Reality that is behind all material realities. This Reality is also called Spirit as it cannot be seen or felt by senses. Yet this Reality connects every person with one another and seeks the good of all people. A person who seeks to damage the whole for the sake of his own good is punished, while one who seeks to help others selflessly is rewarded. However, the rewards and punishments are not instantaneous as every seed that is sown in the ground takes time in bearing fruits, whether good or evil. Yet everyone reaps what he sows.

The first exercise of a spiritual person is to observe closely himself and others and discover this eternal truth that every person who is leading a life of pain or joy is not due to any accident or manipulation but because of his actions in the past. The faith in this universal law

is the first and foremost requirement of a spiritual person. The more you study the life of self and others honestly, the more faith you would develop in the presence of the Omnipresent Spirit.

While it is true that man shares many similarities with other animals, he is designed uniquely by nature. Jesus said in the Bible that man does not live on bread alone because he has spiritual needs. No other animal has this need and that distinguishes man from the rest of the animals. You have, therefore, to observe by looking into your own life as to what brings happiness and joy in your life and what causes you pain and misery. Every person is bound to see that material achievements bring happiness that last only for a few days or even for few hours, while if you help others and make their life better, the joy would be lasting. It can then be found that happiness is not achieved by gratification of the senses but by being good to others. The desires of doing good to others is what people call spirituality as the rewards of such an act are not material but spiritual, which fulfill the natural requirement of every man. Thus, whenever possible, try to help others. There is not better method to become spiritual than by helping others as if you are helping your loved one.

The Gita states that senses are superior to body, mind is superior to senses, soul is superior to mind and God is superior to soul. However, for most people, it is the body and senses that control the mind. The mind, therefore, cannot listen to the soul and the voice of God. The only way to improve the power of soul is to control the body, senses and mind. This is what is attempted by Yoga and meditation exercises. In these exercises, the body of a person is forced to rest in a particular posture for sometime and the mind is focused. The practice of Yoga and meditation gradually enhance the spiritual power of man as a soul takes control over the body and mind.

As the same spirit resides in every single creation of the world, every one becomes the extension of the self. No one can hate oneself or consider hurting oneself. The very reason for hatred is the feeling of separateness. Every person has both good and evil in him. However, we prefer to see good in the people whom we love but we see only evil in the people whom we hate. Hence, if we develop the habit of seeing good in every person, including our enemies, it would not be difficult to love the enemy. The method to start loving your enemy is by learning the goodness about the enemy. This can gradually reduce hatred and induce love as we develop a vision and desire to see goodness in him.

Today's material world is a product of science and technology both of which bring comfort to humanity. Advancement in science and technology is helping people remedy their problems. This is why we need to be aware of both. But, can science and technology eliminate pain at mental level? Unfortunately, modern machines can manufacture everything but a happy mind. And treatment on the physical level can't change our mental disposition.

Which science gets us physical comforts, spirituality brings us mental calm. With the ever growing impact of science on our lives, spirituality have a greater role to play in reminding us of our humanity. There is no contradiction between the two. Each gives us valuable insight into the other.

The potential antidote to our stress is in the mind itself. One must be compassionate to avoid tension. Spirituality deals with the mind. By nature, compassion is the source of inner strength and happiness. The extremely narrow-mind and self-centered person is always worried about something or the other. If a person place his worries within a larger perspective, they will realize just how trivial they are.

If there is major progress, there are also major problems. In such a situation, awareness is important, warmth is important. It doesn't matter whether we believe in God or next life; we need to create a balance between science and spirituality. If the two remain distant, we're headed for trouble. If we don't consider the importance of our inner feelings, we will become like machines and lose many precious feelings. We must keep our emotions they bring colour to life. Training of the mind reduces negative emotions and promotes positive feelings. This means we have the capacity to reduce negative emotions ourselves by practicing spirituality.

It is believed that the concept of God was created to increase love, compassion, tolerance and understanding for humanity. Ancient Indians thought of the theory of karma strengthens basic humans values. To believe or not to believe in these theories is totally the choice of the individual. Once we find our reality through investigation we must accept it. If we finds a reality that is different written in the scriptures, we should have the liberty to change them. If we stay with religion and away from science, we will be living in an unreal world. It is up to the individual to find the levels of reality between these two.

Why is it believed that spiritual practice is possible only within traditionally accepted limits and not outside them? Meditation,

observance of silence and physical relaxation are indeed spiritual practices but are speaking, eating, drinking, sitting and standing not spiritual practices? The integrity of spiritual practice is questioned by those who insist that it is possible only in a particular place, at a particular time and through a particular activity and not otherwise. One of the incongruities of life is spending two hours in spiritual practice and remaining hours in non-spiritual pursuits. Spiritual practice is neither in not doing something nor in doing something. It lies in inner awakening, no matter whether it is accompanied by activity or inactivity.

The scientific attitude or more properly the scientific temper can be described as a frame of mind which has a thirst for knowledge. It recognizes that the knowledge can be acquired by observation, experience and experiments.

It is the frame of mind of s researcher who enters the laboratory to set the hypothesis is to accepted or rejected on the basis of the present scientific data and knowledge. In this process a hypothesis may be modified or in some cases may be replaced by another.

In other words, a scientist or a man with scientific temper or attitude does not cling to a proposition merely because it is attractive or because it is more convenient or because it is after his own heart's desire. You can't impose your own hopes or desires on the course of quest of knowledge.

A truly scientific mind will not accept anything as self evident truth because somebody has authoritatively laid it down. A scientific mind is an adventurous mind and is not afraid to speak truth even if it may not be consonant with established thoughts, beliefs and superstition. It is the method of inquiry and experience that can lead us to closer and closer approximation of truth.

When we are on the divine path of self-realisation, with God's grace, a glow enters our demeanour and we stand out in the crowd. People respect such people and often bow in respect. But we should realize that people are bowing not us but to that glimpse of Divinity whom they realize resides within us. So the credit of this respect goes, solely to that Divinity, not to us (the limited ego). If we start taking the credit, we cross the thin line of demarcation and enter into an area of false ego. The basic difference between material and spiritual lifestyle is that, in material life that the more we progress, the more ego we shed.

The philosophical implications of modern physics and modern chemistry are producing an intellectual revolution. Both Science and

philosophy were inspired by the spirit of criticism and construction. Both of these could well inspire our thinking about society. Earlier philosophy or metaphysics resulted in propositious of high generality. The scientist also deals with propositious of high generality but the two types of propositious were not the same.

We should not lose ourselves in terminology. Philosophy must be allowed to consider the totality of human life. Art is much more intricate, as it is a matter of sublimation. Art creates sensitivity in people. Perhaps philosophy does this too. Art has become the weapon of creative humanism. Art is a part of the method of deeper understanding of the psyche. There is a paucity of art experience in all classes and sections of life in India.

Science does inculcate moral values, but the scientific spirit is hardly prevalent in this country. The humanist and the scientist need to tackle the problem jointly. The scientist does not claim he can predict everything; he does admit areas of unknowability. The scientist is aware of the ethics of this time, but in the process of his work, he is not concerned with it; while the artist in his work often protests against the very fabric of society. Therein lies the difference. Science requires rigorous discipline which has been called a moral value, it leads to good science and not to good morality.

Science tries to inculcate respect for fact, in contrast to the vague term 'truth'. This is connected with a healthy scepticism. There is trinity of situation between question, fact, and answer. The scientists findings are subject to criticism by the scientific community. The scientists accepts progress and change i.e. that there is no such thing as final truth. Are these values new or are they not precise manifestation of earlier values can they help us to build a new society?

In India, the accent lies on living in harmony with nature and on a desire to understand the mystery of nature. Whether people come together or not depends on various values, otherwise there would be a meaningless monotony in society. Science is not so amoral as it seems to be. A scientist has a definite value system; he has to be rational in respect of facts and their interpretation, and this is a moral value. He has to discipline his intellectual and perceptual organs and this is also a moral activity. In India, till recently no difference was made between ethics and aesthetics.

The approaches and methodologies of natural and social science are different, but it is necessary to correlate them. For the natural

scientists rationally divested of superstition is the basic value. But the objects and their relationships have as much validity as conceptual thought and ratiocination.

The contribution of science lies in its attempts to create harmony between man and his natural surroundings. Mutual tolerance, if not mutual help, should be the goal of all human societies and for this it is necessary to devise a code of minimum conduct.

Science still raises hope for something better. This would be the third phase of science. The first phase was when science struggled against superstitions, dogmas, frauds, and credulities; we are now passing through the second phase when science has posed fresh problems on account of the benefits accrued by the achievements of science on vast scales; and the third phase would begin when science would emerge out as the religion of the future man, and would raise fresh hopes against all odds that confront us today.

Science respects moral values, which were discovered for man when civilization was in its cradle. Satya, ahinsa, tapas, brahmacharya, aparigraha, etc. were held sacred in the early society also. But this is not all that a man aspires after. He is prepared to sacrifice his present life for some life about which he is totally ignorant. Science does not deny the existence of such a life, but today, it holds out no promise in this regard.

Magnanimity and tolerance are virtues many of us need to cultivate if we are to make the scientific community strong. In fact, scientists belong to a small community and cannot really afford to drag each other down; science needs all of us and whatever we can offer. We should not only live and let live, but shine and let shine. There is need of the men of science with a broader outlook to try to look beyond their set domain into others, and with an open mind to recognize the fact of their being significantly there.

It is hoped that in the years to come there will be many more scientists with the right perspective and values who will do exciting things and scientists will not have to flee from science for preserving their values or for their peace of mind. It is need of hour that scientists get out of their preoccupation with themselves, throw their blinkers and look at the world around them again with a clear vision and pure thoughts so that the good values of science may survive.

Multiculturalism: A Model of Peaceful Coexistence

Sanjay Kumar Shukla*

I

The traditional notion of culture (*Sanskriti*) refers to the refinement of the human nature in a broad sense. There are three obvious and interconnected dimensions of 'culture' in this sense. There is first the process of improvement (*Samskâra or Sâdhanâ*) effected in man as an individual. In the second place, culture would have the sense of an objective order of rules, goals and symbols belonging to a specific society of men, which impels and guides the transformation of the individual, and lastly there is the historical tradition of that society and of mankind in general within which the specific socio-cultural order subsists as a changing form or structure. Culture is the social expression of value seeking symbolically expressive human consciousness. Religion and ethics constitute the primary value system, while language, ritual and art illustrate its symbolization. It is pressing need to raise the issue that why we witness cultural clashes in a pluralistic society. They are not constituted merely by the innumerable individuals with differing beliefs and practices. The cultural conflict is mainly due to narrow identification which diverts the self from its essential character of seeking self-realization, and this spiritual derailment produces conflicts of interests and imperfect communication between different cultural groups. Cultural difference is expressed in the terminology of identity, togetherness and difference. Identity is a specific interrelationship between self and otherness. Ethnocentrism means inscribing positive

* Dr. Sanjay Kumar Shukla, Associate Professor, Philosophy Department, Ewing Christian College, Prayagraj (U.P.)

value into the historical image of oneself and negative or less positive one into the images of others. It functions as a source of what Samuel Huntington has called the clash of civilization. Ethnocentrism can be overcome by universal values being accepted by all cultures. But this solution has its own difficulties and internal crisis to resolve:

1. Universal validity or acceptability is very often an internal trait of the value system of one culture by which it claims its peculiarity and difference from others. Every identity based upon value system, beliefs and behavioural practices is logically unique. This uniqueness has a universalistic implication which makes ethnocentrism so bitter and loaded with violence.

2. If this can be avoided and real equality stated with the system of universal values, that brings cultural difference out of view, and therefore, only prevents ethnocentrism by ignoring cultural differences. It is to be further noted that such universalism is always contextualized by a specific culture and this context cannot be ignored when the value set is applied to intercultural relations.

There are three different models or state policies addressing cultural and ethnic diversity- 1. Assimilationist 2. Differentialist 3. Multiculturalist. A host of countries believe that peace and security is best assured if people with different religions and cultures are homogenised into affirming a single national identity. They see cultural diversity as a threat to' national identity'. Policies of assimilation, forced or voluntary, have involved suppression of the identities of ethnic, religious or linguistic groups. Centralization of political power, elimination of pre-existing forms of local sovereignty, creation of a unified legal system, adoption of the dominant group's language as the official'language, seizure of land and natural resources of indigenous people and declaring them to be national'resources, and settlement of people from the dominant group to minority region and adoption of immigration policies that favour dominant groups are some of the strategies employed for assimilation and integration. France can be considered to be a good example of state that is strongly committed to an 'assimilationist' model. Another model for addressing ethnic and cultural diversity has been called the differentialist'model. Its extreme form can be witnessed in Serbia and Rwanda which has been labelled ethnic cleansing. It is a consequence of this model that native – born members of ethnic minorities such as Turks in Germany or Koreans in

Japan, or Indians in Indonesia, do not have a natural right to citizenship in their countries of birth. In contrast to these models, multiculturalism is a response to accommodate ethnic and cultural diversities, which entails replacement of paternalistic provisions of goods and services to minorities by a more participative and consultative process. Canada and Australia have explicitly adopted multiculturalism as official policy in which diversity should not only be tolerated but also welcomed as enriching. Multiculturalism emphasizes the contribution of cultural communities, stresses the importance of cultural belonging and legitimizes the desire to maintain difference and brings forth the linkages between identity and recognition. The first moment in the dialectic of multiculturalism is of particularized hierarchy: where two or more communities have a hierarchical relation, a dominant community to which other communities are subordinate. The second moment may be called the moment of universalistic equality': which maintains that the only way to sustain equality is to deny the significance of cultural difference. The third moment is the moment of 'particularized equality': here people are different but equal. Membership in a particular cultural group is important but so is the relationship of equality among different cultural communities[1]. The demand of political recognition can be best situated in the moment of particularized equality rather than particularized hierarchy. This means that recognition must be made available to everyone within society. No community and therefore, no member of it can be subordinate to other communities or its members.

II

Multiculturalism has emerged as a distinct and yet varied political theory in recent years. While there is no consensus among multiculturalists regarding principles, goals and policies, what unites these theorists is their concern that we should resist the wider society's homogenizing or assimilationist thrust and its tendency to assume that there is only one correct or normal way to understand and structure the relevant areas of life. This is evident in the conception of citizenship implicit in the justice theories of egalitarian-liberals and libertarians. Despite the differences between the liberalism of the distributive paradigm, what they share is the belief that justice requires equal right for all citizens, regardless of their gender, religion or ethnicity. Kymlicka observes that this amounts to be a "colour blind" constitution- the removal of all legislation differentiating people in terms of their race

or ethnicity. But multiculturalists view the aspiration for a colour blind society as ill founded for it is not possible to separate state and ethnicity and when the liberal state attempts to do this it unfairly privileges certain way of life over others.[2] Multiculturalists thus endorse the politics of recognition having the concepts of identity and difference, instead of the principle of equal citizenship. It maintains that everyone should be recognized by his or her unique identity. 'Multiculturalism is not about difference and identity per se' claims Bhikhu Parekh, 'but about those that are embedded in and sustained by culture; that is, a body of beliefs and practices in terms of which a group of people understand themselves and the world and organize their individual and collective lives'. Parekh argues that multiculturalism occupies a middle position between two dominant strands of political theory-naturalism (monism) and culturalism (pluralism). The former is espoused by a diverse array of philosophers ranging from Greek and Christian philosophers to Hobbes, Locke and Mill, all of whom 'assumed that human nature was unchanging, unaffected in its essentials by culture and society, and capable of indicating what way of life was the best'. Culturalists, on the other hand like Montesque, Herder and the German Romantics believed that 'human beings were culturally constituted, varied from culture to culture, and share in common only the minimal species derived properties from which nothing of moral or political significance could be derived[3]. Hence, multiculturalism is a way of accommodating cultural diversity, as it locates individuals against their cultural background and shows respect for the different beliefs and practices citizens of a pluralistic society have.

The development of modem notion of identity has given rise to the politics of difference. Everyone should be recognized for his or her unique identity. With the politics of equal dignity, what is established is meant to be universally the same, and identical basket of rights and immunities. In the case of politics of difference we are asked to recognize the uniqueness of individual or group, their distinctiveness from everyone else. The idea is that it is precisely this distinction that has been ignored, glossed over, assimilated to a dominant or majority identity. Multiculturalism considers this assimilation to be a cardinal sin against the ideal of authenticity. The politics of universal dignity fought for forms of non-discrimination that were quite 'blind' to the ways in which citizens differ, while the politics of difference often redefines non-discrimination as requiring that we make these distinctions the

basis of differential (preferential) treatment. In the politics of difference there is a potential for forming and defining one's own identity, as an individual, and also as a culture. This potentiality must be respected equally in every case. But atleast in the inter-cultural context, a stronger demand has recently arisen: that one accords equal respect to actually evolved cultures. Critiques of Eurocentrism or white's domination have pointed out that they (Europeans) have not only suppressed but failed to appreciate other cultures. It is for this reason the thesis of white's domination is not only factually mistaken but somehow morally wrong. Hence, the supposedly fair and difference blind society is not only inhuman, (because of suppressing identities) but also, in a subtle and unconscious way, itself highly discriminatory.[4] In modern societies cultural diversity poses a challenge because society's institutions have been challenged, as members of different groups have started demanding 'recognition'. They are demanding not simply recognition of their claims to a (just) share of the social pie but more important, recognition of their distinct identities as members of particular cultural communities within society. The problem that arises for a liberal society, however, is that there quickly emerges a conflict between two demands: on the one hand, that the dignity of the individual be recognized (by respecting fundamental rights); on the other hand, that the claims of the groups or cultural communities to which individuals belong be recognized.

III

Multiculturalism is not a single, unified ideology but rather a welter of different and sometimes contradictory tenets and practices. Some multiculturalists focus on protecting and preserving minority cultures, while other aims to transform both majority and minority cultures in a progressive direction. They further point out that the majority is guilty of judging immigrant minority cultures to be deficient and wrong (ethnocentrism), seeking to impose dominant cultural values on marginalized cultures (cultural imperialism), and enunciating an impassable racial difference in the form of the "self" and the "other" in order to bolster ongoing efforts to exclude the latter from meaningful membership in comity of nations (racism and nativism)[5]. Hence, multiculturalism seeks to decenter the center, challenge domination and its truths, and mitigate power's effects. Parekh makes some useful suggestions about generating "inter-cultural dialogue", or moral dialogue across racial/cultural lines. Dialogue, he maintains, is method of handling

differences while showing mutual respect and building moral community. In his view, the majority should respect minorities right to culture but also feel free to criticize aspects of that culture, all the while remaining mindful of the danger of cultural imperialism. The minority should, in turn, offer explanations or defence of its practices and feel free to raise questions about the validity of the majority's values and practices as well. The key to the success of this dialogue is its "bifocality", meaning that "neither the majority nor the minority way of life can escape the other's scruitny."[6] The dialogue transforms the participants since it "forces each party to become conscious of its values and reasons for holding them, and contributes to their critical self-knowledge."

Multiculturalism refers to a socio-cultural movement which celebrates cultural differences; insists upon the just respectful treatment of members of different cultures, especially those which have historically been the victims of domination and exploitation; and emphasizes the integrity of marginalized cultures. It upholds to value and respect cultural differences and the alternative experiences and perspectives of members of different cultures; and the members of minority'cultures should not be required to assimilate into, nor to adopt alien cultural commitments or identities of, nor be marginalized, silenced or oppressed by, a dominant hegemonic majority'culture.[7] If we ask ourselves why we should embrace multiculturalism – why cultural differences ought to be acknowledged, valued and respected rather then denied, trivialized, ignored or decried – the answer given by advocates of multiculturalism is straight forward: it is morally required that we should treat varied cultural communities with justice and respect, in ways which do not demean, marginalize or silence them. The justification of multiculturalism is at bottom moral in the sense that hegemonic monoculturalism is in various ways morally problematic, and that a multiculturalism that respects cultural differences is in various ways morally superior to monoculturalism. Multiculturalism maintains that all cultures should/must accept the legitimacy of all other cultures living in accordance with their own, culturally specific ideals. It further points out that the imposition of values and ideals is the root cause of objectionable hegemony, and for avoiding such hegemony we must recognize that your cultural values have no legitimacy beyond the bounds of your own culture. It propounds the transcultural duty to accept every culture's right to living in accordance with its own ideals. Multiculturalist society is to be described not in terms of majority and minority cultures

but of plurality of cultures coexisting in a condition of mutual tolerance. Joseph Raz remarked that "we should learn to think of our society not in terms of majority and minority, but of a plurality of cultural groups."[8]

Rejecting the possibility of transcultural ideals and values has an underlying assumption that such ideals are conceptually impossible as culturally specific ideals are mistakenly regarded as universal. Richard Rorty's favoured version of pragmatism that rejects the search for 'an Archimedean point form which to survey culture,[9] in favour of a frank embrace of ethnocentricity or solidarity, according to which there is no non-circular way to justify our own ideals, values and commitments to those who reject them in favour of their own equally ethnocentric alternatives. David Theo Goldberg nicely summarizes and develops Rorty's view in this fashion: Rorty insists that there is no transhistorical or supersocial Godly view on which such universal (moral) principles can be grounded or from which they can be derived. Thus, any insistence on the universalism of values must be no more than the projected imposition of local values-those especially of some ethno-racial and gendered particularity-universalized. The supposed universalism of epistemological politics reduces itself to the political epistemology of an imposed universality. This rests on a problematic universal/local dichotomy. Goldberg presumes that 'local' and 'universal' are contradictories, and so that 'local' entails 'non-universal' but this is simply an error. Although values and ideals are local in the sense that they have been formulated and advanced in particular historical/cultural location, but at the same time it may have universal application. Goldberg's and Rorty's denial of universality relies upon the presupposition that values in order to be 'universal' or 'transcultural' must be grounded or derived from, a 'transhistorical' or 'supersocial Godly' perspective.[10] But this is not the sense of universal relevant here. Any principle, value or ideal is universal in so far as it has application across all cultural boundaries.

IV

The multicultural approach hinges upon the straight forward link between issues of identity and the domain of particular cultures. It also assumes that the identity of person corresponds to a particular culture and that such cultures are wholes with easily discernible boundaries. Differences in identity therefore correspond to differences in clearly identifiable

and mutually different cultures. It has further assumption that cultural communities are homogeneous while cultural identities being distinct and extremely well demarcated. But each of these assumptions can be easily questioned: it is doubtful that cultures are neatly separated, internally coherent wholes, rather it is more like clusters of heterogeneous elements with varying origins. How can egalitarian multiculturalism be prevented from becoming hierarchical? How must it be prevented from becoming authoritarian? or to put it in other words how can we retain the liberal contents of multiculturalism? How can a multicultural society formulate laws that recognize cultures but prohibit the moral devaluation of individuals and restriction of their autonomy? How can it does so when multiculturalism also requires that proper respect be accorded to those social practices that combine traditional wisdom with oppression of individuals? These are some of the skeptical challenges and serious dilemmas which multiculturalism must have to respond. There is an obvious tension between liberalism and communitarianism, a conflict between autonomy and cultural belonging to be discussed under the category of individual versus group debate.

It is from the above mentioned theoretical discussion that we are in position to settle the different issues. Recent debates for a multicultural society constitute a plea for egalitarian multiculturalism. We can distinguish between egalitarian multiculturalism- the form of liberal and authoritarian one. Liberal multiculturalism is liberal because equal recognition of cultural groups must be compatible with requirements of basic individual liberties and perhaps even with individual autonomy. Authoritarian multiculturalism affirms equal recognition of all cultural groups including ones that violate freedom of individuals. The democratic multiculturalism is distinctive of combining cultural and political communitarianism. It recognizes the importance of cultural identity, the need to maintain cultural differences and is committed to bring these differences into the political domain. Since these differences frequently turn into conflicts, it is also committed to their resolution through dialogue, discussion and negotiation. Authoritarian multiculturalism negates individual liberty and autonomy and for this reason obsessed solely with identity and belonging. Liberal multiculturalism recognizes the value of both individual liberty and autonomy but denies the entry of issues of identity or belonging into the political domain and therefore, tilts in favour of individual autonomy.

Democratic multiculturalism is in a sound footing to tackle the tension between identity and belonging on the one hand and the requirements of individual autonomy on the other, and to bring into the political domain both set of issues. If one is to visualize public policy on multicultural foundations then it can be stated that a multicultural understanding would be beneficial for issues revolving around secularism. The increasing incidence of violence by majority vindicates the multiculturalist's position because multiculturalism helps to conceptualize notions of group security, and the need to safeguard the democratic and human rights of minorities. It is useful when it come to challenging premises of a melting pot model'of 'national integration' and the dictum of mainstreaming minority identities either voluntarily or forcibly.[11] Multiculturalism is enormously valuable when it comes to contesting a politics based on universalism, exclusivism and segregationism. The politics of equal citizenship and of universal dignity is against discrimination on the basis of caste, community and gender, but at the same time it ignores the cultural diversity, identity consciousness and recognition. The politics of recognition would extend cultural rights to all groups, and thereby resist the policy of assimilation and homogeneity.

We are witnessing culturally heterogeneous world with distinct and unique cultural pluralism in societal framework. The outcome of cultural interrelationship can be essentially one of conflict, or simply one of convergence or of co-existence. Intercultural conflict or clash is to be always marked by hatred, violence and bloodshed. Convergence is truly speaking a mask for hegemonic dominance and therefore the sane choice is one of coexistence. This brings forth three different models for addressing cultural and ethnic diversity-Assimilationist for convergence, differentialist for conflict and multiculturalist for peaceful coexistence. Multiculturalism is a way of accommodating cultural diversity, as it locates individuals against their cultural backgrounds and shows respect for the different beliefs and practices which members of a pluralistic society have. Hence, multiculturalism is a revolt against the tendency of hegemony, cultural imperialism and assimilationist thrust of globalization.

Notes and References

[1.] Bhargava, Rajeev, (ed.) *Introducing Multiculturalism, Liberalism and Democracy,* Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2013, p. 12.

2. Farrelly, Colin (ed.), *Contemporary Political Theory,* Sage Publication, New Delhi, 2004, p. 263.

3. *Ibid,* p. 264.

4. We have both kind of reproach today. In the context of some modes of feminism and multiculturalism, the claim is strong one, that the hegemonic culture discriminates, dominates and suppresses other (subaltern) culture.

5. Shukla, Sanjay Kumar, *Modernity and Postmodernity Debate: Related Issues and Challenges,* Satyam Publishing House, New Delhi, 2014, pp. 114-15.

6. Parekh, Bhikhu, *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory,* Harvard University Press: Cambridge M.A., 2000, p. 293.

7. Appaih, K.A., *Culture, Subculture, Multiculturalism*: *Educational Options'* in *Public Education in a Multicultural Society: Policy, Theory and Critique,* R.K. Fullinwider (ed.), Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 74.

8. Raz, Joseph, "*Multiculturalism: A Liberal Perspective,"* in *Ethics in the Public Domain, Essays in the Morality of Law and Politics,* Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1994, pp. 155-76.

9. Rorty, Richard, *Consequences of Pragmatism,* University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 1982, p. 150.

10. Goldberg, David Theo, *Introduction: Multicultural Conditions,* op. cit 17-18.

11. Shukla, Sanjay Kumar, *Modernity and Postmodernity Debate: Related issues and Challenges,* pp. 131-32.

Middle Class in North East India

Dr. Binod Kumar Agarwala*

<div align="center">I</div>

"Middle class" is a slippery concept: thus claimed *The Ecnomist*.[1] But what is clear is that there is a growing middle class population among tribes and other ethnic groups in the North-Eastern region of India.[2] That by any standard regional or global – in relative terms, as the middle income range of each country; or in absolute terms, using a fixed band for all countries – there is an economic middle class among tribes and ethnic groups in the region cannot be doubted and they definitely provide an increasing market for modern consumer goods.

The middle class is not only shopping but also playing politics.[3] Members of the middle class are not resigned to a life of poverty. They are prepared to put in political effort to create a better life for themselves. They neither started with life's material problems solved nor had they material assets to make their lives easy in the beginning. But now middle class has a reasonable amount of discretionary income. Middle-class people do not live from hand to mouth, job to job, season to season, as the poor do. A family enters a middle class at roughly the point where it has a third of its income left for discretionary spending after providing for basic food and shelter.[4] This allows middle class people not only to buy things like fridges or cars but also to improve their health care or plan for their children's education. Usually, an income of that size requires regular, formal employment, with a salary and some benefits. That is to say a steady job is another key middle-class characteristic in the North East.

