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Contents

Articles

Article

Determinants of Agricultural Exports of India: A Commodity Level Analysis

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Abstract

The export opportunity allows the agricultural sector to expand productive capacity to the full extent. An attempt is made in the present study to specify and estimate the factors affecting agricultural exports of India at the commodity level. The major exportable crops used in the study are rice, wheat, tea, coffee, sugar, cotton lint and tobacco. The literature surveyed clearly shows that Indian exports are influenced by a number of factors. A double log-linear regression analysis has been carried out to understand the role of different factors in affecting agricultural exports across commodities from 1980-2010. Examining determinants of agricultural exports at commodity level is critical for proper allocation and effective utilisation of resources.

The findings of the study validate the hypothesis that the impact of various factors on agricultural exports may not be the same for all commodities. The export determination models

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suggest that agricultural exports of India are affected by a number of demand and supply side factors. In a nutshell, the empirical findings reveal the predominance of factors like lagged export, production and world income in determining agricultural exports of India. For rice and wheat rather than production, stock with the government influences export to a large extent. Because of semi government interventions in cereal market, actively for mandatory PDS, exports are not allowed on regular basis for many tradeable commodities like wheat, therefore, much depends on demand and supply. The findings of the study are relevant to design public policies in the external sector.

Keywords: Agricultural Exports, OLS Regression, Determinants, Trade Liberalisation, WTO.

JEL Codes: F14, Q170.

Introduction

Theories on international trade supports that trade plays an important role in the development of a country. Nayyar (1976) examined that international trade leads to development of a country. Balassa (1982) suggested that countries applying outward oriented development strategies had a better performance in terms of exports, economic growth and employment whereas countries with continued inward orientation lead to increasing economic difficulties. The importance of international trade deals with the proper allocation and efficient use of resources. World Development Reports have also shown that outward-oriented trade policies have been more successful in promoting economic growth compared to inward oriented trade policies. The importance of international trade is also explained at the sectoral level in many studies. In the context of agricultural trade, important literature shows that exports can be of much potential benefit to the rural sector, as it removes the restriction on productive output imposed by the low domestic demand for food.

It also provides the economic incentives to establish and improve the infrastructure in the rural areas (Sachdev, 2000). The export opportunity allows the agricultural sector to expand productive capacity to the full extent.

Over the last seven decades of Indian planning and trade policies, the perception about the importance of external trade in economic development has gone through several changes. During the 1950s, the period of First and Second Five-Year plans, foreign trade in agriculture was considered to be almost irrelevant for economic development in India. During the next two decades, i.e., until the mid-1970s, limited export capacity was seen as a constraint on growth and India followed a moderately-outward-looking economic policy (Bhattacharya, 2004). The external sector was therefore given importance from the early 1980s. India initiated liberalization measures from the mid 1980s but it was only from 1991 that reforms gathered pace. The Uruguay Round Agreements, which came into effect from January, 1995 quickened the process of India's integration with the global economy. Since then, considerable changes have been made in the export-import policy in consonance with the provisions of the WTO. Tariff rates and Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs) have been reduced for several commodities. Export promotion measures have been initiated through notification of agro-export zones in major states along with a removal of restrictions with respect to licensing and other regulations. Attempts have also been made to reform domestic trade by abolishing and simplifying physical and regulatory measures on private trade under the aegis of price, legislative and institutional measures (Bathla, 2011).

There has been a substantial increase in agricultural exports in the era of economic liberalization. Today India is a major supplier of several agricultural commodities like tea, coffee, rice, spices, cashew, oil meals, fresh fruits, fresh vegetables, meat and its preparations and marine products to the international market. Indian agricultural export basket has also become diversified. India is observed to have exported about three dozen principal

agricultural commodities. India has emerged as a leading producer of agricultural commodities, endowed with rich natural resources and favourable soil and climatic conditions. India has huge potentiality in agricultural exports but overall potentiality has not been exploited. However, in the era of trade liberalization, agricultural export has been increasing but share of agricultural exports in total exports has steadily declined over the years. In addition, agricultural export is quite volatile and there are large year to year fluctuations in export growth. This has damaged India's image as a stable exporter (Bhalla, 2004).

As far as global competitiveness of agricultural commodities is concerned, there are a number of commodities where India has lost market share substantially. These are mainly cashew kernels, fruits and vegetables, pulses, spices, sugar, tea and tobacco. Loss in market shares reflects reduced global competitiveness, which include both price and non-price factors. The country faces fierce competition from other major players in the field, both the existing and new entrants. Ironically, the major challenge is from within Asia itself where countries like China, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Singapore and Indonesia among others pose a big threat to Indian agricultural products (Shinoj and Mathur, 2008).

Literature suggests that there is buoyancy in the exports of agricultural products in the post-liberalisation era. Although, there is an increase in the absolute quantum of agricultural exports, there is persistent decline in the percentage share of primary products in total export from about 30 per cent in 1980 to about 10 percent in 2010. This indicates a slow rise in agricultural exports in comparison to national exports. Despite considerable increase in agricultural exports, India is still a marginal player in the world agricultural trade. India's share of agricultural exports in world agricultural exports was about 1.20 percent in 1980. In the post-WTO regime, share of agricultural exports in world agricultural exports increased to 1.70 percent in 2010. In the wake of global slowdown and growing protectionism, agricultural exports of India have also declined. Further, weak global demands

have further added volatility to the export basket. These issues pose considerable challenges before the government to take necessary steps to augment agricultural exports. In this context, an examination of determinants of agricultural exports at the commodity level is crucial for designing public policies while dealing with challenges of the external sector.

Review of Literature

Riedel (1984) emphatically argued that the typical demand function of exports yields biased estimates of the parameters if the supply side variables are not taken into account. Therefore, in the literature, an economic analysis of export performance entails both demand and supply factors to be considered as determining variables in the export function. The important literature on the subject suggests that agricultural exports in India are influenced by multiple factors which vary across the commodities. Kumar and Mittal (1995) examined factors affecting tea exports and found that tea exports are insensitive to price incentives and to changes in the world demand and decrease with increasing share of domestic consumption. Kumar (2004) analysed export performance of Indian fisheries. World export and exchange rate were found to be positively associated with fishery exports of India. Domestic prices have theoretically consistent sign of coefficient. However, world prices do not play an important role in explaining exports of fisheries products from India. Kumar et al. (2007) examined the determinants of livestock exports. Ratio of production to consumption, ratio of world export to world output, exchange rate and removal of quantitative restrictions have positively affected livestock exports. However, relative prices did not play important role in influencing overall livestock exports.

Kumar and Rai (2007) examined determinants of tomato exports of India. World export and relative prices have positive impact on tomato exports. However, domestic production had a negative impact on tomato exports from the country. In this context, the authors put forth the arguments that increase in

domestic production had coincided with the increased international production, causing depressed international prices and hence lower exports from India. Gulati and Kelly (2001) and Bathla (2011) found that exports of agricultural commodities are determined by a host of factors, varying from commodity to commodity. In the case of wheat and rice, production, stock and government policies matter.

Examining determinants of agricultural exports at commodity level is critical for proper allocation and effective utilisation of resources. The present study aims to examine the factors that explain variations in exports of major agricultural commodities.

Objective

To examine the factors that affect exports of major agricultural commodities in India from 1980-2010.

Hypothesis

The impact of various factors on agricultural exports may not be the same for all commodities.

3. Data and Methodology

Geographically, the investigations were carried out at the all-India level and separately for seven important tradable commodities, viz., rice, wheat, tea, coffee, cotton lint, sugar, tobacco. The choice of these crops was determined by their increasing share in external trade. The analysis covered a time span of three decades from 1980-2010, broadly representing the pre-WTO period from 1980–1995 and post-WTO period from 1995–2010.

Data were collected from secondary sources and converted at 2004-2005 prices. Data on agricultural exports and production were taken from Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) trade database. Data on world income / GDP was

taken from World Bank database. Rice and wheat stock data were taken from RBI database on Handbook of Statistics on Indian Economy. The data on domestic and international prices of agricultural commodities were taken from various sources. Domestic wholesale prices have been taken from FAO database. International price data has been taken from World Bank pink sheet database, UNCTAD database and IMF's International Financial Statistics. Real Exchange Rate was calculated from the *Report on Currency and Finance*, RBI. Wholesale price index for all commodities at 2004-05 prices was extracted from the website of ministry of economic advisor, Government of India.

3.1. Specification of the Model

Exports from any country are influenced by both demand and supply factors. A traditional export demand function at the aggregate level is expressed as X = f (P, Y) where X is export demand, P is relative export price and Y is real income of importing countries. The relative export price is measured as the ratio of home country's export unit value index to a weighted average of competing countries unit value indices, the weights being the relative export shares. The income variable Y is often represented by world demand or world exports to explain export performance. The export function is generally specified in a log-linear form and estimated applying the ordinary least squares (OLS) technique.

To identify the factors that affect agricultural exports, double log-linear regression analysis was carried out in the study. The agricultural export function was specified as follows:

$$Ln\ Export = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Ln\ Export\ (-1) + \beta_2 Ln\ Production + \beta_3 Ln\ WP/DP + \beta_4 Ln\ REER + \beta_5 Ln\ World\ Income + \beta_6 Ln\ Openness + Ei$$

Where,

Ln Export = Natural logarithm of export of i^{th} commodity in thousand tonnes

Ln Export (-1) = Natural logarithm of export of i^{th} commodity in thousand tonnes (one year lagged)

Ln Production = Natural logarithm of production of i^{th} commodity in thousand tonnes (one year lagged)

Ln WP/DP = Natural logarithm of ratio of world price to domestic price of i^{th} commodity in rupees per ton at 2004-05 prices

Ln REER = Natural logarithm of real effective exchange rate (REER) at 2004-05 prices

Ln World Income = Natural logarithm of world income in thousand rupees at 2004-05 prices

Ln Openness = Natural logarithm of percentage of domestic agricultural exports to world agricultural exports (values in thousand rupees at 2004-05 prices)

While explaining factors affecting agricultural exports, alternative equations have been tried, also to avoid the problem of multicollinearity. In case of rice and wheat stocks with the government has been taken into consideration.

4. Empirical Results and Discussion

The empirical literature surveyed on export determination model shows that agricultural exports in India are mainly determined by production, lagged export, relative prices, exchange rate, world export, world income, openness and policy variables like removal of quantitative restrictions. Theoretically, all these variables are expected to have a positive sign. If external price is higher than domestic price i.e., relative price ratio is greater than one and is increasing, it will positively influence the level of exports and hence, bears a positive sign. It also indicates competitiveness of a commodity in the world markets. On the contrary, if external world price is less than the domestic price i.e., the relative price ratio is less than one, then there is no incentive to export and the variable may be insignificant with positive or negative sign (Bathla, 2009). Beside relative price movement, production can

also explain exports because with an increase in output more marketable surplus can be utilized for export purposes. Exchange rate depreciation is expected to increase exports. Economic literature suggests that an increase in the world income also leads to an increase in exports. In addition, sometimes export also depends on its lagged exports. Further, a greater openness of economy through reduction in export barriers is likely to create a positive environment for export growth. The impact of this variable is captured to the positive openness made to world trade, indirectly captured through India's share of agricultural exports in total world agricultural exports. Dummy variable was used to capture differences in agricultural exports during pre and post-WTO periods. However, it was dropped due to errors in estimation.

The determinants of seven major agricultural exports namely rice, wheat, tea, coffee, sugar, cotton and tobacco are provided as follows:

Table 1 Determinants of Rice Exports

Outcome Variable: Rice Export		
	Equation 1	Equation 2
Explanatory Variables	Coefficients	Coefficients
Constant	-1.33	-22.20**
Export (-1)	0.59***	0.51***
Govt. Stock (-1)	0.75**	0.67**
WP/DP	-.10	0.13
REER	-.58	—
World Income	—	0.69*
R-squared	0.84	0.86
D-W	2.19	2.20
Note: ***, ** and * denote 1, 5 and 10 percent level of significance respectively.		

Table 1 shows that the explanatory variables in the equation 1 and equation 2 could explain 84 percent and 86 percent respectively of the total variation in the exports of rice. The coefficients for most of variables indicate that different factors influence the exports of rice differently. The export function (equation 1) shows rice exports to be positively influenced by lagged export and lagged stock. These variables bear the expected signs and are statistically significant. Ratio of world price to domestic price and real exchange rate have negative signs, however these are statistically insignificant. Therefore, it could be concluded that real exchange rate and ratio of world price to domestic price have not played any significant role in the exports of rice from India during 1980 to 2010. In equation 2, instead of REER world income was added in the model because of the problem of multicollinearity. The coefficient of the world income is statistically significant. It shows 1 percent increase in world income leads to 0.69 percent increase in rice exports. The coefficients of lagged export and lagged stock are also positive and significant. Ratio of world price to domestic price has positive sign, however insignificant.

Table 2: Determinants of Wheat Exports

Outcome Variable: Wheat Export		
	Equation 1	Equation 2
Explanatory Variables	Coefficients	Coefficients
Constant	-10.53	-90.48
Export (-1)	0.37**	.35*
Govt. Stock (-1)	2.48**	2.63**
WP/DP	1.70	3.53
REER	-2.21	—
World Income	—	2.42
R-squared	0.27	0.28
D-W	2.23	2.19

Note: ** and * denote 5 and 10 percent level of significance respectively.

In table 2, estimates of equation 1 shows that like rice lagged export and lagged stock are positively and significantly associated with wheat exports. A 1 percent increase in lagged stock leads to 2.48 percent increase in wheat export. Ratio of world price to domestic price does not play any role in affecting wheat export, as the coefficient is insignificant. Because, domestic price of wheat is higher than the world price so increase in world prices do not play important role in increasing wheat export of India. A negative sign of coefficient was expected; however, it is positive but insignificant. Real exchange rate is negative but insignificant. In equation 2 of the model, real exchange rate has been dropped and world income was added, because real exchange rate and world income are highly correlated to each other. The coefficient of world income is positive but insignificant. Lagged export and lagged stock have major role in affecting wheat export of India.

Table 3: Determinants of Cotton Lint Exports

Outcome Variable: Cotton Lint Export			
	Equation 1	Equation 2	Equation 3
Explanatory Variables	Coefficients	Coefficients	Coefficients
Constant	-20.49***	-25.19**	-24.20***
Export -(1)	0.32*	0.33*	0.26
Production	3.02***	2.17***	3.45***
WP/DP	.83*	—	—
REER	—	2.54*	—
Openness (share)	—	—	1.90**
R-squared	0.51	0.51	0.56
D-W	2.15	2.02	2.09
Note: ***, ** and * denote 1, 5 and 10 percent level of significance respectively.			

From table 3 of equation 1 it is apparent that cotton lint export is determined by lagged export, production and ratio of world price to domestic price. All the variables have positive and significant signs of coefficients as expected. In equation 2, real exchange rate was added, which is also positive and significant. It shows that 1 percent increase in exchange rate leads to 2.54 percent increase in cotton lint exports of India. Therefore, exchange rate adjustments have major impact on cotton lint export. In equation 3, openness was included in the model to see the integration of domestic economy into the world economy. The value of the coefficient is positive and statistically significant. One percent increase in openness leads to 1.90 percent increase in cotton export. This shows economic liberalization and post-WTO agreements have positively affected cotton exports of India. The included explanatory variables could explain 51 percent to 56 percent of the total variation in cotton lint exports.

Table 4: Determinants of Sugar Exports

Outcome Variable: Sugar Export			
	Equation 1	Equation 2	Equation 3
Explanatory Variables	Coefficients	Coefficients	Coefficients
Constant	-25.28	-25.39**	0.78
Export (-1)	0.64***	0.66***	0.68***
Production	2.12**	2.83**	2.37*
WP/DP	0.80	0.40	0.60
REER	1.70	—	—
Openness (share)	—	1.57	—
World Income	—	—	-.75
R-squared	0.47	0.49	0.46
D-W	1.71	1.70	1.72
Note: ***, ** and * denote 1, 5 and 10 percent level of significance respectively.			

Table 4 shows that sugar export mainly depends on lagged export and production as it is visible in the estimates of the equations. Both the variables are positive and statistically significant. Ratio of world price to domestic price is insignificant in all the three equations. A negative or insignificant value of WP / DP was expected, as is the case, because domestic wholesale prices have been higher than the international prices. Therefore, international prices of sugar do not influence Indian sugar exports. Bathla (2009) analyzed that wholesale price of sugar was higher than the world price from 1980 / 81 to 1988 / 89 and then from 1997 / 98 to 2002-03. Exchange rate and openness also do not seem to affect exports of sugar. World income also does not play any role in influencing sugar export. The value of the coefficient is negative however insignificant. The value of the R-Squared varies between 46 and 49 percent.

Table 5: Determinants of Tobacco Exports

Outcome Variable: Tobacco Export			
	Equation 1	Equation2	Equation 3
Explanatory Variables	Coefficients	Coefficients	Coefficients
Constant	-2.38	-.70	-31.53***
Export (-1)	0.42***	0.45**	0.26
Production	0.65*	0.64**	0.68***
WP/DP	-.39**	-.51***	—
REER	0.36	—	1.79**
Openness (share)	—	0.28	—
World Income	—	—	0.80**
R-squared	0.72	0.74	0.75
D-W	2.52	2.59	2.30
Note: ***, ** and * denote 1, 5 and 10 percent level of significance respectively.			

Results for tobacco are presented in table 5. Equation 1 of the model shows that export of tobacco is determined primarily by lagged export and production. The values of the coefficients are 0.42 and 0.65 respectively. The coefficient of ratio of world price to domestic price is negative. This shows that prices do not play important role in increasing tobacco exports. The possible reason may be that the products like tobacco are price insensitive and demand for such products are inelastic in nature with respect to price. The coefficient of real exchange rate has positive sign but insignificant. The explanatory variables explain 47 percent of variations in tobacco exports.

Table 6: Determinants of Tea Exports

Outcome Variable: Tea Export		
	Equation 1	Equation 2
Explanatory Variables	Coefficients	Coefficients
Constant	-.22	0.26
Export (-1)	0.35**	0.36**
Production	0.51*	—
Openness (share)	0.23**	—
WP/DP	—	0.25
REER	—	0.27**
R-squared	0.39	0.38
D-W	2.08	1.99
Note : ** and * denote 5 and 10 percent level of significance respectively.		

In equation 2 also relative prices negatively affect domestic tobacco exports. Openness was included in the model. The sign of the coefficient is positive but insignificant. The dependent variables together could explain 74 percent of variation of total tobacco export. In equation 3, real exchange rate positively and

significantly affects tobacco exports. It shows 1 percent increase in exchange rate leads to 1.79 percent increase in tobacco exports. Production is an important determinant with expected positive sign of coefficient. World income was included in the model. It shows that Indian tobacco export is very much guided by changes in the world income. The value of the coefficient of world income is positive and significant at 1 percent level. 1 percent increase in world income leads to 0.80 percent increase in Indian tobacco export. The explanatory variables together could explain 75 percent of total variations in tobacco exports.

From the statistical evidence furnished in table 4.6 of equation 1, it is quite clear that Indian tea exports are influenced by lagged export, production and openness. A1 percent increase in production leads to 0.51 percent increase in tea exports. Tea export is positively influenced by openness. The value of the coefficient of openness is 0.23. It is positive and significant at 5 percent level. Given a relatively higher world price of tea than the domestic price, one would expect export to positively respond to price incentives. In equation 2, the analysis reveals elasticity estimate of exports to relative price is positive, however insignificant. Tea export also depends on its lag. The value of the coefficient of lagged export is 0.36, which is significant at 5 percent level. Real exchange rate is another determinant of tea exports. Therefore, exchange rate adjustments have important role to play in determining tea exports. A 1 percent increase in exchange rate leads to 0.27 percent increase in tea exports of India. The included explanatory variables could explain around 39 percent of the total variation in the exports tea.

Table 7 shows estimates of coffee exports function. Three equations have been specified and estimated. From the estimates of equation1 it is clear that coffee exports depend on lagged export, production and exchange rate adjustments. A 1 percent increase in production leads to 0.73 percent increase in coffee exports. The sign of coefficient of relative price is positive but insignificant. It shows that relative prices have not played important role in influencing coffee exports. The real exchange rate did not have

Table 7 : Determinants of Coffee Exports

Outcome Variable: Coffee Export			
	Equation 1	Equation 2	Equation 3
Explanatory Variables	Coefficients	Coefficients	Coefficients
Constant	1.36	2.12	-8.67
Export (-1)	0.38***	0.30***	—
Production	0.73***	0.65***	0.66***
WP/DP	0.11	—	0.12
REER	-.53***	-.50**	-.11
Openness (share)	—	0.07	—
World Income	—	—	0.37**
R-squared	0.91	0.90	0.88
D-W	1.97	1.74	1.41
Note: *** and ** denote 1 and 5 percent level of significance respectively.			

theoretically correct signs. It shows that 1 percent increase in exchange rate leads to 0.53 percent fall in coffee exports. The possible reasons may be that exchange rate anticipation is quite common. Therefore, the export decisions also depend on possibilities of exchange rate changes in near future. Secondly, other countries in the world have also devalued their currencies frequently in the last three decades, thirdly, frequent occurrence of financial and economic crisis in the world over. Fourthly, tea has also emerged as an important substitute to coffee and changes in the prices of substitute products have important implications on export decisions. Fifthly, till 1987, India did not import any coffee, however from 1988 onwards India has been continuously importing coffee and it has gone up tremendously in recent years. In this context, Bhalla (2004) found that exchange rate adjustment does not necessarily lead to higher exports. In equation 2, openness is included which is positive however, it does not play important

role in influencing coffee exports. The value of the coefficient of world income is positive and significant in equation 3. It shows that a 1 percent increase in world income leads to 0.37 percent increase in domestic exports of coffee. R-squared is quite robust. The included explanatory variables could explain 88 to 91 percent of the total variation in the exports of coffee.

Conclusion

An attempt is made in the present study to specify and estimate the factors affecting agricultural exports at a disaggregated level from India. The literature surveyed clearly shows that Indian exports are influenced by a number of factors. A double log-linear regression analysis has been carried out to understand the role of different factors from 1980 to 2010. The major exportable crops used in the model are rice, wheat, tea, coffee, sugar, cotton lint and tobacco. For each commodity, various equations are specified to examine their influence on exports. Alternative equations have been tried in the model mainly to avoid estimation error and multi-collinearity.

The estimated equations for rice shows that lagged export lagged stock and world income played a predominant role. In the case of wheat, as India does not export much of wheat and there is wide year to year fluctuations, it is mainly affected by lagged export and lagged stock with the government. Like wheat, sugar export is also influenced mainly by lagged export and production. The estimates of cotton lint reveal that it is affected by a number of factors like lagged export, production, relative prices, openness and exchange rate. However, world income does not play important role in affecting cotton exports. Factors like, lagged export, production, world income and exchange rate affect tobacco export positively and significantly. Tea export is influenced by lagged export, production, openness and exchange rate. In case of coffee, lagged export, production and world income play the dominant role in affecting coffee exports of India and the coefficients have theoretically consistent signs.

Hence, the findings of the study validate the hypotheses that the impact of various factors on agricultural exports may not be the same for all commodities. In a nutshell, the empirical findings reveal the predominance of factors like lagged export, production and world income in determining agricultural exports of India. For rice and wheat rather than production, stock with the government influences export to a large extent. Because of semi government interventions in cereal market, actively for mandatory PDS, exports are not allowed on regular basis for many tradeable commodities like wheat, therefore, much depends on demand and supply.