---

* Dr. Binod Kumar Agarwala, Professor (Retired) Department of Philosophy, North Eastern Hill University, Shillong -793 022 (Meghalaya)

No doubt "middle-class" describes an income category but it also describes a set of attitudes. It is now a category which is turning more sociological than economical. Economists claim that the middle classes make contribution to economic development.[5] They also claim that there is something special about contribution of middle class, which goes beyond providing a market for modern consumer goods. The middle classes can, and sometimes do, play an important role in creating and sustaining democracy according to some researchers.[6] But, strangely enough, the middle class among the tribes and ethnic groups of North-East India do not fit into this sociological category. In the region, contrary to other places, in spite of the presence of a middle class, economic development is much slower and principles of democratic polity is to some extent deformed due to identity assertions by various ethnic and tribal groups. What accounts for this difference in the impact that the presence of middle class makes in this region and elsewhere?

The middle class of tribes and ethnic groups in North-East have solved the problems of food and financial security, they have turned to "belonging" and "esteem" needs. According to some researchers as people get richer (and, by implication, more middle-class), the influence of traditional and religious authorities tends to fall away, though "modern" attitudes to personal and individual well-being are slower to develop. As people move up Maslow's pyramid from "safety" to "esteem", they rid themselves of some traditional attitudes without necessarily adopting individualistic modern notions about broader social *mores*. Surprisingly the last half of this finding is true of the middle class of tribes of North-East but the first half has failed to be true of them.[7]

The middle class of North East still dominated by traditional attitudes to authority and holds inherited religious and communal norms in great esteem. Inspite of the middle class adopting modern consumption culture in the north-east the tribes have not turned into "modern society", like the majority people with a middle-class elsewhere. The values of individual and subjective well-being downplaying authority of collectivity of any kind has not taken roots in the North-East. The tribes of North-East, unlike "modern society," have failed to stress the importance of economic growth and upward mobility.[8] Middle class here is neither shifting away from acceptance of established traditional practices nor putting more emphasis on law and fair play. It hardly engages in a wider debate of policy and politics

of development. The tribes, inspite of presence of middle class, are trying to achieve the kind of society in which they hope their children will do better than they have done themselves only through politics of tribal/ethnic identity. Hardly anyone puts emphasis on merit and effort, there is greater emphasis only on privilege. Similarly, middle class here is not committed to competition, but works for only protective discrimination. Similarly, one notices that there is no thrift, but only conspicuous consumption in the region. There is no applauds for personal effort but there is only collective endeavour for greater share of the economic pie. Middle class has shown little inclination to fight the corruption, bad governance and incompetence that hold back the poor and block their upward mobility through economic growth in this region. To sum up, inspite of there being a large middle class, the tribes and ethnic groups have not turned into society of the new middle classes as it happened elsewhere.

How does one account for this difference of behaviour of middle class of North-East India and elsewhere? How does one characterize the middle class of the North East region of India? We here need to distinguish different kinds of differentiation of middle class available in the literature on middle class. Most common differentiation is the vertical differentiation between upper and lower levels of occupational status, i.e. upper middle class and lower middle class. But there are also indications of horizontal cleavage within the middle class. These have been identified on the basis of asset of occupational groups. For instance, Savage, Barlow, and Fielding identify the petite bourgeoisie or entrepreneurs holding property assets, managers holding organizational assets and professionals holding cultural capital (professionals, managers and entrepreneurs).[9] Others, for example Dunleavy[10] and Perkin[11], find one main cleavage in the middle class on the basis of the sector of employment. Those in the public sector derive their economic and ideological support from the state, while those in the private sector derive their support from the market. A similar, but rather different, cleavage has been identified in terms of the field of production. Berger[12] commented that 'Contemporary Western societies are characterised by a protracted conflict between two classes, the old middle class (occupied in the production and distribution of material goods and services) and a new middle class (occupied in the production and distribution of symbolic knowledge)'.

Out of these distinctions the one made by Dunleavy and Perkin on the basis of the sector of employment, i.e. Public sector and private

sector middle class, is very relevant for studying middle class in North East. There is a difference between the middle class created by the actions of the state and its equivalent created by its own efforts in the private sector in the market.[13] The first group contains managers and white-collar employees of state-owned enterprises, accountants and civil servants, and teachers and doctors in the public education and health systems, teachers in universities and colleges. These are awkward strata in that they neither own (much) capital nor do they provide labor to the owners of capital in the same manner as peasants and the proletariat.[14] The second group covers private entrepreneurs, their employees and archetypal small shopkeepers. Considered as a group of consumers, a middle class created by the state behave in the same way as a private-sector middle class. Its members will buy the same branded goods, save up for the same houses, sign up for the same credit cards and aspire to put their children into the same schools. But the public-sector sort of middle class does not have the same entrepreneurial drive, political impact or capacity to sustain high economic growth over time. Private-sector middle's openness to trade is a far more reliable engine of growth than the old state created middle class, as the private sector middle class is itself a creation of economic growth. Unfortunately, North-East Tribes and ethnic groups have mostly state created middle class.[15] The middle class of North-East is not only public sector middle class[16] but also a middle class that has emerged through vigorously pursued formal and informal policies of protective discrimination.

Private sector middle-class grows with the growth of economy; but a state created middle class has only a limited growth capability and fails to contribute to economic growth of the region.[17] The emergence of private sector middle class goes hand in hand with an increase in political stability but the emergence of public sector middle class through protective discrimination policies does not automatically lead to political stability. In fact public sector middle class created through policies of protective discrimination has failed to deliver growth, stability and equality in the region.[18] Private sector middle-income people are more likely to want competitive elections with at least two parties; more likely to demand fair treatment under the law; and more disposed to back freedom of speech and the press, that is to say private sector middle class want the kind of governance associated with rich nations, but public sector middle class created through policies of protective discrimination is not likely to favor any of these even when paying lip

service to them. Middle class in the North-East India is a group that demands more from the state and government than what they contribute to them. Representation without taxation, that is the reality of the middle class in the region.

In spite of the differences between middle class elsewhere and middleclass in the North-East they still share the common character of consumption and increasing consumption of modern goods. This demand should have propelled growth in the North-East. The demands of middle-class consumers in the region should have fed investment in new sorts of production. But this is not happening. Why is the affluence of consumer markets not translating into engine of growth?

One of the important factors impeding growth is the elite here. Its wealth depends on land or raw materials. It tends to be wary of new economic activities that might compete with its source of wealth and erode its political power. And since openness to foreign ideas is the single most important source of new technology and skills for development, there is a reluctance to invest in new things. It is keeping the economy of the region more technologically backward, less skilled and more inward-looking. This suits the elite perfectly well.[19]

Private sector middle class has no political monopoly to defend. Its members are therefore more willing to invest in businesses and technologies that might offer competition to the elite; they are also more likely to be open to the outside world. So, the growth of private sector middle class, trade openness and new businesses tend to go together. But as this has not happened in the North-East and the only middle class is public sector middle class created through policy of protective discrimination both formal and informal, it is also not ready for investment in business and technology and not open to the outside world and are not ready to compete with elite. They rather collaborate with elite to maintain the policy of protective discrimination and tribal/ethnic hegemony in the states in the region through politics of identity.[20] Therefore in spite of growth of consumption there is no consumption led economic growth in the region. The growing demand for consumption is fed only through importing goods from the other parts of India.

The middle class of whatever kind is committed to education. No doubt current theories about economic growth stress the importance of what economists call "human-capital accumulation". Human capital means more children at school and university, higher educational

qualifications, more adult education and healthier lives. The more educated people are needed to control the processes of wealth creation. It is true that middle class in North-East is valuing education and North-East is by any yardstick more educated in percentage numbers of population compared to most other parts of India. Yet this education has not created "human capital" for growth in the region. The "human capital" of the region emigrates. The educated people who remain do not form "human capital" for growth, they function only as "political capital" to maintain tribal or ethnic hegemony in the states here.

The rich and the middle class in north-east certainly believe in educating their own children in private schools run by missionaries. But they in the name of universal public education, for fear that this will lead to demands for more democracy and challenges to their political dominance, maintain poor standard state schools. Middle-class families spend proportionately more money than the poor on their children's education. Part of this extra money goes on keeping children at school for longer, but most is spent on private-school fees or on private tutors after school hours. Private schools are springing up everywhere.

Elsewhere the private sector middle class's another distinctive contribution to growth is its gift for entrepreneurship. Armed with a capacity and a tolerance for delayed gratification, new entrepreneurs emerge from the middle class and create employment and productivity growth for the rest of society. But the North-East's public sector middle class created through protective discrimination has no entrepreneurial skills. And they fail to contribute any entrepreneurship for economic growth of the region.[21]

The private sector middle class's last distinctive contribution to growth comes through its support for the right economic policies and its backing for democracy. This happens because of heterogeneity of the private sector middle class. But public sector middle class of North-East have provided some manifestations of aggressive tribalism.[22] Middle classes in North-East, faced with the disputes and strains of democratization, seem more likely to deepen political divisions than to resolve them. The middle class here has sometimes contributed to the violence. Thriving middle class in the North-East is not a sufficient condition for democracy and rule of law. One of the factors present here is that the public sector middle class of North-East is not as heterogeneous as the private sector middle class of elsewhere. The middle class of the North-East is a narrow special-interest group in the

same way as poor and the elite. Where the middle is not heterogeneous, the politics is divisive. The elite fears democracy not just because it might mean giving up its position of power (which actually does not always follow) but also because of the potential effect on its wealth. Land is easy to tax, so a land-owning elite will naturally worry that, if there is real democracy and the heterogeneous middle class with the poor gain greater political influence, they will use it to impose punitive land taxes or land reforms. But if the middle class is like narrow interest group it is easy to co-opt them in preserving their privileges.[23]

The private sector middle class acts as a moderating influence on social conflicts as conflict is against there interest. By definition, a growing middle class is expected to reduce income inequality because it will moderate the stark divide between rich elite and rural poor that is often a source of conflict. This middle class also tends to be inclusive. But the public sector middle class created through protective discrimination tends to increase exclusive identity based consciousness leading to conflicts. Such a middle class does not favour new more liberal policies, unlike the private sector middle class. The characteristic political demand of the private sector middle class is for things like private property rights and a stable economic policy. This tends to give rise to a politics of accountability, if not necessarily democracy. But the public sector middle class created through protective discrimination does not favour modern private property rights or any accountability. Members of the private middle class agree on a few basic things. Because they have a stake in the economy and want things to be better for their children, they support pro-growth policies: cautious liberalisation, investment in public goods, open trade. But the public sector middle class created through protective discrimination have none of these concerns and hence tend to support the opposite policies, especially they favour low clarity of responsibility, diffuse responsibility and blame those with whom they share responsibility for outputs.

II

There is a small segment of middle class in the North East that resembles the private sector middle class elsewhere as far as occupation is concerned. But this segment also differs much from the private sector middle class elsewhere. These middle-class actors also stand in a relationship to the state actors here. It is their relationship to the state which largely enables the private sector middle class actors to get rich

and dominate the social scene.[24] It is not only true at the local level, in the villages, but also true on the regional and state level. There is less exploitation from the labour market than from that of contracts, licenses, permission to open educational institutions and public jobs provided by the state in the North East. The trade in outside goods that the Central assistance has facilitated is also important in this connection. The trade in outside goods and also various external rents from tea, coal, plywood etc. have contributed both directly or indirectly to social polarization to create a small so-called private sector middle class.[25]

In the North East the link between holding positions of power within the state apparatus and the acquisition of wealth is clearly dependent on the exercise of power.[26] The exercise of authority generally goes hand in hand with a proportional increase in wealth. The political scientists have been mistaken in leaving this phenomenon to the journalists or moralists, for it should not be dismissed as mere anecdote. It introduces a qualitative rupture within the system of inequality and domination (or claimed equality) in the region. The post-colonial states formation thus represents an historical mutation of the North East societies and tribes. Never before, it appears, has the dominant sections managed to acquire such marked economic supremacy over lower strata of common people.[27]

Corruption and corrupt practices are the state's fabric, and the struggle for power is perhaps chiefly a struggle for wealth.[28] The apparatus of the state is in itself a slice of the national cake so that any actor worthy of the name tries to get a good mouthful. Offices and public works have great value, as these are in themselves providers of riches and wealth, and the struggle to control them is part of politics.[29]

The privileged relation between wealth and power manifests itself in dependency of private firms on administrative authorization of trade licenses, industrial grants, and violations of the law like tax fraud. There is also claim of ethnic groups and tribes to monopolize trade and business. This is creating a small and slow growing so called private sector middle class among tribes and ethnic groups. This necessitates a postulation of public sector (or bureaucratic) middle class and private sector (or business) middle class in alliance as the means of accumulation of the latter depends on its proximity to the former. But the expansion of the public sector middle class to some extent undermines the economic and political foundations of the private sector middle class and also extracts a 'bureaucratic rent' from the latter. The dilemma of the

relationship of the large public sector middle class and small private sector middle class is not yet resolved and remains open. On closer examination the situation appears to be quite complex, and the radical otherness, which clearly distinguishes the private sector middle class from the politico administrative middle class making them two distinct entities whose conflict is potential but not yet realized, has been elusive in the North East. But in the end private sector and public sector middle class drive the same brand car, drink the same wine, smoke the same cigarettes, meet up in the same lounges at airports, attend services in the same churches, attend the same weddings and funerals. The divisions between the two activities, economic and politico-administrative, do exist and partly expressed in the form of personal rivalries. None the less, they express antagonisms between roles rather than status groups or classes. They are not necessarily any more bitter than the factional struggles which divide the political class.

The private and state paths to accumulation are broadly speaking, the same ethos of personal enrichment and munificence. And conversely, there is nothing to suggest that the private sector middle class and public sector middle class is externally related in the North East. The enrichment of the two can be traced back to a network of closely meshed interests running back through time, through contracts, marriages, grant of licenses etc. Public and private operators act complementarily. The osmosis between the two spheres takes place through the accidental businessmen and women who get converted to business once their brother, cousin, spouse, friend or co-ethnic member has been appointed to a post of responsibility. This brother, cousin, spouse, friend or co-ethnic member showers them with all sorts of business opportunities, mainly in construction, public works, stationery or office equipment, interior decorating, education etc. This kind of mechanism of straddling between salaried jobs – particularly in civil services – and private investment,[30] plays a central role and conditions what one might call true accumulation in the North East.[31] There is here an undeniable continuity between the colonial and the postcolonial periods, although it covers a change in salaried positions from which there was a transfer and enrichment. To such straddling we should add other interrelations between public and private channels of accumulation. The ethnic or tribal entrepreneurs enjoy government patronage. Commercial and political circles support each other. So the dichotomy between private sector and public sector middle class does not hold

good in the North East.[32] The entire middle class has acquired the character of public sector middle class due to complimentarity, straddling, and hybridization between private and public. There is no relationship of exclusion and competition between the two.

Ethnicization or tribalization is a condition of private accumulation: the dominant ethnic groups or tribal groups try to capture capital through state sector by straddling or by any other means in the North East. Access to the state is vital for the ethnic or tribal groups who aspire for domination. Hence tribal middle class favors small ethnic states so that there is easy access to power. People in the region forget that the practice of straddling weakens the specifically bureaucratic tenor of the state. The preeminence of the public sector middle class erodes structural adjustment plans.[33]

This straddling middle class which has been characterized as having acquired the characteristics of the public sector middle class needs further conceptualization in its unity and plasticity. Should it be called 'politico-commercial' middle class? No doubt it is an appealing expression suggestive of the interdependence of two major sectors of the process of accumulation at the top of the social scale. The privileged relationship of power to wealth is neither exhaustive (for example salaried position in business or education), nor unequivocal (more and more, economic wealth opens the doors to power). In the emergence of the middle class the state is less constitutive than the incubator.

However, the characterization of this class is still problematic. This middle class is aspiring to be a 'sub-national' middle class. Not only the middle class is on the way to get divided on ethnic and tribal lines but also there is a latent tendency of developing contradiction between the regional business environment and outside capital.[34] The middle class forgets both that networks of accumulation almost necessarily need to transcend regional particularities and that there has to be frequent relationships of association and overlapping between the regional business environment and outside capital if the regional economy is to develop. Even if there are inherent distributional conflict of interest there is no denying the need of outside capital for development. Even the past history of the region makes us believe that the ethnic middle class of the region will continue to be involved in extraversion.[35]

Trade, more than production, is still the major economic activity of the region. Because of this reason it is appropriate to use middle

class instead of 'bourgeoisie' as there is neither class exploitation in the Marxian sense nor a productive economy.[36] The domestic accumulation depends crucially on the rents from outside. The regional agricultural and industrial sectors are fragile and not very competitive. North East still lacks the ethos of private sector middle class as exhibited in other parts of India.

Given the blatant maldistribution of income and wealth, one might assume that some form of class politics would emerge in a rentier economy to redress the iniquity of material conditions. But class-based politics are impossible because the economic conditions and sectoral imbalances of the rentier state discourage class formation in the usual sense of the term. A declining rural-agricultural sector; a state-sponsored industrial sector; a booming service sector hardly gives any options for class-based politics. There is no possibility of revolution in the North-East region of India.[37]The Marxist understanding of class does not apply here because people do not identify themselves by their relation to means of production.

Notes

[1.] "A special report on Latin America," The Economist, September 11th 2010, p.13.

[2.] Cf. Tribal Demography and Development in North-East India, edited by Ashis Bose, Tiplut Nongbri, Nikhilesh Kumar, B. R. Publishing Corporation, Delhi, 1990, especially pp. 1, 16, 29,and 31f; Regionalism in India (With Special Reference to North-East India), edited by B. Pakem, Nehu Publications, 1993, p. 158.

[3.] For the politics of middle class in North East India cf. Regionalism in India (With Special Reference to North-East India), especially pp. 227-235, 273-279 and 190.

[4.] For a discussion of what is middle class cf. Peter N. Stearns, "The Middle Class: Toward a Precise Definition," Comparative Studies in Society and History, Vol. 21, No. 3 (Jul., 1979), pp. 377-396; Val Burris, "The Discovery of the New Middle Class," Theory and Society, Vol. 15, No. 3 (May, 1986), pp. 317-349; Daniel Bell, "The new class: A muddled concept." In R. Bruce-Briggs (ed.), The New Class? 169-190, New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1979; R. Bruce-Briggs, The New Class? New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1979; Sally Power and Geoff Whitty, "Bernstein and the Middle Class," British Journal of Sociology of Education, Vol. 23, No. 4, Basil Bernstein's Theory of Social Class, Educational Codes and Social Control (Dec., 2002), pp. 595-606;Sally

Power, "Educational Pathways into the Middle Class(es)," British Journal of Sociology of Education, Vol. 21, No. 2 (Jun., 2000), pp. 133-145; Francis G. Wilson, "Public Opinion and the Middle Class," The Review of Politics, Vol. 17, No. 4 (Oct., 1955), pp. 486-510; Arno J. Mayer, "The Lower Middle Class as Historical Problem," The Journal of Modern History, Vol. 47, No. 3 (Sep., 1975), pp. 409-436; Jonathan M. Wiener, "Marxism and the Lower Middle Class: A Response to Arno Mayer," The Journal of Modern History, Vol. 48, No. 4 (Dec., 1976), pp. 666-671; F. Bechhofer and B. Elliott, "The Petite Bourgeoisie in Late Capitalism," Annual Review of Sociology, Vol. 11 (1985), pp. 181-207;Gerard DeGre, "Ideology and Class Consciousness in the Middle Class," Social Forces, Vol. 29, No. 2 (Dec., 1950), pp. 173-179; John Urry, "Towards a Structural Theory of the Middle Class," Acta Sociologica, Vol. 16, No. 3 (1973), pp. 175-187.

5. Irma Adelman and Cynthia Taft Morris, Society, Politics, and Economic Development: A Quantitative Approach (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1967), p. 30.

6. Cf. David Martin Jones, "Democratization, Civil Society, and Illiberal Middle Class Culture in Pacific Asia," Comparative Politics, Vol. 30, No. 2 (Jan., 1998), p. 147; Sung Joo Han, "South Korean Politics in Transition", in Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz, and Seymour M. Lipset, Democracy in Developing Countries, vol. 3 (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1989), p. 292. Thomas W. Robinson with Jennifer A. Arnold and Pamela J. Shime, "Introduction," in Thomas W. Robinson, ed., Democracy and Development in East Asia (Washington, D.C.: ACI Press, 1991), p. 2; Ian Chalmers, "Indonesia 1990: Democratization and Social Forces," in Southeast Asian Affairs (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1991), p. 121; Linda Chao and Ramon Myers, "The First Chinese Democracy," Asian Survey, 34 (March 1994), 213.

7. Cf. Regionalism in India, pp. 164-65.

8. Cf. Jayanta Madhab, "North-East: Crisis of Identity, Security and Underdevelopment," Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 34, No. 6 (Feb. 6-12, 1999), pp. 320.

9. M. Savage, J. Barlow, & T. Fielding, Property, Bureaucracy and Culture: middle class formation in contemporary Britain, London, Routledge, (1992).

10. P. Dunleavy, The political implications of sectoral cleavages and the growth of state employment: part 2, cleavage structures and political alignment, Political Studies, 28, (1980), pp. 527-549.

11. H. Perkin, The Rise of Professional Society: England since 1800, London, Routledge, (1989).

12. P. Berger, The Capitalist Revolution, Aldershot, Wildwood House, (1987), p. 67.
13. Cf. also Tom Langford "The Politics of the Canadian New Middle Class: Public/Private Sector Cleavage in the 1980s," The Canadian Journal of Sociology/Cahiers canadiens de sociologie, Vol. 21, No. 2 (Spring, 1996), pp. 153-183.
14. Cf. Karl Renner, The Service Class. Pp. 249-252 in Tom Bottomore and Patrick Goode, trans. and eds., Austro-Marxism. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1978 [1953]; Barbara Ehrenreich and John Ehrenreich, "The Professional-Managerial Class," Radical America 11, 1977, pp. 7-31. and "Rejoinder." Pp. 313-334 in Pat Walker (ed.), Between Labour and Capital. Hassocks, Sussex: Harvester Press. 1979; John Goldthorpe, On the Service Class." Pp. 162-185 in Anthony Giddens and Gavin Mackenzie (eds.), Social Class and the Division of Labour. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1982; Nicholas Abercrombie and John Urry, Capital, Labour and the Middle Classes. London: George Allen & Unwin. 1983; and Scott Lash and John Urry, The End of Organized Capitalism. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press. 1987; C. Wright Mills, White Collar (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951); Daniel Bell, The Coming of Post-Industrial Society (New York, 1973).
15. For Assamese middle classcf. Hiren Gohain, "Origins of the Assamese Middle Class," Social Scientist, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Aug., 1973), p. 18; Amalendu Guha and Arvind N. Das, "Origins of the Assamese Middle Class: A Comment," Social Scientist, Vol. 2, No. 6/7 (Jan. - Feb., 1974), pp. 60f.
16. Gohain, "Origins of the Assamese Middle Class," p. 19.
17. Gohain, "Origins of the Assamese Middle Class," pp. 18-19.
18. Regarding Mizoram situation cf. Regionalism in India, p. 163.
19. Cf. Amalendu Guha and Arvind N. Das "Origins of the Assamese Middle Class: A Comment," Social Scientist, Vol. 2, No. 6/7 (Jan. - Feb., 1974), p. 59.
20. Cf. Regionalism in India, p. 276.
21. Cf. Guha and Das "Origins of the Assamese Middle Class: A Comment," p. 59.
22. Cf. Regionalism in India, p. 157.
23. Cf. Regionalism in India, pp. 230-31 and 275f.
24. Cf. Gohain, "Origins of the Assamese Middle Class," pp. 15 - 18.
25. Cf. Tribal Demography and Development in North-East India, pp. 34-35; P.S. Dutta, "Emerging Differentiation in a Traditional Tribal Economy (The Case of Khasi-Jaintias)," in Social Research, (Vol.4, No.3-4, July–Dec. 1984), pp. 5-6.
26. Cf. Gohain, "Origins of the Assamese Middle Class," p. 12.

27. Cf. Regionalism in India, p. 18.
28. Cf. Regionalism in India, p.319; Tribal Demography and Development in North-East India, p. 35.
29. Cf. B.P. Singh, "North-East India: Demography, Culture and Identity Crisis," Modern Asian Studies Vol. 21, No. 2 (1987), pp. 267
30. The idea of straddling mechanism is used by Jean-Francois Bayart in his The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly, second edition, Polity Press, 2009, pp. 69-70, 81-82 and 96-98.
31. Cf. Regionalism in India, p. 232
32. Cf. Guha and Das "Origins of the Assamese Middle Class: A Comment," p. 61.
33. Cf. Gohain, "Origins of the Assamese Middle Class," p. 12. Middle Class: A Comment," pp. 59-60.
34. Cf. Gohain, "Origins of the Assamese Middle Class," p. 11; Guha and Das "Origins of the Assamese.
35. Cf. Regionalism in India, p. 276; Tribal Demography and Development in North-East India, pp. 36f.
36. Cf. Guha and Das "Origins of the Assamese Middle Class: A Comment," p. 60-61.
37. This is true of all rentier states. Douglas A. Yates, The Rentier State in Africa: Oil Rent Dependency and Neocolonialism in the Republic of Gabon, Threnton, N J: African World Press, 1996, p. 35.

Regionalism in India: A Critical Observation

Dr. Nazmul Hussain Laskar*

Introduction

India is passing through an evolutionary crisis, a crisis of identity and integrity. The emergence of the 29th state i.e. Telengana- carved out of the big state of Andhra Pradesh has given a new momentum to the crisis. It has led to a cry for the creation of more new states like Vidharba in Maharastra, Bodoland in Assam, Gorkhaland in West Bengal and Harit Pradesh in Uttar Pradesh. Regionally based ethnic, tribal, cultural or religious sub-groups have begun to make demands which at time border on separatism. The development of these regional forces in India is a natural consequence of the given heterogeneity of Indian Society. India is regarded as a continent of many communities united through shared experiences but powerfully motivated by parochial and regional considerations. This has produced multi-cultural ethos. The political manifestation of such multicultural ethos is evident in the emergence of regionally based political movements amidst a multiplicity of political identities at the different levels of Indian polity. The process of regionalisation of Indian politics is both the cause and effect of indigenisation and democratization of politics.[1] The traditional social structure with a modern political super-structure has given rise to incoherence between society and politics in India. In this paper an attempt has been made to examine the nature, growth and development of regionalisation of Indian politics in the context of 'specificity' of the Indian political system.

* Dr. Nazmul Hussain Laskar, Assistant Professor and Head, Department of Political Science, Dr. Gour Mohan Roy College, Monteswar, Purba Bardhaman-713145 (West Bengal). (Email-mr.nazmulhussain@rediffmail.com). Mobile No. 07044325704/ 7865072568.

In context to the development of Indian politics regionalism has appeared as one of the major challenges. So, it is useful to study the nature and impact of regionalism on the development of Indian political system and also to find out the impact of Indian politics on this particular problematic issue. So, regionalism and Indian politics are considered as both dependent and independent variables in the analysis.

What is Regionalism?

The term 'regionalism' is derived from the word 'region'. A region is a homogeneous area with physical and cultural characteristics distinct from those of neighbouring areas.[2] It has received different interpretations from different scholars. A geographer tries to emphasise on geographical area, while an anthropologist on a cultural area. However, as part of a national domain a region is sufficiently unified to have a consciousness of its customs and ideals and thus possesses a sense of identity distinct from the rest of the country. The term 'regionalism' properly represents the regional idea in action as an ideology, as a social movement, or as the theoretical basis for regional planning. When the particularistic attitude of the region claims recognition of its cultural identity, it is better understood as 'regionalisation' or regional movement.[3]

Regionalism in the Indian context, as perhaps elsewhere also, is a nebulous concept. It is a multi-dimensional phenomenon- a feeling or sentiment backed by various factors like territory, language, culture, economic development etc. Regionalism generally stands for a particular state of consciousness of a group of people united by ties of kinship, religion, race or language, who seek self identification in terms of a particular territory as their own sphere of activity. This conceptual analysis of regionalism embraces geographical, cultural and psychological connotations.[4] Regionalism is a social reality that survives in a geographical background. It is a significant type of sub-territorial loyalty. Secondly, regionalism is a socio-cultural phenomenon. It involves socio-cultural variables like linguistic, ethnic, religious and economic interests which interplay in varying degrees so as to generate some distinctive characteristics. Thirdly, regionalism implies psychological reality. At the core of regionalism a profound sense of identity prevails. There is widely shared sentiment of 'togetherness' or 'we-feeling' among the people and a sense of differentiation from others.

Regionalism has both positive and negative dimensions. Speaking in positive terms, it embodies a quest for self-fulfilment on the part of the people of an area. In this sense, there is a scope for positive expression of the collective personality of a people inhabiting a region and it may be conducive to the well being of the community. Negatively speaking, regionalism reflects a psyche of relative deprivation resulting from specific grievance. It is believed that deprivation is deliberately inflicted by the powers that be and this leads to acuteness of feeling on the part of the people who carry the psyche of deprivation. This belief is easily cultivated in a milieu characterised by politics of scarcity as in India. It is this negative aspect which makes regionalism militant, agitational and even violent.

Regionalism in India

India is a vast country characterised by heterogeneity of cultural traits and regionalism in general is a product of India's diversity. Naturally, regionalism in India is not monotypical, it is multi-dimensional phenomenon. As Prof Iqbal Narain has described, various dimensions create three major forms of regionalism in India, namely, supra-state regionalism, inter-state regionalism and intra-state regionalism.[5] These types of regionalisms are identified in terms of geographical space. It should be remembered in this connection that these types of regionalism seem to overlap and in the ultimate analysis, all these forces of regionalism emerge out of 'mal-development syndrome'[6] which is characteristic of capitalist mode of economy.

The first type is supra-state regionalism, which is not co-spatial with the boundaries of state. It spills beyond its political territory. Supra-state regionalism actually is an expression of feeling of group identity on the part of the component states. They join hands to take a common stand on the issue of mutual interest vis-a-vis another group of states or even against the Union. The group identity thus forged is usually negative in character; it is usually against some other group identity. It is also issue-specific in the sense that it is confined to certain matter on which the group would like to take common and joint stand. It is not at all a case of total merger to state identities in the group identity. South vs. North in India on such issues as language or the location of steel plants illustrate the point.

Secondly, there is inter-state regionalism which is co-terminus with state boundaries. It involves juxtaposing of one or more state identities

against another on specific issues which threaten their interest. This type of regionalism also has appeared as a movement against the Union. Inter-state river water disputes in general and the Maharashtra-Karnataka border dispute in particular can be cited as examples.

Thirdly, there is the phenomenon of intra-state regionalism which is but another name of sub-regionalism. It embodies the quest of a part within a state for self –identity and self-development in positive terms and negatively speaking, reflects a psyche of deprivation and/or exploitation of a part in relation to other parts of the same state. It is characterised by a 'we-feeling' among the people of a part of the state and a 'they-feeling' against other parts of the same state. Unlike other two types, this type of regionalism is directed against the state governments rather than the Union of India. In this type regional demands are put forward for the creation of new and separate political and administrative units within the existing state structure and for equitable and fair treatment within the state. This type of regionalism is most rampant, typified by a Vidharba in Maharashtra, a Saurastra in Gujarat, Harit Pradesh in Uttar Pradesh and East Rajasthan in Rajasthan, Bodoland in Assam.

These different forms of regionalism have produced a number of demands on the national polity. Thus there is demand to give identity to particular language, religion and ethnic factors of the region. There is also demand for more autonomy, power and constitutional status of the region. Sometimes some areas of a particular state or of two or more adjacent states demand separate statehood within the nation in order to obtain a distinct political entity. Thus the creation of new states like – Uttaranchal, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand and Telengana – is the product of this sort of demand. Regional demand in its extreme form takes recourse to secessionist movements. Secessionist movement in Jammu & Kashmir and Nagaland etc. is an example. To achieve these regional demands sometimes attempts have been made to put forth the claims in the forum of state legislatures and parliament or to make agitations and in worst cases to indulge in terrorist violence.

Genesis of Regionalism in India

Regionalism is not the unique problem of India. Today there is hardly any country including the developed ones, which have escaped this problem.[7] The emergence of the present form of regionalism in India had its roots in the colonial policy of the British rule in India.[8] The

British made concerted effort to create obstacles to the growth of national consciousness in India. The colonial rulers favoured a policy of administrative divisions with a view to creating an environment of conflict between people of different identities the Assamese against the Bengalees, The Tamils against the Telegus, the Bengalees against the Oriyas etc. added to this was the principal concern of the colonial polity to subordinate the interests of India to those of the empire. The administrative divisions of India under the British rule particularly before and after 1905 were entirely based on military and administrative convenience. The empirical rulers disregarded to a large extent the natural boundaries of the various regional communities speaking different languages and following different cultural traditions.[9] On political ground the Montegu-Chelmsford Reform of 1919 rejected the principle of reorganisation of the provinces on linguistic basis, because it would violate the basic principle of colonial rule that 'nobody rules in the colonised tongue'.

The attitude of the Indian National Congress towards the idea of constituting political units on linguistic basis had been vacillating from time to time. During the days of the freedom movement the Congress bent its support to the linguistic nationality principle by opposing the partition of Bengal and supporting its annulment. The Congress then held the view that the maintenance of non-linguistic administrative divisions by the British Government was arbitrary and a part of the policy of 'divide and rule'. This policy of the Congress led to the formation of Andhra and Sind as separate 'Congress Provinces' in 1917. By 1918 Gandhi had accepted the logic in favour of the linguistic provinces. The Nagpur Session of the Congress held in 1920 gave the idea a concrete shape adopting a resolution to reorganise the Pradesh Committees on a linguistic basis. Thus the Congress derived support from different regions and built up the national movement by harnessing the forces of regionalism. But later on limitations were imposed on such a principle by the Congress itself leaving it to the public sentiment to grow in course of time.[10]

After independence the Constituent Assembly appointed a commission known as the Dar Commission in 1948 to have a fresh look at the linguistic question. The report of the commission could not endorse the linguistic principle in larger interest of the nation. This report created dissatisfaction among the supporters of the linguistic principle. The Congress party in its Jaipur session in December 1948,

appointed a high powered JVP Committee to reconsider the issue. This committee also rejected the demand of linguistic provinces, although it found strong points in favour of the demand of Andhra.

The negative attitude of the central leaders on linguistic principle caused discontent among the congress men at the provincial level. The Vishalandhra movement gathered immense momentum during the late forties. The death of a veteran Gandhian Sriramulu out of a long drawn fast caused widespread unrest throughout Andhra. In 1952 Nehru announced the formation of Andhra Pradesh. This decision unleashed a series of demands for re-organisation of the states. There were also demands for adjustment of existing borders of the states.

The central leaders realised that the linguistic passions could not be checked any longer. This led to the appointment of the States Reorganisation Commission (SRC) which submitted its report in 1955. The SRC report generally accepted the linguistic principle, as an offshoot of which the political map of India was thoroughly changed by the end of the fifties. But linguistic reorganisation by itself was no panacea to the ills of retarded growth of various regions. Other vital principles of reorganisation such as size, administrative viability, economic performance and social homogeneity were neglected.[11] This fact later on released forces powerful enough to challenge the validity and viability of the map of India drawn in 1956. In subsequent phases linguistic considerations apart, there were also other forces at work which have created more problems and social tensions. Grievances against the exploitation by the 'plainsmen' have led to the creation of the hill states. There is also demand for more regional autonomy. This process is still continuing.

Regionalism in India: Major Factors

Regionalism is thus a conspicuous phenomenon in the political scenario of the post-independence India. There are many factors and forces responsible for the growth and spread of regionalism in India. These factors again are bound together and interwoven.[12] The main factors and forces responsible for the growth of regionalism in contemporary India can be analysed as under:

Whatever may be the immediate cause for generating regionalism, the root cause that breeds regionalism is economic. Indeed, economic component is the crux of regionalism.[13] The basic root of regionalism lies in the pattern of property relations. It is common knowledge that

India is facing economic scarcity. The resources are scarce and demands disproportionately heavy and ever-growing on account of continued population explosion. This gives rise to the phenomenon of acute competition and the question of distributive justice on the one hand and the phenomenon of rising expectations on the other. Thus tea plantations of Assam become a battle ground between rival groups of Assamese and Bengali unemployed. One reason of Punjab agitation is to get more share of the Sutlej-Beas water.

The adoption of the capitalist model of development has led to regional imbalance in India. Regional imbalance in India was created by the colonial masters. During the colonial regime, development in India took place along the port cities, as this was necessary for imperial interests. The rest of the country served as hinterland. It was thought that the policies in independent India would be directed towards the reduction of regional imbalance; but the colonial evidence is otherwise. In fact, the uneven development of capitalism cannot but result in regional imbalance. The Hazari Report on Industrial Planning and Licensing Policy, 1967 pointed out that most of the Marwari, Gujrati and Parsi investment was concentrated in three states of Maharashtra, West Bengal and Madras.[14] The studies of the relative positions of different states of India in terms of per capita Net Domestic Product in 2007-2008 show that states like Punjab, Maharastra and Haryana continue to forge ahead, while the states like Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa have relatively slid backward. It shows that per capita income of Bihar was only 23.9 per cent of Punjab's per capita income in 2007-2008. Thus the lop sided growth of industries under the uneven development of capitalist economy of India has led to the accentuation of the process of regional disparities. The areas of high productivity shrink and include only Punjab, Haryana and western U.P. Such regional imbalances have led to a sense of relative deprivation. This has given rise to political movement with a regional tinge. The Telengana movement, the Assam Movement, The Bodo movement etc are instances where the demand for distributive justice happens to be the centre of gravity.

Unequal economic development is also at the root of 'sub-regionalism'. The backward regions of the states remain comparatively neglected by capitalist development and democratic state planning. Trends in state politics in India indicate that the economically developed regions also happen to dominate the political structure of the state with

the result that economically developed regions receive more development funds than the under developed regions. Demands for distributive justice thus get generated and assume the form of a movement. Most of the demands for constituting new states are primarily based on allegedly unfair and unequal distributions of development benefits and expenditures in the states. The Telengana movement is a classic instance in point. Jammu and Ladakh regions in Jammu & Kashmir have a feeling that they are getting step-motherly treatment. In this connection, we can say that giving union territory status to Ladakh is a welcome step.

Sometimes questions of political existence, political consolidation and political eminence in the sphere of influence breed regionalist phenomenon and attitude. Politicians in their self interest exploit situations of regional deprivation and unrest and convert them into movements to forge and strengthen their individual and factional support bases. It is common knowledge, for instance, that the infighting within the Congress party gave a lease to life to the Telengana agitation. Majority of the regional political parties like the DMK and AIDMK in Tamil Nadu, Telegu Desham in Andhra, Akali Dal in Punjab, AGP in Assam have built up and survived on regional sentiment. In the north eastern region a large number of political parties have surfaced representing different ethnic groups- the Nagas, the Mizos, the Bodos and many others. The Congress party which at one time held sway over all the states, has lost ground to these regional parties. Every conceivable category of primordial sentiment in India has founded a party of its own. And there is underway a tremendous assertion of traditional identities.

The creation of linguistic states could not solve the problem of composite culture. Rather it strengthened the hands of the regional elites. These regional elites were landowners, merchants, traders, bourgeoisie, caste elites, upper echelons of the administrative hierarchy and intellectuals. They began to establish close ties with the dominant linguistic, communal or caste groups in order to enhance their own position in the decision making process at the provincial level. This resulted in a shift in country's political life from national to regional orientation.[15]

There is no gainsaying the fact that India has adopted highly centralised form of government. Whatever be the rationale for the over-centralisation the fact remains that the state governments are hard-

pressed to meet the ever increasing demands for the socio-economic upliftment of the people as their resources are very limited and the tax base is extremely narrow.[16] The process of centralisation rooted in the constitution received a boost following the hegemonic rule of the Congress Party at the centre and the states for a long period of time. The 1967 general elections broke the domination of the Congress. Since then regional emotion craves for more autonomy and power, both political as well as economic. Increasing political awareness of the states is making the states more and more self-assertive from which clamour for more power and autonomy on the part of the states is the natural outcome.

'Loose endedness' of the Indian state is also another cause of regionalism in India. Loose endedness is the very mechanism of state's survival in India. Such a loose ended state cannot build a nation.[17] The Indian state hardly provides an integrated political framework that can build a nation. Structurally the institutions have failed to produce the desired harmony. Functionally, the state has not been able to dissolve the communal forms of social existence, let alone establishing its hegemony over the Indian society. The Indian big bourgeoisie has not succeeded in unifying the people into bourgeois democratic framework of a single nation. Thus the loose endedness of the Indian state is dysfunctional to the enterprise of nation building. Added to this is the rise of manipulative politics in India since the days of Mrs. Gandhi. The handling of nationality question from narrow partisan point of view and in adhoc fashion cannot but harm the interests of nationalities. The central Government is more interested in manipulating its own parties into power than in making a permanent solution to the problem of a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual country like India.

Culture also plays a vital role in fomenting regionalism. Caste, religion, language and ethnicity often act in conjunction with one another to produce regional tensions in different parts of the country and at various times. Although caste as a social institution plays a marginal role in the context of regionalism, it is a significant contributory factor in the context of sub-regionalism. The regional caste structure leads to the formation of well-knit regional identities. Of late, many regional caste associations have mushroomed on many parts of the country. These associations play an important role in politicising and mobilising the unmobilised traditional masses on regional lines. In such a situation caste association help the regional elites in achieving their vested

interests. Caste solidarities are also used by the dominant castes in order to preserve their dominance. It turns into caste craziness which leads to regionalism. Thus the cases of Maharashtra and Punjab can be cited as examples of dominant caste regionalism while that of U.P. and M.P. as of multi-caste regionalism. Anti-Brahmin movement in Tamil Nadu has been consolidated in the rise of the DMK.

Though religion as such is not so significant in fomenting regionalism, religious practices are part of the religion culture. When a religious group is concentrated in a particular region, and if that group is majority as is the case of Sikhs in Punjab and Muslims in Jammu & Kashmir, this group will try to mobilise itself by creating religious consciousness in order to dominate the regional politics. But in a situation where the religious groups are in a minority, the feeling of insecurity will consolidate that group into a conscious regional community to protect its interests vis-a-vis majority group(s).[18]

In the context of the growth of regionalism in India language is very important socio-cultural element in the formation of regional and sub-regional identities. Since the reorganisation of states on the basis of language, intra-state cohesion and homogeneity are on the increase, though the problem of minority groups continues to be vexing. Linguistic homogeneity strengthens regionalism both in positive and negative senses. In the positive sense, it strengthens unity and in the negative sense it expresses emotional frenzy. Ever since the reorganisation of the linguistic states promotion of regional language has become a matter of fairly acute concern in all states. And aggressive tendency of dominant linguistic groups to impose their own language on the reconstructed areas is on the increase. This often has led to violence in Assam. Sometimes the linguistically dominant group is imbued with some sort of psychic deprivation or its possibility. The linguistic riots in Tamil Nadu exemplify the point.

'Linguistic regionalism' has also created the problem of linguistic minorities. There are two types of linguistic groups. (i) linguistic minorities belonging to linguistic groups which are majorities elsewhere- e.g. Bengalis in Assam and (ii) minorities which are not majorities anywhere. These minority groups are often concerned with reserving their cultural identities and resisting assimilation into a larger regional culture. They are often even more protective of their status in the midst of growing regional sentiments.[19]

Of late, with rising pre-eminence of ethnic dimension in politics, such terms as ethno-nationalism, ethno-regionalism, politicised ethnicity etc. have been used generally to explain regionalisation of politics. Ethnicity as a sociological concept is based on the notion that certain ethnic groups are rooted in space. Sometimes, an ethnic group may find the so called primordial identity to be more efficacious in promoting their socio-economic and cultural interests. The Kamtapuri demand in North Bengal illustrates this. The British rule created a division between the primordial structure of society and relatively well off sections of the people of India. Transfer of power was made to the leadership of the well off sections who formed the core community. No attempt has been made to wipe out uneven development of different ethnic groups. Modernisation has not reached to the weaker sections of the people. Moreover, tribal people look upon modernisation as the destruction of natural environment and their cultural identity. The result is ecological and ethnic tensions. According to Rajni Kothari, politics in India has become a constant struggle for survival, through numbers game.[20] The increasing preoccupation with mere survival in office has led to an 'ethnicisation of politics' in which the manipulation of numbers is done on an ethnic or regional basis.

Finally, it cannot be denied that the roots of regionalism in India, as elsewhere, lie in the psychic factor. History, cultural heritage myths and symbolism often help in developing a psychic factor which may in turn foment regionalism. There is always a natural tendency towards the primacy of the regionalistic over the nationalistic situation.[21] Seen in this light regionalism in India is a psychic phenomenon. The rise of the DMK in Tamil Nadu illustrates the point. The North-South controversy, the ongoing separatist and anti-migrant movement in Assam is a psychic phenomenon.

Conclusion

The above analysis reveals that the emergence of regionalism in the politics of India is an essential product of its socio-cultural diversity and is a part of our life. So long as the cultural diversity, economic and social disparity and above all, other types of social evils remain in existence the phenomenon of regionalism shall have its impact on the national life. It should be remembered that the creation of new states is no panacea to the ills of regionalism. It is high time to acknowledge that India is a multinational state. Various nationalities, such as,

Manipuri, Tripuri, Kamtapuri, Nagas, Mizos etc are getting more and more politicised as a result of their interaction with democratic processes. Regional movements are in some sense manifestations of their sense of being deprived from the due share of the national cake. There is an urgent need for channelizing their grievances in proper direction to check effectively the growth of negative aspects of regionalism.

The manipulative attitude of the administration towards the growing consciousness among the agitating people has further complicated the problems and resulted in their being exploited at the hands of the outsiders. The need of the hour is to eradicate their genuine grievances and bring them into the mainstream of national life. The usual dichotomies between centralisation and decentralisation and between secular and parochial identities are uncalled for in our situation.[22] The polar opposites need to be organically integrated and ordered through a given 'system'. A strong centre can be built by making the regions strong. Regional movements have their constructive aspects as well, so far as the task of nation building formation is concerned. So regional loyalties should be reconciled with the task of nation building. The way to deal with regionalist forces lies not in dubbing them antinational and crushing them with the use of state force, but in respecting them and recognising their underlying motives and aspirations and fitting them into larger framework of national unity. An atmosphere of mutual trust and good will should be created in the process of rebuilding the state.

Notes and References:

1. Majumdar, A.K. and Bhanwar Singh (1997): **Regionalism in Indian Politics**, Radha Publications, New Delhi, p. 9.
2. Sills, David (1968): **International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences**, Vol.13, The Macmillan Co. & the Free Press, 1968, pp. 377, 379.
3. Banerjee, Bholanath (1987): **Politics of Regionalism in India**, Socialist Perspective, Vol. 15, No.1-2, June-September, pp. 28-29.
4. Mukherjee, Bharati (1992): **Regionalism in Indian Perspective**, K.P. Bagchi & Co, Kolkata, p. 223.
5. Narain Iqbal (1984): **A Conceptual Analysis in the Indian Context** in Majeed, Akhtar, ed, Regionalism: Developmental Trends in India, Cosmo Publications, New Delhi, p. 32.
6. Majumdar, A.K., op. cit., p. 148.
7. Ibid.p.1.
8. Mukherjee, Bharati (1996): *Bharate Anchalikatabader Samasya Prasange*, Ganasakti, December 14-15, 1996.

9. Mishra, R.N. (1984): **Regionalism and State Politics in India**, Asia Publishing House, New Delhi, p. 14.

10. Ibid. p. 14.

11. Ibid. p. 16.

12. Mukherjee, Bharati(1992) : **Regionalism in Indian Perspective**, op.cit., p. 88.

13. Narain, Iqbal(1985): **Regional Politics in India**, in Mathur, P.C., ed. Government and Politics in South Asia, Printwell Publisher, Jaipur, pp. 225-227.

14. Hazari, R.K. (1967): **Industrial Planning and Licensing Policy**, Government of India, New Delhi, p.4. Quoted in Majumdar, A.K. op cit., p. 37.

15. Majumdar, A.K. , op.cit., p. 36.

16. Roy, Sushil Ranjan (1986): **Nature and Working of the Federalising Process in India** (1947-1970), Socialist Perspective, Vol.14, No-1-2, June-September, pp. 52-53.

17. Das, Samir Kumar (1990): **State Against Nation: Regional Movements in Contemporary India**, Socialist Perspective, Vol.17, No.4, March, pp. 34-37.

18. Majumdar, A.K., op. cit., p. 89.

19. Weiner, Myron (1968): **Political Development in the Indian States in State Politics in India,** Princeton University Press, Princeton, pp. 26-27.

20. Kothari, Rajni (1988): **State against Democracy: In search of Humane Governance**, Ajanta, Delhi, p. 242.

21. Majumdar, A.K. , op.cit., p. 113.

22. Kothari, Rajni, **State against Democracy**, op.cit. p. 102.

Changing Contours of Labour Force Structure in Jharkhand

Dr. Santanu Sahu*

1. Introduction

The state of Jharkhand was carved out of Bihar in the year 2000. One of the mineral rich states of the country the state still struggles to build its identity in terms of offering a decent living to its entire populace even after 19 years of its creation with large development gaps. The real GSDP of the state has grown at an impressive compound average annual rate (CAGR) of 7.1 per cent during the period 2004-05 to 2012-13. The state's economy witnessed impressive growth even post 2008-09 crisis mainly driven by the service sector. However, in terms of employment generation the journey has not been promising both quantitatively as well as qualitatively over the entire period. Unemployment fell during the period 2004-05 and 2011-12 but has risen during the period 2011-12 to 2017-18. Moreover,the quantitative fall witnessed in the employment rates has been associated with qualitative degradation in the nature of employment.

The present paper discusses into the issue of the status and structure of employment and changes therein in the state along with sectoral changes across the various categories of workers both male and female. Considering the fact that the state is resource rich with immense scope of developing a strong industrial base the paper tries to investigate the status of organised manufacturing in the state as well.

---

* Dr. Santanu Sahu, UGC- Dr. S. Radhakrishnan Post-Doctoral Fellow, University Department of Economics, Ranchi University, Ranchi, Jharkhand, India. Email: santanueco83@gmail.com

2. Materials and Methods

The paper explores the structural change in the nature of overall employment in Jharkhand using secondary data from Census and National Sample Surveys. In addition to assess the status of employability in the organised sector, employment elasticity has been calculated for organised manufacturing sector in the state using data published in Annual Survey of Industries. A separate section also analyses employment in informal sector using secondary data.

3. Result and Analysis

3.1 Pan India situation

The Indian economy has witnessed robust rate of economic growth during the period 2001-2011. The economy had been in a position strong enough to sustain the global economic crisis and absorb its ripple effect. However plummeting world demand in the wake of the crisis has indeed cast a spell on growth and employment in different sectors of the economy. This has specially been the case in organized sector as pointed by Ghosh 2011. The rate of employment growth was relatively higher during the period 1999-2000 and 2004-05 as compared to 1993-94 and 1999-2000, decelerated during 2004-05 and 20009-10 and revived during 2009-10 and 2011-12 (Krishna, 2016). However, the development has been contested on grounds of quality of employment in terms of job profile and wage scenario. The search for a productive employment options has led to growth of more casual and non-formal nature of employment with increase in self-employment (ibid). Further variations in employment in manufacturing during the decade 2000-2011 has been attributed to employment in unorganised manufacturing. The unorganised manufacturing saw an increase in employment during the first half of the decade followed by decline in the latter half.

However, there is evidence in favour suggesting that there has been an upward trend in overall employment as suggested by changes in employment between 2009-2011 with workers shifting from agriculture towards industry and service sector and also growing informalisation (Mehrotra et al, 2013).

Presenting similar empirical argument regarding increased informalisation and casualization of labour the viability of the usual measures of unemployment and its nature – like employment

unemployment rate – in the context of India has been questioned by Ghose (2014). A falling or low and stable unemployment rate may be the result of capacity of the well-offs to stay out of labour force and wait for employment generation in the organised sector and not the creation of jobs or rising demand for labour. This explains the low and stable unemployment rates between 1983 and 2010. Moreover, low employment rate speaks volumes about the nature and quality of employment in the country. There is widespread underemployment as against unemployment. People who cannot afford to be unemployed get absorbed in casual employment or/and self-employment.

The rate of employment for the period 1980-2011has been 1.63 percent (Krishna et al, 2016) The sectoral change observed in the pattern of employment during the past two decades (1990-2011) shows shift in employment from agriculture to service sector reflecting that manufacturing sector has been bypassed in generating the required employment growth. This means a shift from agriculture to non-agriculture. In addition, there has been increased informalization of the labour market with increasing proportion of the self-employed. The organized sector has lagged behind in absorbing labour leaving them to find place in the unorganized sector and that too more of informal nature of jobs with increasing proportion of the self-employed (Ghosh, 2011, Sasikumar and Thimothy 2013, Mehrotra et al, Rangarajan 2013, Krishna et al, 2016).

The analysis of the recently published Periodic Labour force Survey 2017 reveals that robust rate of growth has failed to foster employment generation and contrarily there has been decline in employment since 2012-13 highlighting the low and declining employment elasticity or to put it differently "jobless growth"(Himanshu, 2019, Kannan and Ravindran, 2019).

3.2 Overall Trend in Growth of Workforce in Jharkhand

The rate of growth population during the decade 2001-2011 has been to the tune of about 22 per cent with female population has higher the rate of growth of male population. There has been marked increase of almost 42 per cent in the number of marginal workers as compared to only 6 percent increase in main worker population. Among the main workers the main increase has been due to increase in women participation who have registered an increase of 17 per cent compared

to about only 2 per cent increase in male main workers. However, the marked increase of marginal workers by almost 42 percent has been due to increase in both male and female workers reflecting the fact that there has been increased marginalisation of labour in Jharkhand in the last decade.

Interestingly although rate of growth of female population has outnumbered male population between 2001-2011 the sex ratio has declined from 948 in 2001 to 941 in 2011.

Table1: Rates of Growth in Percentage in Jharkhand

Category/Year	Person 2011	Male 2011	Female 2011
Total Population	21.98	21.01	22.96
Total Workers	29.57	20.95	26.19
Main Workers	5.77	1.91	17.13
Marginal Workers	41.68	52.17	30.84

Source: Author's calculation from Census data

The overall Worker Population Ratio (WPR) in the state has increased from 37.42 in 2001 to 39.71 in 2011 although it remains lower in case of even after increasing during the period under consideration. This means that the women are missing from the workforce. The situation is worse when one considers the WPR across the main and marginal workers category. In case of main workers, the female WPR which happens to be already very low has fallen during the decade.

Table 2: Worker Population Ratio in Jharkhand

Year	WPR Total			WPR Main			WPR Marginal		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
2001	37.52	47.96	26.41	23.92	36.98	10.05	13.59	10.99	16.36
2011	39.71	49.76	29.10	20.67	30.92	9.87	19.04	18.84	19.24

Source: Author's calculation from Census data

The table 3 below shows that there has been increased marginalisation of labour as reflected in decline in the proportion of labour engaged as main workers from 64 percent in 2001 to 52 per

cent in 2011 which amounts to 13 percentage points and corresponding increase in marginal workers by 12 percentage points with rural areas being the greater contributor. This increase has been due to increase in both male and female workers being engaged as marginal workers with the male workers registering a higher percentage growth. The gender-wise worker profile also shows that the labour market has been biased against the females with larger proportion of female workers being marginal workers during all times. More than three-fifths of the women workers have been marginal workers. However, the development of the past decade has been such that there has been a larger increase in the proportion of male workers engaged as marginal workers which is of 15 percentage points from 23 per cent in 2001 to 38 per cent in 2011 as compared to female workers who have registered a growth of 4 percentage points only. Considering the rural-urban divide the rate of marginalisation has been more intense in rural areas as compared to urban areas with the rural areas registering an increase of 15 percentage points in marginal workers' population as compared to only 4 percentage points increase in urban areas. In rural areas the proportion of male workers engaged as main workers has declined from 74 per cent to 55 per cent in contrast to urban areas where the decline has been only by 3 percentage points. In case of female workers, the decline is by 5 per cent points in rural areas and 2 percentage points in urban areas. These figures correspond to the increase in marginal workers both male and female in rural and urban areas.