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Annexure A.1
Detailed Data Description and Sources

Variables	Brief Description of Data	Data Sources
Agricultural Exports (All Commodities)	To estimate the determinants of agricultural exports, export quantities taken in thousand tonnes.	Food and Agricultural Oragnisation of the United Nations (FAO) trade database
Agricultural Production	Agricultural production taken in thousand tonnes.	FAO Trade Database
Value of Agricultural Production	Value of agricultural production in thousand rupees	National Accounts Statistics (NAS), India
Wholesale Price Index	Ministry of Economic Advisor, Government of India.	
Government Stock	Rice and Wheat stock in thousand tonnes	Handbook of Statistics on Indian Economy, RBI
World Income/GDP	Converted in thousand rupees	World Bank database
Openness	India's share of agricultural exports in total world agricultural exports (values) is taken as a proxy of openness	
Real Exchange Rate	Exchange rate is given in Rs/US $ in nominal terms and the series is extracted from the Report on Currency and Finance, RBI. Nominal exchange rate is converted in real exchange rate using 36-currency basket REER index prepared by RBI by the method of deflator at 2004 -05 base.	
Domestic Prices	Domestic wholesale prices	FAO
Unit Value Index	As a proxy of domestic prices for Tea, calculated by dividing production value to production quantity in rupees per ton.	
International Prices	Price unit is in rupees per ton at 2004-05 prices.	
Rice, Wheat, Tobacco Unmanufactured	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Statistics.	
Tea	International Financial statistics, IMF Data.	
Coffee, Cotton, Sugar	World Bank, The Pink Sheet.	

Note: All the variables are converted at 2004-05 prices.

Article

Fiscal Performance of Indian States and Central Transfers: Trade-off between Incentive and Equity

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Abstract

State governments bear the burden of mobilising resources mainly for two objectives which are the execution of central plans and financing the implementation of their own projects. Given the fact, if these expenditures are financed by the borrowings, State level fiscal deficits and debt keeps on increasing. The objective of the present study is to compare the fiscal performance of the States, simultaneously taking into account the factors responsible for improvement or deterioration in the financial position of the States. We have made an attempt to assess the relative position of different States in attaining fiscal efficiency with the help of Fiscal Performance Index, a multi indicator analysis and also compared the results to single indicator performance analysis. The study showed that although the debt position of States has relatively improved due to improved fiscal indicators, it is still eating out huge resources out of the State government's budgets. In order to sustain this improvement it is important that present reform

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policies are implemented with an element of change according to the changing environment.

Keywords: State Finances in India, Fiscal Performance Index, Fiscal Efficiency

Introduction

State governments bear the burden of mobilising resources for two main objectives, firstly for the execution of central plans and secondly to finance the implementation of their own projects. An effective execution of these functions calls for an uninterrupted supply of financial resources for which the State governments rely primarily on own tax and non –tax revenue, borrowings from the public, from the central bank, commercial banks and central government etc.

Financing of expenditures by if done by own revenues of the States is a good deal to lock but continuous dependence on borrowings leads to mounting State fiscal deficits and debt. An insight into the debt and deficit position of State governments painted quite an impressive picture till 1980s but soon started deteriorating. From 1987-88, their debt and debt service burden soared with the high cost of borrowing for financing current expenditure amidst growing fiscal imbalances during 1986-87 to 1997-98 (Gopinath, 2009)[1]. After facing a situation of imbalance till 2004, the State governments witnessed an improvement in their debt and deficits except for a mild shock from 2008-09 to 2011-12. In order to bring about this improvement several reforms were initiated both, to augment the revenue as well as to reduce the expenditure. Some of the major being uniform floor rate sales tax followed by VAT, restrictions of fresh recruitment as and when needed, introduction of Voluntary Retirement Scheme and implementation of Fiscal Responsibility Legislations etc.

The objective of present study is to compare the fiscal performance of the major Indian States from 2000-01 to 2012-13 on the aspects of, how the expenditure is financed; If by borrowings

than the direction of usage of borrowings; States own effort for revenue collection; Quality of expenditure by the States. The paper will further examine the effectiveness of increase in central transfers to low performing States in improving their position and whether this increase should be based on the principle of equity or incentive.

The paper is organised into five sections. Section 2 summarises the methodological framework for analysing the fiscal performance of States. Section 3 gives a description of the performance of States using multiple indicators approach and also compares the result so obtained to a single indicator approach often used for funds devolution. Section 4 examines the importance of central transfers in removing the deficits, if any, in State budgets in order to ensure equity. This section also discusses the trade-off faced by the government between equity and incentive while devolution of funds to the States. The concluding remarks are presented in section 5.

Methodological Framework

The relative position of different States in attaining fiscal efficiency is analysed with the help of Fiscal Performance Index, suggested by Dholakia (2005)[2]. The data for State-wise fiscal indicators has been compiled from various issues of *State Finances- A Study of Budgets* brought out annually by the Reserve Bank of India. The data is collected and analysed for fifteen non special category States, excluding Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh due to non-availability of data for the year 2000.

Keeping in view the various sources of revenue and expenditure heads of the State governments the main focus of the study is on three important indices namely – Deficit Index, Own Revenue Effort Index and Expenditure Index. In the *Deficit Index* the ratio of GFD to TEX indicates what part of a State's fiscal spending is met out of borrowing. In other words it measures the degree of dependence on external sources that are used by a State

over and above its own revenue and fiscal transfers from the centre. Along with quantity it is also important to know the quality of fiscal deficit i.e. whether it is created for meeting the current requirements (shown by RD/FD) or it is a result of some major income generating capital projects (shown by CO/FD). If fiscal deficit is created for the latter it can be justified to a large extent but if it is due to the former it needs to be curtailed.

$$\text{Deficit Index (DI)} = \frac{\text{GFD as ratio of TEX+R.D as ratio of GFD+capital outlay as ratio of GFD}}{3}$$

$$\text{Own Revenue Effort Index (OREI)} = \frac{\text{OT as ratio of REX+ONT as a ratio of REX}}{2}$$

$$\text{Expenditure Index (EI)} = \frac{\text{NDRE as ratio of RR+IP as ratio of REX}}{2}$$

Where, GFD = Gross fiscal Deficit, TEX = Total Expenditure, R.D = Revenue Deficit, OT = Own Tax Revenue, ONT = Own Tax Revenue, REX = Revenue Expenditure, NDRE = Non Developmental Revenue Expenditure, RR = Revenue Receipts, IP = Interest Payments.

The two components of *Own Revenue Effort Index*, Own Tax Revenue as a proportion of Revenue Expenditure and Own Non-Tax Revenue as a proportion of Revenue Expenditure, collectively measure the revenue raising efforts of a State in relation to its revenue expenditure. The composition of revenue sources of States indicates the quality of fiscal resource generation by a State.

In the *Expenditure index*, NDRE/RR measures the extent to which a State's revenue receipts get used up for the payment of non-developmental charges. IP/REX measures the consequences of unplanned debt creation in the past. A separate index for the concerned States has been computed in the following standardized form

$$\text{Fiscal Performance Index} = \frac{DI+OREI+EI}{2}$$

Where, DI= Deficit Index, OREI = Own Revenue Effort Index, EI = Expenditure Index

In order to construct the composite index out of the specified indicators, first the value of each indicator is converted into indices. This is because, the selected indicators are ratios with different numerators and denominators and hence their simple summation is not possible. For this purpose we have used the methodology developed by Morris and McAlpin in 1982 which was used for constructing the Physical Quality of Life Index. Accordingly we first identified the best and worst values of each indicator during the period of 2000-2013. The best and worst values have been defined in such a way that all the indices became unidirectional and could be horizontally compared to form the FPI. That is, an increase in the value of an indicator would necessarily mean improvement in the fiscal performance and vice versa. For each indicator the performance of an individual State is put on a 0 to 100 scale where 0 represents an absolutely defined worst performance and 100 represent an absolutely best performance (Table 1). These best and worst performances are based on actual fiscal achievements of one or more States and are not hypothetical values.

Table 1: Critical Values and Formulae for Indices

Indicator	Best Value (=100)	Worst Value (=0)	Formula
Fiscal deficit as percentage of total expenditure	-5.791, Orissa (2007-08)	42.039,West Bengal (2001-02)	[(42.039 –V) / (42.039-(-5.791)] *100
Revenue Deficit as percentage of fiscal deficit	-1023.80, Orissa (2008-09)	524.8, Maharashtra (2007-08)	[(524.8 – V) / (524.8-(-1023.80)]*100
Capital Outlay as a percentage of fiscal deficit	1131.40 , Orissa (2008-09)	-407.3 Maharashtra (2007-08)	[(V- (-407.3) / 1131.40 –(-407.3)]*100
Non developmental revenue expenditure as percentage of revenue receipts	24.94, Karnataka (2010-11)	86.8, West Bengal (2003-04)	[(86.8-V) / (86.8-24.94)]*100
Interest payment as percentage of revenue expenditure	8.5, Bihar (2011-12)	35.8, West Bengal (2003-04)	[(35.8-V) / (35.8-8.5)]*100
Own taxes as percentage of revenue expenditure	73.4, Maharashtra (2007-08)	19.4, Bihar (2001-02)	[(V-19.4) / (73.4-19.4)]*100
Own non taxes as percentage of revenue expenditure	54.1, Goa (2001-02)	1.9, Bihar (2011-12)	[(V-1.9) / (54.1-1.9)]*100

Note:V= actual value of that indicator for a given State.
Source: Calculated by the authors

Another point that assumes significance while constructing a composite index like FPI is since many indicators are combined into a single index, it is necessary to specify relative weight attached to each component. In the present study we have given equal weights to all components and within each component also each indicator is assigned equal weight. One of the main arguments put forth regarding any composite index is that due to

the number of indicators used, there might be some implicit weight that can occur but as argued by Morris and McAlpin in 1982 it can be ignored because some arbitrariness is inevitable when one is dealing with policy matters.

(A) Calculations and Discussion of the result based on Multiple Indicator Approach

On the basis of the results of Deficit index, own revenue effort index, and Expenditure index, we were able to highlight the stressed areas of the States and look for effective solutions.

The performance of the States on deficit index (Table 2) shows an improvement in their performance over 2001-2013 as nearly all the values show an increasing trend. This increase is contributed by the improvement in all the three components of deficit index. Amid this increasing trend there are certain States where the values decreased in different phases, for example Goa over 2004-05 to 2007-08, Haryana, Karnataka, Punjab and Tamil Nadu over 2008-09 to 2011-12.

Table 2: Deficit Index

Indicator	Best Value (=100)	Worst Value (=0)	Formula
Fiscal deficit as percentage of total expenditure	-5.791, Orissa (2007-08)	42.039,West Bengal (2001-02)	[(42.039 – V) / (42.039-(-5.791)] *100
Revenue Deficit as percentage of fiscal deficit	-1023.80, Orissa (2008-09)	524.8, Maharashtra (2007-08)	[(524.8 – V) / (524.8-(-1023.80)]*100
Capital Outlay as a percentage of fiscal deficit	1131.40 , Orissa (2008-09)	-407.3 Maharashtra (2007-08)	[(V- (-407.3) / 1131.40 –(-407.3)]*100
Non developmental revenue expenditure as percentage of revenue receipts	24.94, Karnataka (2010-11)	86.8, West Bengal (2003-04)	[(86.8-V) / (86.8-24.94)]*100
Interest payment as percentage of revenue expenditure	8.5, Bihar (2011-12)	35.8, West Bengal (2003-04)	[(35.8-V) / (35.8-8.5)]*100
Own taxes as percentage of revenue expenditure	73.4, Maharashtra (2007-08)	19.4, Bihar (2001-02)	[(V-19.4) / (73.4-19.4)]*100
Own non taxes as percentage of revenue expenditure	54.1, Goa (2001-02)	1.9, Bihar (2011-12)	[(V-1.9) / (54.1-1.9)]*100

Source: Calculated by the authors

For Goa the decline was mainly on account of decrease in the value of Fiscal Deficit as a proportion of Total Expenditure as the other two indicators were either stagnant or increasing, highlighting an increase in borrowings over this period.

For States like Haryana, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu not only the borrowings increased, there was a decrease in capital outlay as a proportion of Gross Fiscal Deficit reflecting deterioration in the quality of expenditure. Punjab saw the decline due to a fall in fiscal deficit as a proportion of total expenditure. Over the entire duration of 2000-2013 Orissa emerged as the most successful State in terms of deficit index while West Bengal performed the worst.

Most of the States showed decline over 2008-09 to 2011-12 which was a natural result of the global financial crisis which hit the central as well as State governments from both revenue and expenditure side. There was a moderation in the revenue growth as the tax revenue buoyancy was reduced; simultaneously State governments had to give fiscal stimulus packages in order to boost demand thus, increasing their expenditure. This forms one of the important reason for categorising a separate phase of 2008-09 to 2011-12.

Another observation worth considering here is that the major improvement in all the States was recorded over the period 2004-05 to 2007-08 mainly on account of two major reforms initiated by most of the States- introduction and implementation of VAT and Fiscal Responsibility Legislation.

The Own Revenue Effort index (table 3) also reflected amelioration. State governments over the years realised the importance of becoming self-sufficient in raising resources rather than being dependent on central transfers. For the fulfilment of this aim various measures for improving tax and non-tax revenue were seen from time to time in which the most significant one being implementation of VAT by most of the States over the period 2005-2008. Result of this could be seen from a noticeable increase in Own revenue effort index over 2004-05 to 2007-08 as compared to 2000-01 to 2003-04.

Unfortunately, for States this trend was hindered by global financial crisis leading to a decrease in the reduction in own revenue effort index for most of the States over 2008-09 to 2011-12. Some of the States which were otherwise doing good till 2007 like Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu etc. either stagnated or decreased in terms of own revenue collection.

Bihar performed the worst followed by West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Orissa and Rajasthan with an average index of .855, 13.855, 22.679, 23.33, and 30.649 as compared to the highest 58.608 achieved by Goa.

Table 3: Own Revenue Effort Index

States	2000-01 to 2003-04	2004-05 to 2007-08	2008-09 to 2011-12	2012-13	overall average
Andhra Pradesh	36.281	43.635	44.655	46.443	41.902
Bihar	2.642	2.199	5.441	8.994	3.855
Goa	56.162	60.625	59.679	55.967	58.608
Gujarat	36.826	50.089	47.755	54.869	45.657
Haryana	54.957	66.447	44.978	47.362	54.838
Karnataka	40.3	55.431	49.334	43.585	47.988
Kerala	31.742	35.185	40.077	44.323	36.334
Madhya Pradesh	24.67	36.051	36.784	32.528	32.504
Maharashtra	43.182	54.938	51.486	51.12	49.965
Orissa	13.663	27.265	28.106	27.193	23.33
Punjab	41.844	46.202	42.493	46.088	43.711
Rajasthan	23.83	34.212	33.088	33.917	30.649
Tamil Nadu	42.128	52.951	48.204	53.576	48.2
Uttar Pradesh	16.585	24.668	26.455	26.717	22.679
West Bengal	11.11	15.712	13.581	18.489	13.855

Source: Calculated by authors

As is evident from Table 4, the expenditure index showed a consistent improvement over the whole period of 2000-2013 due to the timely and appropriate steps undertaken by the State governments. Interest payment as a proportion of revenue expenditure improved as compared to the period before 2003 and a major role in this was played by enactment of Fiscal Responsibility

Legislation (FRL). Tamil Nadu was the first one to implement FRL followed by Kerala and Punjab in 2003. Since then these three States started showing improvement in deficit and also interest payments; but only Tamil Nadu could carry this for years and achieve a second best overall average of 80.811 in terms of IP / REX. Kerala and Punjab lost their focus and landed up at tenth and twelfth position in terms of IP / REX and fourteenth and thirteenth position in terms of deficit index. Apart from this, those States that enacted the FRL around 2005 or 2006 were also able to reduce their deficits and accordingly their interest payments.

Table 4: Expenditure Index

States	2000-01 to 2003-04	2004-05 to 2007-08	2008-09 to 2011-12	2012-13	overall average
Andhra Pradesh	62.985	70.707	86.754	92.096	74.914
Bihar	53.686	66.454	87.176	91.416	70.822
Goa	66.348	77.254	83.286	90.743	76.792
Gujarat	62.886	57.341	71.875	73.566	64.767
Haryana	61.625	79.884	85.561	83.947	76.141
Karnataka	72.177	85.768	94.941	94.186	85.056
Kerala	48.952	53.812	65.102	74.908	57.413
Madhya Pradesh	70.001	74.957	90.213	93.531	79.555
Maharashtra	60.022	67.612	79.68	113.751	72.539
Orissa	41.329	57.167	88.425	85.895	64.121
Punjab	42.4	43.315	49.735	66.708	46.808
Rajasthan	49.578	58.439	74.95	84.858	62.825
Tamil Nadu	67.53	77.926	86.782	89	78.304
Uttar Pradesh	46.713	60.563	77.877	81.968	63.276
West Bengal	16.758	20.958	45.972	57.699	30.189

Source: Calculated by authors

West Bengal was the only State that enacted FRL in 2010-11and that is why could be seen struggling throughout to maintain an average 30.515 value as compared to the best value of 83.854 achieved by Karnataka on IP / REX.

Composite Index in Table 5 derives its figures from simple averages of the above three indices; therefore it is much evident that the composite index will vary with the variation in the above three. There has been an improvement in the finances of States proved by an increasing trend in the fiscal performance index; bringing about a reduction in the deficits and thereby in further debt accumulation.

Table 5: Composite Fiscal Performance Index

States	2000-01 to 2003-04	2004-05 to 2007-08	2008-09 to 2011-12	2012-2013	Overall average
Andhra Pradesh	42.11	47.85	54.168	56.779	48.716
Bihar	26.299	34.072	42.734	45.665	35.237
Goa	50.718	54.694	57.496	57.679	54.562
Gujarat	41.279	44.808	48.764	52.615	45.54
Haryana	47.769	62.336	51.498	53.57	53.845
Karnataka	46.48	57.9	58.346	56.162	54.39
Kerala	34.563	37.532	43.629	49.201	39.592
Madhya Pradesh	40.743	47.182	54.09	53.141	47.785
Maharashtra	42.191	48.972	53.75	65.587	49.636
Orissa	26.023	40.866	55.309	49.765	41.427
Punjab	35.882	38.604	39.13	46.976	38.572
Rajasthan	32.355	40.35	46.491	50.871	40.589
Tamil Nadu	45.895	55.021	55.092	57.673	52.439
Uttar Pradesh	29.519	37.203	45.339	47.588	38.141
West Bengal	14.64	18.452	26.589	35.131	21.067

Source: Calculated by authors, Basic data from RBI's State finances: A Study of Budgets

The consistently increasing trend is seen across all the States in all the phases with just one exception- Haryana for which the value of FPI declined from over 2004-2007 and 2008-11.This was because of deterioration in the value of Deficit index and Own Revenue effort index. Goa emerged out as theleading State in fiscal management with the highest FPI on average, followed by Karnataka, Haryana, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra; on the contrary West Bengal performed the worst followed by Bihar, UP, Punjab, and Kerala. Although the debt position of States has relatively improved due to improved fiscal indicators, yet is eating out huge resources out of the State government's budgets. In order to sustain this improvement it is important that present reform policies are implemented with an element of change according to the changing environment.

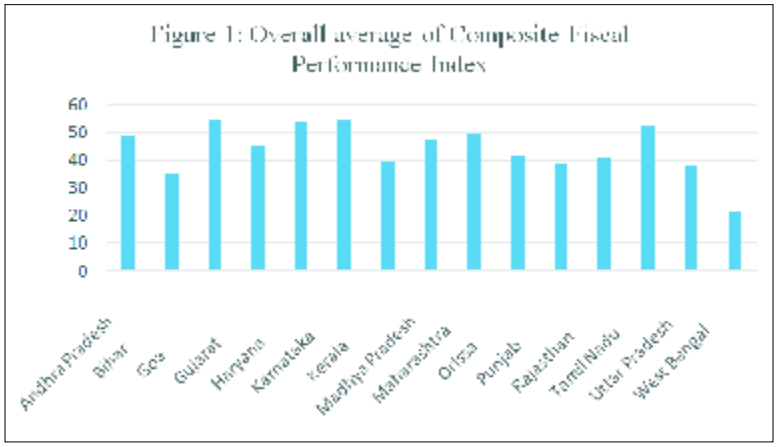


Figure 1 above shows the graphical representation of overall average of the Composite Fiscal Performance Index.

III. (B) Comparison to Analysis by Single Indicator Approach

Generally, the fiscal performance of the central and State government is assessed primarily by taking into consideration a single criterion like the 'Gross Fiscal Deficit (GFD) to GDP or GSDP

ratio'. But it has been argued over the years that a single parameter cannot do complete justice to the analysis of fiscal performance. Thus a case is made for usage of multiple parameters for effective policy making, as is done in case of Fiscal Performance Index (FPI).

Table 6 below gives the ranks of the States based on their performance on FPI (multiple indicators) in 2012-13 and on a single Indicator for three comparative years. Significant variations in the ranks of the States can be seen for example Odisha is placed at 10th position based on FPI performance whereas on GFD / GSDP it shifts to number 1.Similarly Bihar which is placed at 14th position shifts to 5th place, Rajasthan shifts from 9th to 3rd position, Goa from 2nd to 10th etc. All these cases indicate that considering only GFD / GSDP gives a very narrow picture. Because States like Goa, Haryana, Karnataka may not be performing that well on GFD / GSDP but they are efficient in generating their own tax revenue and maintaining quality of development expenditure as seen in previous results. These aspects need to be considered as well. States like Bihar, Odisha, and Rajasthan although not relying heavily on borrowings but at the same time do not incur heavy development expenditure, impeding the overall growth of the State. In the subsequent years (2016-17, 2019-20) ranks of the States on the basis of GFD / GSDP can be seen varying to a great degree. Goa, for instance, regulated its gross fiscal deficit and came to 2nd position in 2016-17 but again shifted to rank 15 in 2019-20.

Thus ranks on the basis of gross fiscal deficit can significantly change on a year to year basis owing to emergencies or any natural calamities.

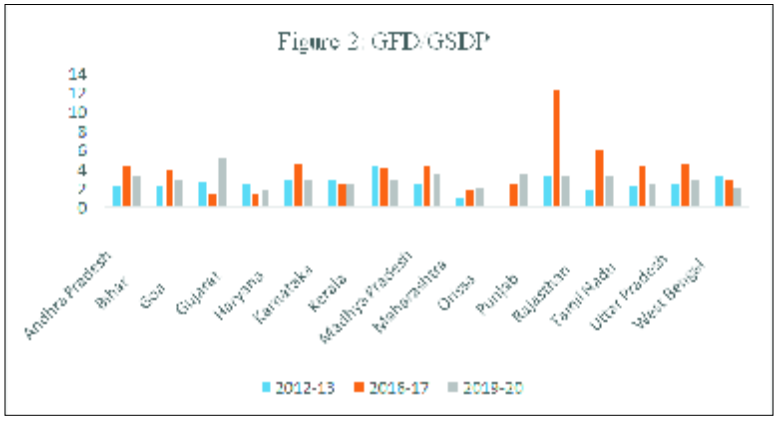
Table 6: Comparison on Single Indicator and Multiple Indicator Approach

States	**Value Based on Multiple Indicator Index-FPI (2012-2013)**	**Value Based on a Single Indicator - GFD/GSDP****		
		2012-13	**2016-17**	**2019-20**
Andhra Pradesh	56.779 (4)	2.3(6)	4.4 (11)	3.3 (11)
Bihar	45.665(14)	2.2(5)	3.9 (7)	2.8(6)
Goa	57.679(2)	2.7(10)	1.5(2)	**5.2(15)**
Gujarat	52.615(8)	**2.5(7)**	**1.4 (1)**	**1.8(1)**
Haryana	53.576 (6)	3.0(12)	4.7(13)	2.9(7)
Karnataka	56.162(5)	2.8(11)	2.4(5)	2.5(5)
Kerala	49.201(11)	**4.3(15)**	4.2(8)	3.0(8)
Madhya Pradesh	53.141(7)	2.6(9)	4.3(10)	3.5(14)
Maharashtra	**65.587(1)**	1.0(2)	1.8(3)	2.0(2)
Orissa	49.765(10)	**0.0(1)**	2.4(4)	3.5(13)
Punjab	46.976(13)	3.3(14)	**12.4(15)**	3.4(12)
Rajasthan	50.871(9)	1.8(3)	6.1(14)	3.2(10)
Tamil Nadu	57.673(3)	2.2(4)	4.3(9)	2.4(4)
Uttar Pradesh	47.588(12)	2.5(8)	4.5(12)	3.0(9)
West Bengal	**35.131(15)**	3.2(13)	2.9(6)	2.0(3)

*Calculated by authors

**State Finances – a study of Budgets, various years, RBI.

But for fiscal health of the State we also need to see share of development expenditure, and the long term revenue generation capacity it is able to create which are missed in single indicator approach. The results are more evidently shown in the figure 2.