Table 3: Percentage Distribution of Main and Marginal Workers in Jharkhand

T/R/U	Main Workers			Marginal Workers		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
2001						
Total	64	77	38	36	23	62
Rural	60	74	36	40	26	64
Urban	87	89	71	13	11	29
2011						
Total	52	62	34	48	38	66
Rural	45	55	31	55	45	69
Urban	83	86	69	17	14	31

Source: Author's calculation from Census data

3.3 Sectoral Distribution of Workers

Sectoral distribution of main workers shows that there has been decline in the share of main workers engaged in agriculture and corresponding increase in non-agricultural sector during the period 2001-2011 in rural areas. This points towards the fact that the workforce in rural Jharkhand is witnessing structural change with a shift from agriculture to non-agriculture sector. This essentially stems from the decline in the share of main workers engaged as cultivators. Although there has been an increase in the share of main workers engaged as agricultural labourers the increase is less to accommodate the overall decline in the agriculture sector. This also highlights the bleak reality that the farmers are moving from self -cultivation towards agricultural labourers reflecting increased casualization of labour in rural Jharkhand. Of the total more than 6.5 lakh farmers quitting cultivation little less than 2 lakhs have opted for agriculture labour as an alternative occupation.

Considering the distribution of main and marginal workers across the sectors it can be seen that marginal workers are chiefly engaged as agricultural labourers with almost 50 per cent of them being absorbed in this occupation.

Table 4: Sector-wise distribution (%) of Main Workers in Jharkhand

T/R/U	Cultivator			Agricultural Labourer			HHI			Others		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
2001												
Total	41	39	51	16	15	22	4	4	7	38	43	20
Rural	52	50	56	20	19	25	5	4	7	23	27	12
Urban	2	1	3	1	1	3	3	2	6	94	95	89
2011												
Total	29	28	35	18	16	26	4	3	7	49	54	32
Rural	40	40	42	25	22	30	4	3	7	31	35	21
Urban	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	5	93	94	89

Source: Author's calculation from Census data

#HHI: Household Industry

Table 5: Sector-wise distribution (%) of Marginal Workers in Jharkhand

TRU	Cultivator			Agricultural Labourer			HHI			Others		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
2001												
Total	34	27	38	49	48	50	4	3	5	13	22	7
Rural	35	30	39	51	52	51	4	3	5	9	16	5
Urban	5	3	8	12	9	20	6	4	12	77	84	59
2011												
Total	29	27	31	51	47	55	3	3	4	17	23	10
Rural	30	29	32	53	51	56	3	2	4	13	18	8
Urban	7	5	11	14	12	20	5	4	8	74	79	62

Source: Author's calculation from Census data

Table 6: Gender Wise work profile of main worker in agriculture and Non-agriculture in terms of percentage of workers in Jharkhand

Sector	Rural 2001	Male 2011	Rural 2001	Female 2011	Urban 2001	Male 2011	Urban 2001	Female 2011
Agriculture	69	62	81	72	3	4	5	5
Non-Agriculture	31	38	19	28	97	96	95	94

Source: Author's calculation from Census data

Table 7: Sector-wise distribution of workers in agriculture and non-agriculturein Jharkhand

Percentage of Agriculture in Total Workforce									
Year	Total			Main			Marginal		
	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female
2001	66.68	58.42	82.42	36.68	41.24	27.88	30.00	17.18	54.76
2011	62.99	54.99	77.42	24.74	26.99	20.68	38.25	28.00	56.73

Percentage of Non-Agriculture in Total Workforce								
Year	Total			Main			Marginal		
	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female
2001	33.32	41.58	15.67	27.09	35.85	10.18	6.23	5.73	5.49
2011	37.01	45.01	22.58	27.32	35.15	13.21	9.68	9.86	9.37

Source: Author's calculation from Census data

Table 8: Changing Proportion of Industries in Total Employment in the Principal status andSubsidiary Status Taken Together in Jharkhand

	Agriculture	Mining & Quar-rying	Manu-fact-uring	Electri-city, Water etc	Const-ruction	Trade, Hotel and Restau-rant	Trans-port	FIREB	CSP
2004									
Rural Male	61.5	1.7	7.9	0.1	14.5	6.7	3.5	0.7	3.3
Rural Female	85.3	0.3	8.1	0	2.9	1.3	0.2	0	2.0
Rural Person	70.0	1.2	8.0	0.1	10.3	4.8	2.3	0.5	2.8
Urban Male	6.7	8.2	15.3	1.5	8.9	27.8	9.9	5.3	16.5
Urban Female	32.0	2.8	20.7	0	6.5	9.6	1.0	0.8	26.4
Urban Person	11.8	7.1	16.4	1.2	8.4	24.1	8.1	4.4	18.5
2011									
Rural Male	52.15	1.32	7.06	74	23.71	7.74	3.6	.19	3.42
Rural Female	84.44	.99	7	0	2.55	2.41	.3	.08	2.24
Rural Person	60.56	1.23	7.04	.55	18.20	6.35	2.79	.16	3.13
Urban Male	3.08	7.46	10.05	.55	15.33	27.97	14.10	2.6	18.84
Urban Female	8.55	6.99	14.04	.22	5.64	9.63	4.03	5.55	45.36
Urban Person	3.69	7.41	10.5	.52	14.26	25.94	12.99	2.92	21.78

Source: National Sample Survey Reports various rounds

#FIREB-Finance, Real Estate, Banking; CSP-Community, Social and Public Administration

The sectoral composition of the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) has undergone considerable change since 2004-05 with share of secondary sectors declining considerably and that of tertiary sector increasing with primary sector's share declining marginally. The share of the primary sector which includes agriculture and animal husbandry, forestry, fishing, mining and quarrying has declined from 25.8 per cent of GSDP in 2004-05 to 24.6 per cent in 2012-13. The share of the secondary sector in state's income was once significant which has declined from 41.2 per cent in 2004-05 to 30.3 per cent in 2012-13. On the other hand, the service sector has gained momentum over the years and its share has increased considerably from 32.9 per cent in 2004-05 to about 45.0 per cent in 2012-13 witnessing an average annual growth rate of 11.46 per cent as against a meagre 4.96 per cent growth rate of the secondary sector during the period under consideration. Over the years the state has witnessed robust growth in state domestic product driven chiefly by service sector especially trade, communication, storage and public administration which provided employment to those quitting agriculture. The secondary sector, on the other hand, grew at a much slower pace at 3.07 per cent per annum during 2004-05 and 2012-13 and at a compound annual rate of 4.6 per cent between 2011-12 and 2016-17 and thus failed to provide productive employment.

Although there has been marginal decline in the share of agriculture and overall primary sector in GSDP, the share in overall employment has witnessed marked decline between 2004-05 and 2011-12. In case of secondary sector, there has been decline in employment share of manufacturing during the period under consideration with the decline being marginal in rural areas and relatively visible in urban areas. The construction sector has absorbed considerable worker population over the years both in rural as well as urban areas. Similar is the case of transport and community and social services where the share of employment has increased in both rural (marginally) and urban areas. Thus, the structural change has been such that employment has shifted from agriculture sector to non-agriculture sectors.

3.4 Organized Manufacturing in Jharkhand

The present section analyses the growth performance of organised manufacturing in the state in terms of its implication on employment generation and the resultant employment elasticities during the period 2001-02 to 2017-18. The industrial units registered under the Factories Act 1948 comprise the organised manufacturing sector in the country. As can be seen form figure 1, the employment growth pattern in the

state has been such as to register a net increase during the period of 18 years transitioning from period of net decline towards periods of net increase. However, there has been net decline in the employment of supervisory staff in contrast to net increase in the number of workers. During the whole period of analysis 92941 jobs were created while 74140 jobs were lost accounting for a net job creation of only 18801.

Figure 1: Employment in Organized Manufacturing in Jharkhand
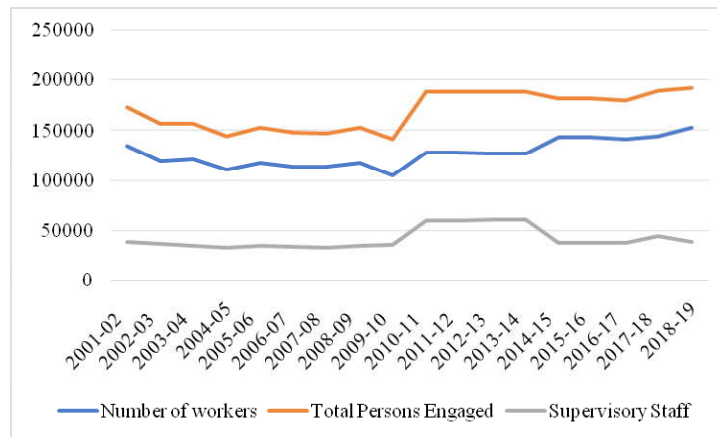
Source: Author's own calculation from Annual Survey of Industries Data

Employment elasticity expresses percentage change in employment growth per unit percentage change in growth of output. However, caution is required while interpreting the employment elasticity values as some outcomes may be positive even with declining industry simply due to the double negative signs as outlined in table below. The table shows resultant outcomes in employment elasticity due to different possibilities of growth in output and employment.

Table 9: Different outcomes of Employment Elasticity and their interpretations

Positive Employment Elasticity	Negative Employment Elasticity
Positive growth in both output and employment	Positive growth in output but negative growth in employment
Negative growth in both output and employment	Negative growth in output but positive growth in employment

As discussed above positive employment elasticity has no meaning if both the growth in output and growth in employment are negative. Such is the case in the years 2001-02, 2005-06, 2006-07, 2013-14 and 2015-16. In a period of 17 years the state has witnessed positive employment elasticity in organised manufacturing arising out of employment generating growth only in 5 years. These have varied from a low of .0006 in 2002-03 to .29765 in 2017-18. These figures being abysmally low suggest that large increases in output may lead to small increases in employment. Strikingly there has been job loss in 8 years. This reflects that the manufacturing units have undergone downsizing and this may be due to both profit motives of individual enterprises as well impact of global crisis as also reflected in negative value added in different years since 2008-09.

Table 10: Employment Elasticity of Organized Manufacturing Between 2001-02 and 2017-18 in Jharkhand

| Year	Percentage change in total persons engaged (A)	Percentage change in net value added (B)	Employment elasticity A/B*100	Signs of A and B
2001-02	-9.8449	-24.567	0.40074	both negative
2002-03	0.06074	100.662	0.0006	both positive
2003-04	-7.6474	10.7881	-0.7089	A negative
2004-05	5.53591	96.8479	0.05716	both positive
2005-06	-2.7732	-30.002	0.09243	both negative
2006-07	-1.0324	-17.858	0.05781	A negative
2007-08	4.01924	77.2088	0.05206	both positive
2008-09	4.01924	-33.2	-0.1211	B negative
2009-10	7.17701	-3.6021	-1.9925	B negative
2010-11	-13.554	18.6301	-0.7275	A negative
2011-12	4.62704	-19.534	-0.2369	B negative
2012-13	-4.4448	18.4088	-0.2414	A negative
2013-14	-0.0899	-6.1579	0.01459	both negative
2014-15	-3.0829	10.7285	-0.2874	A negative
2015-16	-1.3433	-37.224	0.03609	both negative
2016-17	5.27558	52.1448	0.10117	both positive
2017-18	1.6741	5.62432	0.29765	both positive

Source: Author's own calculation from Annual Survey of Industries Data

3.5 Trends in Labour Productivity and Share of Wages in Organized Manufacturing

The declining share of wages to workers reflects that the growth of the organised manufacturing has been of jobless growth. Total emoluments as percent of Net Value Added in the organised manufacturing sector during the period has registered a net decline with the share of wages showing similar trend. Further between 2009-2016 the share of payments other than wages has been more than share of wages. This reflects contraction of workers during the period which is the post crisis period to be reversed only since 2017-18. The share of wages has declined from 33 per cent in 2001-02 to a whooping low of 7 per cent in 2005-06. The share of wages to supervisory staff has also declined from around 17 per cent I 2001-02 to 4 per cent in 2005-06. This fall clearly points reduction in employment while output grew by more than three times during the same period. The increases in output have been retained by the employers as profits. Further the share of wages has fluctuated during the period 2006-07 and 2015-16 and remained below 15 per cent only to rise to in 2016-17 and fall again.

As can be seen from figure 3 the output has grown by almost 2.5 times, the total emoluments have grown by only around 1.5 times. This means increases in productivity have been appropriated by the employers. The increase in total emoluments being less than the increase in net value added has resulted in decline in share of wages from 33 per cent 2001-02 to 15 per cent in 2018-19.
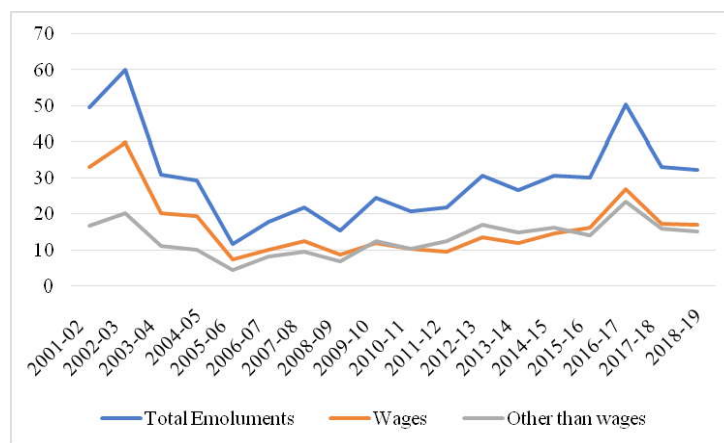
Figure 2: Index of Net Value Added and Emolument (2001-02=100)
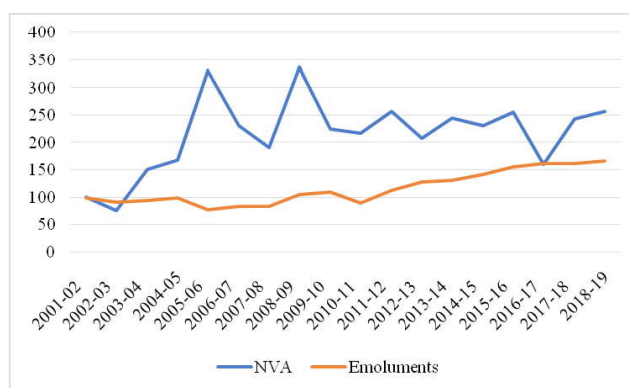
Source: Author's own calculation from Annual Survey of Industries Data

Figure3: Share of Total Emoluments of Employees, Wages of Workers and Wages of Supervisors (as % of Gross Value Added)

Source: Author's own calculation from Annual Survey of Industries Data

4. Conclusion

Employment generation in the state has failed to keep pace with the high rate of growth witnessed in the state domestic product. Further due to lack of livelihood options workers engage themselves in informal sector and take up casual labour or self-employment as alternative employment choices. The census data reveal that there has been shift from main workers to marginal labourers especially among men. This reflects the earnings being low workers engage themselves in multiple jobs to mike out a living. The structural change witnessed in the pattern of employment in the state is the shift from agriculture to non-agricultural activities.Moreover,farmers are giving up farming and moving to non-agricultural activities. This may be due to rising agricultural costs. Sectoral changes in the pattern of employment reveal that there has been shift in employment from primary and secondary sectors to tertiary sector. The role of organized manufacturing in absorbing labour force has also been limited as reflected in positive employment elasticity being witnessed only in five years ever since 2001 and that too less than one. The unemployment rate declined during 2004-05 and 2011-

12 but increased thereafter during 2011-12 and 2017-18. Thus, the state needs policy framework to harness its potential to emerge as an industrially advanced state and provide dignified employment to its population.

References

1. Chandrasekhar, C.P. and Ghosh, Jayati (2006). Macroeconomic Policy, Inequality and Poverty Reduction in India and China, in G.A. Cornia (ed.) *Pro-poor Macroeconomics: Potential and Limitations*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke Himanshu (2019): "The Seriousness of the Problem.
2. Ghosh, Jayati (2010). The Unnatural Coupling: Food and Global Finance", *Journal of Agrarian Change*, Symposium on Global Food Crisis, January, Vol. 10, No. 1.
3. Ghosh, Jayati (2011). The Challenge of Ensuring Full Employment in the Twenty-First Century. *The Indian Journal of Labour Economics*, Vol. 54, No. 1.
4. Himansu (2019), "The Seriousness of the Problem of Unemployment in India", Live Mint, 1 August.
5. Kannan, K. P. and Raveendran G. (2009). Growth sans Employment: A Quarter Century of Jobless Growth in India's Organised Manufacturing. *Economic & Political Weekly*, vol XLIV, no 10, 80–91.
6. Krishna, K.L., Aggrawal, S.C., Erumban, A.A. and Das, D.K. (2016). Structural Changes in Employment in India, 1980-2011, Working Paper, Centre for Development Economics, Delhi, pp-1-47.
7. Mehrotra, Santosh, Ankita Gandhi, ParthaSaha and Bimal Sahoo. (2013). Turnaround in India's employment story: Silver lining amidst joblessness and informalization? *Economic & Political Weekly, 48*(35), 87–96.
8. Rangarajan, C., Seema and E.M. Vibeesh (2013). "Developments in the workforce between 2009-10 and 2011-12," *Economic and Political Weekly,* 49(23). June 7.
9. Sasikumar, S.K. and R. Thimothy (2013). "Surmounting India's employment Challenge: Evidence from NSSO data (2004-05 to 2011-12)," *Labour and Development* 20(1). June.
10. Sharma, AlakhNarain (2006), "Flexibility, Employment and Labour Market Reforms in India", *Economic and Political Weekly*, May 27–June 02, Vol. 41, No. 21, pp. 2078-85.
11. Sundaram, K. (2007), "Employment and Poverty in India, 2000-2005", *Economic and Political Weekly*, July 28-August 03, Vol. 42, No. 30, pp. 3121-31.
12. National Sample Survey Report, 519 (2007), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India.

Transforming Realities and Yeni Turkiye

Anita Sengupta*

Writing on 21 August 2014, just after Turkey's Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan became the country's first popularly elected President on August 10th 2014, and signaled the beginning of a 'new era", Mustafa Akyol in an article entitled "What Exactly Is New Turkey"? argued that the key concept in Turkey's political lexicon today is hard to define.[1] The closest that he could arrive to a response is that "New Turkey" will be a place where 'democracy" will be consolidated and the era of military coups and interventions will be a thing of the past.However, he argued that this democracy would be about ballots only and hardly anything else. Erdogan's election posters had noted that the AKP had the goal of staying in power at least till 2071, the millennial anniversary of the Turk's conquest of Anatolia. Akyol cited an editorial in the *YeniSafak*, a pro Erdogan daily, which declared that New Turkey was a project in re-designing and re-establishing Turkey after a century and had both domestic and foreign policy implications. This article reflects mostly on the foreign policy implication though this was often compelled by domestic considerations.

Turkish foreign policy under the AKP has come to articulate a vision for improving relations with all neighbours, particularly by privileging the former Ottoman space in the Middle East where agreements were negotiated for a free trade zone and an eventual Middle Eastern Union. The identification of the Turkish Model as 'secular, democratic and liberal' was at the heart of debates as Turkey itself and a number of states in the Middle East searched for social, economic and political options. Since 2011, Turkish foreign policy doctrine was

*   Anita Sengupta, Director, Asia in Global Affairs, Kolkata and Senior Fellow, Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi.

challenged by political changes and growing instability in the Middle East. One of the flagship initiatives of the current government, the 'zero problem' approach to its neighbours, no longer corresponded to the situation on the ground. And Turkey was forced to take sides. In his victory speech in June 2011, Erdogan promised to adapt Turkey's foreign policy to a changing regional environment and announced Turkey's support for democratic forces across the Middle East and North Africa. Similarly Ahmet Davutoglu, then foreign minister argued that the political transitions in the Arab countries were natural and inevitable and that the best course of action would be to develop a sound understanding of the causes of this transformation and develop suitable strategies to cope with the changes.[2]

In congruence with the new foreign policy doctrine, the Erdogan government also pursued a dramatic improvement in its relations with Syria. A number of agreements were signed and bilateral dialogue was initiated on a number of contentious issues. Both countries shared concern about Kurdish aspirations for autonomy in northern Iraq and its repercussions on Turkish and Syrian Kurdish minorities.

Erdogan, Turkey and the Syrian Crisis

When the Syrian conflict began with pro-democracy protests against President Basher al Assad, there was a general belief, shared by Turkey, that the fall of the regime was imminent. This proved to be incorrect with the conflict acquiring sectarian overtones. To this conundrum was added the possibility of a US trained force of ''moderate rebels'' to fight the Islamic State on the ground, the fact that Iran and Russia have helped and called for support for the al Assad regime while Turkey and Saudi Arabia have called for the making of a Sunni army.[3]This was compounded by the insecurity of Turkey which was keen to create a neutral zone along the 100 km border with Syria which would not only contain the Islamic State but also prevent the creation of a Kurdish state along Turkey's south eastern border and keep the Syrian refugees within the borders of Syria.

The Syrian crisis became a test case for Turkey's new foreign policy. Unlike Egypt, Tunisia and Libya, Turkey not only served 'as a source of inspiration' in Syria but had wanted to play a more active role in the process, revising its policies in response to emerging circumstances. Between March 2011 and May 2012, Turkey's policy towards Syria changed from pressure on the al-Assad government for

constitutional reform, to attempts at unifying dissident groups under a single roof and promoting international sanctions to a return towards efforts for a UN based solution (the Annan Plan). In terms of rhetoric the change was from "Syria is not a foreign affair but a domestic affair for us" to the "Annan Plan is an opportunity for Syria".[4] Turkey's policy, based on the rhetoric of being a "playmaker country in the Middle East", however, encountered strong resistance in Syria. And Turkey's objective of establishing an EU like Union in the Middle East, which began with its 'zero problem' discourse and its claim of being a 'model' for the countries of the region suffered because of the Syrian crisis.[5]

Determined to balance its global expectations and regional objectives Turkey aimed towards the down fall of the Assad regime relying on its strength in the Arab streets and support to rebels including radical groups like the al Nusra, to ensure a rapid outcome. This tolerance for the radical opposition in Syria, which is believed to have contributed to the growth of Islamic State sleeper cells within Turkey, and identified as a one of the reasons for the spillover of the conflict into Turkey and repeated terror attacks not just in the south east but also in Istanbul and Ankara. On the other hand there were misgivings about the use of refugee camps by the opposition fighters who used the camps for recruitment and recovery.[6] In the wake of the Suruc terrorist attacks, Ankara gave permission for the use of the Incirlik Air Base by Washington in the anti Islamic State coalition.[7] In return Washington agreed to the formation of a "buffer zone" within Syria. The US administration was careful not to use the term ''no-fly'' zone because of legal and geo-strategic complications with Russia and Iran, but to refer to it as the "Islamic State free zone".[8] This prioritized the fight against the Islamic State rather than targeting the Syrian regime and the US continued to support the Syrian Kurds, that is, the PKK affiliated Democratic Union Party (PYD) on the ground.

Developments in the Syrian civil war have also had an impact on the ongoing peace process with the PKK (Kurdish Workers Party). When the Syrian crisis started in March 2011, Syria's Kurds adopted an ambivalent position. However, in July 2012 they took control of several cities in the north where Kurds were in a majority. The Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) which governed this region, bordering Turkey, is affiliated to the PKK and has clearly expressed an interest

to form an autonomous zone in Syria comparable to Iraqi Kurdistan, a move Ankara opposes. Turkey's Syrian policy, in which President Erdogan had sought President Basher's overthrow, became counterproductive for Turkey when it contributed to bringing Syrian Kurds into the fray. Turkey which has battled domestic Kurdish insurgency for decades feared the domestic consequences of the creation of a contiguous area under Kurdish control.[9] In a sense of course it was Turkey's anti-Assad policies and support for anti-Assad groups that generated the pro-Kurdish outcome. This was compounded by the results of the June 2015 election in Turkey where the pro Kurdish HDP (Democratic People's Party) crossed the 10 percent threshold for the first time. President Erdogan was aware that the 13 percent vote that the HDP received was a principle reason why the AKP failed to get a majority. Anti Kurdish policies were renewed both domestically and in the neighbourhood and predictably there were attacks on Turkish soldiers and police officers in the Kurdish dominant south-east and clashes between Kurdish militants and Turkish forces that left casualties on both sides. The result has been a campaign of violence that culminated in the bombings on a procession in Ankara on 10 October 2015 (subsequently blamed on the Islamic State) which was calling for resumption of peace talks between the PKK and the Turkish state.

In the last weekend of June 2015 it was reported by a number of news dailies that President Erdogan was planning a military intervention in northern Syria to prevent Syrian Kurds from forming an independent state on the Turkish border. In a speech on 26 June Erdogan vowed that Turkey would not accept a move by Syrian Kurds to form their own state in Syria following gains by Kurdish fighters against the Islamic State.[10] That Turkey was uncomfortable with the Syrian Kurdish victories in northern Syria was evident in a number of reports that indicated that Turkish air strikes were targeting Kurdish strongholds rather than the Islamic State.[11] It was reported that the military had been given orders to take measures, including an incursion into Syria, to stem possible advances by the Islamic State or the PYD and prevent changes in the demographic composition of the Syrian provinces near the Turkish border.[12] The Turkish military however, urged the government to work out diplomatic avenues before the incursion arguing that Turkey should present reasons stronger than the possible emergence of a Kurdish state in northern Syria as a reason for the deployment.[13]

Domestically, recent attacks on the HDP and PKK have been vindicated in terms of 'nation under threat' and to encourage voters into supporting President Erdogan's 'security first' agenda. The justification for change was couched in terms of an effective executive state more capable of facing terrorism, civil war, economic decline and corruption. Davutoglu had stressed on what he referred to as a "terror cocktail" of the PKK, the Islamic State and the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party Front, all of who wanted chaos in Turkey, thereby appealing to nationalist elements.[14] The AKP election campaign for the November 2015 polls was based on the looming crisis and the slogan "after us there is chaos" and its subsequent victory hailed as "victory for democracy" and the fact that democracy and terrorism do not mesh well. Predictably enough President Erdogan in his first major speech prioritized discussions among Parliamentarians for a completely new constitution which would introduce a Presidential form of government since the current one has 'lost its relevance and become full of details'. He also underlined that Turkey would keep up its fight against the PKK until the rebel group is "eliminated".[15]

The failure of the Arab Spring and the Muslim Brotherhood in maintaining its authority, shifts in the geopolitical landscape with Russia getting increasingly involved in the Middle East and the trajectory of the Syrian conflict itself has meant that from being identified as one of the major players in the post Arab Spring Middle East, Turkey was faced with a failed foreign policy, and a failed peace process in the south east. Turkey was also unable to integrate strategic shifts on the political and military front into its policy making particularly in Syria as it equated the Syrian Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) with its armed wing the Peoples' Protection Units (YPG) and the insurgent Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). While this serves domestic Turkish politics, it also means that Turkey was at odds with both Russia and the United States which recognized the usefulness of the Syrian Kurdish fighters in the war against the Islamic State. Sending ground troops into Syria would mean confrontation with Russia with no guarantee of support from its own allies. Not intervening would mean the creation of an autonomous Kurdish enclave in northern Syria and the defeat of the opposition that Turkey has been supporting. Turkey also sought to revive demands for the creation of a safe zone in northern Syria to protect civilians who otherwise enter Turkey as refugees.

In Lieu of Conclusions

The Euphrates marks the rough dividing line between forces backed by Iran and the United States. The area to the river's east was controlled by Kurdish Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) backed by the United States, while pro regime forces backed by Iran controled the western banks. This unstated yet clearly demarcated balance was disturbed when President Donald Trump tweeted on December 19, 2018 about immediate and unconditional US retreat from the area east of the Euphrates river. This was not significant in terms of the numbers of troops to be withdrawn but more in terms of the deterrence that the US provided through air power but also its commitment as the global superpower. The removal of this deterrence would mean that the SDF whose backbone is the Kurdish Peoples' Protection Units (YPG) would feel the pressure from multiple actors in the region including Russia, Turkey and Iran but also the Syrian regime.

Turkish President RecepTayyipErdogan (in an opinion piece on 7 January2019 in the New York Times) reacted to the planned withdrawal by positing Turkey as the regional alternative who could 'get the job done'.[16] Proposing a comprehensive strategy to eliminate the root causes of extremism, President Erdogan called for a stabilization force featuring fighters from all parts of Syria (except those with links to terrorist organizations) adequate representation of all communities in popularly elected councils and most importantly a willingness to shoulder the responsibility of transition to stable governance. Implicit in the offer was the stipulation for the liquidation of the YPG, which is the chief US ally in Syria but which Turkey identifies as a terrorist affiliate of the banned Turkish group the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), and the establishment of Turkish control in the East of Euphrates a region covering about 27 percent of Syrian territory. This is not the first time that Turkey has suggested a 'zone of influence' as a surrogate buffer zone. Similar offers of a 'buffer zone', signaling its initial intentions of a serious involvement, had been made by Turkey earlier as a measure to protect refugees fleeing the conflict in Syria. What was significant was President Trump's tweet giving Turkey the green signal for actually setting up a 20 mile wide buffer zone within Syria.

The proposed buffer zone under Turkish control had been rejected by the Syrian Kurds who have called for the deployment of UN forces

along the line separating Kurdish fighters from Turkish troops. Identifying Turkey as one of the parties to the ongoing dispute, senior political leader Aldar Khalil has argued that as one of the players involved, Turkey cannot guarantee stability. Complicated ethnic overlaps mean that the Kurdish population in the region now live across Turkey, Syria, Iran and Iraq with varying levels of autonomy. While Turkey has accepted northern Iraq's autonomous status over time, the dilemma is about the future of the Syrian Kurdish areas, adjoining south eastern Turkey, and the precedence that the autonomous status of the Kurds would create for the Kurdish population in Syria and Turkey.

The grandiose Turkish rhetoric faces challenges on a number of fronts. The Turkish plan outlined in the New York Times piece would test Turkish military, administrative and financial capabilities unless it is supported by US military commitments. In that case, it would face opposition from Russia, which supports the return of the Kurdish held regions to the Assad regime and the Astana process of which it is a part. It would also affect its position in western Syria where it has made inroads into Idlib with Russian support. Syrian Kurds are reportedly in favour of allowing the Assad regime jurisdiction over their areas rather than surrender control to the Turkish. And most significantly the attack on a US military convoy in the northern city of Manbij raised questions about the practicality of the withdrawal of American ground presence in Syria given the fact that this was the sixth major attack by the Islamic State in less than a month.

This was followed by the attack on Turkish soldiers in Idlib, killing as many as 36 Turkish soldiers prompting Turkey's request for an emergency NATO meeting. While Turkey argued that the attack on Turkish soldiers called for NATO intervention since its security was threatened, there were counter arguments from NATO members that this did not apply in this case since the attack on the Turkish troops did not happen on Turkish soil. While Turkey argued that NATO's non-intervention would lead to questioning of its deterrence power it was agreed that NATO would continue to provide support to Turkey short of triggering a collective military response. This was followed by a halt to hostilities by Russia and Turkey in March 2020. The Turkish Russian collaboration in Idlib, based on the Astana platform, does not however preclude confrontation between the two sides. As Fehim Tastekin argues a constant cycle of conflict dictates collaboration between the two sides but this collaboration fails to avert further conflict.[17]

Terror attacks and hostilities leading to civilian deaths continue in north eastern Syria along Turkey's southern border. Turkey now controls most of this territory having crossed here after a series of operations since last October. Turkey blamed the attack in a vegetable market in the town of Ras al Ain on Kurdish fighters reiterating their links with the PKK. However, such attacks raises questions about a rhetoric centered round the 'defeat of the Islamic State' and reconstruction in a post Islamic State era. Experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan show that any such premature assumptions should be avoided.

Notes

[1] Mustafa Akyol, "What Exactly is the "New Turkey?", ALMONITOR, Turkey Pulse, 21 August, 2014.

[2] Cited from Eduard Soler i Lecha, "The Conceptual Architecture of Turkish Foreign Policy: An Update in the Light of Regional Turbulence", Documentos CIDOB 18 June 2012.

[3] Plans to train moderate rebels were later scrapped with Washington moving towards working more closely with Kurdish and other forces in Syria. See Simon Tomlinson, "US scraps its $500 million programme to train moderate rebels after producing less than 80 soldiers, most of whom were either shot or ran away", Mail Online, 9 October 2015.

[4] Prime Minister Erdogan cited from Dogan Ertugrul, "A Test for Turkey's Foreign Policy: The Syria Crisis", TESEV Foreign Policy Programme, www. tesev.org.tr/Upload/Publication

[5] Since the end of the Cold War Turkey's relations with Syria have gone through two major transformations. Historically the problematic relations was transformed into close partnership between 1998 and 2011 after the signing of the Adana Agreement before relations deteriorated in the wake of the Syrian uprising when Turkey supported the opposition. This has been explained in terms of regional politics by Meliha Benli Altunisik. See Meliha Benli Altunisik, "Explaining the Transformation of Turkish Syrian Relations: A Regionalist Approach", in Raymond Heinnebusch and OzlemTur (eds) Turkey Syria Relations, Between Enmity and Amity, Burlington: Ashgate, 2013 pp178-191.

[6] See Souad Ahmadoun, "Turkey's Policy Towards Syrian Refugees: Domestic Repercussions and the Need for International Support", German Institute for International and Security Affairs, SWP Comments 47, November 2014.

[7] On July 20, 2015 a suicide bomber killed 32 people in Suruc a Turkish town on the borders of Syria. The bombing targeted members of the Socialist Party of the Oppressed and the Socialist Youth Associations

Federation who had gathered at the Amara Culture Centre to participate in the rebuilding work at Kobani.

8 See Omer Taspinar, "A Risky Turning Point for Turkey", Today's Zaman, July 29, 2015.

9 See among others "Turkey confesses fears to US of Syrian Kurds making territorial gains", 7 January 2016, www.rt.com/news/328201-turkey-us-kurds-territory

10 Cited from Thomas Seibert, "Turkey Plans to Invade Syria, But To Stop the Kurds, Not ISIS", The Daily Beast, 28 June, 2015.

11 Sylvia Westall and Humeyra Pamuk, "Kurdish militia in Syria accuses Turkey of 'provocative' attacks", Reuters, Beirut/Istanbul August 1, 2015,www.reuters.com/articles/us-kurds-turkey-idUSKCNOQ632X 20150801.

12 "Turkey ponders possible military incursions into Syria", Today's Zaman, June 29, 2015.

13 "Army Asks Government to work out political and diplomatic avenues before Syrian incursion" Today's Zaman, Ankara, 28 June 2015.

14 Metin Gurcan," Would you like your terror straight up or as a cocktail?", ALMOINITOR, Turkey Pulse, 22 October 2015.

15 "Erdogan wants 'completely new constitution' for Turkey", ALJAZEERA, 4 November 2015.

16 "Erdogan: Trump is Right on Syria Turkey can get the work done", 7 January 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/07/opinion/erdogan-turkey-syria.html

17 Fehim Tastekin, "Is Turkey headed for a Compromise Or Fresh Fighting in Idlib?", Al Monitor 29 July 2020, https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2020/07/turkey-syria-russia-idlib-fresh-fight-or-compromise-rebels.html

Projection of Stark Demeaning Realities in Dalit Self Narratives

Dr. Amandeep*

Abstract

The Present paper explores how Dalit narratives discern Demeaning Realities in general as well as in the context of what has been traditionally associated with notions of supposed lowly work.

In contemporary societies, these types of work were ritually degrading and the people entangled in such types of work were placed in a socially inferior position. It analyses stark demeaning realities and language culture by analysing dalit autobiographies available in English Translations. It also describes how the language is brought closer to the realities of life. Regarded as the most marginalized of the castes in society, they were and are still considered polluted and assigned the occupation deemed too defiling for other castes to do, such as manual scavenging, sweeping, disposing of corpses, skinning and tanning of animal hides for leather making and sandal making, digging graves, etc. Born into her or his caste, a dalit has to struggle to escape her or his low social status to employ him/her-self in a more lucrative or socially respectable occupation.

Paper

Although abundant in literature containing self-expression of the Dalits, North India lacks in producing an established mode of dalit literature acceptable to the educated and professionally well placed population in the same segment of society. The social and intellectual dynamics have resisted their inclusion in the discourse concerning evaluation and

---

* Dr. Amandeep is Associate Professor Department of Evening Studies. Multi Disciplinary Research Center, Panjab University, Chandigarh.

prohibited cognition of dalit mobilization. The term 'Dalit' has a fairly long history of its own. Initially, under the four-*varnas* of the Hindu order, the lower castes, the non-*dwija* castes were described as *shudras*. Shudras were supposed to perform mundane and menial jobs; they were denied access to leaning and fine arts. Later on, as the education spread, such a nomenclature was not only contested, but was also strongly resented by the lower castes.

This debate however has a shared ground, that Dalit literature must be concerned with *Dalit life* for it to be considered Dalit literature. But a new question is: Who is a Dalit? N. Singh defines 'Dalit' as one who has been oppressed, whether by weapon (*shastra*) or by doctrine (*shaastra*). He then proceeds to define. Dalit literature as one that expresses the pain borne out of oppression based on caste. This makes it clear that caste-based oppression sanctified by the shaastras should be at the centre of Dalit literature. But not all litterateurs take such a restricted view of the word 'Dalit' (qtd in Basu, 187). . N. Singh himself favours placing women literature to some extent under the rubric of Dalit literature. According to Mata Prasad: All the literature that is based on the socially, economically, religiously, educationally and politically crushed, exploited, oppressed, humiliated, neglected, marginalized, disadvantaged helpless, deserted, abandoned, deprived, and vulnerable, in a class society, can be considered as part of Dalit literature. This includes women in shackles, bonded labour, slaves, wandering communities, schedule castes and schedule tribes. (187).

By the late 1960s, the first generation of university- educated dalit youth in Mumbai, inspired by the black literature movement in the United States began expressing themselves in writing. In 1990s we saw a great flowering in dalit poetry; song, short story, novel and essay.Mainstream autobiographies are well-structured narratives of self-glorification. Autobiography being more an inward form of writing based on fragmentary imagination and memory should ideally be non-linear and if not utterly erratic in its narrative. But what one comes across in mainstream autobiographies is taut narrative with total control of the autobiographer as narrator on the confessions he outpours.

Despite the constitutional proclamations made against caste- based discriminations over six decades ago, dalits still suffer all kinds of social exclusion and discrimination. The starkest feature of social exclusions is their physical segregation. Dalits continue to live in separate localities outside the village in rural areas and in specified

areas in cities, even though most villages and cities have undergone growth and renewal with government schemes like Indira Awas yojana and Rajiv Awas Yojana for them, respectively. They still do not have access to common public amenities such as wells, tanks and temples. They still have limited access to capital assets like agricultural land and non –land assets. As a result, they still constitute the lowest strata of the society on all socio-economic dimensions including household income, education and occupation. The journey from a pariah, an untouchable whose very shadow was considered polluting, to the present day defiant dalit has been long, troubled and painful.

The dialect of dalit autobiographies is shockingly crude and abusive. Dalit writers see no point in being refined and polished, as the excesses committed against them are so brutal and inhuman that no amount of linguistic sophistication can camouflage them. The dialect is brought closer to the demeaning realities of life. Regarded as the most marginalized of the castes in society, they were and are still considered polluted and assigned the occupation deemed too defiling for other castes to do, such as manual scavenging, sweeping, disposing of corpses, skinning and tanning of animal hides for leather making and sandal making, digging graves, etc.

Omprakash Valmiki has frankly highlighted his plight in Joothan:

The days of the rainy season were hellish. The lanes filled up with mud, making walking very difficult. The mud was full of pigs' excrement, which would begin to stink after the rain stopped. Flies and mosquitoes thrived like clouds of locusts. It became extremely difficult to go outside. Our arms and legs would get smeared with dirt. The feet became mangy. The space between the toes filled up with reddish sores. Once these sores started to itch, they would itch non-stop. (valmiki, 20). They also worked for the Tagas like permanent servant. Every Taga would have ten to fifteen animals in the cowshed. Their dung had to be picked up and brought to the place cow dung cakes were made. There would be five to six baskets of dung to be taken out from every cowshed. He Says:

During the winter months it was a very painful job. The cows, buffaloes and bullocks would be tethered in long hallways. The floor would be covered with the dry leaves of cane or straw. The dung and the urine of the animals would spread all over the floor overnight. The matting would be changed after ten or fifteen days. Or sometimes a layer of dry leaves would be added on top of the soiled one. To search

for dung in the stinking cowsheds was extremely unpleasant. The stink made one feel faint.(8-9).

Each and every word written in Omprakash Valmiki's Joothan is true. It is true not because it has been written by the author. It is true because the book provides proof of the truth. It is true because the experiences presented have been witnessed by those born in upper-caste families and who have seen a Dalit being humiliated and denigrated in their surroundings.

Putting a surname 'Valmiki' means revealing one's identity which actually unearths the brutal nakedness of the society. There is yet another important feature of the book. Omprakash Valmiki has frankly highlighted the futility of the efforts of defending one's dignity as a man. We are who we are, not because of who we are but because society considers us to be as such. It is therefore something for the upper castes to be ashamed about. It is therefore no wonder that people have to hide their identity in order to live in a society fragmented by caste and class, where the status of man is determined by caste, gender, colour and religion.

Butchering is vividly described in dalit writings. In *Upara*, narrative by Laxman Mane for instance: The butcher beheaded the goats and cocks in quick succession. The devotee himself had to hold the goat's legs. The butcher only separated its head from its body. The blood spurted at every stroke of the butcher's knife. The neck hardly severed, the rooster was thrown aside. The blood began to flow, at first in a furrow, then a stream. Stepping over the bloodied mud. Father went ahead… gripping the legs of his goat. The butcher's knife came down over its neck. The blood splashed. Father handed over the offering to the priest and paid the butcher's charges. Then he joined his palms in reverence and accepted with devotion a part of the offering. And then pulling the goat's body, brought it to our tent. (Mane, 52).

The scene of slaughtering and cutting of dead animal shown in Limbale's *Akkarmashi* in terms which are nauseating.

Whenever an animal died in the village, its owner came tothe Maharwadato ask the one under contract to remove the carcass after which there people would accompany the one who had the context to fetch the dead animal. If the animal was young it was slung on the shoulders and brought to the Maharwada. If it was a big cow or a buffalo it was brought in a cart. Two people pulled the cart and two others pushed it. He Says:

When we were young, the sight of a dead animal excited us. We would draw closer when they started skinning it. To avoid commotion we were driven away. As a tough boy I was always asked to help in small ways. I used to hold the legs. Men peeled the skin off with knives. My hands would be sticky with blood and flesh. The legs I held slipped from my grip, so I was scolded. Then I had to grip them harder. I used to watch closely the things I had heard about in school – liver, intestines.(Limbale, 14). This is how Bama spells out the semantics of dalit metaphor: "Not only did I pick up the scattered palmyra karukku in the days when I was sent out to gather firewood, scratching and tearing my skin as I played with them; but later they also became the embryo and symbol that grew into this book [her autobiography]." (Bama, xiii).

Balbir Madhopuri in Chagiya Rukh Against the Night discusses the unhealthy experience:

I started at my uncle. He put a toasted locust into his mouth and giving me one, repeated, 'Eat, it doesn't have any bones!' Then laughing shortly, he remarked, 'I have eaten enough bones in my time!'

 Hesitantly, I ate the roasted locust. It was salty and very tasty. Then, I scattered the embers and picking up the locusts, ate them. This incident of my having eaten locusts spread and the children teased me, calling me 'locust-eater' or 'locust-snake. (28).

In Hazari's *An Indian Outcaste* is probably the first autobiography of an untouchable written in English way back in 1951 – a time when writing autobiography was the sole preserve of the nationalist elite. The strength of Hazari's autobiography lies in its international setting, its cross-civilizational framework. And precisely for this reason, the narrator spends very little time in describing the inner life of dalit *basti*s. But at places he does peep inside his own dalit interiors, and provides intimate details of everyday dalit thrills:

"We dragged the bodies of dead dogs onto an open space, so that the vultures could make a speedy end of their remains. After that we tied the four feet of pig with a cord and passed a stout stick between; three of us taking each end of the stick on our shoulder. It weight quite one hundred and fifty pounds, if not more… after a long rest we brought the kill home. Everyone was thrilled, as a pig of that size had not been killed for a very long time. Soon it was cut up and divided amongst the community" (99).

It is in such passages that Hazari in a way sets an aesthetic frame for the future dalit writing. The dead dogs and the hunted pigs animate

the dalit landscape, and lend it a touch of what may be termed as ultra-realism. In the mainstream literature, such descriptions are normally avoided for they may affront the aesthetics of the sophisticated. The bestial, the brutal and the dalit seem to overturn standard measures of aesthetics. The animals, dead or alive, are the natural companions of dalit. The intimate and robust relationship of dalits with the animals lends an unprecedented dynamism to dalit landscape. As an autobiographer, Hazari does not shy away from providing his readers an account of the everyday thrills of dalit life. (qtd from Amandeep Thesis, 64).

In Prisons We Broke is the first autobiography of a Dalit woman in Marathi. *Jina Amucha*, the original in Marathi, was published in the narrative is an expression of protest against the inhuman conditions of existence to which the Hindu caste system has subjected the Dalits for thousands of years. 1986. Not only it depicts the inner harsh realities of the Mahar community in Maharashtra but also graphically presents how brahmanically domination had turned the Mahars into slaves, forcing them to live in conditions worse than animals. She recollects: the house of Mahar of the sixteenth share overflowed with meat… during an epidemic, his house would be flooded with huge mounds of meat. The Mahars considered animal epidemics like diphtheria or dysentery a boon. Everyday at least four or five animals would die… the inside of some animals would be putrid, filled with puss and infested with maggots. There would be a horrid, foul smell. It was worse than hell. We cut off the infected parts full of puss, and convinced ourselves that it was now safe to eat the meat. (Kamble, 85). Not only this she describes how during epidemics, there would be many animals lying dead in the pens all over the localities. The carcasses of these animals would rot, giving out such a foul stench that people in the houses found it difficult to even drink water. The Mahars had to pull out the rotting carcasses and carry them to a deserted spot and then they had to sweep the pens that were full of rotten flesh, maggots, droppings and the bloody secretions of dying animals. After cutting the animals the women would immediately transport the food. Their heads would be drenched with blood, puss and other putrid secretions oozing out of the meat. The rivulets of sweat mixed with blood and puss would run down their faces and onto their bodies, already coated with grime and muck. Another narrative *uchalya[1] is the only community in the world branded as inherent criminals by birth*. The narrator describes the life worse

than the life of animals. Gaikwad's strength lies in articulating the interiors of dalit-localities. Dalit-inside is exteriorized, without any aesthetic make-up or camouflage. He takes the reader straight to garbage-piles, the zone of his childhood days. Near their hut there was an open space which they used for killing pigs. The young boys and girls would search all the rubbish heaps around the place and collect sticks, rubbish and hay and throw them on the spot where the pig was to be roasted. Women from the village used that spot for shitting. He writes in his autobiography how Tulshiram, his friend gave a hefty blow on the neck of the pig with a thick iron rod (generally used for breaking loose rocks in a stone quarry). The pig would stretch and jerk its legs and die a slow death. Then sticks were inserted under the carcass and laid over it, dry grass was spread on top and the pig was roasted. Even while we were roasting the pig, women from the village sat in front of us and shat as if that was the only spot available. In the morning heaps of human-dung could be seen all over the place. Often as we moved about, we stepped on these heaps. It is in such a shit-yard that we roasted and ate the pigs. First, Tulshiram cut the belly and removed the intestines. Then Manikdada removed the liver, cut it into pieces and distributed them. We gulped down the liver-pieces without chewing. Our hands and mouths were smeared red with blood. These pieces tasted deliciously hot and we greedily extended our hands begging for some more. All the dogs- Pilya, Champi, Gulbya- barked frantically and rushed to get at the intestines. As Tulshiram threw away the intestines, all the dogs pounced on them and battled for a share. Then Tulshiram cut pieces form the back of the pig and distributed them.

He writes:
We enjoyed eating these tasty bits very much. Even as we were busy eating, Yalama and Maratha women would be busy sitting nearby. As we begun to eat the pig, they held their noses, shitting all the while (Gaikwad, 13).

It shows the abject and unhygienic conditions of many of the lower-caste people in the rural area. As dalit writers provide graphic details of their garbaged-territories, the usual revulsion gives way to anger mixed with sympathy. The credit of explaining/ exploring the aesthetics of garbage goes to dalit autobiographical writings. Because of the common ideological function, the character of this literature is univocal[2]

The view of life conveyed in dalit literature is different from the world of experience expressed hitherto. About dalit language Limbale

writes: it is uncouth- impolite language of dalits. It is the spoken language of dalits.This   Language does not recognize cultivated gestures and grammar… to dalit writers, the language of the basti seems more familiar than standard language. (Aesthetics, 33).

Conclusion

These narratives describe the radical dalits who deploy for demobilization of dalits from dehumanizing practices like eating the flesh of dead cattle. The Mahars in those days were repulsed by the very idea of pig. Sanitation work is undoubtedly the worst of all kinds of work. One may not be able to see why the work of a weaver is polluting, but our sensed bear witness daily to the repugnance we feel when we have to walk through a littered street, or in front of smelly urinals.franco writes: Unless you drink and numb your senses you cannot do this job. (Ramanathan, 256).

The dalits faced widespread discrimination or restrictions in most spheres of public life such as access to water resources, village shops, restaurants and hotels; and public transport and most public services to a varied but significant extent. The discriminatory restrictions or sanctions served to reproduce and sustain the institution of Untouchability. It is done through observance of an array of customs and practices such as banning marriage processions through public roads, standing in front of an upper- caste person and not being allowed to be new clothes. The survey noted varied amount of such customs being observed all across the countryside.

Under Article 17 of our constitution, 'untouchability' stood abolished and its practice became forbidden. In order to enforce the constitutional provision, the untouchability (offences) Act, 1955 was passed by parliament to make provisions for punishment for observance of 'untouchability' in any form. However, convictions under this act have been very few and the punishment has been too formal. The magistrate fined to offender only two rupees. On appeal of High court raised the fine to a still inconsequential fifty rupees. Another scheme was launched in March 1992 by the Government of India to eliminate inhuman and degrading practice of manual handling of wastage. The scheme operates two levels: one by the Ministry of urban Affairs and Employment for the conversion of dry latrines into water-borne flush latrines in homesteads and provision of sewage facilities at the city level. The other scheme operated by the Ministry of welfare provides for the rehabilitation of scavengers in alternative dignified occupations.

Considerable amount of money has been spent under this scheme, but very little seems to have been achieved on the ground. The government itself admits that the progress achieved " is extremely dismal barring a few states". (Annual Report of the Ministry of Welfare; 1994-95). (Sharma, 31).so awareness should be created among people about its ills and their rights. With technology taking over their jobs, they should also be provided with an alternate livelihood option. However, a greater evil would lie ahead which would be changing the thinking of the society that would still look down upon these people.

The caste-based and gender-based discrimination needs to be eradicated from the minds of the people in the society for the problem to truly evaporate from our society.

Bibliography

Amandeep. From Assimilation to Assertion: Towards a Post-Ambedkarite Aesthetics of Dalit Autobiography. A thesis Department of English PU Chandigarh, 2008.

Bama. *Karukku*. Trans. Lakshmi Holmstrom. Delhi: Macmillan, 2000.

Basu, Swaraj. *Readings on Dalit Identity: History, Literature and Religion*. Orient Blackswan, 2016.

Gaikwad, Laxman. 1951. *The Branded*. Trans. P.A. Kolharkar. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademy. Hazari. *An Indian Outcaste*. London: The Bannisdale Press, 1951.

Limbale, Sharan Kumar. *The Outcaste (Akkarmashi).* Trans. Santosh Bhoomkar. New Delhi: OUP, 1984.

———. *Towards an Aesthetics of Dalit Literature: History, Controversies and Considerations.* Trans. Alok Mukherji. Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 2004.Referred to in the text as *Aesthetics.*

Madhopuri, Balbir *Changiya Rukh*-Against the Night. Translated from Punjabi by Tripti Jain. New Delhi: Oxford, 2010.

Mane, Laxman. *Upara: An Outsider*. Trans. A.K. Kamat. New Delhi: Oup, 1997.

Kamble, Baby. *The Prison we Broke*. Translated from the Mrarthi *Jina Amucha* by Maya Pandit. Orient Longman, 2008.

Paswan, Sanjay and Pramanshi Jaideva. Eds. *Encyclopaedia of Dalits in India*. Vol.II, & XI Delhi: Kalpaz Publications. 2002.

Ramanathan, Suguna, Fernando Franco and Jyotsna Macwan. *Journeys to Freedom: Dalit Narratives.* New Delhi: Samya, 2004.

Migration and Social Transformation: Life of Northeasterners in Delhi

Shilpi Shikha Phukan*

Introduction

Migration in the twenty-first century has become a global phenomenon. It does not mean that migration did not exist in the past, but with the rise of globalization and the advent of the neoliberal economy, migration seeks to take a new turn. Markets have opened up, and privatization became central to the global economy. India,too, was not lagging in reshaping its state policies and politics. After the liberalization of the economy in the 1990s, India opened its markets for private investments. Simultaneously, the widening rural poverty vis-à-vis rise of the informal sector in the cities encouraged rural-urban migration (Mishra, 2016).The economy also encouraged private investment in cities to build up shopping malls, call centers, and hospitality sectors. These new spaces of cities increased the demands of employees that could provide the aesthetic to please global customers. In this light, the English educated, western dressed, and 'un-Indian' facial features of the people from North-East were welcomed (Mc-Duie-ra, 2011).

Such a relationship of neo-liberal economy and migration in the 21st century is studied by sociologist Stephen Castles (2007). He says that the twenty-first century is a period of social transformation. Social transformation is a fundamental shift in which society was organized. He borrowed the concept of 'social transformation' from Karl Polanyi's masterpiece, *The Great Transformation (1944)*. In this book, Polanyi studied the changing western societies of the post-cold war period,

* Shilpi Shikha Phukan is a Ph.D research scholar at The Centre for the Study of Social Systems (CSSS)/ School of Social Sciences (SSS), Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi-110067.

which was a time of global change. Radical social and economic changes occurred during this time, prominent among them were globalization and neo-liberalization. The market urged to become the governing principle of both the society and economy. In the process, the function of the welfare state was changing to a market-oriented state. While studying this process of social change, the classical economist ignored the *embeddedness* of the economy into society. It means the market liberals did not consider the importance of other factors in society, such as polity, religion, or social relations, which were governing principles of the society before the nineteenth century. Therefore, such ideas where the economy is considered to be autonomous to other social factors will lead to a *disembedded* understanding of social change. Likewise, Castles argues that taking migration in the twenty-first century only as an economic factor without considering other social relations will lead to a *disembedded* view of migration. In the study among North-East migrants in Delhi, one argues that migration is not just a means to end relationships, but is governed by varied factors like aspirations for cities, presence of networks or escaping from violence along with a search for a better livelihood.

Patterns of Migration from North-East to Delhi

The migration from the North-East to Delhi began around the 1950s by professionals seeking a high post in government jobs (Hazarika, 2018: 277). The children of the then middle-class Assamese families migrated to both cities in India and abroad. However, what triggered this mass migration was after the year 2000 or maybe from two decades or so. Babu, P. Remesh (2016) is of the view that the major reasons for migration from the North-East are because of educational and employment considerations. The region is also poor in employment and creating job avenues. It has to be noted that although the literacy level of the region is quite satisfactory, the opportunity for higher education in the region lags behind. Only very few cities, such a Guwahati and Shillong, have good educational institutions for higher education (Mukhim, 2005: 10).