Central devolution to correct Fiscal Deficits: Trade-off between Equity and Incentive

The above discussion shows that a mismatch between revenue capacity and expenditure need of sub national governments is an inherent feature of all federations. All the States are falling short on their revenue commitments. But a silver lining in this grim situation is the impressive growth shown by many States in fiscal performance. They are taking steps to improve their revenue collections and reduce their expenditure. Unfortunately the regional spread of this improvement has been uneven, and even as some of the low income States have been trying to catch up with their more advanced counterparts, inter-State disparities have shown an increase. The States with better physical and social infrastructure and market friendly governance were able to grow faster (Panagariya, Chakraborty and Rao, 2015)

It is important to accelerate growth and development in the low income States for reasons of both inclusiveness and stability in Indian federation for a variety of reasons. Overwhelming proportion of the poor are concentrated in low income States and therefore, accelerating growth in these States is an important pre-requisite for creating income earning opportunities to them. The

working age population (15-64 years) in India is presently 63.4 per cent and given the staggering demographic profile in low income States, the high proportion of working age population will continue for a longer period as the fertility rate in these States remains high.

Furthermore, acute inter-State inequalities in the levels of living can be a source of instability and unrest. Regional differences in social and infrastructures can be mitigated either through regional policies or through intergovernmental transfers. In a small country, the Central government can identify the diverse needs for public services and accordingly allocate resources to achieve the required balance. In a large, diverse federation, this has to be mainly achieved through intergovernmental transfers as the lower level jurisdictions are better placed to provide public services according to the diversified preferences of the people. In almost all the federations, therefore, the policy of inter-governmental transfers play an important role in ensuring equitable access to public services (Ahmad, 1997) even as they tend to soften the budget constraints at sub national levels.

There is also a case for transfers to ensure that people, irrespective of the jurisdiction they live in, receive prescribed minimum standards of meritorious public services or those with high degree of spill overs such as elementary education, basic healthcare, water supply and sanitation and anti-poverty interventions. Such transfers have to be purpose specific, but linked to providing the specified minimum standards.

This leads to the interpretation that the States which t are not performing well on the fiscal performance Index should be allocated more funds in order to bring them at par with the level of services provided by the fiscally sound States. But here it needs to be highlighted that Government policies to reduce poverty or to encourage economic equality, if carried to extremes, can injure incentives for economic output. The poverty trap, for example, defines a situation where guaranteeing a certain level of income can eliminate or reduce the incentive to work. An extremely high

degree of redistribution would likely discourage well performing States from work and entrepreneurship. Thus, it is common to draw the trade-off between economic output and equality. In this formulation, if society wishes a high level of economic output it must also accept a high degree of inequality. Conversely, if society wants a high level of equality it must accept a lower level of economic output because of reduced incentives for production. But there are certain programs that might increase both output and economic equality. For example, the policy of providing free public education has an element of redistribution, since the value of the public schooling received by children of low-income families is clearly higher than what low-income families pay in taxes. A well-educated population, however, is also an enormously powerful factor in providing the skilled workers of tomorrow and helping the economy to grow and expand. In this case, equality and economic growth may complement each other. Also if society does not make some effort toward reducing inequality and poverty, the alternative might be that people would rebel against market forces.

Also with the report of 14th finance commission under implementation vertical devolution has already increased to 42 percent of total divisible pool. Any further increment in State's share might not be feasible because first, presently the Union government does not have fiscal space to meet its own obligations and cannot be expected to make any significant increase in the transfers. Second, there are significant deficiencies in the standards of physical and social infrast5ructures provided even by high income States and they too need to spend large amounts on the developmental heads. Therefore, there is a clamour for higher transfers from all the States. Third, there are arguments that equitable transfers may reduce the overall growth of the economy which, in the long run may prove inimical to the interests of the poorer States themselves. Therefore, the general purpose transfers, which are supposed to enable all the States to provide comparable levels of public services at a comparable tax rates can do so only to a limited extent. It is in this context that the role of specific purpose

transfers becomes critical. In particular, equalization in specific meritorious services such as education and healthcare, rural roads and anti-poverty interventions can help in augmenting the services in these areas.

In the case of specific purpose transfers, the centre has to determine the design itself. Here, it is important to limit the number of schemes and fund them adequately to make a difference to service level. It is important to link them to shortfall in specified services so that the overall objective of ensuring minimum standards is achieved. The design should result in increased outlay on the aided services. There is certainly a case for having differential matching requirements with States contribution increasing as the shortfall in services reduces. This will help in bringing about equality without directly compromising on the incentive to the States recording good fiscal performance[3].

Conclusion

The analysis shows an improvement in the finances of States as indicated b a growth in the fiscal performance index; bringing about a reduction in the deficits and thereby in further debt accumulation. The consistency in the improvement could be seen across all the States in all the phases with just one exception-Haryana for which the value of FPI declined from over 2004-2007 and 2008-11 primarily on account of deterioration in the value of Deficit index and Own Revenue effort index. Goa emerged out as the leading State in fiscal management with the highest FPI on average, followed by Karnataka, Haryana, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra; on the contrary West Bengal performed the worst followed by Bihar, UP, Punjab, and Kerala. The 14th finance commission has also recorded the Improvement when it says There is an improvement in the fiscal position of all States taken together, during the period 2004-05 to 2012-13, was reflected in a reduction of the aggregate gross fiscal deficit and revenue deficit, relative to GDP, by 1.4 percentage points each, as well as a

reduction in the primary deficit, relative to GDP, by 0.2 percentage point.

Fiscal improvement primarily resulted from an increase in the aggregate revenue. At the same time, capital expenditures fell marginally relative to GDP. The increase in the aggregate revenue receipts was contributed by a rise in own tax receipts as well as higher tax devolution (0.5 percentage point) and grants-in-aid (0.2 percentage point). However, own non-tax revenues decreased (0.2 percentage point). But this improvement in States performance has been quiet varied as indicated by the gap in the best value (54.562) on FPI recorded by Goa and the least value (21.067) recorded by West Bengal.

This level of inequality needs to be addressed for the reasons of both inclusiveness and stability. It is in this domain that the centre can play an effective role by transferring more resources to the low performing States in order to bring them at par with the best performing States. But this has to be done with caution as giving too much privilege to the low performing States might discourage the spirit of work and efficiency in the economy. Thus more stress should be laid on specific transfers here than general transfers as the former is more equalizing.

These specific transfers also need to be designed effectively. They should not be merely incremental in nature but linked to service level outcomes and achieve the basic purpose of ensuring minimum standards of services. The number of specific purpose transfer schemes taken up for equalization should be few in number to enable an effective spread of resources. The variation between the originally approved allocation and final release of funds under various schemes must be removed. The criteria of uniform matching requirements under various schemes becomes another reason of shortfall as the low performing States lack the fiscal space for it.

While ensuring equality, interests of the good performing States should not be neglected as that could lead to a situation of trap and slowdown. Thus motivating such States is equally

important and that is why time and again various finance commissions have has accorded weight age to fiscal discipline in States. Even the 15th Finance commission has been asked to recommend performance-based incentives for States based on the efforts of the States to control population, promote ease of doing business, control expenditure on populist measures, progress made in increasing tax/non-tax revenues, promoting savings through adoption of direct benefit transfers, promoting a digital economy and removing layers between the government and beneficiaries of welfare programmes.

Therefore the ways to deal with the trade-off between incentive and equality based on fiscal performance of States has to be designed meticulously.

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Article

Resisting Displacement, Redefining Development: Social Movements and Law Making in Contemporary India

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Abstract

This paper studies the making of The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 to argue that the law is an outcome of social movement politics and engagement with the state over a period of two decades. The intervention of social movements in the terrain of legislation constitutes a form of discourse intervention whereby they sought to shift the debate on development and inscribe concepts and ideas emerging from an alternative counter-hegemonic conception of development into the law.

Keywords: Social Movements, Displacement, Development, Law, Rights, Natural Resources.

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Introduction

The experience of development-induced displacement has been one of the main grounds on which the dominant development model adopted by post-independence India has been critiqued. Social movements which emerged in opposition to big development projects of irrigation, industrialisation and mining as well as projects of commercial forestry not only faulted the development model for destruction of livelihoods, ecology and cultural practices of primarily subaltern natural resource-based communities; by the end of the twentieth century these critiques had formed the basis for them to articulate the need for an alternative conception of development. The shift in the dominant development model from national state led planning to neoliberal globalisation in the 1990sresulted in increasing demand for land, forests and coasts whether privately or communally owned or in the form of commons by private including foreign capital characterised as a process of 'accumulation by dispossession' (Harvey 2003) through a 'global land grab' (Hall 2013).That this process was underway in the context of redistribution being dropped as a goal of Indian polity and withdrawal of the state from the social sector on the one hand, and ecological degradation which increased the vulnerabilities of subaltern communities on the other hand, informed the politics of social movements. A key practice of social movements in India has been intervention in the arena of law and policy. Using a rights-based approach and drawing on constitutional provisions, they have adopted a mix of advocacy, lobbying and agitational methods to push for legislation on a range of issues. This mode of politics has been an outcome of the process of social movements forming alliances and joint fronts with each both at the national and global level to develop a consensus on key issues; a process which had been spurred by the challenge of countering globalization(Srinivasan 2012). The coming to power of the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) in 2004which adopted a development framework of 'inclusive growth/globalization' set up a specific mode of democratic politics and state-civil society relations which

enhanced the capacity of social movements to intervene in law and policy making. A slew of rights based social legislations were put into place in the period constituting a 'new welfare architecture' (Ruparelia 2013). The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 (henceforth LARR) passed in September 2013 was an outcome of this process along with other rights-based legislations on information, employment guarantee scheme and food security. However, this paper argues that unlike these other rights-based legislations which drew from the human development approach, the LARR alongwith the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 (henceforth FRA) constitute a distinctive terrain of rights, since they deal with right to natural resources with both the individual and the community as the bearer of rights. Secondly, while social movements' intervention in the making of the LARR sought to secure maximum possible safeguards for those adversely affected by a development project, this paper argues that in the process they sought to effect a discursive shift from the mainstream development paradigm. Through their interventions, movements challenged the dominant development model, fleshed out their understanding of an alternative development model and sought to inscribe concepts and formulations from this alternative conception into the law. The law thus constitutes a site where contending meanings of development were play and the LARR bears the marks of this politics of discourse intervention.

In order to make this argument, this paper studies the intervention of social movements in the making of the law. The first section provides the background to the issue of displacement and land acquisition. The second and third sections map out the contestations between the state and social movements over the two components of the law- the procedure regarding land acquisition and the provisions of compensation, rehabilitation and resettlement, and document the shifts that the draft law underwent in the course of a decade. Based on this, the last section

shows how the eventual law can be read as a product of the contestation between the dominant and alternative conception of development.

Background

Till its repeal in 2013, land acquisitions in India were carried out primarily under the Land Acquisition Act enacted by the colonial administration in 1894. This law was based on two principles: one,the eminent domain of the state over all resources within the territory and second, the idea that resources belong to those who can utilize them most efficiently. With independence, India adopted a state led development model aimed at economic growth to be achieved through rapid industrialization and intensive agriculture. Given the centrality of the state to India's 'development regime' put in place since colonial rule (Ludden 1992), both the law and its logics were retained but transformed to become part of the legitimacy sought by the state in its promise of and claim to be the sole agency to deliver development. The LAA, 1894 allowed the state to acquire any land in the territory on the grounds of 'public purpose'. While the landholder, or 'person interested' as the Act puts it, could raise objections, this couldn't result in overturning the acquisition since the determination of 'public purpose' was not open to scrutiny. Even the compensation was to be determined by the District Collector's office. It was subsequently amended in 1967 and most significantly in 1984 when the phrase 'or for a company' was added as was a whole new Part VII dealing with 'Acquisition of Land for Companies' which enabled the state to acquire land for a private company under this law. In addition, the LAA included an urgency clause, Section 17, which suspended the mandatory procedure for hearing objections and allowed for immediate acquisition of the land i.e., within 15 days while keeping the 'degree of urgency' outside the purview of the judiciary in case the matter is taken to court. In addition, there exist 16 other central legislations on the LAA model enacted

mainly in the postcolonial period which enabled the state to acquire land.

There are no official figures of the total land acquired or people displaced under the different development projects initiated by the state. Walter Fernandes' pioneering work estimates at least 60 million displaced persons and project affected persons (DPs / PAPs) from 25 million hectares for the period 1947-2004. Of these 7 million hectares are forests and 6 million hectares are of other common property resources. Fernandes clarifies that these are likely to be underestimates; they also do not include those displaced due to other indirect consequences of projects like pollution rendering the area unusable. At least 20% of the displaced are Dalits while 40% displaced belong to the Scheduled Tribes who also happen to be the section that lost maximum access to forests when they got reserved under the Indian Forest Acts. Fernandes also estimates that less than 18% of the displaced have been resettled which doesn't include rehabilitation (Fernandes 2008). While irrigation projects constituted a big chunk of these numbers, land and forests were acquired for mining, industry, ports, urbanisation and linear projects like railways and roads.

Despite the staggering numbers, development induced displacement did not become an issue till the1980s even though there were protests by the displaced in many such projects for just compensation and rehabilitation. It was in the late 1980s that movements against big dams on Koel-Karo, Tehri, Pong and Narmada generated questions not only about inadequate compensation and rehabilitation, but whether these projects were based on sound cost-benefit analysis, including ecological costs thereby questioning the development model under which they were undertaken. Anti-displacement social movements came to the attention of social scientists in the 1990s along with movements by fishing communities against mechanised trawling and forest people against deforestation and commercial felling on the one hand and for access to forest resources on the other; they noted that these movements were seeking an alternative development

paradigm (Sethi 1993, Omvedt 1994). Some of these movements in regions of intense resource extraction transformed or fed into movements demanding separate states (Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Uttarakhand) which also foregrounded the cost of development on people and nature.

Despite the scale of displacement, India lacked a policy on Resettlement and Rehabilitation (R&R) which were taken up on a case-by-case basis. The need for a comprehensive policy which addressed the multiple dimensions of displacement and provided for effective rehabilitation was articulated by these movements. Some state governments enacted laws or formulated policies but only for irrigation projects whereas corporations like National Thermal Power Corporation and Coal India Limited also came up with their policies. Bulk of these were formulated in the 1990s and the impetus was pressure from the World Bank, a key financier for many such projects worldwide. Not only had the Bank formulated its policy in 1980 when confronted with the impact of projects it financed, it engaged in continuous research on the effectiveness of the policy. The World Bank research team led by MichealCernea resulted in the Impoverishment and Reconstruction Model to plan and evaluate resettlement (Cernea 2002, Serageldin 2006)and impose as conditionalities for financing any project. This model came to be widely used by all those working on displacement and resettlement and influenced the inputs provided by Indian movements in the law-making process. Apart from pressure from movements and the World Bank, the other impetus for a national policy was the economic liberation programme India had inaugurated in 1991. It was anticipated by the government that inviting private and foreign investment would mean increasing demand for land and this would require a uniform policy to address displacement and avoid delays. By the end of the decade, the demand for land by private enterprises did start to shoot up and were accompanied by resistance movements. The first draft of a National Policy on Resettlement and Rehabilitation was prepared by the Ministry of Rural Development in 1993, and then another one in 1994 and these were followed by a draft of proposed

amendments to LAA in 1998. As a response to these, a draft was formulated by an alliance of movements in 1995[1] and extensive consultations were held with the government on the various drafts (Saxena2006). However, the policy prepared in 2003 and notified in February 2004 fell short of the expectations of the movements[2]. The regime change after the 2004 elections provided the new context for policy debates. The UPA government constituted the National Advisory Committee (NAC) under the chairpersonship of Sonia Gandhiwith members drawn from civil society and social movement activists and socially engaged academics to aid in matters of social policy and legislation. The working team of the NAC, with key roles played by Aruna Roy and N.C. Saxena, got into the process of extensive public consultations especially with movements and other stakeholders, both formal and informal, and finalised what can be called a collaborative draft submitted to the government in January 2006. Titled Draft National Development, Displacement and Rehabilitation Policy (henceforth NAC1-D), this document came to be the benchmark to evaluate all subsequent developments on this issue though it was not accepted by the government. The period between the NAC1-D and the eventual law passed in 2013 was one of high intensity activity. A National Policy was issued in 2006, then in 2007 the government introduced 2 bills in Parliament (one bringing in amendments to LAA and the other on Resettlement and Rehabilitation) which were referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee, and the bills were introduced again in 2009 before the elections. After the UPA was voted back to power in 2009, NAC came out with another report in 2011 after which a single bill covering both aspects was introduced in 2011, referred to the Standing Committee again,

[1]As early as 1988, a draft policy was drawn by movement representatives (Patkar 1999).

[2]Ramaswamy Iyer (2007) thinks that the shift in the state position from incorporating suggestions from civil society in the 1990s to presenting a very different policy in 2003 was the result of the publication of the World Commission of Dams report in 2000 which the Indian government rejected.

discussed in the two houses of Parliament in 2012 and 2013 when it was eventually passed.

The movements collective engaged in every step of this process- writing reports, Op-eds and responses on the documents; formulating a draft law; making presentations to the parliamentary committees, holding meetings with ministers and the Planning Commission; holding public hearings, independent tribunals, conventions and consultations with each other and with other civil society actors as well as undertaking protest and agitational activities especially when parliament sessions were ongoing.A key role in this process was played by the urban middleclass civil society support groups and actors who facilitated consultations between movement groups functioning in different parts of the country and acted as an interface between social movements and the various organs of the government and the media playing the role of what Sinha (2011) calls 'translational agents'.

Till 2007, discussions focused on a policy to address displacement and rehabilitation and bring in amendments to the land acquisition law. But from 2007 there was a shift towards insisting on a comprehensive law that made any programme of Rehabilitation and Resettlement (R&R) not only bound to a legislative framework but also one that follows from a different conception of development rather than one that assumes acquisition.Apart from the disappointment with the 2003 and 2006 policies, with the latter having negated the NAC1-D, two other factors which contributed to this shift were the passing of two divergent pieces of legislation, namely, the Special Economic Zones Act, 2005 and the Forest Rights Act, 2006. While the SEZ Actby inviting private capital through a slew of concessions and incentives to create territorial enclaves for manufacturing activities signalled that the UPA remained committed to the growth oriented neoliberal economic development model wherein the state acts as a facilitator for private including foreign capital, the FRA,on the other hand,constituted a paradigm shift in the

approach of the state towards its eminent domain over forest resources. By acknowledging the 'historic injustice' done to forest dependent especially tribal people due to the non-recognition of their customary rights as well as holding the state responsible for the negative impact of its development agenda on forest dependent people, the FRAlaid out a participatory procedure to vest individual and community rights over land and other forest resources including the right to conserve forests. The paradigm of the FRA within which rights over natural resources accrue to those dependent on it for livelihood and where community rights are considered necessary for conservation of nature shaped the intervention of movements on the law against acquisition.

Framing the Law: The Keystone Concepts

There are three aspects with which the law on acquisition and R&R was concerned with: one, to specify what constitutes a ground for land acquisition; two, to specify the rights of those affected by the acquisition; and three, the procedure which ought to govern both these aspects. While the intervention of social movements was at all these aspects, their activity was part of a broader attempt to shift the overall discourse within which the law was located. In other words, movements engaged with the specifics of the law, often going into the minute details of the provisions, in order to challenge the underlying paradigm, that is, the assumptions and goals of the law and redirect the debate towards what they saw as first questions.As it came up repeatedly in consultation after consultation whether within the movements or between them and the state, the key question was not acquisition or rehabilitation as much as the model of development under which acquisition and rehabilitation is made necessary. In demanding 'non displacing or least displacing alternatives', movements tried to transform the issue in terms of what constitutes development and what should be the main unit taking decisions on development goals and processes. This can be seen most clearly in the document'Call for Action 2007' issued as part of Sangharsh (2007), a week longevent

organised by a broad collective of social movements, advocacy groups and non-government organisations in 2007 which can be read as an alternative development manifesto outlining its framework and key components.

The very first demand of the document is 'Acceptance of Principles of Peoples' Sovereignty over Natural Resources' which is then elaborated as:

> All natural resources including land, water, air, minerals, aquatic wealth and forest resources belong to the farmers, tillers, landless peasants, agricultural workers, dalits, tribals, fisherpeople, who depend on them for their livelihood.

Two elements of the framework articulated in this document went into the movements' intervention in the making of the law; first, a rights-based perspective which links natural resources to livelihood andsecond, foregrounding an understanding of development to any discussion on displacement or R&R and extension of the rights framework in this regard. The document demands the 'right to sustainable development without displacement and marginalisation' and 'the right to egalitarian and participatory development' for the marginalised, and most significantly a 'new National Act on Development Planning' based on 'right to local natural resources to local community with full participation of women, dalits and adivasis and the right to make village / city development plans through the Gramsabha / village councils OR bastisabhas / ward councils' (Sangharsh 2007). By emphasising development planning, movements sought to break the 'necessary' connection between development and displacement and shift the discussion to the conception of development itself. In other words, these two elements taken together refer to two sets of rights- the right to development and the right to decide on what constitutes development which were deployed as a framing device for interventions on the specific aspects of the draft laws.

The keystone components of the law are the notions of public purpose, consent and social impact assessment. Together these determine whether a particular project is to be undertaken in the first place and the conditions that need to be fulfilled for it to be sanctioned. The second part of the law was about R&R which deals with the provisions for those displaced by a project and the process through which it is to be undertaken. Between the 2007 and 2009, the government sought to deal with these two parts separately by way of two different laws. For movements however, any discussion on R&R had to be conditional on whether the project requiring displacement had met the first conditions of approval. This was first expressed in the very title of the NAC1-D and then the NAC2 explicitly recommended a single law suggesting the title 'National Development, Acquisition, Displacement and Rehabilitation Act' with the understanding that discussions on public purpose in particular but also on whether the impact of the project makes it worthwhile would flow from an understanding of development.

As we saw the LAA, especially after amendments in 1984, allowed for the acquisition of land by the state either for a specific public purpose or for a company.The bills introduced in 2007, 2009 and 2011 effected a shift in the content, though not the outcome, byallowing state acquisition of land for a wide range of projects, including for private companies, in the name of public purpose. The most contentious parts of the changed definition since 2007 were (i) the inclusion of infrastructure projects with a very wide ambit to which additions could be made later by the central government by just notifying in the official gazette (ii) allowing acquisition of the remaining 30% land for a private entity (defined as person rather than company) for 'any other purpose useful to the general public' if they had already acquired 70% of the land in 2007 which was changed to 80% in the 2011 bill for projects undertaken by both private entities and public-private partnerships. The 2011 bill also allowed for acquisition by the government for any other purpose if useful to the public, keeping the criteria completely open.

In the context of the government trying to retain large discretionary powers, the constantly reiterated demand of movements was a tight and restrictive definition of public purpose. This as K.B Saxena[3] pointed out in one consultation in 2010 will ensure limitation on the eminent domain powers of the state. Also, movements' intervention on restricting the definition of public purpose worked at two levels: one, to provide a definition of public purpose and second, to put in place the process of determining public purpose. The best example of the first level is in the document called Draft Guidelines for Development Planning, Land Use Alternations, No Enforced Displacement, and Just Resettlement and Rehabilitation Bill (Sangharsh 2011a) which functions as a critique of the proposed bills, a draft alternative law as proposed by movements and articulation of the principles on which to base not just this law but the development paradigm. The alternative suggested here is to limit acquisition for only those infrastructure projects which are 'open to the general public, freely accessible by the said public contributing to social welfare' as well as for general projects which aim at distribution of land and resources or create economic development opportunities for the poor and marginalised sections in order to raise their standards of living with the rider that these projects would only include state owned and operated ones and would be based on the principle of minimising displacement (Sangharsh 2011a:8). What was contested was the idea that infrastructure by itself signified development since the state sought to link infrastructure to investment and employment, thereby justifying transfer of land to private capital undertaking for-profit infrastructure projects. The second level was more extensively discussed with the NAC1-D recommendations acting as a framework. NAC1-D had recommended substituting public interest for public purpose and made a case for a 'processual rather than a substantive definition'

[3]Saxena is a retired bureaucrat who has written on development induced displacement and was active in all the civil society consultations organised by social movements.

(NAC1-D 2006: 27) which meant that any project requiring land should be subject to a cost-benefit analysis which would compare existing land use to the proposed one and that this analysis should be carried out in a democratic and transparent manner. That means a decision on public purpose should be an outcome of a 'democratic process as defined in Article 243 of the Constitution' (Sangharsh 2011b: 3), i.e., by the local level of direct democracy. Thus, the idea of public purpose was connected to that of the impact of the project.

The LARR Act does incorporate a broad definition of public purpose by including infrastructure within the ambit of public purpose though it lays out a broad but better-defined conception of infrastructure. Apart from specifying projects related to agriculture, water conservation, sports, tourism, sanitation, transport, research and educational institutions, it subjects manufacturing projects to inclusion within National Manufacturing Policy and infrastructure activities to those listed in the relevant government notification. Likewise, while it includes a clause allowing 'any infrastructural facility' it mandates that the notification has to be tabled in Parliament thus subjecting the decision to a procedure involving the legislature instead of leaving it to executive interpretation. Most importantly it does away with the open-ended clause allowing any activity if deemed useful to the public. In addition, LARR also mandates a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) for all projects.

The LARR also restricts the much misused 'urgency clause' which had been used by the state indiscriminately to acquire land for all manner of projects, including for private companies, by suspending the already limited provisions within LAA through which a landowner could object to the acquisition. In LARR, permission to acquire land or property under the urgency provision is restricted to grounds of defence and national calamities with a residual category of 'any other emergency' that needs approval of Parliament. This however does allow for the suspension of provisions of consent, SIA and R&R in these cases

but provides for additional compensation of 75% of the compensation amount.

It is also important to mention that the law tries to limit the extent of land under agriculture that can be acquired for any project irrespective of the public purpose it serves. Social movements had long pointed out the irony of excluding agriculture, while including allied activities like agro-industry for instance, from public purpose and linked loss of land under agriculture to the question of food security. The demand for a law on food security in the form of right to food was part of the social movement agenda as noted before. The LARR bars the acquisition of irrigated multi-cropped land, except under exceptional circumstances and as a last resort, and even then, subject to a percentage limit to be set by the state governments for acquisition of all such land in a district with a proviso that if acquired an equivalent area of wasteland be developed for cultivation. Acquisition of agricultural land in general for all projects must also adhere to percentage limits of the net sown area in the district or the state as set by the state government. The 2011 bill had in fact sought to fix the percentages itself[4] but state governments objected to this citing the specific conditions of their states. Nevertheless, this limit on acquisition of cultivated land is an acknowledgment of the importance of agriculture for sustenance as stressed by movements.

The concept of social impact assessment (SIA) of a project was an outcome of the extensive research conducted on development induced displacement since the 1970s. This research had broadened the ambit of impact on the displaced community from economic loss to the experience of social and cultural loss as well as the interconnected nature of these impacts which must be taken into account while designing resettlement programmes (Cernea

[4]5% in case of total irrigated multi-crop area in the district, and 10% of the total net sown area in districts where the net sown are is less than 50% of the total area in the district.

1996, Scudder 2005)[5]. Social movements in India sought to integrate such a conception of impact with conventional cost-benefit analysis undertaken to decide on a particular project. While SIA provisions find mention in all state policies and bills since 2006, primarily because it is included among 'best practices' by international agencies, the struggle for movements was to give the provisions some teeth in deciding the acceptance and/or content of the project. The 2006 policy and 2007 bill mandated SIA only if 400 plus families in plain areas and 200 plus families in hilly, tribal or desert areas, whereas the 2011 bill makes a distinction between the process to be followed if the required area is more or less than 100 acres. While the bills required consultation[6] with the Gram Sabha in preparing the report and provision for having a public hearing, the public or affected community did not have any representation or even the requirement that their views be included in the report. The focus was on getting a SIA clearance based on a mitigation plan for the impacts which assumed that mitigation was enough ground for embarking on the project. An expert group was to assess the SIA report, but neither it nor the additional level of a committee appointed to examine the expert group report had any representation from the local government institutions or affected people. These provisions came for the strongest critiques by movements.

The SIA provisions in the LARR incorporates these critiques. A SIA is mandated for all projects irrespective of area or number of families affected. Not only is the government supposed to ensure representation of local elected representatives while carrying out the SIA, it is required to conduct a public hearing and incorporate

[5]Cernea's work on impoverishment pointed to eight interconnected sub-processes leading to impoverishment of displaced communities wherein he included loss of access to common property, social disarticulation and cultural impoverishment due to breakdown of existing social relations and networks and loss of cultural space and identity (Cernea 1996).

[6]As pointed out by Jean Dreze in one of the movement meetings in 2010, the idea of consultation is meant to dilute the requirement of consent.

the views of the affected people in the report. The SIA is supposed to assess whether the project serves public purpose, if the land required is the bare minimum, whether there are alternatives available; and estimate the extent and nature of impact on livelihood, common property, public utilities and assets for traditional needs of the community and prepare a plan on how each of these impacts will be ameliorated. This report is to be evaluated by an expert group which includes non- official social scientists, experts on rehabilitation, and representatives of the local elected body on the public purpose and social cost-benefit impacts of the project including whether the land for the project constitutes the minimum needed for a project of that kind. If the expert group recommends within two months that the project be abandoned with specific reasons, the LARR recommends that it be abandoned but allows the government to proceed with it if it states down the reasons in writing. This last leeway was justified by Jairam Ramesh (2015: 22-23), who as Minister for Rural Development piloted the law, on the ground that any disregard of the expert group recommendations cannot be arbitrary since the government has to give publicly available reasons for its decision. This however is a weak defence since the degree of accountability perceived by a government could vary but the SIA provisions in the law do make space for local participation and make the documentation available for public scrutiny and political contestation. While the SIA provisions were evaluated positively by movements, it was critiqued for granting exemption from SIA for irrigation projects where an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) has been carried out and for acquisitions under emergency provisions.

That any project requiring acquisition must obtain the informed consent of those affected, known as the principle of 'prior informed consent' was perhaps the most reiterated demand from social movements and most resisted by the state. The idea of consent is the keystone of democratic theory and hence has a powerful resonance in the modern era, but it contests the concept of eminent domain which has been central to the modern state. This built-in tension between the two notions played out in all the

documents and negotiations over the law. In fact, the idea of consent is the last to find a place in the draft laws as it was incorporated only in the final 2011 bill which mandated that in case of acquisition for PPP projects or for projects undertaken by private companies in public interest, these entities must acquire prior informed consent from 80% of project affected families after which the remaining 20% land could be acquired by the government. Even though the PSC on the bill rejected the idea that the state should acquire land for any private or PPP project, the final LARR mandates consent from 70% and 80% of project affected in case of PPP projects and private projects respectively. The private enterprises that can undertake such projects however are restricted to those registered as a company under Section 3 of the Companies Act, 1956 or a society as registered under the Societies Act, 1860 or a corresponding state law (LARR 2013: 5). The definition of project affected used for consent is also restrictive unlike the compensation and R&R provisions as consent is sought only from land or property owners and those who had been assigned land by the government under any of its schemes. Significantly, the LARR also recommends that all acquisition be avoided in Scheduled Areas (V and VI) unless as a last resort in which case consent from the Gram Sabha is mandatory even if under urgency provisions (LARR 2013: 20) making it the only instance where consent for government acquisition has been made a requirement and also the only instance where consent is sought at the level of the Gram Sabha rather than land owning families affected by the project. This had been the demand of social movements in case of all projects regardless of the agency undertaking it. They critiqued not only the absence of provisions regarding consent but also its limited focus on the landowner because it does not capture the dependence of the community over land and other natural resources that come with it including water bodies, grazing and pasture land, and forests. The Gram Sabha was considered the only legitimate institution which can sanction a project both because it was the only body of direct democracy and as per Article 243(G), the panchayat is the body that can make

development plans. They sought an extension of this in the case of urban areas through the provisions of the 74th amendments though basti / ward sabhas have not been instituted in the same manner as the Gram Sabha. So, for movements, the consent provision is related to decisions about development priorities. Given this understanding the lack of consent provisions for all state acquisitions in LARR was a major factor in their disappointment with the law. They declared that it was 'completely unacceptable given that post independence maximum acquisitions were done for the public sector companies leading to massive displacement' (NAPM2013a).

Consent requirements aside, the question of whether the state should get into the business of acquiring land for private companies remained a vexatious issue within the movements' collective. In the years 2010-11, even as the law was being debated, protests in urban peripheries like in Bhatta Parsaul and Khanjawala in the National Capital Region of Delhi made headlines and led to proposals that land transfers should be the outcome of direct negotiations between farmers and private investors (whether for real estate or manufacturing projects) rather than be first acquired by the state. While the movements' collective took a general position that the state should not become a land broker for for-profit entities, there were practical concerns about the ability of the local community to be able to resist large scale land buying and the consequent need for legal protective mechanisms to prevent speculative purchases by non-locals with prior information and exploitation of the local community especially small farmers. In the NAC2 (2011: 4), N.C. Saxena took such a position and argued that the private concerns should obtain written consent from 70% of project affected so that the SIA and R&R provisions can apply equally to everyone[7]. It is instructive

[7]The other two members Aruna Roy and Harsh Mander reject any acquisition by the state for private companies. The document notes that this was the only issue on which there was no agreement between the members of the working group that prepared the document.

that in the previous drafts consent as such was not mandated. Rather the provision was that the private enterprise acquires through contract 70% of the land it had earmarked for the project on the basis of which it can ask the state to acquire the rest. It followed that R&R provisions of the law would apply only to the 30% acquired by the state, and R&R for the rest would be as agreed upon between the private enterprise and affected families. This automatically meant that only land owners would constitute affected families. This proposal was rejected by the PSC on the 2007 bills on the grounds that it went against the principle of equity as two different sets of provisions would apply to those affected by the same project. A related issue was that of exemption from the provisions on the acquisition process to the 16 other laws under which land could be acquired. Of particular concern was the inclusion of the SEZ Act, 2005 among these where the bulk of acquisitions were for private and PPP SEZs involving large tracts of land. The PSC on the 2011 bill had required that this exemption be dropped and noted in particular the incongruence of exempting the SEZ Act, 2005 (MRD 2012: 61) and the final LARR brought the SEZ Act apart from 2 others defence related laws under the purview of the Act while mandating within a year the R&R provisions of LARR would be made applicable to the other 13 laws. Despite this provision, it came as a disappointment to movements that 13 laws had been kept out of the purview of the process of acquisition which involved the application of principles of consent and SIA to state run projects of highways, railways and mining which involve regular land acquisition.

That these three- public purpose, consent, and SIA- are the keystone concepts of the law is an area of consensus between the state and the social movements. The state tried to restrict the inclusion and then scope of these provisions as much as possible. For the movements, the eventual outcome on each fell short of what they had pushed for and hence their reception of the law was of dismay and disappointment. Yet, tracing the trajectory of the law-making process demonstrates the distance that has been covered, for these concepts did not have any imprint in law till

2013. Thus, ideas that emerged from a counter hegemonic discourse were not only extensively debated, they found a space in the law making them justiciable rights of the citizenry.

Further evidence that these concepts were paradigm altering, even with the dilutions, is provided by the alacrity with which an attempt was made to remove them from the law. In June 2014, the NDA government announced that it was bringing in amendments to the law on the grounds that there were problems being faced in its implementation. Eventually it brought in an Ordinance in December 2014 and renewed it for two other terms before dropping the attempts to bring in changesto the law in face of opposition both within and outside parliament. The crucial amendment brought in by the ordinance was to waive the requirement of consent and social impact assessment (which as we saw also enquired into whether a project serves public purpose) for five categories of projects, namely, defence, rural infrastructure (including rural electrification), affordable housing and housing for the poor, industrial corridors and infrastructure and social infrastructure projects including projects under PPP where the government continues to own the land (LARR Ordinance 2014: 2-3).Given the open-ended nature of these categories, in effect it included an overwhelming majority of projects likely to be undertaken especially by private capital on its own or under the PPP model. For these projects it also waived off any limits on acquisition of multi-crop irrigated or agricultural land. Other amendments expanded the definition of private entity to refer to any private concernrather than restrict it to the terms of the two laws as before and included private hospitals and educational institutions within the ambit of public purpose. Taken together these amendments threw wide open the scope of state acquisition which the LARR with all its dilutions had restricted. The provisions of consent and SIA are the only ones in the law which allowed the people affected by acquisition the possibility of questioning and resisting it or negotiating better terms for themselves and waiving them would in effect render the law inapplicable and superfluous in most cases. It is to be noted that the

Ordinance did not seek to bring changes to the R&R provisions but with those provisions which allowed for democratic interventions by the affected people to decide whether the project can be deemed as constituting development from their perspective. These keystone concepts thus can be seen as an expression of the right of the local community to natural resources.

Debating Compensation, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Provisions

Negotiations over provisions regarding compensation and R&R can be understood as a tussle between the state and the movements where the former pulled towards cash compensation and the latter sought to push towards livelihood protection. It can also be understood as a clash between opposing interests. While the state's interest was guided by the desire to ensure smooth process of acquisition, movements were guided by two aims: one, to ensure that the interests of those affected by the acquisition are protected and they get the best possible package that can enable them to rebuild their lives; and two, to make acquisition unattractive to investors and push them towards non-displacing alternatives. This becomes significant because from the early drafts of the rehabilitation policy, displacement is presented as an inevitable consequence of development and the change in official language can be discerned only in the 2011 bill. Moreover, R&R is not understood as an enforceable right of those affected and in the demands of the movements there is a constant foregrounding of both fundamental rights as guaranteed by the Indian Constitution and the international human rights framework to address R&R, including the principle that the post-R&R condition of the displaced ought to leave them better off than before.

There are significant shifts in the provisions from the early policy and draft bills to the LARR. Earlier bills laid down minimum benchmarks on when the R&R entitlements became applicable with the 2007 and 2009 bills restricting it to cases where

400 plus families in plain areas and 200 plus in hilly or tribal areas are displaced which 'will effectively result in the exclusion of most projects and oustees from the purview of this legislation' (Sangharsh 2009) as most projects are likely to fall under the limit, more so in areas of low density. There was also a built-in contradiction when it came to acquisitions by private companies in the earlier bills since the state was responsible only for acquiring 30% land in which case most will fall outside the limitset for R&R. On this the constantly reiterated position of movements as seen in all Sangharsh documents is that 'legal entitlements that follow from State's responsibility towards those displaced should be based on the concept of citizenship and not on numerical strength of those likely to be displaced' (Sangharsh 2007a, 2009, 2011a)[8]. Likewise the bills did not have provisions for participation of the affected people in the process, did not prescribe either a timeline to complete the R&R process, nor did they prohibit possession before R&R or specify the amenities or essential services that the resettlement site should provide for.

To that end, the LARR addresses many of the objections and demands raised by the movements. It does away with a benchmark in terms of families or area for the R&R process to come into effect. It lays out a procedure for assessing and disbursing compensation as well as putting the R&R plan in effect. A dedicated official, called the Administrator for R&R, is appointed to prepare and execute the R&R scheme for that specific project. A draft of the R&R scheme based on a detailed survey of land, livelihood, common property resources, infrastructure and public utilities that will be affected by the project which specifies the entitlements of each affected family and the details of the resettlement area with a timeline for implementation is to be publicized and discussed in the Gram Sabhas and/or municipal bodies and followed by a public hearing in the affected areas. A

[8]NAC2 takes notes of this and recommends that while individual entitlements should be extended to all affected, the collective entitlements of an R&R be provided if the number of families displaced is 100 and 50 for the two categories.

declaration to acquire land is to be accompanied by a summary of the R&R scheme and the identified resettlement area, which makes R&R conditional for the project to take off the ground. Timelines are specified and possession made conditional on payment of compensation and provision of R&R. It provides for another official called a Commissioner to supervise the R&R implementation and in case of acquisition of an area of 100 acres or more, a Rehabilitation and Resettlement Committee with the District Collector as Chair and with representation from the affected area as well as Chairpersons of the concerned panchayats / municipalities to monitor the implementation process. There are provisions for National and State Monitoring Committees to check on the acquisitions and R&R carried out under the Act. The Act allows for the application of R&R provisions also to cases where a private entity purchases land, through negotiations without involving the government, beyond a certain limit as set by the state government. Significantly, it provides for a post-implementation social audit to be conducted in consultation with the gram sabha or municipality.

Specific provisions are made for Scheduled Areas and for Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes. Acquisition is made conditional on a Development Plan regarding settling land rights where not settled and a programme to provide an alternative source of fuel, fodder and forest produce within five years. For displacement in Scheduled Areas, which has been made subject to Gram Sabha consent as mentioned earlier, there is added provision for the community to be resettled together in the same Scheduled Area so that they can 'retain their ethnic, linguistic and cultural identity' (LARR 2013: 20) or in 'a similar ecological zone so as to preserve the economic opportunities, language, culture and community life of the tribal communities' (ibid: 42) and the benefits of a Scheduled Area are to extend to the new site of relocation[9]. There is of course the qualifying phrase 'as far as possible' added to

[9]There is also provision for additional compensation for SC and ST families if resettled outside the district and fishing rights in irrigation or hydel projects.

these instructions on relocation. Yet, it is important to note that this had been a key demand of social movements based on their understanding that for vulnerable communities, especially adivasis and tribals, the experience of displacement has to be approached holistically wherein the cultural, ecological and social aspects are inseparable from the economic. In other words, the question of livelihood is to be approached through the lens of community.

The LARR provides for compensation to all 'affected families' which is a significant shift from the approach taken in previous policy and draft bills where compensation was restricted to owners of property. Also significant is that this definition is gender just, since a family is now counted as an adult of any gender, whether single or unmarried, with his / her dependents. The 2007 and 2009 bills included, apart from land or home owners, only tenants as recognized under state laws and forest dwellers under FRA as eligible for compensation though the ambit of those qualifying for R&R was wider to include other residents and also those whose main source of livelihood was conducted in the area for at least three years prior to acquisition and hence affected by it. But LARR draws up an exhaustive list of those depending on the land in case of rural areas to include all those living or making their living off the area as eligible for compensation. Apart from owners of land and property and holders of forest rights under FRA, it specifies agricultural labourers, tenants holding any kind of tenancy or use rights, share-croppers, artisans and also any family whose primary source of livelihood depended on common property resources of the area such as fisherfolk, boatmen, etc. This detail is however missing when it comes to urban displacement though the law includes both residents and those whose primary source of livelihood for three years is affected by the acquisition. Groups like the National Hawkers Federation, Housing and Land Rights Network, and NAPM constituents working in cities raised the issue of neglect of urban concerns in the draft laws while pointing out how acquisition in urban areas tend to take the form of evictions from slums and government land.

That the law is primarily a 'rural law' is part of all critiques of the draft laws and the final LARR produced by movements which have demanded a separate law to deal with urban commons[10] (NAPM2013a).

Even though the inclusive nature of those considered project affected is a result of movement activism and lobbying, the compensation component has been the principal target of their strongest criticism of the law. That any effective rehabilitation in rural areas must be based on the principle of 'land for land' was their principal demand and a shared area of consensus among all groups working in rural and especially tribal areas. In this the terms of the Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal Award which provided for land-based rehabilitation was held up as the model. While providing for a constructed house in both urban and rural areas for those who lost their dwelling, the LARR includes land based compensation only in irrigation projects, wherein a minimum of one acre in the command area is to be allocated to every land-owning family and in case of SC / ST families the full extent of their land loss or 2.5 acres at the minimum.[11] It also provides for 20% of developed land to be offered back in case of urbanization projects, but this is again restricted to land-owning families. Apart from these two instances, all compensation is monetary, though the method to determine the price of land has come in for critique from industry as rendering land cost prohibitive[12] since it fixes compensation as two times the market

[10] Commenting on the 2011 bill when it was in the final round of discussion in Parliament NAPM (2013b) says: 'The Bill and the comments by both, Standing Committee as well as MoRD almost totally excludes and have unaddressed the situation in the urban areas, where there is no land acquisition, but eviction, brutal and unjust, for any and every elitist real estate development to infrastructure without guaranteeing right to shelter, right to life and livelihood'

[11]The language is ambiguous though, for it used the phrase 'as far as possible' in case of non SC / ST families.

[12] The entire decade of law making is marked by intense deliberation on how to fix market price of land given that price as listed in official sale deeds are universally

price in urban areas and on a sliding scale of 2-4 times in rural areas along with a solatium of 100%. While there is an option of providing jobs in lieu of annuity, every other component of the individual R&R entitlements is also converted to a monetary value[13] though the range of grants is a product of social movement demands highlighting the multi-dimensional challenges faced by the project affected in reconstructing their lives. Apart from these entitlements, there is an R&R list of 25 infrastructure amenities[14] to be provided in the area of resettlement basically on the lines of the comprehensive listing provided in NAC1-D which was cited by social movements as a non-negotiable requirement in all negotiations since 2006. Taking these provisions together, it can be concluded that while the R&R provisions and the category of 'project affected' bear the imprint of the demands of social movements, the emphasis on cash in compensation provisions demonstrate the opposite.

Since the time of the debates in Parliament over the final bill and after, the compensation and R&R provisions have been heavily criticized by industry and business sectors in particular as excessive, enough to make any project involving acquisition unviable[15]. In this context it is interesting that Jairam Ramesh reframed the UPA government's attempt at striking a balance between contending approaches in his book on the making of the law. He argued that the intention of the law was 'to discourage land acquisition…so that land acquisition would

accepted as unreported. The law provides for the value to be determined by the higher of three figures- the value in the sale deeds in the area, average sale price in the nearby area or the agreed upon compensation in case of PPP or private projects.

[13]This includes either a job for one member per affected family / one time payment / annuity for 20 years, subsistence cost for one year, and one time grants for assets, or resettlement and transport etc.