Education is seen as mechanisms for upward social mobility, prestige, and status for the families and to certain communities. Nevertheless, one has to understand that not only getting an education, but education pursued outside the district or home state attaches more value to them (Achumni, 2013). There is a notion that technical or

higher education pursued in big cities outside the state has more demand in the market. Students or professionals migrating to other places no doubt have a better opportunity to shape their careers, but it also becomes a kind of status for the migrant-sending family (Osella & Osella, 2000).Illito H Achumni (2013) argues how education in cities becomes a marker of status in Naga middle-class families. In pursuit of education, she writes that Nagas have traveled to other cultures and, in return, incorporate the acquired changes in society. Many may want to go back to their ancestral model even after education, but another section is looking for an alternative model and lifestyle. Now university degree is itself a marker of middle-class status as education today is associated with prestige (Achumni, 2013: 163). Similarly, Duncan McDui-Ra (2012) talks of the popularity among students at North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU) to bypass Shillong and move to other places outside North-East.

Not only a lack of educational opportunities or lack of employment, the problem of conflict in many states in the Northeastern states also can be seen as a push factor for migrants. Patricia Mukhim (2005) says that fifty years of conflict and corruption in states like Nagaland have left not much scope for development and self-employment in the region. Sanjoy Hazarika (2018) observes that the North-East as a region engulfed by years of ethnic conflict and insurgency. After years of struggle, the middle-aged insurgent leaders are not able to gain anything close to their goal. The sense of still far from home and not able to achieve much has ¯'bread a sense of 'sullenness and depression' (ibid: 276). Hence, many want their next generation to move forward and look for a better life. Therefore, he argues that a new pattern of migration is visible in the Northeast.From the migrant-receiving region, it is now fast becoming a migrant-sending region, perhaps for the first time in centuries.

However, in many states like Manipur, Nagaland, and Assam, problems are not solely for militancy but also because of the government's failure as a welfare state. States of the Northeastern region have fewer opportunities for private jobs or investment, leaving the onus on government jobs as a primary source of income. The states itself are infected heavily by the problem of nepotism and corruption, where even a job like a school teacher would need bribery of three lakhs rupees (Mc-Duie-Ra, 2012). Again, to compensate the amount, they have to accumulate the money, perhaps by scrapping funds from

school or from students luring to give higher grades (ibid). A participant from Manipur believes that corruption, conflict, and the lock-down[1] (hartal) culture of many Northeastern states like Assam and Manipur causes hindrance to development. A Tangkhul Naga participant from Manipur, who owns a small eatery in Munirka Village, says that due to the lock-down of schools, vehicles, offices, and markets, many people who work as daily wage labors or own small business go through a huge loss. Also, because of lock-down on highways, vehicles carrying groceries, petroleum, or other goods are not allowed to cross. As a result of some places where the   lock-down's impact is more, price of goods becomes very high. The frequent occurrence of such activities gets annoying to the people. Therefore, to get away from such everyday issues, people who could afford would like to get out of their states and migrate to cities.

Young people also idealize the city as a place of numerous opportunities, which in the result is leading to migration to the cities (Osella & Gardener, 2003: xv). This contention holds no less true in contemporary India. The young people from the North-East see cities as 'modern' in contrast to their traditional villages and small towns. Not only the city life gives scope for better education or livelihood, but it is also an embodiment of freedom and liberty from old age customs. Concerning this context, one would like to share an example collected during her field visit. A couple-Prerana and Shekhar[2], who hail from Assam, eloped to Delhi after getting married without family's consent. They started living with a cousin. Prerana is a Nepali Brahmin and her husband Shekhar, although a Nepali is not a Brahmin. This inter-caste marriage created trouble in their family. Initially, when they came to Delhi, they were living with their married cousin, her husband, and their three children. After a few months, when they got some work, the couple started living on their own. For Prerana, Delhi, as a city, fetched them an income, a respectable life, and a place to live. In Delhi, with her minimal educational qualification,she could find a job in a Honda Service center. Now Shekhar is a driver in Uber, and Prerana went back home for not able to take care of her child single-handedly. She romanticizes the city as a place where no one would question her caste identity, and no family member would chase them out. In Delhi, she also had the freedom to work, to wear whatever she wants and live life with ultimate freedom, which is otherwise not possible back in the conservative village as a married woman. According to her, Delhi is

also a place where the possibilities of earning more money increase with experience and hard work.

Therefore, in the neo-liberal city of Delhi, migrants assume to have a better life, though they might migrate back after some years of living in the city.

Settling Down: Munirka Village an Overview

In the above section, one has briefly discussed the patterns of migration from North-East to Delhi, as students, emerging aspirants for social mobility, job seekers, and one looking for a better life away from insurgency related violence. This paper is not looking into government bureaucrats or highly paid corporate personals. Instead, it studies the students and migrants who come as skilled or semi-skilled professionals to the emerging hospitality industry, shopping malls, call centers, and small entrepreneurs. They are all first-generation migrants who are yet not sure if they want to return or settle down in the city. However, to some extent, they have successfully created a web of networks and neighborhoods to feel at home. Therefore, we will look into their process of settlement and the making of a Northeastern neighborhood like Munirka Village in the capital city, New Delhi.

During the process of migration, social networks of the migrants are connecting dots from their homes to places of destination. These social networks range from friends to relatives already settled in the place of destination that fosters the migration. In the case of the North-East migrants, ethnic bonding and migrant associations build on the bases of ethnic identity acts as an important network. Here, Munirka Village is a place where members of different ethnic groups from North-East settle and welcome more migrants from their community.

Munirka Village falls under a category called *laldora.* The term *laldora* was used by the British in 1908 to classify land between habitation and agricultural purpose. In the past, a red thread was used to mark this distinction. However, in the present day, it is commonly known as the area of a village which is outside the jurisdiction of the municipality and urban development authority. As this land does not come under the jurisdiction of any urban development body, these places are now occupied with illegal construction, overpopulation, and poor infrastructure. Many rich people bought land here for a commercial purpose because the rate here is one fourth to one-tenth of that in the Municipality Corporation of Delhi (MCD) area[3]. This exclusion provides

the landowners to make buildings with full freedom.Now,Munirka Village,although a *laldora* land, is situated near posh developed areas. Sensing the economic prosperity, the landowner has constructed multi-storied buildings to rent without any restriction. The rent is not very high, and there is not much distinction between Munirka village and the market. The lanes are narrow, and rooms are congested without much ventilation.

However, Munirka is in a location where communication to major parts of the city is accessible easily. It is located just two to three kilometers from Jawaharlal Nehru University and becomes home to hundreds of students. Munirka also has libraries and coaching centers that attract numbers of students from many disciplines seeking budget-friendly accommodation. It is about three kilometers away from the posh malls built in Vasant Kunj, where majorly a significant number of young people from North-East work. Likewise, commuting to Gurgaon, where the majority of call centers are placed, is also accessible from this place.

'Chinky' to 'Momo': Experiences of Social Discrimination

Nongbri and Shimreiwung (2017) observe that although to make money, the landlords lease out rooms to people from North-East, the host society embedded in caste, religious orthodoxy, and patriarchal values are deeply suspicious of migrants from the North-East. This suspicion and unacceptance towards the migrants lead to social 'othering' towards the people from North-East. Common forms of these discriminations come from name-calling, bullying, teasing to severe forms of physical violence, which have also led to death. 'Chinky' is popular name-calling towards the people who have Mongoloid features in North-Indian cities. The word attaches derogatory connotation of not just meaning an'other', but also people who are morally not decent enough. The Northeastern youngster's nonconformist attitude, unlike the orthodox caste society such as wearing stylish western attire, the flexibility of in and out timing, casually moving around in the city with persons of the opposite sex, sharing a flat with the opposite gender, and specifically having a food habit completely different to the host society makes them a distinctive 'other.' However, the 'other' here is not unilateral but mutually constructed, as the attitude of 'us' versus 'them' exists both on parts of the migrants and the host (Nongbri & Shimreiwung, 2017: 21). The 'other' and 'us' versus 'them' do not acquire a negative

meaning unless and until one is seen as less worthy or inferior to the self (ibid). In our case, the tendency of seeing the other as inferior is more visible from the dominant host society towards the North-Eastern migrants than the vice versa. The attitude of the host society is manifested not only in derogatory terms like 'Chinki', 'Momo', it is also reflected in other forms such as higher rent for accommodation, associating them with foreign nations such as with Nepal, China, or Tibet. Asking for passports in hotels and airports is also common. In 2012 the Ministry of home affairs had asked all the states and union territories to book anyone who commits an act of atrocity against people from the Northeast under the SC/ST (Prevention Atrocities) Act[4]. However, to what extends the Act works in the case of Northeastern migrants in Delhi and other parts of India is also questionable.The tragic case of Nido Tania, a boy from Arunachal Pradesh killed due to a racist attack, has shaken the entire Northeastern community both inside and outside the North-East. Recently, after the Coronavirus outbreak, news of Northeastern people targeted as Chinese has been circulated. Such discrimination of the dominant society about the North-East comes from deep historical prejudices against the region as backward. These ideas against people from North-East are also built from a different dietary habit of the tribal people from the North-East have. The caste-based society regards food such as pork to be inferior and beef as a taboo. As a large section of the tribal from North-East, eat fermented food like 'Akhuni', which leaves a significant odor, found to be unpleasant by the host community.

However, despite such odds, the community has made its ways of negotiating their everyday life with the city. The next section explains how the migrants from North-East is in the process of building up spaces and places for the community.

Everyday Negotiations as Migrants in a Transforming Delhi

Stephen Castles (2007) is of the view that in 'global cities', the migrants are no more a minority but constitute a major chunk of the population. These migrants in neo-liberal cities are powerful ferment of change. The case of North-East migrants has become more relatable to this argument, given their increase in migration as well as growing agency in making a space of own. Duncan McDuie-Ra (2013) writes that discrimination is not the only kind of experience the people from North-East in Delhi go through, but they are also transforming to be active

agents of social change. In terms of gaining jobs in the corporate sectors or malls for their 'un-Indian' features act as positive discrimination for them. Their educational background, commonly those who are English educated and their different accent of English, help them in gaining jobs in call-centers and Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) sectors. In this way, it excludes other sections of the Indian population from the job market. There are incidents of private educational institutes preferring students from the Northeast. It is so because the corporate institutes are well aware of communitarian networks people from the North-East have with each other. Allotting one student from the region can help gain them more students (Phukan, 2016).

The neo-liberal economy in Delhi has displaced a large section of poor migrants from their homes through the demolition of houses (Baviskar, 2003; Bhan, 2009). However, within the same economic setup, Northeastern migrants have gained accessibility to their livelihood. The physical feature, which becomes the cause of discrimination, also becomes the cause for their demand. It is because their looks resembling the South East Asian or East Asian people can give the consumer a global feeling without having to travel the world. They are also engaged in creating meaning out in this space by distinctively creating Northeastern places such as neighborhoods, restaurants, churches, associations, guest houses, hostels, and offices.

How these spaces become distinct Northeastern places can be understood by reflecting on everyday Northeastern life they try to build in neighborhoods like Munirka. These spaces are not just places of accommodation, but people from the North-East have taken up a large part of the village to conduct their commercial business, i.e., particularly opening northeastern shops. These northeastern shops distinctively sell items needed for the Northeastern community. These items would be various kinds of vegetables, dry or fermented meat, and fish, jewelry items, food items, including home-made cigarettes. There are also a few Northeastern garment shops (sells western attire), beauty parlors, restaurants, and small eatery in the neighborhood. To know how they transport such huge junk of Northeastern food, one enquired. A shopkeeper replies:

"…we bring it every day by cargo plane or by commercial flights that come from Imphal… back in Manipur, we have agents. We order, they deliver the products…. Sometimes even our families do the work… we sell purely organic and hilly vegetables here."

These commercial places have become hubs in entire Delhi for purchasing special items imported from states like Manipur and Nagaland. During the field study, one encountered that customers range not just from the North-East but also foreign nationals from African countries. With more visibility and acknowledgment for Northeastern food, customers from other parts of India are also seen buying cooking items from these shops. However, such customers are not very frequent, like the North-Eastern and African buyers.

Not just as commercial business and accommodation, this place also generates complex meanings that reflect on the questionable idea of a pan-Northeastern identity. If one closely observes, the identity is stronger as individual ethnic communities than a pan-Northeastern identity. This attitude reflects on the fact that communities have specific students' associations or church instead of a larger North-East. Infact, many migrants from states like Assam, Manipur, and Nagaland, form their ethnic associatioans apart from state-centric student or welfare association. For example, A Kuki from Manipur may be part of Kuki Student Organisation, Delhi (KSOD), instead of Manipur Students Association, Delhi. Likewise, Mising community students can be part of both Mising Students Association, Delhi (MSAD), and All Assamese Students' Association, New Delhi (AASA, ND). The networks are also based on the community's ethnic lines. For example, Munirka village has a lot of Kuki shops. During interviews, it is revealed that when one person from the community migrates, they encourage others to do so. Not just encouragement, they provide space to live and also finance the migration in many cases. The same case goes for the churches in Munirka and other parts of Delhi. For example, in Meghalaya House, the two communities Khasi/Jaintias and the Garos, conduct their prayer services separately although they come from the same state. Likewise, almost every Christian community in Manipur that reside in Munirka village has an independent church or fellowship. Interestingly the prayer services are also done in their native language. A few churches like the Naga Christian Fellowship and Khasi Christian Fellowship conduct prayer services both in the native language as well as in English.

However, there are times when the people from the region do introduce themselves as North-Eastern or work for a unified North-East. Duncan McDuie-Ra (2012) claims that though North-East is very diverse when the people migrate to cities, they share a similar kind of experience.These experiences may arise from different forms of

discrimination to the political demands of the migrants. Therefore, they rais etheir voice together and gain the confidence to be identified as one unified North-Eastern. Therefore, the author in this article argues that the North-East identity is more of an imposed identity upon the people. This identity is used as a means of solidarity and development in the region. Unless and until a person from the region migrates to cities, they are not very aware of a pan- Northeast identity. Here in cities, it gets manifested through everyday interaction and the process of 'othering.' It is through festivals like North-East Calling or North-East Festival in Delhi, a region farway from home, that a pan-Northeastern identity is built up. Or though common cause like protests against racial discrimination, discriminatory laws against the interest of the whole region. Hence, identity is context-based; therefore, with time and reiteration, people start accepting the new identity. Therefore,one argues that the term North-East or Northeastern is not homogeneous. Instead, it is fluid, shaped by time and space.

Conclusion

The paper argues that India's liberalization in the 1990s changed the physical as well as the population structure of Indian cities. Delhi, as a capital, has undergone a tremendous transformation with private investments and more temporary/permanent migrants from all over the country. The poor migrants who came for informal jobs like construction laborers were not given adequate space in the city. Whereas the people from Northeast, though discriminated, were also welcomed for the need of 'un-Indian', English accented workers to serve the new consumers who demand a global taste. In the process, the migrants from the Northeast are gradually making a space in the city and claiming it be equally as their own. Such examples are evident from neighborhoods like Munirka or Humayunpur with an abundance of North-East food stalls, joined by customers across the city. While doing so, the paper has also problematized the idea of a unified Northeast and argued that the North-East identity is temporal and spatial. The ethnic identity is the one which is primordial both back home or in Delhi.

References

Achumni, I.H. (2013). *The Emergent Middle Class in Naga Society: A Sociological Study* (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation). Jawaharlal Nehru University: New Delhi

Bhan, Gautam. (2009). There Is No Longer the City I Once Knew: Evictions, The Urban Poor And The Right To The City In Millennial Delhi. *Environment and Urbanisation*, vol 21(1): 127-142

Castles, Stephen. (2007). Twenty-First-Century Migration as a Challenge to Sociology. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 33(3), 351-371.

Hazarika, Sanjay. (2018). Strangers No More. New Delhi: Aleph Book.

McDuie-Ra, Duncan. (2012). *Northeast Migrants in Delhi: Race, Refuge, and Retail.*

Amsterdam, Netherlands: Amsterdam University Press

McDuie-Ra, Duncan. (2013). Being a Tribal Man From the North-East: Migration, Morality and Masculinity, *South Asian History and Culture*, Vol 4 (2): 250- 265. Doi http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19472498.2013.768867

McDui-Ra, Duncan. (2017). Learning to Love the City in Northeast India. *The focus*. No.77. Retrieved from https://iias.asia/the-newsletter/article/learning-love-city-northeast-indiaon 04/-6/2018

Mishra, K. Deepak. (Eds). (2016). *Internal Migration in Contemporary India*. New Delhi, India: Sage

Mukhim, P. (2005). Where is this North-east? *India International Centre Quarterly, 32*(2/3), 177-188.

Osella, F., & Osella, C. (2000). *Social Mobility in Kerala: Modernity and Identity in Conflict*. London: Pluto Press.

Osella, F & Gardner, K. (2008). Migration, Modernity and Social Transformation in South Asia: An Overview. *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 37(1&2). v-xxviii

Phukan, Shilpi. (2018). *Northeast Migrants in Delhi: Communities and Associations* (Unpublished M.Phil. Dissertation). New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru University

Polanyi, Karl. 2001. *Great Transformation*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Ramesh, B, P. (2012). Strangers in their own land: Migrants from North-East in Delhi. *Economic and Political Weekly*., 47 (22),35-40

Ramesh, P.B. (2017). Migration and Marginalization: A study of North East Migrants in Delhi. In Deepak. K. Mishra (Ed.), *Internal Migration in Contemporary India*, New Delhi: Sage

Shimreiwung & Nongbri (2017*). Migration, Identity, and Conflict: Lived Experiences of North-easterners in Delhi*. New Delhi: Rawat

Notes

1. Lockdowns are usually called by organisations to show their resistance towards the state mechanisms.
2. All names are changed to maintain anonymity
3. https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/delhi/laldorademystified/articleshow/417854.c ms accessed on 28/06/2018).
4. https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/spotlight/Call-a-Northeastern-Chinki-be-jailed-for-5-yrs/articleshow/13848316.cms accessed on 28/06/2018.

French Perceptions of Eighteenth-Century North India: An Analytical Study of the Memoirs of Modave and Dieu

Uma Shanker Pandey* and Ravi K. Mishra**

Abstract

French travellers Modave and Dieu have so far been among the least represented figures in the existing historiography on eighteenth-century north India. Owing to the French language constraints and excessive reliance on English sources, the accounts of these two travelers – which remain untranslated – have been on the margins. However, our understanding of the second half of eighteenth-century north India will remain incomplete until the writings of Modave and Dieu are explored. Written extensively on multiple facets of Indian lives, the French eyes go deep into the minutiae of details and thus unravel many unreported facts. The memoirs of Modave and Dieu not only expand the academic canvas of travel writings but also function as important correctives. The treatment of subjects in these works reveals that virtually nothing escaped the eyes of these Frenchmen. If the information provided in their writings on Mughal life, polity, court, and the decline of the empire is revealing, their quest to know more about socio-religious and cultural life is enriching. Thus, these memoirs are seminal in their scope, extent, and reach.

*   Uma Shanker Pandey, Assistant Professor, Ramjas College, University of Delhi, Delhi-110007. E-mail: uma.francais@gmail.com. Mobile: 9910849414.
** Ravi K. Mishra, Deputy Director, Nehru Memorial Museum & Library, New Delhi-110011. E-mail: ravikmishrain@gmail.com. Mobile: 9810848143.

I

European travellers' accounts are important documents in understanding and writing about the historical past. They become especially pivotal when there is dearth of other kinds of documentary evidence. European travellers' writings are also crucial because they help not only in supplementing and augmenting our understanding of the past, but also in historicizing it. Seen by the eye of the 'other', these works even provide new dimensions to view historical events. Notwithstanding the fact that these texts are not free from fallibility, they are reflective of the general ethos of the time they were written in. Furthermore, narrativized from various vantage points, travelogues also furnish important clinchers for comparing different societies, cities, and even state systems.

The present paper is an attempt to analyze important facets of the writings of two French travellers—Comte de Modave and Dieu—who ventured into northern India in the 18th century and wrote about its diversities and complexities. Whereas Modave's work *Voyage en Inde* is voluminous and exceedingly broad in its scope and treatment of subjects, Dieu's *Memoir* is compact and focussed. These untapped French accounts throw up many challenges to mostly English-based existing narratives and emerge as significant correctives.

Following a contrarian approach to that of the famous English traveller William Hodges, who travelled through India in 1780-1783, Modave, alongside ascertaining facts before textualizing them, also expresses his views on what he observes. Hodges, on the contrary, had pointed out in his travelogue that, "it is not my business to enter into the question respecting the rights of the government and those of the governed in different countries. Facts are my object and such alone as fell within the limited and confined sphere of my notice".[1]

Modave's approach is eclectic—accounting for a range of subjects. His distinction lies in trying to acquaint himself with the political and cultural realities of India and giving an intellectual orientation to his submissions. Whenever he is interested in an issue, he always documents it in detail. Being an erudite and learned traveller, Modave presents informed insights into various facets of India, rather than merely pronouncing subjective judgements. As a traveller and adventurer, he has his eyes open to everything: landscape, routes, villages, cities, lifestyle, people, culture, animals, plants etc. Virtually nothing escaped

the eyes of Modave—the curious—who never ceased to inform himself. Modave's writings have a diversified range in reach, perception, and explanation. His scholarly appraisal of many issues heralded the phase of great enquiries on India in the beginning of the 19th century, particularly by Buchanan in southern India and Bengal.[2]

II

A Biographical Sketch

Modave travelled through northern India between 1773 and 1776, which proved to be the last venture of his life. There exists no organized biography of Modave; and what little is there is scattered.

Louis Laurent de Féderbe, Comte de Modave was born on 25 June 1725 in Grenoble in France. He belonged to a military family. His father was a Colonel in the army. Modave too joined the army. He participated in nearly all French military campaigns from 1743 to 1748 as a subordinate to the Prince of Conti. He was honoured with the Order of Saint Louis. Along with a career in the army Modave was also into writing from the early years of his career. In 1756, he anonymously published in Amsterdam the translation of the Commentaries on the war of Spanish Succession (1700-14). The survey of Modave life's reveals that he was a multi-dimensional figure who did not adhere to any linear vocation. He was an army officer, writer, traveller, historian, and a merchant. Modave's commercial enterprises in Mauritius, and attempts to settle the French in Madagascar are indicative of his expansive temperament.[3]

Modave's Indian venture began in 1757 when he arrived in this country with the military entourage of Lally. Thereafter, he made many voyages to India. His last journey was during 1773-76 when he travelled through northern India and wrote a voluminous account of his experiences. Having been present in many Anglo-French conflicts, he was convinced of underscoring the importance of psychological factors in local rivalries. He pointed out its ignorance as one of the reasons for Lally's military losses. He was of the view that a man without support and resources but aware of real issues could play a determining role in such a big country as India.[4]

In the last round of his India journey, he landed at Balasore on 2 October 1773 from where he moved up to Chandernagore. He later entered Awadh and joined Nawab Shuja-ud-Daula on the

recommendation of Colonel Gentil. Here he was instrumental in the militarization process of Awadh army carried out by some important French adventurers called as *partis français*.[5] Thus, Awadh provided Modave the entry-point for his journey into the interiors of the country. After the death of Nawab Shuja-ud-Daula the English forced the expulsion of French adventurers from Awadh. Modave along with some other compatriots went to Delhi, where he was employed by the Mughal emperor Shah Alam II. Here he played a critical role when he initiated diplomatic dialogue for the emperor on the formation of a grand alliance between the Mughals, the Marathas, and the French to arrest the growing power of the British in India. Later on, he was in the entourage of a French adventurer René Madec but fell out with the latter on the issue of the payment of the salary. Thereafter, Modave decided to quit Hindustan in 1776. Taking the Kota, Burhanpur route, he reached Masulipatam in December 1777 where he suddenly developed fever and died soon after.[6]

Modave's travel account *Voyage en Inde* is particularly important from the politico-military perspective, for he did not remain merely a traveller. He found military employment with the rulers in north India and became part of the state system. Additionally, his own military background perhaps provided him insights into military details. But he also wrote quite extensively on society, culture, religion, and various practices prevalent in India.

Modave considered writing his most important work and regularly wrote. He particularly liked writing diary and put down detailed account of the day. He gave minute details of the men and things that he observed around him, while appearing witty and lively in his writings.

III

Voyage en Inde: Its Importance and Relevance

Modave's travelogue *Voyage en Inde* is the result of his travel diary which was an eye-witness account. Being a travel diary, it has spontaneity, freshness in observations, and relevant explanations. Had Modave lived longer, he would have organized and presented his diary entry systematically which he himself admitted to when he stated, "I intend to, in fact, rework on the memoirs with more regular time and arrange the matter in its logical order".[7]

Notwithstanding this constraint, his work can be read from the beginning to the end with ease. Modave was an artist at the core. All that he saw, be it landscape, men, events etc. deeply touched his sensitivities. The poverty and nastiness around him sometimes overwhelmed him. He allowed his pen to follow the dictates of his emotions with complete sincerity and simplicity. All subjects ranging from major political developments to minor incidents in daily life are evoked by Modave in a conversational style as lucid as found in letters. He is neither pompous nor pretentious.

A glimpse of his lucid and simple style can be found in his description of the Agra Fort where he mentions it as, "these high red walls with their thick towers, the dome of the building covered with white marble, covered with brass". The shades of his style are even clearer in his portrayal of the European adventurer Sombre: "he (Sombre) fears the English as much as the devil, and that does not stop him from having a big seraglio which is more than what he needs". Similar are his remarks on the Mughal Empire, "on the debris of this vast empire rises a ghost without real power and without money which only sees around itself feigned respect and ridiculous prostrations". His description of a woman committing *sati* is not only an illustration of sincerity in his writing but also of strong emotions which overpowered him when he witnessed this entire ritual. He gives a detailed and minute eye-witness account of the entire ritual, and states, "this horrible spectacle was embedded so strongly in my mind that during two days I did not think of anything else. The image of that woman is so much imprinted in my memory that it will never be erased. She showed neither trouble nor agitation and discharged all the frightful rituals as the most indifferent things of the world". Yet another instance of this emotional display was at the time of his departure from Hindustan. He wrote, "…when I left Agra, I was on the verge of crying for the advantages that I abandoned as Hannibal cried on the victories that he had to forego on the orders of his senate who recalled him to Carthage. But all my preparations were done. I began the journey with my two companions to search for fortunes elsewhere".[8] His writings could be both witty and sarcastic. On the occasion of Mughal noble Najaf Khan and Madec's campaign against the Jats and the siege of Dig, Modave described its *modus operandi* and severely criticized the techniques of the siege laid by the Mughal army. Commenting on the poorly executed operation including the drawbacks of their trenches he writes, "I admit

at Dig the bizarre and ignorant procedure that was followed. And when one asked my opinion on the siege, I frankly replied that if monkeys attacked this fort from the other side, they would have without doubt adopted the same strategy that is being followed by us".[9] Modave, therefore, was not shy of bringing forth the brutal truth.

Historical Value

Modave himself states that the aim of his writing is an exercise to replace ridiculous stories peddled by numerous travelers with authentic facts to give a real idea of the country. But he is also aware of his limits. He does not even pretend to know such a big country well in such a short sojourn. However, Modave does not neglect to learn anything. The real condition of the events is presented irrespective of what the author was told about the state of affairs regarding anything. Nothing is exaggerated and the facts of which the author came to know are expressed with simplicity, which lends authenticity to his account.

Modave had carefully planned his adventure. Only a few adventurers who had embarked on a journey to India were as well-informed as Modave was. Having panoramic vision, he had knowledge of nearly everything. He cites the works of Arrian, Quintus Curtius, Montesquieu, Voltaire, Abbé Guyon, and Colonel Dow in the context of India. His depth of knowledge is especially evident in his writings about the religion of the Hindus and also his discussion about the opinions of Henry Lord[10], Abraham Roger[11], Athanasius Kircher[12] or Holwell[13] on the matter. Most of the published works on India were known to him. Speaking about the Marathas, he writes, "I read a whole library of books and memoirs on this subject". Therefore, Modave knew the shortcomings and the errors in the writings of above-mentioned scholars. It was because contrary to the men of letters of Europe, like Abbé Guyon, who were content with making a synthesis of little-verified information furnished by travellers, he employs his Indian experience to ascertain, accept or reject what was bookish. And he never fails to criticize fanciful narratives, even as he acknowledges authentic descriptions. He is skeptical of readymade ideas and refrains from giving arbitrary judgments on complex questions which were beyond his competence.