[14] Listed under the Third Schedule of the Act (LARR 2013: 43-44)

[15] See for instance, FICCI's position here: https: / / www.thehindubusinessline.com / economy / ficci-asks-political-parties-to-reconsider-land-bill / article23094201.ece

become a route of last resort' and cited India's woeful record of resettlement due to large projects in support of this approach (Ramesh 2015: 70).

Development Models, Livelihood and Natural Resources

At one level the long-standing consensus in the movements' collective that cash-based compensation packages are to be rejected draw on grassroots experience and studies on displacement in India and in other third world countries.These assessments of the ground level situation include the gap between most compensation and price of land, the lack of skills in most farming communities, especially tribals, to invest the compensation amount into income generating options, the inability of cash compensation to benefit the poor who are either landless or have very small holdings and the failure of the promise of employment in most rehabilitation schemes (Mathur 2006, 2013). In a country where a majority of holdings, 86.21% according to the Agriculture Census 2015-16, are classified as small and marginal (less than 2 hectares), most landholders would not be able to replace land lost to acquisition. In addition, given the dependence of the poor on common property resources, these losses have a greater impact on their capacity for survival but remain unaccounted.

At the second level, rejection of cash-based compensation is part of an approach to land and natural resources rooted in their vision of development. This can be called a livelihood and common property approach in contrast to an individual property approach. As seen in the previous section, the pressure politics of social movements resulted in the gradual expansion of both the category of project affected and the form of impact highlighting the differential impact of a project depending on power relations. While monetization of the impacts of a project on the people inhabiting the territory with their diverse forms of use of resources, expands the conventional framework of cost-benefit analysis, in the understanding of movements it also points to the inability of

the monetization framework to replace the losses of the affected subaltern community. In making this argument, the issue of livelihood and the relationship between natural resources and livelihood is foregrounded.

While through their intervention in the law making process, movements sought to maximize the interests of, and minimize the negative impacts on, the affected communities, their aim was not limited to securing just rehabilitation but to shift the terms of the debate towards development goals. The key link between the two aims is the idea of the right to livelihood. While part of the UN Human Rights framework in the form of right to work, adequate standard of living and to just and favorable working conditions, classified as the 'second generation of rights', in the Indian Constitution mention of livelihood and work is made in the Directive Principles of State Policy (Article 39 and 41) making them non-justiciable. It is with the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), that these provisions find a place in law. However since the landmark Olga Tellis vs Bombay Municipal Corporation case of 1978, the judiciary has read the provision of Article 21 of the Indian Constitution, part of the fundamental rights provisions, that guarantees to the citizen 'protection of life and liberty' as including the right to livelihood (Nariman 2013: 19). Movement groups invoked Article 21 in the negotiations over the law on land acquisition to emphasize that alternative livelihood rather than cash compensation should be the aim of any rehabilitation policy since acquisition fundamentally threatens livelihood. But by centering livelihood, they put forward the understanding that securing livelihood requires recognition that natural resources belong not to the state or the individual land owner but the community dependent on it as a whole. This was then extended to elaborate on the principle and process to determine use of natural resources. The principle was fulfillment of basic needs of all, and the process to bring this about was decentralized local level decision making on the use of resources.

In adopting this approach, the attempt was to both link any deliberation on land acquisition to the existing constitutional provisions and to extend the framework of the constitutional provisions to shift the debate from acquisition to rights over resources and more critically, redistribution of resources. These provisions are, apart from Article 21, Article 243, 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Constitution, The Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act of 1996, the Samata Judgment of 1997 and the FRA of 2006. Together these provisions deal with local self-governance and community management of resources. In these deliberations, the language of FRA was particularly influential since it provided a model for community rights over both use and conservation of resources. As K.B Saxena pointed out LAA was designed to supersede many of these constitutional provisions, especially those ensuring control of tribal communities over traditional use and control of resources. It was also designed in a manner that erases 'the existence of the community as a distinct social entity' and makes the issue of rights and entitlements as a matter between individuals and states. The law on acquisition thus cannot comprehend or make space for the idea of rights held by 'a collective entity like a community' (Saxena 2008: 383-84).

The demand for a National Development Planning Act, in which the issue of rehabilitation will be just one component based on the principle of minimum displacement with consent, was thus a discursive move to challenge the development model and articulate the alternative framework centered on the concept of the collective right of the community to natural resources. There are three elements to this alternative conception of development. One, that the unit of planning would be the institution of local self governance, i.e., the Gram Sabha in rural areas and an equivalent (referred to as bastisabha / ward committees) in urban areas. These institutions should take decisions on the use of natural resources. Two, the goal of development will be to achieve equality in fulfillment of basic needs and ensuring quality of life which requires correcting the structural inequalities of caste, class,

gender and ethnicity. This translates to demand for land rights in particular. Third, use of natural resources to achieve these goals should work on the principle of sustainability and environmental protection. Democratic decentralized decision-making is both a goal and a method to achieve these goals.

Conclusion

Social movement politics in India in the first decade and half of the 21st century has been characterized by the demand for rights-based social legislation. This paper tracked the interventions of social movements in the making of one of the laws in this broader basket of rights-based legislations, the law on land acquisition, resettlement and rehabilitation and linked the campaign on this law to that of the law ensuring forest rights of forest dependent communities. While part of the broader rights based framework, these two laws constitute a distinctive terrain of rights in comparison with other rights-based legislation dealing with welfare rights, as they involve rights to natural resources.

The interventions of social movements with this law on acquisition can be understood as driven by two aims, to ensure just rehabilitation and make acquisition difficult. Movement activists understood their own interventions as strategic interventions to secure maximum safeguards within the dominant model of development. However, a study of the entire process of intervention in the law lends itself to another reading as a form of discourse intervention and contestation of the dominant model. To that end, we can discern four levels in which the political and intellectual activism around this law takes place. What links the levels together is that they are all based on the notion of the right to natural resources. At the first level, their intervention sought to ensure legal safeguards and maximum protections for those likely to be displaced or adversely affected by large infrastructure projects. In doing this, they drew attention to the diverse and differential nature of impacts wrought by any project. Coded as

rights, the compensation and rehabilitation requirements have the potential to discourage large scale acquisition and displacement. At the second level, they sought to expand the space for resistance. Requirements of consent, social impact assessmentand democratic processes to question the purpose served by the displacing project as well as democratic processes to ensure compliance of compensation and rehabilitation rights open institutional space to challenge the project (the law itself claims right to transparency) and enables a politics of resistance. At the third level, in engaging with this law, movements connected it to other laws, policies and the constitutional framework. By linking it to Article 21, Article 243, PESA and FRA, the law against acquisition is located within a framework of rights to natural resources and by linking it to laws on employment, education, housing, health, food, it links natural resources to welfare rights. Rights thus claimed are both individual and community rights. At the fourth level, these interventions constitute a challenge to the conception of development that necessitates acquisition in particular but denial of the right to determine resource use in general. The right to livelihood and natural resources are linked to the right to decide on the meaning of development and the method to pursue it. In order words, in the process of engaging with what became LARR, social movements fleshed out their conception of alternative development not just in a negative sense of challenging the dominant model but in a positive sense of positing a framework of alternative development in terms of its goals, principles and methods to achieve them. The LARR was an outcome of negotiations between contending paradigms, and hence while it fell short of many demands made by social movements, significant provisions of the law draw from this alternative counter-hegemonic conception of development.

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Article

Politics of Development in Haryana: A Study of Education in Mewat Region

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Abstract

Haryana is one of the most developed states of India. It is ironical that Mewat, one of the regions of Haryana is considered to be the most backward region of the country. This is reflected from the fact that, as per the Niti Aayog Report, only 27 per cent children received vaccination, 63 per cent women are anaemic, 10 per cent girls were married at very young age, 37per cent girls were married before they attained 21 years of age, only 49 per cent girls are educated and only 23per cent households have facility of potable water in Mewat region. One of the important parameters of development is the status of education in a region, Mewat lags behind in education as evident from the fact that only half of the total population of the region is literate. The present paper examines in detail the factors responsible for the poor development in education sector in the region and suggests some measures to enhance the level of the same.

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Keywords: Development, education, politics, policies

Introduction

Mewat region geographically coordinates on latitude 27* 54' 05" North and Longitude 77* 10' 50" East. It is mostly a hilly region, comprising of the portions of ancient *Matsyadesh* and *Surasena* or modern part of South Haryana and North-East Rajasthan. Mewat region is situated on the Indo-Gangetic plain to the west of Yamuna and south-west of Delhi that falls in the southern part of Haryana state. The major part of the Mewat region is surrounded by Arawali mountain range. Mewat can roughly be classified into three stripes, running from North to South. The western region is that of the hills. A long north-south shallow valley constitutes the middle sector of Mewat. The third section is lower portion further east, and flows south to Agra. The Mewat further comprises of the three tracts namely Dhangalwati, Naiwara and Phatwa, named after the *pals* (a group of some villages that believe in common origin i.e common ancestors) of Meos who hold these[2].

As per the 2011 census, total number of population in the erstwhile Mewat (now Nuh) district is 1089406 with the density of 590 persons residing in a km. Sex ratio in the district is 906. In religion - wise distribution of the population, Mewat is dominated by Muslims since Meos are in majority in the region with 79.20%. Followers of Hinduism are just 20.37%. Others are on margins since Jains are 0.13% and Christians are 0.11% while Sikhs are 0.05%. The region is backward on educational front with the 56.10 percent of literacy rate as compared to 76 per cent at Haryana state

[2]Ahmad, Aijaz, (2015), *Heritage of Mewat*, Nuh: Mewat Development Agency:2.

level and 74.04 at National level as per the 2011 census. Nationwide social campaign of right to education was started here on November 11, 2018, on the birth anniversary of India's first education minister Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad. The female literacy is as low as 37.6 per cent in the district[3].

Meos are sub-divided into twelve *Pals* and fifty-two gotras. However the various *pals* were demarcated during Akbar's times (1556-1605 AD). The philosophy behind this division might have been that the different classes of Meos often fought among themselves over territory and because of these feuds, their collective strength against external enemies was adversely affected. Meos have a distinct cultural identity. They are originally Hindus but under the influence of the Tablighi Jamaat movement, they have embraced Islam. They still practice Hindu customs and traditions. But the outside world perceives them as Muslims.

The Status of Development in Mewat

As per 2018 NITI Aayog Report, Nuh (erstwhile Mewat district) has been declared as the most backward district of India. Based upon five sectors, a total of forty-nine indicators of development including education, health and nutrition, the commission has recognised 115 districts including eight districts from Uttar Pardesh and twelve districts from Bihar as backward districts of India which are named as *Aspirational Districts of India.* For the effective implementation of state and central scheme implementation, Government has appointed officers of additional secretary and joint secretary level. Among those backward

[3]*RTE Launched in Nuh',* November 12, 2011, available on http://m.timesof india.com, (Accessed on 12 February, 2017).

districts, Nuh was adjudged as the most backward districts of whole of India with a total score of only 2 per cent which means district is in a very bad state of development in social sectors like education, health, agriculture and basic infrastructure. As per the Niti Aayog Report, only 27 per cent children receive vaccination, 63 per cent women are anaemic,10 per cent girls were married at very young age, 37 per cent girls were married before they attained 21 years of age, only 49 per cent girls are educated and only 23per cent households have facility of potable water[4].

Table 1: Standard of Living across Blocks in Mewat (in per cent)

Block	Electricity as primary source of lighting	Pucca house and floor	LPG as primary source of energy for cooking	Mobile	TV and Radio	Toilets
Jhirka	75.9	78.3	1.96	93.6	16.6	20.8
Hathin	74.8	86.1	4.25	96.6	30.3	33.6
Nuh	61.6	92.4	4.05	94.2	42.0	44.1
Tauru	97.9	76.8	2.47	85.8	45.8	42.9
Punhana	70.8	78.5	2.16	95.7	13.3	40.3

Source: Statistical Abstract, Haryana 2011

Table 2: Basic Amenities in Rural Mewat

Block	Proportion of Villages with Pucca Roads	Average distance to nearest bank (in K.M.)	Proportion of Villages having Schools beyond Primary	Average Distance to Highway (in K.M.)
Highly Backward Villages	59.38	4.31	81.25	10.06
Somewhat Developed Villages	59.09	4.34	77.27	8.55
Highly Developed Villages	83.33	4.75	91.67	10.75

Sources: District level Household and facility survey IV

[4]R Sharma, Harikishan, (2018) 'Nuh Des ka SabsePichhra Zila Ghoshit', *Dainik Jagran*, 30 March.

Developmental Effortsin Mewat

Constitution of Mewat Development Board and its associate agency were major steps to accelerate the development the Mewat area of Haryana. From 1966 to 1980 area was officially undertaken by usual respective district headquarters. The government of Haryana on 16.1.1980 constituted the M.D.B. and its district implementation agency to be known as the Mewat Development Agency for the development of Mewat area. The main objectives of M.D.B./M.D.A. is to ameliorate the condition of poverty, unemployment, economic and social backwardness of this area which has shown only a few signs of advancement trend despite the development program undertaken during the successive five year plans.

Education

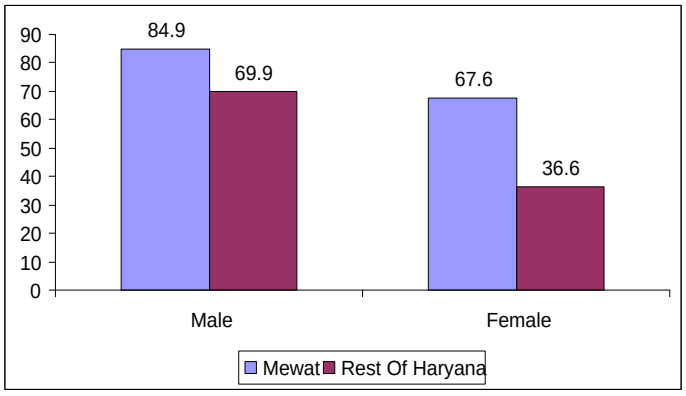
Education is important in one's life not only to earn livelihood but also to live a quality life. Therefore, right to education has been given the stature of fundamental right in India. Since independence the government has initiated many programmes and schemes. In recent years such as *SurvSikhsaAbhiyaan* (education for all campaign), Mid- Day Meal (MDM), Integrated Child Development Services Scheme(ICDS), School Health Programme (SHP) aim to universalise elementary education, to narrow gender gap in enrolment and to improve the education in rural areas of the country.

Table 3: Percentage of Literacy Rate in Mewat (2011)

	Total	Male	Female
Rest of Haryana	76.8	84.9	67.6
Mewat	54.1	69.9	36.6

Sources: Director of census operation, Haryana

Chart 1: Percentage of Literacy Rate in Mewat (2011)



Though the literacy level of Mewat is low in comparison to both the national level and to the state level, the situation becomes worse in case of women education when it is as low as only 36.6 per cent in the District. Low level of literacy rate in the district indicates the dismal status of educational infrastructure in the region. On an average, every village has a primary school. Though the number of middle schools is good but the situation reverses completely in the case of senior secondary schools in Mewat. In the scenario when every village in the state has at least one senior secondary school, the number is almost nil in the case of Mewat. On November 15, 2015, under the banner of Mewat Sangharsh Samiti, total of 29 organisations made a rally in Punhana. On this occasion, convenor of the rally, Ramzan Choudhary said that when present Haryana government is opening university in every district then whynot in Mewat. Other leaders also stress on the need of opening of university in the region since it is an old demand. The poor infrastructure in the higher education sector has long drawn socio economic implications[5].

[5]Bhardwaj, Gurudutt, (2015), 'Mewat Mein University SthaapitKarne Ki Maang Ko Lekar Mewat Sangharsh Samiti Ka JordarPradshan', available at http://www.viranjan.com/news/349960, (Accessed on 12 February, 2017)

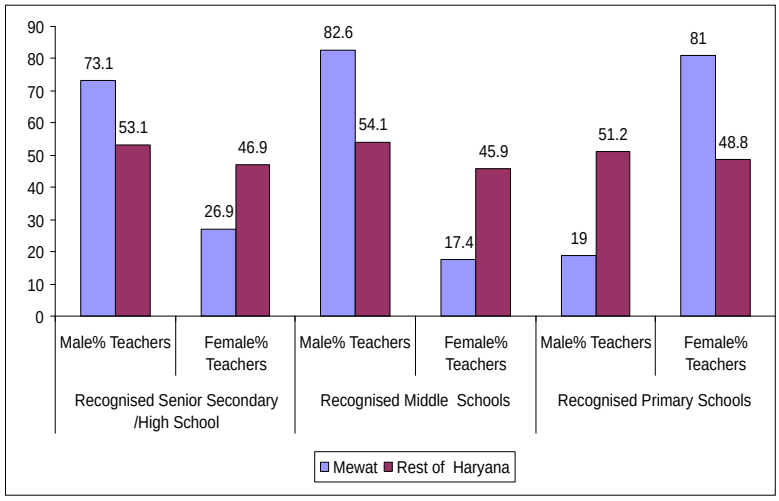
Table 4: Teaching Staff in Schools (2011-12)(in per cent)

	Recognised Senior Secondary /High School			Recognised Middle Schools			Recognised Primary Schools		
	Male Teachers	Female Teach-ers	AT*	Male Teach-ers	Female% Teachers	AT*	Male Teachers	Female Teachers	AT*
Mewat	73.1	26.9	9.4	82.6	17.4	2.8	19	81	4.8
Rest of Haryana	53.1	46.9	10.4	54.1	45.9	13.0	51.2	48.8	3.1

* Average number of teachers per school

Sources: Director of Secondary / Middle / Primary Education, Haryana

Chart 2:Teaching Staff in Schools (2011-12)(in per cent)



They also grapple with non-availability of female teachers in the schools and lack of awareness regarding menstruation and sanitary napkins. Lack of availability of sanitary napkins across entire rural India is a great cause of concern and it forces around 25per cent girl children to drop out before they finish elementary education. This is also a great worry across the entire rural region of Haryana. It is also one of the reasons for backwardness[6].

An analysis of the gender-based disaggregated data reveals that there is sharp gender imbalance in the availability of teachers in Mewat. Moreover, teachers at primary level are found from local (semi-literate) region and at higher level, teachers hardly stay for long. The tendency is very true in case of other government departments also. Mewat has a saying that plays off its reputation—"*Aadmi Mewat aane se pahle rota hai, aurchhodtevaktbhi rota hai*(A man cries when he comes to Mewat and cries again when he has to leave Mewat) (Aditya Gaur, Doctor, Health centre, Firozpur Zhirka,15/11/2018)."The officials see the grim reality and feel their inability to help the simple folks living there. The situation becomes toxic when officials posted in the region are blamed of partiality against Meos. Umar Mohammad Padla, National President of Mewat Vikas Sabha said that the then D.C. Mewat, Mani Ram Sharma was against Meos Muslim and therefore they urged the government to transfer him from the area and not to post him in any area having sizable minority community. For the same, organisation also sent memorandum to all including President of India, Prime Minister and Chief Minister of Haryana[7].

Only a meagre number of female teachers are available in the schools and this number declines sharply in the higher grades. Low representation of female teachers in the education is both the

[6]Gayatri, Gitanjali, (2017), 'Nuh Schools Await Funds for Stipend, Uniform', The Tribune, 27 October.

[7]Chatterji, Kaushik, (2016), 'The Trouble with Mewat? Delhi's Near but Still Very Far', Samachar Today, 14 September.

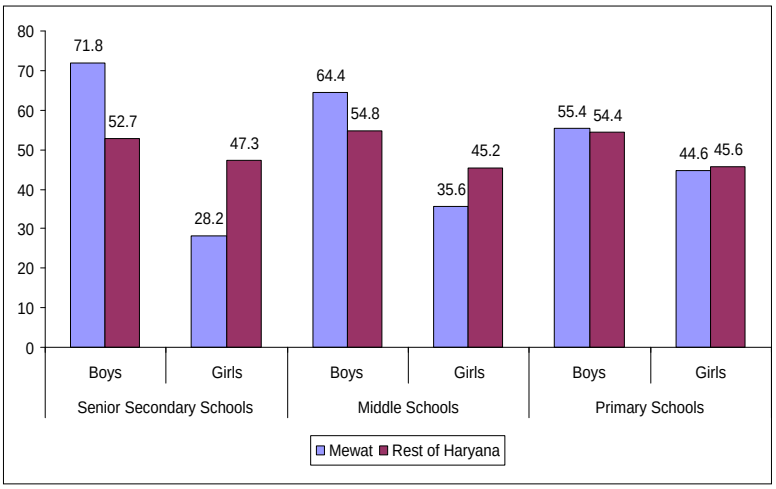
cause and effect of imbalance in the gender ratio of pupils. In addition to it, the lack of awareness regarding menstruation and availability of sanitary napkins are also cause of concern there. It is a well-known fact in India that around 25per cent of girl children are forced to drop out before they finish elementary education.

Table 6: School Enrolment in percentage terms (2011-12)

	Senior Secondary Schools		Middle Schools		Primary Schools	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Mewat	71.8	28.2	64.4	35.6	55.4	44.6
Rest of Haryana	52.7	47.3	54.8	45.2	54.4	45.6

Sources: Director of Secondary / Middle / Primary Education, Haryana

Chart 3: School Enrolment in percentage terms (2011-12)(in per cent)



It is clear from the above mentioned data that in primary grades, girl students are almost equal to boy students but in higher grades, the enrolment of girls is less than half of that of boys. The cultural ethos of Mewat is possibly the major cause of this trend where adolescent girls are married early or are refrained from moving out of their homes. But they believe that girls are in no way inferior to boys which is evident from the following lines by a Meos poet.

"Beta su betibhali,jaikulwantihoye,
Beta tyareekkul,betityaredoye "[8]

Moreover, they don't send their girls far from their house for education. As a respondent puts it: "Part of the problem with Mewat is that there are no proper schools. No teacher wants to go to Mewat. *"School master aatehen, unhe bhaagne ki rahti ha. Hum unki puri khatirdaari karte hen,tikte hi nahi....."*(School teachers come but they are always eager to run away. We provide them good hospitality but still they do not stay here). (Hazi Khushi Khan, Malai Village, 12 / 11 / 2018).

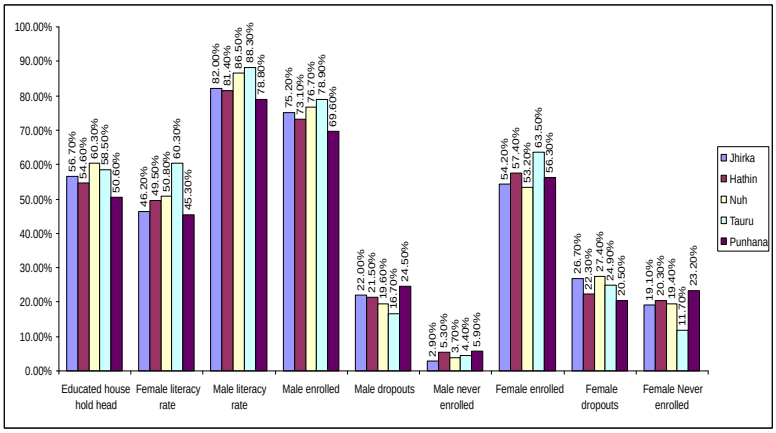
Table 7: Educational Development across Blocks in Mewat (in per cent)

Block	Educated house hold head	Female literacy rate	Male literacy rate	Male enrolled	Male dropouts	Male never enrolled	Female enrolled	Female dropouts	Female Never enrolled
Jhirka	56.7	46.2	82.0	75.2	22.0	2.9	54.2	26.7	19.1
Hathin	54.6	49.5	81.4	73.1	21.5	5.3	57.4	22.3	20.3
Nuh	60.3	50.8	86.5	76.7	19.6	3.7	53.2	27.4	19.4
Tauru	58.5	60.3	88.3	78.9	16.7	4.4	63.5	24.9	11.7
Punhana	50.6	45.3	78.8	69.6	24.5	5.9	56.3	20.5	23.2

Sources: Director of Census Operation (2011), Haryana

[8]Meena, Anchal, 'Mewat Ki Sanskriti'in Musi khan Balot & P.S.Saharia (eds.) *Mewat ka Itihas aur Sanskriti,* Alwar: Mewat Sahitya Akademi :238-241.

Charts 4:Educational Development across Blocks in Mewat



The dismal picture leads to a dangerous situation as the preaching of Tablighi movement affects the behaviour of poor Meos children. The disastrous result of the Jamaat preaching is the reluctance of the Meo community to send their girls for education to high schools, or for higher education to universities. *"Hum ladkiyon ko padhatehen,syani hone par nahibhaijte. ladkiyonkeliye school ha hi nahi*[i]*."*(We educate girls till they are children ..... do not send when become adolescent. There is no separate school for girls.) (Hazi Khushi Khan in Malai village, 12 / 11 / 2018). Moreover, they are not allowed to give up *purdah* and come out in the open. Now it is very difficult for Meo women to work side by side with the men in the field and attending to cattle. The Meos argue that they would educate their girls if there were *zenana* (all girls) schools with only women teachers. There are some instances of zenana schools in Mewat. One such example is the *kulliyat-ut-tahirat* (School for Pure Girls) in Bharatpur, Rajasthan. It was started in 1993. Its founder and principal is Maulvi Qasim, grandson of the well-known Meo Miyanji Musa who played a crucial role in the spread of Tablighi Jamaat. The most impressive and remarkable example of girls education is the Bibi Fatima school at Duha close to the Alwar

border. It is a private school of sarpanch Fajruddin Khan whose untiring efforts have promoted girl education in his area[9].

The region is backward on educational front with 56.10 per cent of literacy rate as compared to 76 percent at state level in Haryana and 74.04 at National level as according to 2011 census. Nationwide social campaign of right to education was started from here on the birth anniversary of India's first education minister Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad when Chief Minister of Haryana, Lok Sabha speaker, union HRD minister and other important dignitaries were present. However, they seem clueless on what purpose would be served by it in Mewat. Recently a medical college and an engineering college came up near the town of Nuh (District Headquarter of Mewat), but development in education is a far cry, particularly for women. Their literacy is as low as 37.6 per cent in the district[10].

The idea of going to school for education and reaping dividends in terms of employment seems to be unsuitable to Meos. Moreover, they think poor quality of education in government schools can never arrange government job for them and due to low level of income, private schools are usually beyond of their reach. *"Itni bhaari phees private schoolon ki kahan se den? Ghar ka kharcha na chal raha."(*How we can pay such high fees in private school? it is very difficult to meet out daily household expenses) (Azad Mohammad, Shahid Minar & Library complex, Rupraka village, 12 / 11 / 2018).*"Kuchh hi log padha sakte hain, itni bhaari phees kahan se den? Sarkari school me master nahi, pure school me chaar master hen. Jyada time dusre kaam karte rahte hen..building banwate hen...paisa banate rahte hen"*(only few can afford education, how one can pay such hefty fees? In government school, there are no teachers. Only

[9]Sikand, Yoginder, (1995), 'Meonis of Mewat', Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.30, No.10: pp.49.

[10]Nuna, Anita, (2013), Education of Muslim Girls: Barriers, Challenges and Possibilities, Journal of Indian Education, http: / / www.ncert.nic.in, , (Accessed on 12 February, 2017).

four teachers run the whole school and spend most of their time in non-academic activities i.e. construction of school building and make money) (Sirazuddin, Rupraka village,12/11/2018). This issue was considered as a serious threat to the education in Mewat region by administration also. "Common men are not able to afford school tuition fee and hostel expenses due to poor economic background. They prefer government schools instead. Many times, this issue has been raised raised but in vain. Moreover, we have to come daily from the far off places since there is no facility of accommodation nearby". "(Balwant Yadav, principle, Mewat Model School, 14/11/2018) "*Achhe school bhi hen, bahar ke bachchhe padte hen, Master bhi bahaarke, kya fayda hua"(*There are good schools also in the region but of no benefit since the students and teachers are outsiders) (Jaan Mohammed, Shopkeeper zhirkha, 14/11/2018). In each district, there is a KendriyaVidyalya... why there in no such school in Mewat" (Rafiq, a school master, Rupraka village, October, 2018). As a result, poor Meos see good scope of jobs in short affordable Madras as education. It is a well known fact that Mewat is famous for producing Islamic scholars (Maulvis, Imams and Hafiz). Some of their graduates are employed in mosques and madras as not only in different parts of India but also abroad (Ishtiaque &Hurera, 2014)[11].

The education-cum-training institute which may generate employment in the region also face problems the solutions to which are usually found in the society. The main difficulty that industrial training institutes face is dropouts in large numbers and child marriage to some extent in the countryside. Moreover, people do not send their wards especially girls to the institutes due to their fear and anxiety regarding security. It is worth mentioning here that only 65 girls took admission at ITI Firozepur, Jhirkha, against 150 seats in the session 2018-19. Situation worsens when even teachers are not available. There was only one teacher out of

[11]Sikand, Yoginder, (1995), 'Meonis of Mewat', Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.30, No.10: pp.49.

five sanctioned post in the ITI meant for girls. *"I teach all subjects ... am trying..... but if others subjects trained teachers are available, story may be different."*, stated a teacher. Parents do not feel secure in sending their girls to distant schools/college for education. *"Gavnke log ladkiyon ko bahar nahi bhejna chahte. Pata nahi kaisa mahol hoga, Itni door jaana hoga"* (Villagers are not willing to send their girls outside village for studying as they are not sure about the environment. Girls have to travel to far-off places), (Shakoona, an ITI Student, Firozpur Jhirka, 13/11/2018). This is a great worry across the entire rural region of Haryana and also one of the reasons for educational backwardness.

Conclusion

It can be inferred from this study that the education scenario in Mewat is not satisfactory even when the state has made significant progress. In primary and middle schools the pupil-teacher ratio is extremely skewed. There is a heavy burden on teachers (1:50) which has a negative impact on the quality of education that is being imparted. In higher education, the number of students is very low and there is a poor infrastructure and resources to educate them. Moreover, frequent failure of the administration in providing aid to the needy school students of the region also impact negatively the education being imparted to the Meos. The school children hailing from the poor strata i.e. SC, BC and BPL families do not even receive the meagre funds (SC students from RS. 150 to 300,BPL families from RS. 75-200 and BC students 75-200) as stipend on time[12].

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Article

Tribal religion, Transformation and Women Participation: An Analytical Study

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Abstract

Religion as one of the fundamental structures of any human society is a set of beliefs that typically include the worship of spiritual powers or entities that continue to exert a significant impact. This paper is a preliminary to clarify the religious beliefs and practices among the tribals in general and role of tribal women in religious sphere is particular with special reference to Dindori district of Madhya Pradesh. The tribal people used to have a common kind of religion that was a conviction in spirits existed. The present paper focusses on how the spread of modernization, urbanization and non tribal religion significantly affected the tribal religion and compelled to adopt the value system of non-tribal religion. However the traditional belief system and practices are considered to be a key part of tribal culture.

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Keywords: Rites & Rituals, Beliefs system, Modernization, transformation, Religion.

Introduction

Traditional religion comes primarily within the category of animism and totemism. Even today, there are people who have strong beliefs and faith on religion. Many have adopted other surrounding of religions, namely Hinduism, Christianity and Islam. This is mainly owing to their masters' influence. In some places' they worship their supreme God 'Kattu Bagavathi' (jungle god) is their traditional religion. In the shrine is erected no image of the god. They have worship place in every settlement, each house has a small 'tina' platform, or kulithara believes to be the spiritual dwelling place. Besides this, they also believe in the number of spirits i.e. good versus evil. They practiced various rites and rituals, hectic dances and festivals, to please God and spirit. Some trees are thought to be possessed or haunted by evil spirits. They don't touch or cut these trees. They have appointed priests in every settlement shrine. They believe in spirits, goddess, and goddess. They believe in sun as day god 'pakal bhagavan' and the moon as night god 'iravu bhagavan.' During rituals and festive occasions they offer these deities an offering. A prescribed cycle of religious ceremonies in one year is customary. In different seasons, they observe a number of festivals, some of them are exclusively as their own, some of them are widely spread across the state. The important religious functionary is the attali, a combined hymnist, ritualist, and medium-dancer engaged in ritual practices in honour of the gods, the spirits of the dead, and in exorcising evil spirits who possess persons. Moreover, there are "ordinary medium dancers, the velichapads," who get the afflatus of different deities; also specialists in soothsaying, divination, and astrology, who practice their witchcraft trade (kodi vekkal, mantidal, etc). The vaidyakkar are medical practitioners who can cure those suffering from sores by symbolically "drinking" the blood, and by the

manipulations of magic sticks can charm thorns, hairs and other harmful foreign bodies from the sufferers.

The tribals are traditionally non-idol worshippers, they have no temple, no portrait, no holy books, no official founders of their religion, and no daily worships. But they have a deep faith that can be traced through their festivals, cleansing ceremonies, etc., and have formed culture in its fullness. The world's tribal beliefs are inhabited by invisible supernatural beings of different kinds and the benevolent spirits of the dead ancestors who remain interested in their survivors' affairs. In this world of supernatural entities, the tribals believe that they are living, moving and having their being. In other words, the tribals not only exist in their tribal world, but also in a wider community of supernatural beings (T. Hembram, 1996: 34). The relationship of tribals with these spirits is one of reverential terror, dependency, obedience and propitiation. Communion with these spirits is concretely manifested mainly through supplications, offerings of rice-beer and sacrifice of animals made on behalf of a particular group. Over time, the awareness of the supreme god whom they credit as the root of all that exists in the real and unseen world has steadily evolved. (J. Troisi, 1979: 71-74).

The word bonga is used by the tribals for different types of supernatural beings. Ghosts, individual tutelary spirits, spirits of deceased ancestors, witches, etc., and even Hindu deities, are for the creator. The belief of the tribals originally based on a supreme divinity. He assigns a life term to any living being and is one who is not called a bonga. They use the Sun for the ultimate god, as well. Supreme god is the world maker and sustainer, and a benevolent spirit. But in any important religious festival and in other important occasions such as marriage and death, the supreme god has no special worship but is reverentially remembered. Besides the supreme god, there are several principal bongas (spirits) in the pantheon of tribals that are considered the spirits of the village culture. Among the tribals many religious ceremonies are held. Their faith is a mixture of Hindu, tribal and Christian beliefs and

rituals. They adorn Nag Deo, Jal Deo, Gram Deo, Dharti Mai, Brun Deo, Thakur Deo, Fire God, Burha-Burhi Deo etc. The tribal religion shows their beliefs in soul, super human power, mana (cultivators), Bonga (dancing around campfire), natural artefacts, various gods, goddesses and spirits. They believe the living beings' soul dwells on hills, mountains, wells, ponds, lakes, mud pits, dry trees etc. Also, they believe all living and non-living things have superhuman control. They claim that the super human force carries with it all happenings in their world. In and around the tribal village settlement one finds a variety of places dedicated to the names of various human spirits, natural animals, snakes, tigers, etc. Christopher Tirkey (1998) in his book, Religion: Primal religion, investigate different theories concerning to the origin of religion in the society in general and tribal society in especially. He refers to the following theories: theory of animism, ancestors, terror, ghosts of religion, sorcery, natural theology, belief in the High God, figures of mother worship, natural mythology, projection, deism, totemism, manaism, fetishism, basis of religion in myth, transcendental origin of religion, revelation and biblical theory etc. Through help of these hypotheses many numerous scholars' have attempt to understand how the religion came to exist in society.

Research Problem

Tribals in Dindori district of Madhya Pradesh are economically and socially very backward. Over 3/4th of the women of the Scheduled Tribe are illiterate. They have high rates of dropout in education, which resulting more conventional type of attitude has developed among the tribal women. A number of religious ceremonies are celebrated among the tribals. Their religion is a blend of the ideas and rituals of Hinduism, tribalism and Christianity. India as a whole is characterized by sharp gender disparities, although women's status varies considerably by region. On virtually all frontiers of human societal pursuits economic, educational, scientific, legal, political, official, political

and religious sphere, tribal women suffer profoundly. For all time there are socio-cultural factors, which validate for the status of women in tribal society. It is always culture (set of collective experiences of ideas, norms, values and beliefs associated with a people) with its gender role inequalities and socialization determines the position of women in a tribal society.

The present paper is based on a research undertaken in the State of Madhya Pradesh to understand the current situation, vulnerabilities, threats and gaps of tribal women associated with religion. The objective of the study was to explore the beliefs, attitudes and effects of religion which are intended and recognized and examine the degree to which modernization influenced tribal religious practices and beliefs. It also attempted to understand the Discrepancies that exist in religious practices among tribal communities of the study areas (Christian and Hindu). It also tried to identify the the role of women in the religious sphere particularly.

The field and methods

Dindori district in the state of Madhya Pradesh was selected for the study of religious beliefs and practices among the tribal communities in general and role of tribal women in particular. The Dindori district has a special distinction of accommodating about one-sixth of the total tribal population of the State. Tribals only constitute 64% of the district and thus, it stands fourth among all fifty districts of the State with highest proportion of tribal concentration. The Baiga are PTG and very Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups which can be found only in this district of Madhya Pradesh. The district is covered in seven blocks namely Dindori, Shahpura, Mehandwani, Amarpur, Bajag, Karanjiya & Samnapur. The major tribal communities namely Baiga, Gond, Kol, Pradhan, Dhulia, Bhoomia and Agaria tribes were found in this District. These two blocks (Karanjiya and Bajag) were selected for the study. Under these blocks 18 GPs were selected for the study. The total respondents were 200 adolescents in the age group of 25-50 years

belonging to three different tribal communities namely Gonds, Baigas and Kol, out of which 150 were females and 50 males. The respondents were administered self structured interview schedule. The knowledge concerning the various religious and socio-cultural practices was gathered from the elderly and religious headman. The survey was performed among the local population, and people from the neighbourhood met in their residential areas. The visit was replicated for several occasions before it was completed as necessary knowledge for the proposed work. The data were tabulated, measuring the frequency and percentages.

Rites and Rituals of Tribals

In the study areas, it was observed that tribals have their number of customs and cultures. In this paper the researcher tried to focus on rites and rituals related to birth, puberty, marriage, death and burial performed by the tribal in the study areas. The researcher reflects on their child-birth in this post. Tribals shield pregnant women from curses and harmful forces, and perform various rituals after the birth of an infant. Child is normally brought to a husband's home. Mother's emission is measured about thirteen to twenty-one days. The fathers of the child or other male relations are not allowed to contact the child for the first 21 days. And strangers are unable to eat food or drink water from the house where childbirth happened, as the childbirth defiles a home. It is a type of social force. Even they can't appear before the family and village gods' shrines. On the first twenty day a bath for purification is given to the boy. Naming is usually completed within a month. A brother of a mother normally names a baby boy while the sister of the father names a child. Children grow up as part of a family, tribe, and phratry (one of the tribal community's four major divisions), and they gradually learn their people's ways. Both boys and girls help protect the birds and monkeys from family crops. As a sign of adulthood, males undergo a ritual beard, moustache and eyebrow shaving. Tribals generally refrain from hard work after childbirth and take care of the child till; the child can help by himself.

At their first menstruation the girls are considered full-grown. The custom related to puberty is as follows: 'Soon after maturing the child, they isolate her from normal family life; she is given an isolate hut. In this hut males are not allowed to see her. She will stay there for seven days, she will be given a bath on the eighth day and taken back home. The hut is then demolished and burnt, and the old cloths are then burned. During menstruation Bhils and Gonds practice prohibitions. Not worshipping, preparing food and taking water. All the women justified the restrictions which they considered impure. Also the researcher refers to marriage of the tribal. Mostly practiced marriage within the family, the boy tends to seek a bride if he can't find it is permitted to take it from outside. Marriage is preferred to the daughter of one's father's sister and the daughter of the mother's brother's that is characteristic of southern India. However, tribal groups in central India which have been affected by Northern peoples' rites and rituals adopt northern practices in choosing marriage partners. Among the tribes for which widows are permitted to remarry a deceased husband's partner, Widow marriage. Tribals usually select their partners, and the matches are accepted by a tribal council. A groom's father pays a premium for bride. Significant ceremonies include tribal weddings. The key part of the wedding happens when the bride and groom walk around a wedding post seven times. Newly-weds remain with the family of the groom until they can move into their own home. Often, when a groom and a bride elope make tribal matches. These marriages would also have to be accepted by relatives and the village council. Divorces may also be accepted by the Council. In general, marriage is after the girl has attained puberty. There are several traditions which are followed by marriage. The priest formally officiates the reception.

The practices linked were those related to death and burial. Often the family gathers around in the time of death to perform the requisite rites and rituals. Kids, unmarried adults, and people dying an inauspicious death (in an outbreak, for example) are buried without much ceremony. Soon after death in a bamboo platform the dead body will be given a decorated and taken to the

burial ground. The head is positioned northward, face upward, in burying the dead-body. A small amount of rice gruel is placed after burying the dead body, and filled with soil. Often burials take place very close to their 'padi' home. They also cremate the dead body at some time; this is done primarily to please a Hindu lord. Tribals believe humans have a soul and a life force. On death the life force is reincarnated into another human form, but in the other world the spirit remains. Tribals conduct rituals of death to help the spirit pass into the other world and facilitate its recognition by other spirits in the community. This ritual, known as karun, has to be performed to fulfill a responsibility towards the deceased. The foundations of Remembrance commemorate the fallen. Tribals believe that ancestral spirits watch over the living, punish criminals, and protect the families of tribal people.

Beliefs and involvement in Religious activities

The findings indicate that primarily in the form of prayer, 65 percent of male and female respondents reported religious practices daily. Sometimes it was achieved by around 35 percent but never was it by negligible proportion. Jena (1994) and Ghosh and Bandyopadhyay (1995) who discovered witchcraft beliefs were too deeply ingrained among tribals, observed the similar findings. Religion is part and parcel of a tribal culture. For the tribal communities, it plays various roles in the context of preserving community, uniting people and healing through faith. The traditional cultures have strong religious affiliations. The tribals were left to themselves and lived in solitary confinement. For decades, they have stood and stuck to their society, beliefs and faith. In tribal areas, religion focuses entirely on the principal deity of the village who controlled the role of the God. The principal deity of the village is a divinity, a priest, a magistrate, a judge, the chief executive, an astrologer, the hero of the village, the cynosure of all eyes, etc. wrapped in one. A fascinating study is made of the identification, the histories, the custom, the songs and the origins of these village deities.

Natural objects are recognized as indicators of divine presence, and seasonally they offer oblations. Accordingly, life-cycles, birth, marriage and death and annual cycles of major seasons and nature changes form an important part of occasional and seasonal festivals and scarifications. A continuum of nature-human spirit is the secret to life's tribal vision. This holistic view of truth is the foundation of all religious rituals, observances, and festivities. In their interactions, tribal religion recognizes the fundamental connexions of nature, humans and spirit. One clear example of this spectrum is the tribal totem. Another significant aspect of tribal religion is that the worship of ancestors is a part of the life of those who are alive and they are involved in living welfare. At the beginning of their meal the tribals give the ancestors grains of rice and the confidence is that they share the meal with the living people. (Nirmal Minz, 1996:122).

The tribal religion is unique in that it affirms the centrality of space in recognizing all realities. The distinctive feature of tribal tradition lies in affirming the centrality of land / creation or space as the basis for understanding the community, identity, personality and religious ethos of the tribal people. Tribal theology seeks salvation from the existence of all beings and of God. The distinguishing feature here is that liberation is sought from the perspective of space; space does not mean mere natural objects outside us, but rather a location, a sacred place that gives us identity and help. Tribal people still see themselves as part and parcel of creation / land and not apart from it (A. Wati Langchar, 2000: 1-20). In tribal ideology the land occupies a very central position. Land and God are viewed as afraid and co-creator. It is the land which possesses people and gives them an identity. It is the temple in which humans become one with the Supreme Being, their ancestors, the spirits, and other creation parts. The land is a part of the Supreme Being. Specific land ownership is only temporary. The True Soil is the Supreme Being. The Supreme Being is the one who enters the earth, or lives there. It is assumed that the Supreme Being would join the soil with the plants, and grow again with the crops. So the blooming flowers and rice

signify the Supreme Being's existence. The Supreme Being is the embodiment of all creation. The Supreme Being ceases to act without the Land. The land is the symbol of the union of all living beings and the Supreme Being and Spirit. The land is not a mere space to manipulate but a place that gives the community identity; it owns people. There's no personhood and identity without the property. The World symbolises peace. The land not only holds the clan, village, and tribe as one, but unites the Supreme Being, spirits, ancestors, and creation as one family as well. Without the earth, humans cannot coexist with other living beings, with their ancestors, and with their creators. Land is conceived as a mother: Most tribals have storeys that they are born from the soil that their forefathers arose from the stones or from a large hole of the soil or from the bowels of the earth (A. Wati Langchar, 2000: 26-88).

The tribals perceive time and history as having to do with the land. The land depends on time and tradition and produces that. They count time according to their soil based activities. The tribal people view time in a circular way as opposed to the western linear definition of time. People pass through the natural atmosphere and the soil or earth cycle. The soil cycle focuses all of the people's festivals and religious practices. People expect the years to come and go at a constant pace, like day and night, just like the moon's waning just waxing. They also expect rainy season activities to continue indefinitely, planting, sowing, harvesting, dry seasons, rainy season, planting, sowing, harvesting, dry seasons, rainy season again, and so forth. The dimension of the idea of time is that of honouring the life-cycle of nature. The religious and other social facets of life follow the same pattern all year round, much as plants and agriculture rotate. The nature of the world, the sun and the season's movements recapitulates the human life cycle as it passes from the birth to death. And the whole patter of the idea of history and time is cyclical for the tribals. It is focused on the ground. It is an important part of existence. It is nature / soil that produce history and time and humans step along with nature's rhythm. Therefore the tribals do not have time when the natural habitat is ruined. They are left in an empty room. People aren't sure

what to do. The tribal concept of history and time is thus intertwined with and rooted in development (A. Wati Langchar, 2000: 83-85).

The entire religious philosophy is based on the land itself, and deeply ingrained. The land is all connected to the religious traditions, rituals, ceremonies, festivals, and dance. The whole pattern of the religious tribal milieu shifts along with the land. The pattern of the social, legal, economic life of the tribal people is directly tied to the land. Land comprehension offers an ethical framework for sharing, compassion and responsible stewardship. The land is not a disputable possession, since it is not human possession. Land cannot be commercialized according to the tribal perspective; rather, it should be preserved and protected for future generations. It should also be shared by all inside the village (A. Wati Langchar, 2000: 79-80). The tribal people affirm his/her immanence, without denying the transcendence of Nature. Tribals signify God's earthly existence, They denote God's transcendence and omnipresence. They all agree that the Supreme Being is a representation of creation. The entire universe is the temple creation of the Supreme Being exposes the secrets of the Supreme Being and the Supreme Being, through space, speaks to humans. In all creation God is seen to be actively present. The wind, the light, the tree and the rivers all represent the Supreme Being's presence (O. Alam, 1994).