His real-life adventures throw light on the last episode of the Anglo-French rivalry in India marked by the activities of French corps. His writings of the journey describing the long route he took in the plains

of the north and Deccan bring back to life the rural and urban landscapes of vast parts of India. Finally, his thoughts on the condition of the Mughal Empire freed certain aspects of it from a general picture of decadence, which is a valuable piece of information to revisit the subject of Mughal decline.

Modave's lively and rich information on the activities of French adventurers in Hindustan during the time of his journey has no parallel in the genre of travel writing. It helps us to reconstruct and understand many facets of French presence in north India during the period under discussion. The information that Modave gives on the French adventurers' role in the military rise of Nawab Shuja-ud-Daula in the post-Buxar period is not only pivotal but also rare. This French presence, popularly called as *partis français*, in Awadh had nourished hope and aspirations in the Nawab to challenge the British might. It was an important politico-military development in Awadh which has largely remained absent from scholarly writings. *Partis français* inspired several other Indian rulers to unite militarily against the British. It was most evident in the diplomatic endeavour of Jean Baptiste Chevalier, the governor of Chandernagor, wherein a grand alliance of the Mughals, the Marathas, and the French was envisaged. This is yet another important episode of 18th century India that has remained obscured from historical writings. Modave's mention of several French personalities who were active in north India in the 18th century provides crucial information on these foreigners. The names of Gentil, Sonson, Pedrose, Delamarr, Dr. Calvé, Dr. Macarty, Dr. Visage, Baronet, Dieu, Sauvagère, Sourd, Moncelet, Martinière, Le Chevalier de Crécy, De Berville, Jean Pillet, Dubocage, and Delsier find frequent mention in his diary. Apart from Madec, it is General Sombre's meeting with Modave which is a least known fact in received history. Sombre was remorseful for the massacre of the English at Patna. He had become religious with age, and financed the construction of a church in Agra. However, Sombre was constantly worried of revenge by the English and kept his troops in a state of constant alert. Sombre even related to Modave his predicament at the time of the massacre of the British, and how he tried to save them through coded messages which unfortunately the imprisoned British could not understand. Thus, Modave's depiction of Sombre's personality is diametrically opposite to the established scholarly appraisal and owes its certification to his own interaction with Sombre. It is another rare piece of information which makes us

revisit—if not change—our understanding of the much maligned character of Sombre. Moreover, Sombre's visit to Kashmir on two occasions and his intention to bring it under his control does not find mention anywhere else. It is also hardly known that he even wanted to visit Kabul.[14]

Modave's portrayal of Claude Martin, the famous French general in the British army, offers insights into his multiple talents. Modave mentions him as a renaissance man who was a not-so-significant captain in the army but had built a huge library on diverse subjects. Similarly, Modave's information on Jesuit Wendel proves critical in ascertaining the latter's propensity for hobnobbing with various powers. Modave wrote, "Jesuit Wendel passed almost all his time with the English…leaving his small number of followers to the protection of Providence". Thus, Wendel comes across as a British informer. Dieu was another adventurer, former captain in the high seas who became a faithful companion of Modave, and appears in the narrative of Modave. The surgeon Visage was another figure who was the last commander of Madec's corps. Modave's information on Du Volton, who suddenly disappeared from the historical scene after his approach to Dupleix, and whose family was found by Modave at Kota is of critical significance. Then there are others about whom almost nothing is known such as Herbel, a German doctor who made a big fortune in Calcutta and went back to Vienna, where he belonged, with all that wealth. Then there was an eccentric German residing in Faizabad who proclaimed himself to have hailed from an illustrious family. This poor German became a *faqir* and was brought by Modave to the camp of Madec. There is the story of these two English deserters who strangely planned an attack on Madec; one of them named Bourgeois later miserably lost in a battle in the Kota state. Gaetan Criscol is yet another unknown person mentioned in Modave's travel account who lost all his fortunes in the Rohela war. Similarly, the list of those Frenchmen who accompanied Modave from Faizabad to Agra is critical to our analysis of the extent of French adventurers' role in the modernization of Mughal army. These Frenchmen were, Baronet, La Sauvagère, La Martinière, Du Bocage, Moncelet, Berville, Calvé, Macarty, le Chevalier de Crécy. Some of these Frenchmen who had to leave Najaf Khan's service later found respectable employment. For instance, Quimberton, a native of Pont-Saint-Esprit, found employment with a small Raja "to make him learn French which the poor boy himself did not know". Another scarcely

known piece of information provided by Modave is that Madec had even written to the Afghan ruler Timur Shah to offer his services along with his camp and a good number of Firangis. This piece of information was even missed by E. Barbé, a well-known biographer of René Madec.[15]

Modave knew many of the above personally and therefore could give minute details. For example, he writes that these adventurers were not the highest officers who played a primary role, but the subalterns who by their sheer bravery and audaciousness had asserted their authority. They became known for their *sword-in-the-hand* bravery and buoyed confidence, but also for their selfishness. The adventurers who succeeded were Madecs and Sombres, the heroes who have been portrayed glowingly and who lived for a long time in Indian imagination.

The Anglo-French Rivalry

Modave's opinions on the power of the English company in India vary according to the impression or situation of his station. During his stay in Bengal, he argued against the French illusion of chasing away the English forces from their possessions. Later, when he moved away from the Gangetic delta, he allowed himself to be caught up in the dreams of adventurers of the time and, in his scattered notes, he tries to find their "weak point". The memoir on Bengal, original contribution to the knowledge about European factories which were clustered around the river Hugli and which towards the end of the 18th century were in complete decadence, is also a precise description of the early efforts of colonization by the English in India. Modave accounts for the efforts made by the English company to re-establish order, carry out administrative reforms in the Bengal region. Being a military man himself he admires their military strategies and defenses. If he does not find the condition of the English troops up to the mark in terms of efficiency, he recognizes that as well. But, he also extolls what he finds praiseworthy. For instance, he praises the strength of the fortress of Budge Budge and Fort William and notes that it would be difficult to besiege them, and strongly criticizes the optimistic parleys of Chevalier to the minister at home in France for a great alliance with the Mughals and the Marathas to throw the British out of Bengal. Describing the fortification of Budge Budge, Modave says it contained an unbelievable number of canons and mortars which were certainly for defense. He writes that the French sailors had contemptuously ignored it. The French

sailors, as per Modave, were too naïve in their belief that a single vessel would destroy it. Similarly, Fort William was not only a specimen of architectural exquisiteness, according to Modave, but also a symbol of British military prestige.[16]

During the course of his journey, he demonstrates the increasing and expanding presence of the English company everywhere in the Ganga valley, which included limiting aggressively the activities of the French, controlling actively the possessions of the son of Shuja-ud-Daula, contesting him everywhere, directly or indirectly, and expanding on all sides of the Mughal Empire from Bengal to Coromandel Coast and the Western coast. However, when Modave was on his way to Delhi, he changed his mind and thought of offering his services to the Mughals. Modave believed that the English fortunes were not assured, and that, they "will find themselves overwhelmed with the weight of their grandness which they will not be in a state to support". He noted that if the Mughals regained control, the English would face a 'fatal catastrophe'. He found it surprising that 3000 ordinary English soldiers without any discipline or military spirit, expanded on the two sides of Ganga were dictating laws to the whole of Hindustan. The British were blinded by their success and were unable to fathom the dangers that their immense possessions posed to them. Ten to twelve thousand English setting off from the coasts would not be able to win through everywhere at the same time. He also estimated that one could attack the English with advantage in India with forces much inferior to theirs. He thought that the English establishment would become precarious and unstable. However, he also writes that the English could sustain themselves for a long time if no revolution took place in this part of the world. And, if the French did not involve themselves in supporting the Indians, that revolution would not arrive here for many centuries.[17] Thus Modave brings to the fore the weak amplitudes which had the potential to become enormous waves.[18]

Life at the Mughal Court

Modave's description of the imperial court offers a gripping contrast with that given to us by Bernier a hundred years earlier, at the apogee of the reign of Aurangzeb. His critical eye does not leave out anything. Writing about the state of affairs, Modave observes, the court reflected sordid misery in which the once brilliant monarchy had fallen. He writes, "One has conserved the form and appearance of the court, but

now they have no meaning. An old choubdar, a stick in the hand…gesticulating and announcing the words with all his power whose meaning is: Here is the king of kings, the conqueror of the world, the master of the land and other gigantic appellations as much false as ridiculous. The magnificence of the court is no longer there. The pompous spectacle of the audience of Aurangzeb that Bernier describes with so much pleasure and exactitude is replaced by a more strange parsimony which had its origin in a real destitution and not in a weakening in the taste of an exterior pomp. The carriers of huge supply of money have ceded the place to some hundred beggars armed with big sticks and this throne of massive gold and studded with precious stones of inestimable worth is replaced by a gilded wooden armchair. The poverty and baseness of this Court which once upon a time was so proud and so rich can be spotted. I could not be weary of admiring the astonishing contrast of pride and misery which it presents at the first sight".[19] Modave continued that the melon festivals and the birthday of Alamgir did not have any splendour. He also does not fail to mention that the authorities dealt with the people with a heavy hand. And in that description of the daily life of the Court, he sheds light on the little known conditions of existence of the *shahzadas*, princes of the royal blood, locked within a quarter of the fort, who were given irregular pension and, during moments of food shortage arising out of financial constraints, literally died of hunger and rebelled in vain.[20] This description of the Court can be said to represent the microcosm of the real situation of the empire.

Military Conditions and the War with the Jats

Now it is the observations on military conditions which emanate from the pen of Modave, who as a master of camp, colonel of the armies of the king, is perfectly qualified to do that. Readers will be interested in his judicious remarks which make us understand why the Indian armies submitted to comprehensive defeats by the European armies in the second half of the 18th century. It was because of the absence of uniformity in recruitment, military skills and weapons, absence of discipline, tactical elements, lack of coordination between different wings, lethargy in the execution of the orders, absence of supply corps, which justified the presence of a moving real city of merchants in each army, inflating disproportionately the number of men (in the army). And the principle victims of these military operations, conducted without

order were "the unfortunate inhabitants of the countryside who had no interest in their fight". This bad organization reflected itself in the method of paying the troops, and here Modave points out that the only method through which the troops would get paid was by revolting: "it is which one calls to do *danga* (tumult)". He stresses, finally, on the necessity of reforming the whole military system, by showing that some princes, of whom Shuja-ud-Daula and the Rana of Gohad may be mentioned, were already inspired by the English military model. Indian armies of the 18th century have not largely been seen from this perspective.

Thus, Modave's account encapsulates a whole mosaic of Indian diversities and dynamism. While showcasing military rumblings of the time, it also provides deep insights into the socio-religious world of the Indians. Unlike many travellers' accounts, Modave's work was written with the purpose to acquaint the Occident with multitudinous shades of Indianness, which it had failed to comprehend. Thus, Modave's account is seminal on 18th-century north India amid myriad English writings.

IV

Dieu: A Traveller-Adventurer

Dieu's memoir, in spite of being short, is a critical supplement to our understanding of French military presence in the Mughal service. It provides a window to the difficult and challenging times faced by the Mughals and their efforts to restore their power using French adventurers' military potential. Dieu's account underscores the fact that India in the 18th century had emerged as a land of immense professional opportunities opening avenues for all kinds of people to have exceptional careers. Dieu himself ultimately found refuge in it when the prospects of growth dried up in the services of French Company. He had worked in the Compagnie des Indes in the capacity of an officer since 1756. But he finally thought of travelling to India in 1772 in search of employment when he found himself without much work due to suspension of the French company's commercial activities, probably due to Anglo-French hostility, and was reduced to a mediocre pension from the King, along with little consideration given to his views on commerce. He set out from Lorient and embarked on a Pondicherry-bound vessel. He reached Ile de France where after having waited for favourable winds, sailed for India on a boat. He arrived at

Chandernagore. It was at Chanderangore that Dieu heard of the nawab of Awadh Shuja-ud-Daula offering lucrative employment to the French who went over to him. Therefore, Dieu reached Faizabad where he was employed by the Nawab in an exclusive French corps called *partis français*. Later, his services were used in Awadh military campaign against the Rohelas. It was after his return from the Rohela campaign that he met Modave with whom he developed a lifelong association. Dieu attributed his good friendship with Modave to the like-mindedness and conformity of their views which made them companions of chance and fortunes.[21]

After being expelled from Awadh by the English in 1775, Dieu along with many other Frenchmen reached Delhi where adventurers Sombre and Madec had already been in the Mughal service. Dieu's memoir proves crucial in revealing the high status that Sombre and Madec enjoyed in the Mughal polity. According to Dieu, they were held in high esteem and were considered powerful military assets in restoring peace and stability in the empire. Dieu was admitted in Najaf Khan's service at a monthly salary of 600 rupees, a substantial amount. Modave, who was a Count, Chevalier of Saint-Louis and master of camp, was employed on a monthly salary of 2500 rupees. Since these appointments were to be confirmed by the wazir Abdullah Khan, Dieu, Modave, and Moncelet hastened to Delhi in April 1774. They were presented before the emperor by the minister Abdullah Khan where Dieu along with Modave was received graciously. After the customary exchange of presents and *nazar* from both sides, Dieu and Modave's appointments were confirmed. Dieu sheds light on the differences that arose between the minister Abdullah Khan and Najaf Khan, and Modave's journey out of Delhi to resolve the issues between the two. It is yet again a telling comment on the rising importance of French adventurers in Mughal politics where they even played the role of arbiters. Dieu, however, stayed in Delhi. Dieu's military acumen was tested in a battle when he led some Mughal sepoy companies against the Rohelas. However, the Mughal forces were decimated and top-rung military leaders killed. Dieu states that the loss and its accompanying chaos had a bearing on the payment of his salary for 9 to 10 months.[22]

Modave's quarrel with Madec and his decision to quit Hindustan was another important piece of information Dieu was privy to. Modave asked Dieu to meet him in Kota-Bundi so that they could travel together to the Deccan and seek employment in the court of Nizam Ali of

Hyderabad. Dieu left Delhi and reached Agra where he was compelled to stay for one month because of the bad times. He then stated that having been separated from Modave, and with little hope of getting any better services in the court of Nizam Ali than at Delhi, and feeling exhausted with the prospect of another long journey in the wake of depleting resources and plummeting morale, he gave himself the last push with his limited resources to reach Chandernagore and embark from there on a journey to return to the comfort of his family in France.[23] But after reaching Chandernagore in May 1777, he did not stay there for long. We find him sailing as an officer on the ship called *Sévère,* which was a vessel belonging to the fleet of Suffren. He appeared fighting in the battle of Nagapatam where he displayed exemplary courage only to be killed later in Guntur.[24]

The accounts of Modave and Dieu are seminal works of French discoveries of 18th-century north India. Unlike many contemporary and past travelogues, these narratives are highly reliable and authentic in providing information on India. These works are crucial in textualising and contextualizing the historical developments of the time in many new ways, and it is in this sense that these narratives are essential for any holistic understanding of 18th century north India.

Notes

[1] William Hodges, Travels in India, 1780-1783, p. 48.

[2] Buchanan, F., A Journey from Madras through the countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar. His notes on Bengal and Bihar were compiled by Martin Montgomery, The History, Antiquities, Topography and Statistics of Eastern India, London, 1838, 3 Vols.

[3] For more information, see Louis-Laurent de Féderbe, Comte de Modave, Voyage en Inde du Comte de Modave 1773-1776 (The Voyage of Count Modave in India 1773-1776), (ed.) Jean Deloche, Paris: Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO), Paris, 1971, Introduction, pp. 1-3.

[4] Comte de Modave, Voyage en Inde, pp. 2-4. He was present in the siege of Madras and the capture of Fort Saint David.

[5] For a detailed discussion on the partis français and its constituents, see Uma Shanker Pandey, European Adventurers in North India, 1750-1803, Routledge, New York & London, 2020, pp. 104-112.

[6] See Ravi K. Mishra and Uma Shanker Pandey, Eighteenth-Century North India: Some Reflections on the Writings of French Traveller Modave, Dialogue Quarterly, Vol. 21, no. 2, Oct-Dec. 2019, pp. 54-65.

[7] Comte de Modave, Voyage en Inde, p. 12.

8 Comte de Modave, Voyage en Inde, pp. 12, 174.

9 Comte de Modave, Voyage en Inde, p. 40.

10 Henry Lord was born in England in 1563, and was educated at Oxford. Lord sailed to India in 1624 as a Company chaplain. After arriving in India, he was appointed for five years as chaplain in Surat where he remained till 1629. It appears that he was back in London in 1630. His book titled 'A display of two forraigne sects in the East Indies' was published in 1630. Will Sweetman, Mapping Hinduism: 'Hinduism' and the study of Indian religions, 1600-1776, Halle: Verlag der Franckeschen Stiftungen zu Halle, 2003, pp. 65-67.

11 Abraham Roger was a Dutch missionary who resided in Pulicat, north of Madras (now Chennai), from 1631 to 1641. He largely gathered his information on India from a Brahman named Padmanabha who knew Portuguese. Roger went to Batvia in 1642 and lived there for five years before returning to Holland in 1647. He died in 1649. His memoir of India was published by his wife with the title 'The Open Door to Hidden Heathendom'. A.V. Williams Jackson, History of India: Historic Accounts of India by Foreign Travellers, Classic, Oriental, and Occidental, New York: Cosimo Classics, 2008, p. 237.

12 Athanasius Kircher was born in 1601 in Geisa, Hesse, Germany. He was said to be the last renaissance man for his wide interests and erudition. His most notable work was on comparative religion. He died in Rome in 1680.

13 John Zephaniah Holwell was a temporary governor of Bengal. He was one of the first officers to attempt a scholarly engagement with Hinduism. He is famous for his work titled Interesting historical events, relative to the provinces of Bengal (1765-1771). See Thomas R. Trautmann, Aryans and British India, New Delhi: Yoda Press, 2004, pp. 30-31.

14 Comte de Modave, Voyage en Inde, p. 420-1 ; also see Uma Shanker Pandey, European Adventurers in North India, 1750-1803, London and New York : Routledge (Taylor and Francis group), 2020, pp. 23-24.

15 Comte de Modave, Voyage en Inde, pp. 15-16.

16 Comte de Modave, Voyage en Inde, pp. 23-24, 64. Writing about the Fort William, Modave mentioned that it was an irregular pentagon which could also be called a hexagon because it was made up of five big bastions and two half bastions, the last two flanking the wall which was lined along the river Ganga. The place could not be attacked from its front even if it was made up of only a simple rampart, two half bastions, a small semi-circle, a moat and a covered passage. The base of the wall led to the Ganga which put the fort in this part to be safe from all attacks. The bastions were very big, and of a good and thick masonry which required deep digging. However, Modave could not procure any

information on the subterranean area. Nevertheless, he knew in general that there existed a place for living, munitions, and for stationing of a garrison of 3,000-4,000 men. There were within the fort an important place for arms, a park of artillery well furnished with canons, mortars, bombs, bullets of all calibre, some ateliers for the workers, a building for gurads, and a garden. Besides, the artillery pieces distributed in different places, there were more than 300 guns or mortars lined up in a heap in the park.

[17] Comte de Modave, Voyage en Inde, p. 24.
[18] Comte de Modave, Voyage en Inde, pp. 23-24.
[19] Comte de Modave, Voyage en Inde, pp. 33-34.
[20] Comte de Modave, Voyage en Inde, p. 34.
[21] Precis du voyage du Monsieur Dieu, officier des vaisseaux de la Compagnie des Indes auprès de Shah Alam, Empereur Mogol (Hereafter Memoir of Dieu), Microfilm 9368, archives. Microfilm Accession No. 589, pp. 188-189; also see Maurice Besson..p. 84.
[22] Memoir of Dieu, pp. 191-192.
[23] Memoir of Dieu, pp. 191-192. It contains a letter written and signed by Dieu at Pondicherry, 10 January 1777.
[24] Maurice Besson, Les Aventuriers Français aux Indes (1775-1820), Payot, Paris, 1932, pp. 84-87.

Perception of India's Soft Power: As Perceived By People Within And Around The Globe – Report from the Field Survey

Dr. Amit Kumar Gupta*

Present-day India, with its social, economic and geographical diversity and the cultural pageantry of its people, represents an ancient civilization, which is still in touch with its past (Gupta, 2008). Its "cultural enigma and exoticism, which to a large extent has been defined as esoteric, have attracted the imagination of numerous poets and thinkers, scientists and philosophers, not just of those to whom it matters, but intellectuals and masses all around the globe. India offers more than just something, and hence titillates everybody's pondering cognition" (Gupta, 2013). The aforementioned attributes that India possesses, find their resonance with a concept, soft power.

There is a plethora of literature in praise of India's past. The genius and majesty of India's esoteric culture both baffles and fascinates. And all this because of its rich medley –beginning with its robust democracy to multiplicity of languages and dialects gods and goddesses values and beliefs, customs and practices, sensuality and asceticism (Singh 1998: XI). On the contrary though, its existing imperfection in the form of widespread poverty, its law human development report, its execrated social practices – caste system, dowry practices, etcetera – out rightly present the conflicting majesty of the Indian society. However, as Kishan S. Rana puts it, owing to its vastness, diversity and enchanting

* Dr. Amit Kumar Gupta, Faculty (Director), Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. Mobile: +91 8372801243 / 9313481208.

medley of its people it would not be false if one says there is some degree of veracity in almost anything that is said about the country. (Rana 2000: 147)

Among the various books and articles that have been written by Indian and foreign authors about India, there are subtle scientific assessments or global surveys of how India is currently perceived by people within and around the globe. One such survey was done by Ogilvy and Mather – a renowned global advertising company – in August 1998 in the name of India Brand Audit. Through its Audit it assessed the thoughts of people in various countries about India. The standard comments about India that cropped up in the surveyed countries were: (Rana 2000: 147-148)

China

- India offers more than can be seen, under extreme conditions of passion and optimism;
- Feel curious and alienated, too strange;
- Blacks are always lazy, do not work effectively.

United Kingdom

- A synthesis of the impossible, real and harsh, coexistence with the spiritual;
- A world of its own, leaves you feeling curious;
- The spirit of India never leaves you.

United States of America

- Restores faith in humanity;
- Not a country but a journey through one's own mind;
- Like going back to childhood, standing before a toy store;
- Generates curiosity, rewarding.

The survey, also reported views of people from Hong Kong and Sri Lanka. Here too the replies were similar, however the negative elements were highlighted prominently. In summary, it can be viewed that, the people are more puzzled and give emphasis on the exotic aspects of India, which is difficult for a person to understand, mainly because these are intangible.

To further clarify the contemporary broad view of the people in India and around the world about India, I conducted a random survey of foreign nationals, Indian academicians and diplomats

and tried to know their perspective about India's foreign policy and its soft power.

Field Survey

There are very limited number of surveys to know the global view about India. This study thus seeks to make a constructive addition to the small number of global surveys to know how the people around the world perceive India. The survey was conducted in the months of May, June and July, 2019 in New Delhi, India. Through this survey, an attempt was made to get the perspective of foreign nationals, Indian academicians and diplomats about India and its soft power.

The survey was divided into two parts. In the **first part,** the study endeavoured to get the perspective of foreign nationals about India and its soft power. The targeted foreign nationals were those who were presently on a tour to New Delhi (India), with their variant purpose of education, visiting a friend, cultural exchange programmes, business, or as tourists, and they belonged to several countries from various continents, such as, Europe, North America, South America, Africa and Asia. The sample size of the first part of my survey was one hundred and fifty (150). In the **second part,** the study targeted to identify the perspective of Indian academicians and diplomats about India's foreign policy and its soft power. This was done in order to compare at the end of the survey as to what the people from around the world think of India, and on the other end, what the Indians themselves especially the learned class conceive about India and its soft power. The sample size of this second part was fifty (50). Owing to the qualitative nature of this second part, the sample size of this part is smaller than the first part of my survey. The targeted academicians who were interviewed for the purpose of the survey belonged to three reputed central universities in New Delhi (India) - Delhi University, Jamia Millia Islamia and Jawaharlal Nehru University,. And the diplomats interviewed were both retired and also presently serving in New Delhi (India).

Survey Questions

Two set of questionnaires were prepared for the survey. The first set of questions was for the first part of the survey, where the target audience were the foreign nationals. The second set of questions was for the second part of the survey, where the target audience were Indian academicians and diplomats and the questions were open ended.

Data Analysis and Interpretation
I. Part I

The responses received from the foreign nationals were considerably variant, though similarity in their thought and their perception of India in many aspects were visible. Their distinct responses in the first part of the survey has been categorised into sub themes that are presented below:

A. India's Culture

Majority of the foreign nationals opined that India's greatest strength is its culture and expressed their opinion on the various dimensions of Indian culture.

i. Family Bonding

Their primary emphasis was on the fact that India's strength lies in its family bonding. According to them 'love' in Indian families is very strong, which the Indians should uphold and protect, especially family values, moral values, religious values, spiritual values and open mindedness to others. Many even went on to say that, "If Indians lose these values, India would lose its greatness too".

ii. Spirituality

Next important thing according to the foreign nationals about India is its spirituality, which according to many is the true solace provider. Many of the respondents even stated that they had come to India with the idea that India is a spiritual and a highly religious place where one can learn the non-material things of life. They are of the opinion that Indians really know how to respect their temples. Indeed, they stated that the world has a lot to learn from India's deep spirituality, from the Gandhian principles, from the culture of hearts and how to respect god and be 'submerged in the ocean of serenity in the auspices of almighty'. The world can also learn how in India people from different religions live together. The respondents had a realization that India has retained its rich traditions and culture.

iii. Indian People

Another important focus of the respondents was on their opinion about Indians in general and the Indian youth in particular. Many of the

respondents stated that the Indians are "good people having good heart" and that they are "very kind and nice". The respondents also stressed on the point that Indian's are very joyful, talkative and outgoing, and also that they enjoy a lot of freedom. According to them, the Indians have a very different way of life and the culture here is very different, and the most striking feature of the Indians is their respect given to cows and other animals. In addition the respondents pointed out that India has many smart and resourceful young people who can become good leaders.

iv. High Culture

According to the respondents, India is an incredible country. Its culture, religious practices and lifestyle are all very different. Indian dresses, dances and songs and the marriages here are all very colourful and incredible. According to some, Indian food is the most striking feature of India. "The food here is very delicious, but too spicy". One of the respondents in fact pointed out that Indian cuisine has excessive of everything in them, for example, too much of spices in their food, similarly, excessive sugar in their sweets, etc.

B. Knowledge and Education

The respondents claimed that Indians are knowledgeable people and thus "India has incredible potential that must be ignited to benefit the world". As a matter of fact, many of the respondents pointed out that there are many intellectual people in India and they should be encouraged to go out to the world, so as to enable them to use their abilities to improve other countries economy and politics. However, some others stated that 'India must retain its intellectual people and stop the so called 'brain drain'. In fact, some of the respondents pointed out that Indians pay serious attention to education and the students are studious and parents invest in their children's education. Some others stated that they had come here to see the IT (Information Technology) environment and some claimed to have heard and read some parts of Indian epics and Vedas before coming to India and wanted to learn more about the Indian knowledge system and its rich civilizational history.

C. Tourism

According to the respondents India has many new things to offer. 'It's awe inspiring and majestic Taj Mahal and the Great Himalayas are the

best'. Many respondents also talked about India's encouragement and recognition of traditional medicines also while focusing on the modern allopathic medicines. Many of the respondents were aware about India being seen as a centre for medical tourism, and some others were enthralled by the practice of Yoga and its benefits. One of the respondents in fact pointed out that India's greatest strength can be its tourism.

D. Growing Stature of India Abroad

The foreign nationals opined that India's image abroad is largely positive and believed that it could play a major role in the international platform, in terms of peace making. They also stated that India's other big strength is its economy.

E. Contrary concerns about India by Foreign Nationals

In contrast to all soft power aspects of India that was discussed by the foreign nationals, some of the respondents also pointed out some grim picture that they had drawn about India. According to them, though India is a spiritual place, it is also materialistic. "India needs to do better in the fields of infrastructure development, poverty eradication, equality for women and the majority of Indians need to love people from other religions too". Many other respondents talked about caste system and its evils which detracts it social image. They also talked about noise pollution and waste management issues in the major Indian cities. Some talked about Indian hot summers and some others highlighted the prominence of separatist movements in India.