Traditional beliefs system of Gond, Baiga and Kol

There are number of customs and cultures observed among the tribals of the study areas. The worship of ancestors is an integral part of their religion among the Gond. Bura Deo, the great God, was probably at first the Saj tree, but afterwards, the whole collections of gods were sometimes called Bura Deo. They believe also in a number of local deities. The Gonds have a highly developed aesthetic sense. They indulge in merry-making and pleasure seeking which is manifested in dancing and singing and in celebration of festivals. They are highly superstitious and are

always afraid of 'evil eyes' and other misfortunes like epidemics etc. Every season and every socio-religious ceremony has specific songs. On the occasions of their important religious festivals and marriages, they are found dancing and singing. Both the sexes take active part in singing and dancing. The festivals of Gonds are not so much associated with religion as is the case with most Hindu festivals without understanding their religious significance. Their festivals are in response to the harvest season and local customs. Most celebrations consist of offerings to gods, feasts drinking and dancing. On the whole, their festivals tend to be recreational rather than spiritual. Their enthusiasm and zeal depends upon the success of harvest. Festivals are the only occasions in which Gonds ever indulge in any extravagance, otherwise they believe only in securing two square meals. Throughout the year a number of fairs, festivals and feasts are organized in the village. However, their distribution over a year is rather irregular.

The Baiga worship a plethora of deities. Their pantheon is fluid, the goal of Baiga theological education being to master knowledge of an ever-increasing number of deities. Supernaturals are divided into two categories: gods (deo), who are considered to be benevolent, and spirits (bhut), who are believed to be hostile. Some of the more important members of the Baiga pantheon include: Bhagavan (the creator-god who is benevolent and harmless); Bara Deo / Budha Deo (once chief deity of the pantheon, who has been reduced to the status of household god because of limitations placed on the practice of bewar); Thakur Deo (lord and headman of the village); Dharti Mata (mother earth); Bhimsen (rain giver); and Gansam Deo (protector against wild animal attacks). The Baiga also honor several household gods, the most important of which are the Aji-Dadi (ancestors) who live behind the family hearth. Magical-religious means are used to control both animals and weather conditions, to ensure fertility, to cure disease, and to guarantee personal protection. Major religious practitioners include the dewar and the gunia, the former of a higher status than the latter. The dewar is held in great esteem and is responsible for the performance of agricultural rites, closing

village boundaries, and stopping earthquakes. The gunia deals largely with the magical-religious cure of diseases. The panda, a practitioner from the Baiga past, is no longer of great prominence. Finally, the jan pande (clairvoyant), whose access to the supernatural comes by means of visions and dreams, is also important.

The Kol is Hindu, and worships all Hindu deities. The Kol who live in dense forested areas still adores their tribal gods. Their Hinduism and their animistic beliefs are intermingled. As H. H Risley (The Tribes and Castes of Bengal, 1891) points out, the Kol invokes their tribal god Sing-Bonga to avoid illness or calamity and to this end, white goat or white cock sacrifices are offered to him. They also worship the mountain god, Marang Buru, who is supposed to reside on the neighbourhood's most prominent hill, who controls rainfall and is appealed to in times of drought and epidemics. Animals are sacrificed to him and the priest leaves the heads to be appropriated. Certain deities of this nature preside over rivers, ponds, wells, and springs, and it is believed that when these gods are angered they cause bathers to suffer from skin diseases and leprosy. Deswali is their traditional god of the village and each village of Kol has a shrine for him. He is kept accountable for a successful harvest and gets a buffalo deal at their farm festival. The dead body of a married person is cremated among the Kol while that of an unmarried person is buried. Pollution of both death and birth is observed for ritually defined times. The Kol visits the holy pilgrimage sites such as Allahabad, Haridwar, Bandakpur and Maihar Mata, and celebrates festivals such as Holi, Ramanavmi (Rama 's birthday), Diwali (Lamps Festival), Janamashtami (Krishna 's birthday), Shabri Jayanti (Shabri 's birthday, she is a lowly tribal lady who fed a roaming Rama berries). There is a strong belief in evil spirits and witchcraft and is generally worked by a sokha (witch-finder or witch-doctor). Possession cases are mentioned by the Devi (goddess) and include piercing their cheeks with tridents.

Modernization and Tribal Culture

Modernization and urbanization have brought about a new transition in more or less all of Dindori district's localities in the modern phase of development. The pace of mining and the development of manufacturing industries, as well as the exploitation of power and forest resources, were greatly accelerated for the duration of the last 60 years and particularly through the plan periods. This has led to a high degree of displacement and dislocation that urgently requires the reconstruction and resettlement of the communities that have been uprooted. Experienced communities villagers say this recovery and resettlement process has been going on for years but without proper functioning or responsibility on the part of the authorities. These agrarian people were in great trouble when they were uprooted. First was about their alternative recovery position as well as alternative jobs to make a living. While these affected families received fair compensation they were faced with various social issues, cultural crisis, economic disorganization and social disintegration (Vidyarthi & Rai, 1977).

When interviewing the tribal people, they were asked what their thoughts on modernization in relation to their cultures were, whether modernization is helping to grow or weakening cultural values. Most of the respondents said that modernization helps them in the process of development economically and socially and only a few tribal respondents said that culture extinction occurs due to modernization. People want change today so they can meet their needs and cope with the changing scenario. People's needs have grown and people have lost their originality in the attempt to meet their desires, and want to tag along with the mainstream. Helping them tackle this situation depends on each tribe, and it becomes the government's duty to help the tribes in maintaining their culture by providing the required developmental requirements.

With one marginal exception, almost all of the respondents had confidence in Kuldevta. The study finds support from Debbarman (1991) who claimed that their faith was based on all the

practices and beliefs of tribes. Time has changed and its impact on culture has been made evident by modernization. People are becoming civilized day by day and with time their life-style is evolving. Drastic changes are being viewed and no longer follow the rich cultural heritage that once was the legacy of the tribes. The tribals used to worship and preserve nature, including trees and mother earth, but today very few persons are left who follow these practices. While the practice of sacrifice that was once practiced by tribals, and is no longer practiced today, is in itself a positive shift. The traditions of body inscriptions and tattoos have changed because the individual tribes believe it differentiates them from other tribes, but their children are still not adopting these traditions. Guest washing hands practices are still observed among the tribes and the style of dancing is still performed during ceremonies and songs and celebrations are sung in their own languages. All these rituals give each tribe some individuality. But among the tribes the use of traditional crafts and equipment such as pots, baskets, mats etc. is seldom used. Miracle and herbal healing practices were a knowledge and tradition that was passed down from their ancestors, although most of them prefer to see a doctor and travel to a hospital in case of sickness. When asked whether they agreed that their children should have knowledge of their cultures, the response was always affirmative, but on the other hand, they also wanted them to be educated and literate as they felt that this would help them in their future and that they would be knowledgeable enough to be part of society. On being asked about the cultural activities such as songs, dances, prayers, storey's, etc. that they observe during celebration and sorrow ceremonies, their response to this was that during celebration ceremonies such as weddings, births and religious festivals, all cultural activities such as songs, dances, prayer offerings, sacrifices, fasting, storeys etc. are performed, but mostly they enjoyed only prayers and songs during sorrowful times like death. The cultural practices show that the tribals are glorified by God. From all these cultural practices, prayers offering and fasting are performed frequently in their everyday life. The tribals are also in practice of slaughtering animals or birds in the study areas.

Even if, to a greater extent, the tribals have forgotten their ancient traditions such as dance, music, songs, folk tales, their own dialect and many more traditions, even when they were asked whether they wanted their children and their future generations to maintain their religious customs and traditions or to be modernized in every way that would lead to the extinction of many of their traditional practices, the response was perfectly obvious. To this they replied that they want to maintain their traditional values, but that they also want to be modernized so that they can cope with the dramatic change that is taking place in society and come out of the perpetual sense of backwardness. Yeah, be modern, and preserve culture as well. It is a confusing situation where both positive and negative changes have been brought with it by modernization. For successful progress all development programmes should be implemented efficiently and effectively. A nation's preservation of its culture and tradition is very important for the country's overall growth.

Interface between Tribal and Non-tribal Religion

Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism are the main universalizing religions in the world; faiths which claim to be common to all human beings and which strive to spread their values through missionary work and actively pursue converts. Membership is open to everyone, often through a symbolic pledge, and no one is usually excluded due to nationality, race or prior religious convictions. Ethnic religions have a strong distinction with the territorial and cultural communities. Usually these religions do not proselytize and instead their members form distinctive closed societies. Ethnic religions are for example Judaism, Hinduism (India). Relevant types of ethical religions are tribal or traditional religions, characterized by their small scale, close links to nature, and distinctive identification with localized culture. Animism is the idea that inanimate things, from rocks and trees to lakes and mountains, hold souls and in many instances should be worshipped as gods. Hinduism is the predominant religion (91.1

percent) of the State. As many as 89.1 percent STs are Hindus. Tribes following other religions and persuasions account for 5.2 percent. Christian and Muslim tribes constitute 5.5 percent and 0.1 percent respectively. The hierarchical spread of religion taken place through history as missionaries actively tried to convert kings or tribal leaders, in the expectation that their people would obey. Tribal people have always been relationships with other religious streams, as well as with local cults and sects, not only borrowing from them but also, in some cases, influencing them. However, most of their interactions have been with the majority Hindu community, the structural principle of which is the caste system (Srinivas, 1952). It is worth noting here that Hinduism is a non-proselytizing religion (Srinivas and Shah, 1968): it does not have the idea of conversion. One is born a Hindu, or may be adopted by a Hindu family (Fuller, 1992). One need not be a believer to be a Hindu: a person may call himself a Hindu even when he or she does not believe in the existence of god; even an atheist can be a Hindu.

The first mode of interaction between tribal people and Hindus is a process of religious 'borrowing' or syncretism. For example, tribal groups have assimilated Hindu gods and goddesses in their religious system. The tribals believe that the entire universe is regulated by a superpower known as Dharmesh, the representations of which are the earth (dharti), the moon (chando), and the sun (bin), and therefore, the veneration of these natural things is supreme in their worship system. At the same time, they revere Mahadeo Bhagat, a form of the Hindu sanskritic god, Shiva, and the monkey-god, Hanuman. For them, their own religion and Hinduism can co-exist without any contradictions. It has also been reported that on the day of Diwali (the 'festival of lights'), the tribals carry out the 'worship of the fowl' (*rangua puja*), which is their indigenous practice, along with the lighting of lamps. That Hinduism is pluralistic, allowing different (even contradictory) beliefs and practices to coexist, has been observed by many scholars (for example, Braden, 1967; Biardeau, 1989; Srinivas and Shah, 1968). Syncretism in Hinduism itself is also

common; the religion is highly mouldable and adaptable. It has in its womb highly abstract ideas, alongside elaborate rituals for the pacification of spirits and restoration of homeostatic balance in the universe and cosmos. Believing that God is one and formless. Obviously this background facilitated diverse communities with different combinations of deities, beliefs and practices to coexist and claim to be following the same religion, namely Hinduism.

Upper caste Hindus did not react when lower castes and tribal groups appropriated their deities and parts of the complex of beliefs and rituals. Indeed, Hinduism has, in some cases, been influenced by tribal religion. For example, some prominent Hindu deities had their genesis in tribal gods and goddesses. (Eschmann et al., 1978). Hindus did not object when lower castes and tribes picked up certain aspects from their pantheon and modified them to suit their social structure and levels of knowledge, cognition, and practical circumstances. However, they did not permit the entry of lower castes and tribes into their places of worship, for the simple reason that they believed that these places would be sullied. As punitive sanctions did not exist, it was natural that tribes would borrow the things they most liked from others with whom they came in contact. In this way, the religious aspects of Hinduism spread to tribal communities. The tribes were most influenced by the Hindus both because they were the majority religious tradition and also because they were the communities with whom tribals are interacted the most. The productive system of caste society was another factor, as we shall see later. The tribes regarded the Hindu system as superior to theirs. Some tribals thought that if their prayers were answered in the other language (which is not their language, but the language of their superior neighbours, upper caste Hindus), then their gods would grant their wishes. Thus as noted above, economic interaction brought tribals closer to Hindu communities, from whom they periodically borrowed certain cultural and religious traits, such as apparently 'powerful gods', an 'effective language in which gods should be worshipped', and also 'life ways' that would appease upper caste Hindus (Furer-Haimendorf (1982). In a nutshell, they borrowed whatever they

felt was good for them, since Hindus, as pointed out earlier, did not object to the spread of many of their cultural practices and traits. The process of borrowing occurred slowly and gradually, but demonstrates that tribes were not static and conservative, as presented in the anthropological literature.

In many cases, the complex of indigenous tribal religious practices did not bear a name. Outsiders gave a name to them, so that the tribal communities of the study areas did not embrace Christianity (in the second half of the nineteenth century) were simply called non-Christian. However, for the tribes, the beliefs, practices, and performances that attached them to their sacred entities, ensuring their long-term welfare, were far more important than the collective name they bore. To this repository of beliefs, practices and performances, they added some more, borrowing from their neighbours or others with whom they came in contact, those beliefs, practices and rituals that they thought would enrich their culture and enhance their control over the environment. There were no pure categories; what existed was an embryonic form of 'mixed-up genre'. In spite of the interaction of tribals with Hinduism and later Christianity, and also other religious and sectarian groups, they have nevertheless been able to maintain some kind of autonomy in their religious systems. K. S. Singh (1994: 12) notes that, notwithstanding these ongoing interactions, the hierarchy of tribal peoples' clan and village deities generally survives intact: most of the sacred specialists among the tribals are from their own communities, with few from other communities. The calendar of festivals and festivities is also relatively intact.

Interaction and syncretism is very different from a second mode of interaction: the practice of bringing back people to the Hindu fold and making them pure/shuddhi. This was a later development within Hinduism, against the backdrop of the politics of conversion and the desire of religious groups to increase their numbers, although the idea of reconverting from other religions to Hinduism for making them shuddha/pure is not accepted by some strata and orders within Hinduism. As far as

tribal religion is concerned, tribals are always held to adopt their own distinctive religious beliefs and traditions, but as the census data shows us, most of them (over 75 percent) are Hindus. There is smaller number of tribals adopting Christianity, Buddhism, and other religions. Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism are also contributing to some improvement in tribal women's status, particularly regarding religious activities. However, in society they tended to see women mainly as mothers and wives, and inferior to men. Presently in the study areas it is found that most of them (tribals) have expressed their desire to Christianity because of the facilities provided to them by the Christian missionaries.

Women's role in religious sphere

The tribal women who played a leading role in the economic sphere also made their presence felt in the religious sphere. The tribals are Hindu adherents. Some have faith in institution of the Radha Swami Satsang. The local tribal goddess is Bharmani Devi. A fast is usually practiced by women during "Navaratra" (fast nine days) to seek out her blessings to strengthen their families. Several gods are worshipped like Marali, Kiling, Lakhna mata Narsingh, Narayana, Hanuman, Banni mata, Kali, Sati. Many of these also refer to the Hindu faith. Tribal family has its own goddess of heritage which is decorated by females every morning. The females observe a fast on every Purnima of the month for their husbands' health and long life. 'Graha puja' (planet worship) is performed by men and women alike, since the practise is assumed to be efficient only when the wife accompanies the husband. It is forbidden for the females to enter some temples such as Keling, Narsingh, Hanuman, Buhari and Banni Deity. In the old days this prohibition was strictly enforced but now only married females are banned. Sacrifice of goats is performed by males only.

'Raah Pujna' (prayer performed on the pathway) is observed as a rite in which female worship their village's steep way of returning their husbands and children safe. 'Kailu' is adorned only by women who have children. They honour their ancestors, as

well. 'Sradhas' are carried out for the healing of spirits and mind of the ancestors. They are thought to be pleased and propitiated by only providing worship and water and other ceremonial offerings from the males' hands. This is so since a family or clan name is known to retain only males. Therefore girls have no part to play in the worship of ancestors. This is also one of the reasons why a son's birth is marked by ceremonial gaiety, even though a daughter's birth is not regarded with disdain because of their huge position in the economic sphere. For some special occasions of her life a tribal woman refrains from taking up religious activities or attending the place of worship. She does not observe fasts, feasts and religious ceremonies during menstruation for example.

Women are stripped of attending funeral processions or ceremonies. They can't light the pyre for funeral. They are still discouraged from moving off into the jungle. These tabuses are defensive in nature as opined by the village's people. Women are more susceptible to the evil spirits that inhabit the forest woods or cremation ground, owing to the weaker constitution. It is interesting to note that, on the one hand, women in tribal culture are considered easily vulnerable to evil spirits or evil eyes, they are the most feared as 'Dayan' or witch in their positions, and their actions are known as 'Khadra'. Not all women are witch or Dayan but Dayan seems to be inexplicably linked to all Dayan's or some other person who has an unnatural death. However, no tribal women have recorded instances of witch hunting.

Women's role in decision-making is significant, and they are marginalized in religious practices both in the group and in the family. The male supremacy in the ritual sphere shows in the tribal communities under research. Three popular religions such as: Buddhism, Hinduism, and Traditional professed by the studied tribal groups operate with tenets that limit the involvement of women in their rituals. Women are never named as priests, and are used against themselves skillfully. Both sexes take part in rituals, but the men carry on greater roles. Men were primarily instrumental music players. Women engage in dancing but their

movements are different from those of men. Tribals attach considerable significance to the coercive privileges to exorcise and kill the demons. Communities of tribals have trained male and female experts to exorcise the demons. Male and female tribals who play a part in exorcising privileges. They are only present as spectators at festivals and such ceremonies, or at the time they win respect for themselves. Even tribal cultures make a distinction between the funeral pyres of male and female. In the case of female and male funeral pyres, eight to seven layers of firewood are laid for consuming the body in flames, respectively. Tribals describe this inequality in such a way that women are inside society one degree below men. Her pyre is elevated higher to compensate for this lower status of women (Bhasin, 1991).

Man regulates the ritual realm even among Gaddis and Bhils. Women take part in the singing and dancing. Women Gaddi and Bhil merely engage as spectators in the rituals of Gaddi Chela or Bhil Bhopa. Gaddi Chela or Bhil Bhopa do not have female counterparts. Since the religious sphere is most powerful among tribals, it is a major domain for male dominance. Women are excluded from public authority. Religion legitimizes Hierarchy of Gender. The subordination of women in religious practices and their denial of access to religious leadership roles have been an influential weapon in most world religions to uphold patriarchal order and women's exclusion from the public sphere (Ortner, 1974; Sered, 1994; Franzmann, 2000). The religious domain is a significant area of male supremacy, and a tool for depriving women of public authority (Scott, 1988; Jones, 1993). In the religious domain there are a few developments and so these improvements must occur within a conventional, ritual and textual framework. Christian institutions oppose equality between the sexes. In structure the tribal societies contain an explicitly male religious framework. While secular institutions are working to eliminate discrimination, women in these areas have been shown to lag behind in other fields.

Conclusion

It is concluded from the study undertaken that the attitudes of the tribals, views, food habits, daily life styles, clothes, festivals, law and rituals, the eco-friendly, nature-related culture, etc., are all deteriorating due to the tread of modernization in these tribal villages. As modernization has entered tribal lifestyle, in the changing scenario, there is a chance to lose tradition and tribal singularity in the long run. There is obviously no simple description of tribal religious practices and beliefs as Islam and Buddhism or any other religion (Chaudhuri, 1965). And yet, at the same time, distinguishing between tribal culture and certain types of common Hindu practices is not so easy. Needless to say, Hinduism is not the only cultural force that has brought about drastic changes in tribal societies, as Christian missionaries have also been involved in tribal areas, with the result that most tribals have converted to Christianity. The problem here lies in how these indigenous people will blend with the homogeneous Indian society, the so-called advanced Indian society with its never-uniform linguistic religion and caste separation. And where those indigenous groups can be incorporated has never been established. The tribals are constantly facing stress and the burden from the community in which they live. Being a part of society has contributed to linguistic assimilation and many tribal groups have lost their original language and now speak one of India's major languages. Recent schooling and related knowledge have undoubtedly helped the tribals not to be seriously abused by the non-tribals. It is paradoxical that in many cases the tribals are subjected to the power of the culture they will be abused, so that they are qualified and part of the society (www.socyberty.com). Modernization is therefore seen as slowly destroying the tribal culture as it progressively disintegrates the tribal community's cultural capital. The question here that must be addressed by us as a part of society is whether to embrace or repudiate such modernization.

Tribal's have their own religious convictions that they have long maintained. While these people are in process of

transformation and are coming to the mainstream, they still retain their values and customs. Community values and concepts have a critical impact on men, women and children's lives. For one thing, it strengthens the division of labour, location, resources and language between the sexes. Women are considered impure according to religious traditions, which is why they are not permitted to use plough and associate directly with the supernatural beings. The tribal women's present status and situation is not an unintended affair. It has developed in the past because of the multiple forces service. The women have played an important role because of the religious exchange with Hindus and Christian in the tribal areas. Without a doubt, this religious role has influenced the social status of women, who have social freedom which is very remarkable in its breadth. In the respective areas under research there is cultural similarity among the different tribal groups, as women from different areas have the same religious roles to play.

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Article

Kerala Flood 2018: People's Perceptions and Experiences

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Abstract

The flood that occurred in the State of Kerala in 2018 was an unprecedented event in the history of the State due to the magnitude of the damage it caused. It resulted in a catastrophic damage to the socio-economic infrastructure of the State and claimed 433 human lives in total as per official information. Such was the magnitude of the disaster that not even a single sector remained unaffected .While the government stated that it was due to incessant rain that Kerala received in August 2018 that resulted in flood in the State, the opposition parties alleged that it was due to the faulty dam management that resulted in the catastrophe. Given this context, the present paper is an attempt to understand the perceptions of people who were victims of Kerala flood 2018 through an opinion survey conducted in selected flood-affected areas of the State. It tried to identify and analyse the factors that have led to the occurrence of 2018 flood, how it affected the lives of people and response of the State and central government in this regard.

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Introduction

The 2018 flood in Kerala was an unprecedented event in the history of the State. After the 1924 disastrous flood, this was the first time that the State was experiencing a calamity of this magnitude which had repercussions in almost all districts. It may be mentioned that the monsoon rain gradually began in June 2018 and intensified by the second week of August 2018 in Kerala and claimed the lives of 433 people and incurred severe damage to people's livelihood and property (Government of Kerala; PDNA Report; 2018). The economic loss that flood caused to the State exchequer was more than INR 16,163 crore (Government of Kerala; PDNA Report; 2018). According to Kerala State Disaster Management Authority (Government of Kerala, PDNA Report, 2018), seven most affected districts of the State were Alappuzha, Ernakulam, Idukki, Kottayam, Pathanamthitta, Thrissur and Wayanad. The devastating floods and landslides had affected 5.4 million people, displacing 1.4 million people" (Government of Kerala; PDNA Report; 2018).

In 2019 also, the State witnessed another deluge; however, it was not that severe compared to the 2018 flood. This time, along with flood, massive landslides also occurred due to extreme rainfall in ecologically fragile areas of the State. In the flood and the landslides that occurred in Malappuram and Wayanad districts of Kerala in 2019, 121 people died and 1,789 houses collapsed ("Kerala Floods 2019...collapsed", 20 August 2019). This scenario is a pointer to the fact that the climatic conditions and rain patterns in Kerala are gradually changing, making floods and weather variations the new normal in the State. This is a situation which Kerala had never experienced since its formation in 1957. Moreover, such events are a waning to the State machinery and the community to prepare for combating natural disasters like this for future.