II. Part II

Part II of the study deals with the responses of Indian academicians and diplomats about India and its soft power. The common responses have been clubbed together and presented under the following sub headings as follows:

A. Democracy

According to the Indian academicians and diplomats, India's greatest strength is its democracy. They further stated that "democracy and the democratic way of life are very difficult to retain amidst poverty, because the growth and development rates are slower in democracies. However, India has proved that its civilizational values and its democratic way of

life and governance can be sustained amidst problems and challenges and also that it has sustained democracy consistently during the last seventy years amidst inequality, poverty, social unrest, violence, etc." According to the respondents, despite everything, India's democracy has been deepened and widened and that its economic growth has finally taken off which will only make the sustenance of democratic way of life easier in the years to come. India has successfully attended to democracy and diversity. This has in fact been India's greatest contribution to the world. Some of the respondents stated that the robust Indian democracy is indeed India's distinct soft power.

B. India's Soft Power

As per several other respondents, India's culture, its epics and modern day literature, its religious diversity, Information technology, economic growth and its middle class, excelling performance of big Indian industries worldwide, its prospering diaspora, economic assistance to its neighbours and other needful countries under south-south cooperation, science and technology, tourism, knowledge economy, service sector, disciplined, skilled and cheap labour, cuisine, Bollywood and the enduring strength of its democratic way of life, peaceful nature of India's foreign policy behaviour and skilful diplomacy constitutes its unique soft power. According to one of the respondents, India is a place where diversity is celebrated. Irrespective of religion, everybody celebrates each other's festivals together. This keeps India united. Similarly, one of the other respondents pointed out that, "India's soft power is its values, principles of panchsheel and non-violence. India as a civilization has always believed in borrowing good, and giving up the bad. India has the capacity to absorb". "India's soft power can be utilized by presenting its own society, culture and politics as a model before others. It can present its model of unity in diversity, democratic way of life, tolerance and secularism." According to the respondents India has stood for these values and hence can project itself as a living model to others. "India's greatest strength is its culture, because its culture has stood the test of time, and it has endured over thousands of years." Additionally, India's plurality, that is, its multicultural, multilingual and multi-religious polity is its soft power. With all said, however, one of the respondents pointed out that, "the Indian policymakers have to be sensitized about harnessing India's soft power in a skilful manner. It is there but not being used skilfully". Likewise,

it was also pointed out that, there is no single source of power for India. In India's case, its dynamic economics and resilient democracy along with military power is its main source of strength". Among the respondents, some of them cited the importance of soft power and some others did not believe in the efficacy of soft power. Those who believed in the concept stated that "soft power plays a major role in International Politics and it was United States of America's soft power that played a much more important role for it than its military". And those who did not believe in the importance of soft power stated that there is no such thing as soft power, as there is nothing called moral stature, which is in fact different from power". And some others stated that "soft power does play a role in international politics, however, it may not be very direct. It may be time taking. Soft power actually becomes power only with patience".

C. India in the International Platform (Brand India)

According to the Indian academicians and diplomats, India is at the threshold of being a major power in the international scenario with its hard power and soft power being simultaneously recognized, and that India is a force to reckon with. India stands for neutrality and global peace and has maintained it over the last seventy years. India can set a very good example to the whole world as it strikes a balance between tradition and modernity, between scientific progress and spirituality. It can certainly model itself as the largest democracy having its economic and military strength. It has played a major role in U.N. peace keeping. It is being invited in international forums, such as, G-7, G-8, G-20, BRICS, International Solar Alliance (initiated by India) and also in other major economic forums. India deserves a permanent seat in the Security Council of the United Nations because it has all the attributes of a great power. As stated by one of the respondent's "India is a brand for three good reasons:

1. Largest democracy and has a democratic regime for over sixty years.
2. Pioneer of Non Aligned Movement, and
3. It has political, social and economic strength coupled with military and nuclear strength.

Therefore, it is a brand and now is very uniquely placed in the third world and hence, has to be taken seriously in the global world platform". The respondents also pointed out that India is respected in

the international platform, because of its positive credentials; it has been non-violent and can be relied on. India can, and is thus making a case for a better and just global order. It has been playing constructive role in the global campaign against terrorism and also in trade development and knowledge economy. Many of the respondents further believe that India with its geographical size and its rich civilizational history is destined to play a major role in International politics, and this is evident from the fact that India has today transformed itself from being a potential power to a major power. One of the respondents pointed out that "India is a happening place, that's why people are coming here and all the other countries are stagnating". Additionally, India provides a large market, it has rich resources, and provides cheap labour to the world. Juxtaposed to the above statement, one of the respondents pointed out that "India still has to strive for full legitimate role in world politics, as it is still punching below its weight".

D. India's Foreign Policy

India, according to the respondents has crafted its foreign policy very diligently. Its leadership has done a good job, and also India has very efficiently managed the post-colonial challenges, where many countries around the world have failed. It has in fact been balancing its foreign policy very well and that "ideologies have not been determining India's foreign policy". India's foreign policy is more so strongly oriented towards promoting global peace, disarmament and development, and it thus serves the cause of humanity. According to one of the respondents, "foreign policy of the NDA government is moving in the right direction, however, it is far from being satisfactory - because there is always something better to do". In the contrary, some of the respondents pointed out that "India's foreign policy is not going in the right direction and that it has compromised its ideals, which were developed during freedom struggle, whose objective was human solidarity and Non Alignment. Now India has taken a positive view of neo-liberalism, to attach itself with western powers. This is in fact not good for the long term, but may be beneficial in the short run". According to them, India has acquired importance in the international arena, since 1950s, by being the spokesman for the then newly independent ex-colonial poor countries, and asking the developed world to help in their progress. India should continue with this mission.

E. India's Culture

The Indian academicians and diplomats were equally proud about Indian culture. According to them India's secularism, democracy and unity in diversity are its greatest strengths. The cultural personality of India is different. However, one of the respondents pointed out that "India has not used its cultural power efficiently. Why is India shy of projecting its Muslim population? Use of religion is not a negative aspect, unless it is used to spread hatred". As per the respondents "culture unites India, however, one has to be careful in the manner a country uses its culture as a diplomatic tool, because every other country have their own cultures, and most of them are very proud of it. Thus, one should be careful in not imposing one's culture upon the others". Additionally, many of the respondents pointed out that for India to become a major power, it has to do away with the desecrated practices prevalent in the society. To them, India can't be a 'brand'. Caste system is still prevalent and women continue to be ill-treated. "India has to start treating its people well first, so as to be able to set examples of the most valued ancient Indian belief 'Vasudeva Kutumbkam', which implies that world is one family".

F. Indian Economy

According to the respondents, India's strength today is also primarily because of its robust economy. India is in a much more stronger position in all fields including, economy, politics and military, than it was in 1947. "Its corporate sector, IT industries and its tourism sector (including medical) is fast growing and booming all over the world", and that "its resource management with equity policy will bring more development". However, some other respondents pointed out that "India's economy is coming up only for the salaried class. The fate of the bottom quartile of the income distribution is roughly what it was 40 to 50 years ago". "There is no feel good factor. Common people are not shining. India is rising on India hype. We are made to believe which we are not. India has bartered away the interest of the Third World countries as well".

Recommendations for better constructing India's Image Abroad

A number of senior academicians and diplomats provided certain recommendations towards improving the state of affairs within India

and its image abroad. According to one of the respondents, "India, to become a leading power, is required to have a committed leadership that also holds accountability. The leader needs to take every one along. Strengthen people. And strength comes by taking your population together". Similarly, a different respondent pointed out that "all Indian bureaucrats and politicians need to work on themselves for self-development. So it becomes important that they keep their promises. There is distinct gap between what they say and what they do". One of the respondents raised a blaring concern and stated that "over the past few years, India has been on the path of aggressive nationalism. It should be avoided. Jingoist nationalist perspective is emerging now. India should not promote everything from security point of view. The state is securitizing everything". On a similar note a respondent pointed out that "we have to open channels for our nation's development. Corruption and discrimination must be done away with, only then talents can be utilized. India has tremendous resources. It has a vast population. There are immense possibilities if human development is carried forward in the country. This would also constitute humane development". According to them India will succeed if it "remains earnest and consistent in all its endeavours".

Likewise, the respondents flagged certain propositions towards India's foreign policy. According to them, India can play a major role in International platform by promoting a peaceful and non-violent approach in resolving all conflicts, and that it will also have to balance the super powers well. India should see itself as a leader and needs to work with the Third World countries. It needs to democratize the world. India's foreign policy, according to them, should give priority to develop human resources of developing countries of Africa and Latin America. India should share its experience of agricultural sector with the rest of the world, which will work for food security and poverty elevation. It should share its technology with developing countries. India should work hard for the expansion of Security Council membership. It should propagate the use of nuclear science for peaceful purposes and support the developing countries as per their requirements. Additionally, according to the respondents "India can provide technical and intellectual resources to the whole world if we could only keep the best of the brightest from running away!" India and Indians should be outgoing, reaching out to the world and let the world come to India to know it

at its best. In fact "India should stand on its own terms and the world will look up to us".

Key Findings

The survey revealed three significant points:
1. The foreign nationals are enthralled more by India's culture, then by its economic growth or its military strength.
2. The Indian diplomats and academicians take pride of the resilient democratic consistency in the country, also while emphasizing on its multicultural, multilingual and multireligious polity.
3. The execrated social practices (especially caste system) and widespread poverty in India, remains a matter of concern both for the foreign nationals and the Indian educated class.

Conclusion

The survey reveals the fascination that world has for India's civilization, its culture, its spirituality, its unique way of life, its plurality, the unity in diversity, the family values, the exceptional resilience of its democracy, the strength and intellect of its middle class, and so on. The foreign nationals are more perplexed by India's esoteric qualities. They come to India to see the exotic life here. Some are here in India in search of peace of mind. For few the economic downturn was just too much to handle and hence were looking for solace in the non-material matters. For many Taj Mahal is a wonder, for many the Indian food is simply awesome. But very rarely did the foreign nationals talk about India's military strength or its economic growth. In one instance when I asked a foreign national whether India's military could be considered its greatest strength, then the immediate answer was, "that's a very bad thing to say, why do you say so?"

The Indian academicians and diplomats too are fascinated by India's upward progress and the respect and the importance that India has achieved for itself. The main reason behind this, the academicians and diplomats see it in the consistency and the resilient nature of its democracy. They argued post-colonial countries had to face the severest of the challenges, here India was victorious, and many of its counterparts that failed are still stumbling. India gave itself a system of government that sustained all ferocity and is now known to the world community as a major rising power. Many attribute this rise to post-cold war era,

when India accepted neo-liberal policies and its economy began to punch upwards. They argued what India did in these 30 years (post-cold war period) it could not be done in the previous 40 years (The period from its independence to the end of cold war). Indian technology is being praised by the world community, its companies are doing well as is evident from them buying companies around the world. With all mention of India's political and economic strength, the academicians and diplomats too did not fail to make mention of the importance of India's multicultural, multilingual and multi-religious polity.

However, a common concern that was visible in the responses of both the foreign nationals and the Indian academicians and diplomats, was the prevalence of widespread poverty in India, together with the baneful social practices, especially the caste system. Stress was laid on the fact that growth should be accompanied by equity, and that corrupt practices by the bureaucrats and the politicians have to be aborted.

Be that as it may, the survey distinctly highlighted the fact that India's primary strength lies in its soft power, accompanied by the progress of its economy.

References

1. Gupta, Amit Kumar (2008), "Commentary on India's Soft Power and Diaspora," *International Journal of World Peace* 25:3, 61-68.
2. Gupta, Amit Kumar (2013), "Soft Power of the United States, China and India: A Comparative Analysis," *Indian Journal of Asian Affairs* 26:1, 37-57.
3. Rana Kishan S. (2000): Inside Diplomacy (New Delhi, Manas Publication).
4. Singh B.P. (1998), India's Culture: The State, the Arts and Beyond (Delhi, Oxford University Press).

Forced Child Begging Practices in India: A Sociological Analysis

Anirban Mukherjee*, Athar Ullah** and Susham Biswas***

Abstract

Despite India's economic growth in the recent years, begging still remains a big social problem in India. Begging is prevalent mostly in the tourist areas, including areas around important monuments, railway and bus stations, religious sites, shopping districts, traffic intersections, etc. The percentage of beggars vary from state to state. As per the latest census of the Government of India, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh have a large percentage of child beggars. Uttar Pradesh, in particular, has a very high percentage of child beggars. Begging in India often involves organized gangs. Beggars commonly exchange a significant share of their begging to the gang's leader in lieu of the privilege of begging in a particular area. Child beggars constitute a robust section of beggars in India. A report of Indian Human Rights Commission reveals that 40,000 children are abducted in India annually and a substantial section of them are forced into begging. Further, 3 lakh

---

* Anirban Mukherjee, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Petroleum Technology (RGIPT) Jais, Uttar Pradesh-229304. /Email: anirban.jnu2004@gmail.com/ amukherjee@rgipt.ac.in

** Athar Ullah, Research Scholar, Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Petroleum Technology (RGIPT) Jais, Uttar Pradesh-229304. Email: athar.ifham@gmail.com/ ps18001@rgipt.ac.in

***Susham Biswas, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Petroleum Technology (RGIPT) Jais, Uttar Pradesh-229304. Email: susham@rgipt.ac.in sushamster@rgipt.ac.in

children in India are forced into begging (DNA Report, 2016). Controlling child begging and offering healthy childhood to them is a challenge. It is required to determine how child begging is getting perpetuated in different city environments. This paper attempts to get a nuanced understanding of forced child begging and proposes ways in which this organized crime may be countered.

Introduction

As India steadily progresses on the path of development, it faces the challenge of countering social ills like poverty, illiteracy, drug abuse, alcoholism, child labour, etc. Economic growth in India is mainly concentrated in the urban areas and this can be evidenced from the fact that in 2008, urban GDP constituted 58 per cent of the total GDP (McKinsey Report, 2010). The claim is bolstered by the study of Mitra and Mehta (2011) that reveals that 59 per cent to 70 per cent of India's GDP is generated in the cities. It is further predicted that Mumbai Metropolitan Region's GDP will rise to $265 billion by 2030, which is higher than the current GDP of many countries like Portugal, Columbia, and Malaysia (McKinsey Report, 2010). Likewise, Price water house Coopers predicts India's three cities (Delhi, Mumbai, and Kolkata) among the top 40 cities of the world in terms of estimated GDP of 2025 (IIHS Report, 2014). Further, Hawksworth and Hoehn et al. (2009) observed that cities in the developing countries will grow faster compared to that of the developed nations.

The Census of India (2011), reveals that 31.2 per cent of the total population in India lives in urban areas and direct migration to urban areas accounts for 20-25 per cent of the increase in the urban population (Report of the High Powered Expert Committee, 2011). One of the major challenges of unprecedented urbanization has been acute shortage of housing in urban India. There has been a corresponding rise of slums. The Report of National Sampling Survey (2012) estimates the number of slums to be 33510 and is inhabited by 65.49 million people (Census of India, 2011). 'Income or capability poverty' is identified as a defining characteristics of slums and the conditions are seen to create obstacles for human and social development (Report of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, 2015). One of the often overlooked problem associated with urban poverty and slum is the issue of child begging. The magnitude of the problem can be gauged

from the fact that 300,000 children across the country are forced into begging (DNA Report, 2016).

The Problem of Child Begging

Before going into the discussion of forced child begging practices in the country, let us develop an understanding of the concepts—'child' and 'begging'. According to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), a child is referred to "as a boy or girl under the age of 18" and begging may be described as, "a range of activities whereby an individual asks a stranger for money on the basis of being poor or needing charitable donations for health or religious reasons. Beggars may also sell small items, such as dusters or flowers, in return for money that may have little to do with the value of the item for sale." (Delap, Anti-Slavery International Report, 2009). The very instance of compelled begging can be seen as a form of 'forced labor'. As per the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Convention No. 29 (1930), forced labour may be described as "work or service which is extracted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily." In fact, as per the guidelines of ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labor (1999), the practice of using child for begging may aptly be described as one of the worst forms of child labour (Delap, Report of Anti-Slavery International, 2009). Elaborately speaking, child begging can be seen as slavery or slavery-like practice, a form of forced labour, a result of child trafficking, and an illegal activity (Delap, Report of Anti-Slavery International, 2009).

Research reveals that forced child begging can be categorized into two groups: children who are forced into begging by the third parties; children who are forced into begging by their parents or guardians.Let us now initiate our discussion by focusing on the first category i.e. children who are compelled to beg by the third parties.

Children Forced to Beg by Third Parties

It is concerning to note that 40,000 children are abducted in India each year and of them 11,000 stay untraced (Report of the National Human Rights Commission, DNA Report, 2016). The cases of abduction of children by the 'begging mafia' is common in the States of Kerala, Bihar, Orissa, New Delhi, and Tamil Nadu. These abducted children

are forced to work in the illegal factories, forced to be sex slaves or join pornography industry, made camel jockeys in Gulf nations or child beggars, become involved in organ trade (Andrabi, Report of the National, 2009).

Children who are forced to beg are starved for several days so as to attract public sympathy and get money from begging. They are also trained in several begging techniques. For instance, they receive training about where to beg, whom to approach for begging, what to say or mannerisms to display while begging. Further, the paltry amount (Rs. 100-200) that the children get from begging are taken away by the group controlling the area at the end of the day.

At times, children are tortured and maimed for invoking sympathy from the onlookers. In fact, CNN-IBN conducted an investigation in 2007 and found the involvement of doctors from government hospitals of Delhi in heinous crime racket of forced begging. The doctors were paid money by the begging mafia to amputate the limbs of abducted children (Andrabi, Report of the National, 2009).

Research also reveals that a number of children are forced into begging by drug dealers. The drug dealers get the children addicted to drugs and once they become addicted, the dealers refuse the children further dosage of drugs unless they get money by begging (Delap, Report of Anti-Slavery International, 2009). A recent research reveals that children who are forced into begging by the drug dealers, beg for nine to twelve hours each day and earn around Rs.50-100. Most of the money is used by them to pay off the debt and to earn more drugs (Delap, Report of Anti-Slavery International, 2009).

Children Forced to Beg by Parents

Most of the times, it is poverty that forces the parents to send their children for begging. Other prominent reasons include: drought (especially in States like Rajasthan), parental unemployment or sickness, alcoholism of parents (especially fathers)(Report of Anti-Slavery International, 2009). Existing research also revealed few instances where the parents forced their child to beg despite the families having enough for meeting their basic needs. Such money was used by the parents to buy luxury items such as TVs, CD players, fans, etc. (Delap, Report of Anti-Slavery International, 2009).

Statewise list of Beggars

State	Count
WEST BENGAL	81244
UTTAR PRADESH	65835
ANDHRA PRADESH	30218
BIHAR	29723
MADHYA PRADESH	28695

■ Column1
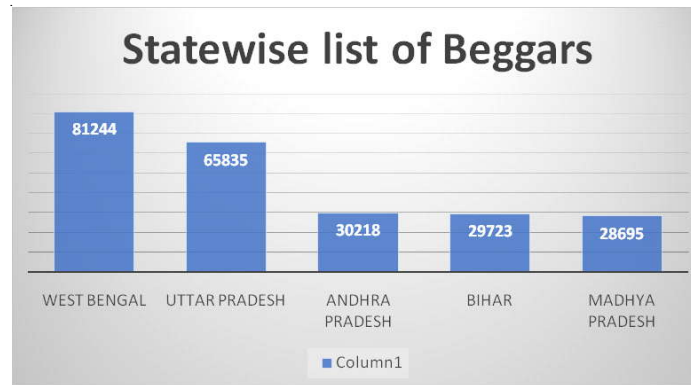
Source: The Times of India, 2015

The above table depicts the count of beggars across the various States of India. West Bengal has the highest count of beggars (81,244) in the country (Report of the Times of India, 2015). It is a matter of plight to note that children from West Bengal are exported nationally and internationally to engage in such heinous act (Burns, Report of the New York Times, 1997). In lieu of payments ranging from $75 to $1500, poverty stricken parents sell their children to the touts. Equipped with fake passports, the touts send the children to varied destinations including Jidda, Riyadh, and Mecca, where they work for more than 15 hours a day. Sometimes the children are subjected to severe physical abuse. The payment received by the parents mainly depends on the physique of the child and higher amounts were offered for disabled children. Of the 48 children rescued by Saudi police and sent back to India, 32 were found to be disabled (Burns, Report of the New York Times, 1997).

One may further introspect that larger family size and higher fertility rates is to be blamed for the suffering of the children. In fact, a recent report in Hindustan Times reveal that impoverished families in rural West Bengal, having as many as six children, lend their wards to intermediate agencies to distribute to the city beggars. Most of the children hailing from the areas of Panskura, Uluberia, and Andul are brought by their parents to Kolkata based railway stations at early

dawn to be handed over to intermediate agencies. The agencies note down the details of both the parents and the beggars and then supplies the children to the beggars. The children are handed back to the parents by five in the evening. The parents remain contended about not having to worry about the meals of the children and the fact that children start earning from their infancy. Infants (below one year of age) are in high demand for such odious act and the parents are offered Rs. 100 per day for them. Children in the age group of two to five years fall next in the line of demand and receive daily payment of Rs. 50. The agency hires children on both daily and monthly basis and report suggests that they are in contact with as many as 1,000 families and 2,000 beggars (Report of the Hindustan Times, 2008).

The Report of the Anti-Slavery International (2009) also suggests that few parents resort to violence when children display any reluctance towards begging or when they do not bring enough money. In its extremity, parents were found to use opium for making the infants cry in order to gain sympathy from people (Delap, Report of the Anti-Slavery International, 2009)

Towards Countering the Problem

Forced child begging is thus an exploitative practice and children are deprived of their childhood. They are not only deprived of their rights and privileges of having a 'normal' life, it also truncates their capabilities. The nefarious act adversely affects the future of the child and the child remains indigent for the rest of his/her life. Taking the perspective of Labeling theory, one may argue that once the child is labeled as a beggar by the society, he/she slowly begins to accept such identity (Becker, 1964). When such identity is accepted by the child as the primary identity, it become very difficult to alter it.

The Constitution of India, by virtue of Articles 15, 23, 24, and 39, ensures the well-being of the child; prohibits them from being engaged in forced labour and begging; being engaged in factory, mines, and hazardous activity; and ensures healthy development with freedom and dignity. Despite such Constitutional provisions, the problem of forced child begging exists in the country. The question, therefore, is: how to counter the problem of forced begging of children?

First, people should recognize that their responsibilities does not end by offering alms to children begging on the streets. In fact, the

money people donate may not always be retained by the child in question. Thus, it becomes our moral responsibility to report children who seem distressed, injured, and abused to the local Child Welfare Committee or police (Report of Save the Children, 2016). According to the Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959, begging is a crime in India and incidence of child begging may be reported to the police (Report of Save the Children, 2016). The Government must also devise plans to design 'affordable' and 'accessible' quality education for children. In a developing country like India, education must be complemented with vocational training so that children get to learn subsistence skills at schools. Education without immediate practical utility will not be well-received by poverty stricken families (Delap, Report of Anti-Slavery International, 2009).

Furthermore, the Government can also design some awareness-raising campaigns about the ills of child begging. Such awareness campaigns must again be propped up by income-generating schemes for destitute families. The police, legal professionals, and social workers additionally need to be trained to empathize with the child beggars. A little bit of compassion on their part will only help to further expose the under reported incidence of child abuse and begging (Delap, Report of Anti-Slavery International, 2009).

Acknowledgment

Reference

Andrabi, J. (2009, January 18). Beggar mafia thrives on lost children. The National Report, Retrieved from, https://www.thenational.ae/world/beggar-mafia-thrives-on-lost-children-1.547033

Becker, H. S. (1963).*Outsiders: Studies in the sociology of deviance*. New York: Free Press.

Burns, F. J. (1997, March 13). West Bengal Finds It Creates Child Beggars for Export. The New York Times, Retrieved from, https://www.nytimes.com/1997/03/13/world/west-bengal-finds-it-creates-child-beggars-for-export.html

Nandi, K. (2015, June 26). '53 per cent increase in child labour'. The Hindu, Retrieved from, https://www.cry.org/media/53-percent-increase-in-child-labour

Constitution of India. *THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA.* Retrieved from,https://www.india.gov.in/sites/upload_files/npi/files/coi_part_full.pdf

Delap,E.(2009).*Begging for change*: *Anti-Slavery International Report.* Retrieved from, http://www.antislavery.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/beggingforchange09.pdf

Dr. Ahluwalia, I.J. (2011). *HPEC Report and Recommendations.* Retrieved from, https://smartnet.niua.org/sites/default/files/resources/HPEC%20Report%20PPT.pdf

Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, National Buildings Organization. (2015). *Slums in India: A Statistical Compendium.* Retrieved from, https://www.google.co.in/search?q=SLUMS_IN_INDIA_Slum_Compendium_2015_English+(1).pdf&rlz=1C1C HBF_enIN800IN800&oq =SLUMS_IN_INDIA_Slum_Compendium_ 2015_English+(1).pdf&aqs= chrome..69i57.20221j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8

Mitra, A. and B. Mehta (2011). 'Cities as the engine of growth: evidence from India.' Journal of Urban Planning and Development, 137(2): 171-183.

Hawksworth and Hoehn, T. et al. (2009). Which are the largest city economies in the world and how might this change by 2025?. Price Waterhouse Coopers (PwC) UK Economic Outlook, 20–34. Retrieved from, http://pwc.blogs.com/files/global-city-gdp-rankings-2008-2025.pdf

Hindustan times. (2008, July 23). 'Agency' supplying child beggars in Kolkata. Retrieved from, https://www.hindustantimes.com/kolkata/agency-supplying-child-beggars-in-kolkata/story-0t3EtzzGWI1KRvOLhHMedM.html

International Labour Organization. (1930). *Forced labour:Definition convention No.29.* Retrieved from,www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@asia/@robangkok/documents/genericdocument/wcms_346435.pdf

Ravi, A. Koduganti, J. & Anand, S. (2014). *IIHS: Cities as engine of inclusive development.* Retrieved from, https://www.google.co.in/search?q=IIHSRF_CitiesasEnginesofInclusive Development_Final_Rducedsize.pdf&rlz=1C1CHBF_enIN800IN800&oq=IIHSRF_Citiesas EnginesofInclusiveDevelopment_Final_Reduced-size.pdf&aqs=chrome..69i57.13285j0j9&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8

Reuters. (2016, June 1). 3,00,000 children across India are forced to beg by cartels. DNA Report, Retrieved From, https://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-300000-children-across-india-are-forced-to-beg-by-cartels-report-2218856

Sankhe, S. (et.al.). (2010). *India's urban awakening: Building inclusive cities, sustaining economic growth.* Mackinesy Report.Retrieved from, https://www.google.co.in/search?rlz=1C1CHBF_enIN800IN800&

ei=kVCmW8y3JIn3vgSCk6-ACw&q=MGI_Indias_urban_awakening_ executive_summary+%281%29.pdf&oq= MGI_Indias_urban_awakening_ executive_summary+%281%29.pdf&gs_l=psyab.3...954234. 978640.0.980053.39.13.1.0.0.0.541.1925.42j2.5.0....0... 1c.1j2.64.psyab.. 33.3.960.6..0i67k1j0i7i30k1j35i39k1.452._SeqeVx7X94

Save the children.(2016). *Save the Children India's Position on Child Labour.*Retrievedform, https://www.savethechildren.in/resource/position- papers/child-labourSave the Children. (2016). *Statistics of Child Labour in India State Wise.* Retrieved from, https://www.savethechildren.in/ articles/statistics-of-child-labour-in-india-state-wise

Sharma, P.C. (2005). *Report of the NHRC Committee on Missing Children.* Retrieved from, http://www.childlineindia.org.in/CP-CR-Downloads/ Missing%20Child%20report%20NHRC.pdf

The Times of India.(2015, Aug 13). Over 4 lakh beggars in India, mostly in WB: Govt. Retrieved from,https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Over- 4-lakh-beggars-in-India-most-in-WB-Govt/articleshow/48470292.cms

United Nations.(1989, Nov 20). Convention on the Rights of the Child. New York. Retrieved from, https://treaties.un.org/doc/Treaties/1990/09/ 19900902%2003-14%20AM/Ch_IV_11p.pdf