Studies and reports on the subject indicate that there were many reasons behind 2018 flood. According to the report submitted by the Amicus Curiae appointed by the High Court of Kerala, "it is the mismanagement of dams in the State that had caused the flood" (“Poor Dam Management….floods”, 3 April 2019). According to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) (Jha and Kishore, 2019) which keeps the annual rainfall data, one of the reasons for the flooding of the State in 2018 was the incessant rain that the State had received in less than two consecutive weeks in August 2018. In August 2018, Kerala had received 652.4 mm of rain, which was the highest rainfall ever since 1989 (Jha and Kishore, 2019). The Post Disaster Needs Assessment Report (Government of Kerala, PDNA Report, 2018) of 2018 also shows that "between June 1 and August 2018, the cumulative rainfall that the State received was 42% over the normal average." The socio-economic infrastructures of twelve out of fourteen districts were wholly deva Stated in flood. After the flood, Kerala Government launched the 'Rebuild Kerala Initiative' intending to "bring about a perceptible change in the lives and livelihoods of its citizens by adopting higher standards of infrastructure for recovery and reconstruction and to build ecological and technical safeguards so that the restructured assets could better withstand floods in the future"(Government of Kerala, Rebuild Kerala Development Programme; 2018).

Even though two years have already passed since the 2018 flood, the extent to which the State has equipped itself in addressing disasters of such magnitude needs to be seen. This paper is an attempt to understand people's perceptions about Kerala flood 2018 through an opinion survey conducted in selected flood-affected areas of the State among the victims. This paper would examine the factors that have led to the occurrence of 2018 flood and the way it has affected the lives of people. It also attempts to analyse the response of the State and central government to the flood situation,. i.e. whether any perceptible change was visible in the lives of people after the flood and the measures taken by the government and political parties for preventing disasters .. The

survey was conducted for a period of three months i.e. from 15th September 2019 to 15th December 2019 in selectfive districts of the State, which were the most affected in the 2018 flood. These districts were Ernakulam, Alappuzha, Idukki, Pathanamthitta and Wayanad. Convenience sampling technique was used for conducting this survey, and in total, 560 participants was interviewed from flood-affected areas. 112 participants were selected from different taluks of each district. 28 close-ended questions were asked to the participants, including the questions to elicit their socio-economic profile.

People's perception of flood

Even though one and half years have passed after the 2018 flood, there is still a lack of consensus regarding the factors that have contributed to the flood. Among the survey respondents, 51.32% opined that the main reason for the occurrence of natural disasters like the flood in 2018 is climate change. They commented that changing weather patterns caused due to global warming is resulting in recurrent floods in the State. It was found that 30.33% respondents felt that faulty dam management by the government machinery like releasing water all of a sudden was the main reason behind flooding in the State in 2018. They believed that the government decision to store water in the dams up to a maximum capacity level during heavy rains in August 2018 and the decision to open up all the 35 major dams in the State at one go without informing people properly exacerbated the situation. While 12.11% thought that it was the absence of early warning systems to predict the climatic variations in the State that led to this havoc. 6.24% said, no one could be blamed for flood or no specific reasons could be cited for causing this.To the question, what was the main factor that intensified flood situation in Kerala, 35.41% found that the unscientific land-use practices that are followed in the State as the main reason for this. 32.64% of people answered that encroachment into river water bodies and excessive quarrying in eco-sensitive areas as the lead causes behind the intensity of flood.

Meanwhile, 30.25% of people thought that deforestation and non-implementation of Gadgil/Kasturirangan report on the Western Ghats had intensified the flood situation. 1.7% of respondents were not willing to comment on this.

Impact of Flood on People's Livelihood

The 2018 flood had brought the life of ordinary people almost to a standstill situation. There were thousands of people who got stranded and lost their entire livelihood. Many of them haven't recovered yet from the economic and psychological impacts of the flood. According to the Kerala Post Disaster Needs Assessment Report (Government of Kerala, PDNA Report, 2018), the share of flood loss is varied for each sector. If the percentage of loss is 37.54% for the infrastructure sector (water, sanitation and hygiene), it is 17.47% in productive sectors (agriculture, fisheries and livestock) and 18.21% in the social sector (social sector includes housing, land and settlements, health and nutrition, education and cultural heritage). While, 26.78% is the loss for cross-cutting sectors (cross-cutting sectors include the environment, employment and livelihood, disaster risk reduction, gender and social inclusion and local governance). Around 10,000 km roads were destroyed, and thousands of people who had worked in the informal sector lost their jobs (Government of Kerala, PDNA Report, 2018). The Cochin International Airport which situates in the Ernakulum district of the State had to remain shut down for about two weeks.

When the flood victims in selected districts were asked to comment on how the flood affected their livelihood, marking the worst affected sectors in order of preference, 41.31% of them said that flood-damaged their house and property either partially or wholly. Out of total 41.31%, 14% had lost everything that they had earned in their lifetime in this flood starting from house to utensils. 27.12% of respondents answered that flood killed their livestock, ruined harvests and affected their earnings from the agricultural sector. 16.39% of the flood victims were affected by the lack of social infrastructure. They said that their children's education,

parents' treatment in hospitals and mobility through roads and public transport were severely affected during the flood time. 12.18% of the total respondents opined that they had lost their jobs what they were doing earlier, after the flood. Majority of them were either doing menial jobs or were engaged in small scale businesses. People who were working in the unorganised sector were severely affected due to flood and a lot of them had lost their jobs due to economic slowdown that followed after the flood. 3% of the respondents said though they had lost their house, property and career due to flood, the most significant loss was nothing else but the precious lives of their relatives or family members.

State Government's Response to Flood

The Kerala State government's efforts to effectively coordinate the rescue activities throughout the State during the flood time by decentralising responsibilities to local self-governments and ensuring mass participation of youth at the local level for rescue and relief operations had received massive appreciation from all quarters. The timely intervention of fishermen community using their boats to rescue the people who were trapped in remote areas of various districts of the State was crucial in reducing the number of the death toll. The extensive use of social media and other communication platforms for coordinating the rescue and relief operations also had worked in favour of reducing the number of causalities in the State. A total of 10,28,300 people were sheltered in 3,274 camps in different parts of the State ("Kerala Floods…Rehabilitation", 20 August 2018). It was the unified efforts of police, media, voluntary organisations and fishers joining hands with the State government, keeping aside all differences that rescued the State from this colossal calamity. To the question, how you assess the performance of the State government in handling the 2018 flood, 58.60% of people responded that the performance of the government was either excellent or very good. 23.20% said that the performance of the government was average, while 14.20% rated it as bad or very bad.

4% of respondents refused to comment on this matter. However, this overall appreciation from the part of the people for the performance of the government in handling the flood situation was almost absent in the assessment of the government's performance in handling the post-flood rehabilitation activities. When respondents were asked to assess whether the post-flood Kerala rebuilding activities of the government were in the right direction, only 27.60% said that the government is doing well in this regard. A majority of people, that is 37.10% answered that the performance of the government is not up to the mark, while 29% expressed their complete dissatisfaction with the government's performance. 6.30% of respondents claimed that they do not have any opinion regarding this. To the question, whether there was coordination between the centre and the State governments during the time of the flood in rescue and relief operations, 41.75 % of respondents commented that there wasn't any coordination between them. 23.13% claimed that there was coordination between the central and State government.17.58% of people believed that there was some coordination between the centre and the State on this matter, while the remaining 17.54% said, they were neither aware of the situation nor want to comment on the subject.

After 2018 flood, Government had announced a relief package in the form of financial assistance for flood victims. While 63.32% of flood victims received this financial assistance from the government, there were 36.68% of people who were yet to avail this financial support. It is a fact that after back to back floods in 2018 and 2019, Kerala economy is facing a massive crisis and the government is mulling over to take some austerity measures to recover from its current situation. After the flood in 2018, the Kerala government had insisted all government employees in the State to contribute their one month's salary to the Chief Minister's Disaster Relief Fund and thereby to support the government's post-flood rehabilitation activities through the 'Salary Challenge' initiative (Haneef, 9 October 2018). However, this move of the government had met with severe criticisms from different corners

when a section of government employees started to register their protest. Some of them alleged that, without taking any cost-cutting measures, the government is merely looting the employees by taking away their hard-earned one month's salary. When the respondents of the survey were asked to mark their responses concerning whether the government is adopting any austerity measures after the flood, 44.39% said that they do not think so. There were 29.62% of respondents who believed that the government is adopting stringent cost-cutting measures after the flood and 20.24% remarked that they were only partially satisfied with the government actions. 5.75% of respondents didn't respond to this question at all.

As of now, resource mobilisation for post-flood rebuilding of Kerala is a key challenge before the government. A team consisting of Chief Minister and other ministers in the State had visited foreign countries for meeting the Malayali population living there and mobilising funds from them through various organisations that are working among them. Opposition parties in the State alleged that these foreign trips of the Chief Minister, ministers and the bureaucrats were an abject failure and mere waste of money from the public exchequer. One of the questions posed to the respondents of the survey was, whether they think that the foreign trips of the Chief Minister for mobilising funds for Kerala rebuilding initiative were helpful for the State?. 40.15% responded that they do not believe the tours were successful in meeting the Stated objective due to various reasons. 34.71% opined that trips were successful only to an extent. 19.4% firmly believed that the tours of the Chief Minister and other bureaucrats have indeed benefitted in mobilising the funds for the post-flood reconstruction of Kerala. While 5.74% of the respondents said that they do not have any opinion on this matter. Another question posed to the respondents was how they look at the flood cess imposed by the Kerala government on goods and services for generating additional revenue for supporting the post-flood rebuilding activities of the State. 45.56% said that they disagree with the proposal to impose flood cess as they think it would be an extra

burden on the already flood-ravaged population of the State. 30.73% of respondents were in favour of imposing flood cess as they believed that it would be a big relief to the government to carry out the rehabilitation and reconstruction activities unabatedly. 23.71% of people were either confused to comment on this or weren't having any opinion at all.

Environmental Concerns in Post Flood Kerala

The post Disaster Needs Assessment Report of 2018 (Government of Kerala, PDNA Report, 2018) points out that "14.5% of the State's land area is prone to floods, and the proportion is as high as 50% for certain districts. Landslides are a major hazard along the Western Ghats in Wayanad, Kozhikode, Idukki and Kottayam districts." Even though Kerala has recently embarked on the 'Nava Keralam' mission to build a new green and climate-resilient Kerala, still the neglect of environmental laws and policies in the State is a crucial challenge. Environmental degradation and climate change is a reality for the State now. Unabated quarrying, sand mining, deforestation and developmental activities in ecologically fragile areas of the State are posing numerous threats to the building of a sustainable Kerala. To the question, whether the successive governments in Kerala have succeeded in implementing the environmental laws in the State, 80.58% said that the various governments were a failure in ensuring the strict implementation of the law. 10.42% opined that the governments were successful or somewhat in implementing the laws; while 9% remarked that they do not have any opinion or do not have any knowledge about the matter. When the respondents of the survey were asked to mark what they think had led to the continuous violation of environmental laws in the State in order of preference, 35.54 responded that the breaches happen mainly due to unholy nexus between the politicians, bureaucrats and the land mafia. 34.17% opined that bureaucratic corruption is the main factor behind the constant violation of environmental laws in the State. 30.29%

thought that it is the inefficiency of the government mechanisms that help the perpetrators to invade the land and river beds.

To the question whether the government is taking strong actions against the violators of environmental law, 69.6% answered that the government's performance is not satisfactory in this regard and there is ample scope for correction and improvement. 25.4% opined that the government is taking strong actions against the perpetrators of law. 5% refused to comment on this. Another question that was posed to the respondents was which political party that they think is supporting the illegal encroachments most in the State?. 46.07% of respondents said that all major political parties in the State are equally responsible on this matter, and they all are helping the violators to carry out all sorts of illegal encroachments without any disruption. However, 20.72% responded that the Congress party is the main culprit in this regard, while 18.21% blamed CPIM for supporting the perpetrators of environmental laws. 9% blamed that parties other than Congress and CPIM are responsible for this. 6% of respondents refused to comment on this.

When the respondents were asked to comment on the most serious environmental crime that they had observed in their vicinity in the recent past in order of preference, 40.4% said that the major violation that they observed is the conversion of eco-sensitive areas like the fertile paddy lands and wetlands by filling it up for construction activities. 26% responded that the most blatant violation that they have observed in their surroundings is the illegal human encroachment into river beds for sand mining. For 20.3%, excessive quarrying, and for 13.3%, deforestation was the most serious issues of concern. G.M Pillai, the head of World Institute of Sustainable Energy in Pune says that “about 80% of the paddy fields in Kerala have been levelled or converted to other activities. That is a huge environmental neglect. Paddy fields are kind of wetlands in Kerala's topography capturing water from the surrounding hills” (“Environmentalists Investigate…Flood”, 27 August 2018). Sadly, even after consecutive floods, it is a matter of

huge concern that the environmental laws in the State are not strictly implemented. Kerala society hasn't learned yet that the man's encroachment into ecologically sensitive areas in the name of development was one of the reasons that intensified the flood in 2018. Mahalingam (2018:25) writes "the illegal quarrying, squandering, inane deforestation, and illegal constructions changed the natural rainwater topography of the State. The exploited soil could not absorb the torrential rain and allowed the water to quickly runoff flooding the drains, streams and rivers inducing flash-floods and landslides."

The 2019 Supreme Court verdict to demolish illegally constructed flats in ecologically sensitive areas of Marad, Kochi, is a reminder that how unlawful constructions are going on in the State unabatedly by violating all provisions of Coastal Zone Regulation Act. One can find many unlawful buildings along the Kerala coastlines. Statistics point out that 'there are around 1800 illegal structures in Kerala' ("CRZ Violation..Demolition", 27 September 2019). As per the latest Kerala government report 'Alappuzha, Ernakulam and Thiruvananthapuram are respectively the first three districts wherein maximum illegal buildings have been built by violating the Coastal Zone Regulation Act ("Alappuzha….in Kerala", 29 December 2019). Unbridled construction activities in ecologically sensitive areas and building of illegal check dams by interrupting the natural flow of water bodies have indeed led to the intensification of flood in 2018. Prominent ecologist Madhav Gadgil says "massive construction has prompted indiscriminate sand mining and quarrying in the mountains. A large number of landslides have occurred because of these stone quarries. Rubble from them has blocked streams and rivers" (Pasricha, 2018).

Kerala is looming under the threat of climate change. Indian Meteorological Department (Nandi, 24 November 2018) describes climate change as the main factor that caused extreme rainfall in Kerala and led to the flood in August 2018. It is a fact that for the past few years, the State is witnessing not only consecutive floods but also cyclones and landslides. Drought, increasing seal level

and coastal erosion are the ramifications of changing climatic pattern in the State. To combat this climate crisis, the State government has given form to a State Action Plan on Climate Change. The objective of this is to "mainstream climate change strategies into State-level planning and development process and to reduce present and future climate change associated risk of the State" (Directorate of Environment and Climate Change). The Action Plan (Government of Kerala, Kerala State Action Plan on Climate Change, 2014) has identified four districts in the State as climate change hotspots-Alappuzha, Palakkad, Wayanad and Idukki. The parameters considered for identifying these hotspots were based on "the degree of vulnerability of climate-sensitive sectors like agriculture, fisheries and forests, tribal population and low ranking in the human development index"(Government of Kerala, Kerala State Action Plan on Climate Change, 2014). The Department of Environment and Climate Change, Government of Kerala, is entrusted with the task of implementing the State Action Plan on Climate Change. However, even after continuous floods, the State's efforts to achieve a green protocol haven't gained much momentum. When the survey respondents were asked to comment on whether they are satisfied with the preparatory measures of the State government for averting the disasters like flood in future, 47.27% said that they are not satisfied. 32.81% remarked that they are satisfied or to somewhat satisfied. 19.92% either refused to comment or were unaware of the matter.

The laxity showed by successive governments in Kerala for protecting the Western Ghats and stopping deforestation has made the State ecologically more vulnerable to natural disasters. Even after repeated appeals from the environmentalists all over the State, Kerala State government is not willing to implement the Gadgil / Kasturirangan reports for the protection of Western Ghats fearing the public protests from people living in this biodiversity hotspot. To the question 'do you want Kasturirangan / Gadgil Committee reports on the Western Ghats to be implemented', 43.33% of people responded that it must be implemented in the post-flood scenario. 37.67% of respondents were not in favour of

implementing the recommendations of the report in its current form. 19% were neither aware of the report nor having any opinion on it. The Western Ghats is a biodiversity hotspot. After the 2018 flood, Prof. Madhav Gadgil had remarked that 'Kerala flood is an excellent example for manmade disaster as illegal constructions on river beds and unauthorised stone quarrying had contributed to the calamity' ("Environmentalist Gadgil Says…Disaster", 19 August 2018). Prof.Gadgil in his report submitted to the Kerala State Government on the Western Ghats on 31st August 2011 had requested the government to declare the entire Western Ghats region as an eco-sensitive zone by prohibiting mining, quarrying and construction activities in these areas (Kerala State Biodiversity Board Report on Western Ghats, 2011). The non-implementation of Gadgil / Kasturirangan committee report on the Western Ghats is marked as a dark chapter in the environmental history of Kerala.

Urbanisation is taking place rapidly in Kerala. Urbanisation coupled with population pressure is giving rise to new environmental challenges and scarcity of resources. Nowadays, the land has become a rare, expensive commodity in the State. 860 people live in Kerala per square kilometre (Census, 2011). Such is the density of population. As per the 2011 census (Census, 2011), Kerala's total population is 3.34 Crores and out of this about one-fourth constitutes the urban population. Rising urban population and population pressure are resulting in conversion of even the remaining agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes. Conversion of paddy lands and wetlands for building residential complexes, resorts and industrial houses have already led to land degradation and loss of biodiversity. It is adding to water scarcity as well. In Kerala, since the 1970s, land-use patterns are gradually changing. Changing land use pattern is a significant driver of climate change. Unscientific land utilisation in the name of developmental activities is pushing the State to the verge of further disasters. Hence, it is equally crucial for the State to focus on scientific land use management and practices for preventing the catastrophes in future.

Conclusion

As natural calamities are recurrent in the State, the government and society need to prepare for meeting disasters like this in future. While to what extent Kerala society is prepared enough for this is doubtful. Apart from the 'Kerala Rebuild Initiative', no practical steps have been taken up by the government to check the environmental violations that are rampant in the State which many believe was one of the reasons that intensified the flood in 2018. Though majority people were satisfied with the government's performance during the flood, it was evident from the survey that was carried out that many of them were partially or fully dissatisfied with the government's performance after flood especially concerning taking effective steps to control the environmental degradation happening in the State. Majority respondents favour the implementation of the Gadgil/ Kasturirangan committee report on the Western Ghats in the post-flood scenario as they believe that the protection of Western Ghats is crucial for the maintenance of ecological stability of Kerala. More than half of the total respondents believe that building a climate-resilient Kerala is extremely important in today's context, as they think climate change is the most critical factor that has caused the flood in 2018.

The impact of 2018 flood on people's lives and the property was massive. Many of the flood victims haven't recovered yet from the socio-economic and psychological consequences of 2018 flood. If another flood of this magnitude is happening in Kerala in the coming years, Kerala won't be able to withstand it. As it is, the State needs to take adequate steps, precautionary measures and stringent actions to implement the environmental laws strictly in the State without diluting it at any cost. Majority of people who participated in the survey had opined that it is the unholy alliance between the politicians, bureaucrats, and land mafia groups are behind the environmental violations that are taking place in the State. In this context, a responsible government has to burst this nexus and ensure that environmental laws are strictly implemented in the State with immediate effect. Kerala must

convert this crisis point into an opportunity for taking strict action. Otherwise, the time Kerala witness another disaster like this is not very far away.

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Article

Solid Waste Management, Workers and Perspectives: Insights from Punjab

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Abstract

Collecting and segregating waste is largely channelized through informal system of waste management and in this waste workers constitutes an integral part of the solid waste management 'system'. The existing literature points out that they work in inhumane conditions without using protective gears which poses certain occupational health hazards. With limited knowledge and awareness about the health hazards, they not only lack exposure to modern systems, but never demand any change or improvement in the system for the fear of losing their employment. Further, they encounter conflicts with general public, municipal corporations and private parties on various social and economic matters. Irrespective of their contribution, they are mostly not

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acknowledged in the value chain of solid waste management.

Given the above context, the paper is based on a study of an informal network of waste management 'system' which plays a key role in turning waste into resources. With regard to waste workers, different aspect like their role in solid waste management, working conditions, health hazards, organisation and their relation with other stakeholder were studied in selected cities of Punjab State. Based on qualitative research methods like focus group discussions held with the waste workers, the study attempted to understand their role and participation in solid waste management. It also discussed the case study of SWACH in Pune in order to find solutions for integrating formal and informal sector in order bring about sustainable solid waste management and zero waste strategy as well as provide efficiency in service delivery to the residents.

Keywords: Solid waste management; formal and informal sector; turning waste into resources; waste workers; rag-pickers; occupational health hazards; SWaCH

Introduction

Solid Waste Management is a part of environmental and health service provided by urban local bodies within their jurisdiction. Due to multi-dimensional aspects of this service, various stakeholders are involved at different stages such as local government, public, private parties, funding agencies, non-governmental organisations, waste workers etc. The problems derived from solid waste have a unique and complicated character – while it is a potential source of

pollution, on the flipside, it has a great potential as a secondary source of raw materials and energy. Inappropriate waste management practices, such as improper incineration and uncontrolled disposal of waste, majorly contributes to greenhouse gas emissions; the anaerobic degradation of waste in landfills produces methane, a gas that is 21 times more toxic than carbon dioxide (Impact of improper waste disposal, *n.d.*). Hence, pinpointing the significance to mange it well.

Waste workers constitute an integral part of the solid waste management 'system' in which they collect and segregate waste which is largely channelized through informal system of waste management. In this context, existing studies on the subject point out that waste workers function in aninhumane conditions without using protective gears which poses certain occupational health hazards. With limited knowledge and awareness regarding health hazard, they lacked exposure to modern systems and generally resisted change or improvement in the system for the fear of losing their employment. Moreover, they have both social and economic issues of conflicts with general public, municipal corporations and private parties. Irrespective of their contribution, they have been largely unacknowledged in the value chain of solid waste management. Hence, the present study encapsulates

The present study was largely based on qualitative tools as per the nature of this study..It based on both primary and secondary data sources. Secondary data was collected from various journals, books, reports of the government and international and national research organisations, magazines and newspapers. A wide range of these materials were sourced from the internet. The primary data was

collected through interview schedule, focus group discussions,an observation checklist and visual tools. Semi-structured interview schedule was used to collect data from concerned officials of Municipal Corporations and union head of the waste workers in the selected cities of Punjab State.

Twelve (12) focus group discussions, three in each city were conducted with rag-pickers at different locations (secondary storage centres, various market places and dumping site). A schedule was prepared to guide the focus group discussion. An observation checklist was used to take into account various activities of waste workers such as timing to collect waste and waste segregation spots.

The workers were selected from three cities and the capital of Punjab, namely, Amritsar, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, and Chandigarh. Punjab is divided into three geographical regions – Majha, Malwa and Doaba and the selected three cities represent different regions of Punjab State. Further, the Municipal Corporations of these cities served the most populated cities of Punjab. Chandigarh was selected on the basis that it is the capital of Punjab State and has a municipal corporation form of local government.

Waste Workers in Solid Waste Management in Punjab

Waste workers constitute an integral part of the solid waste management 'system'. They are largely involved in waste collection services in the studied cities of Punjab State. Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016 provide an operational definition of the term 'waste pickers' as a person or group of persons engaging in collection of reusable and recyclable solid waste from the source of waste generation as well as

picking up of waste from the streets, bins, processing and waste disposal facilities for sale to recyclers directly or through intermediaries to earn their livelihood (Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016, 06). With regard to waste workers, the various dimensions such as their role in solid waste management, working conditions, health hazards, organisation and their relation with other stakeholders were studied in selected cities of Punjab State.

Role of Waste Workers in Solid Waste Management

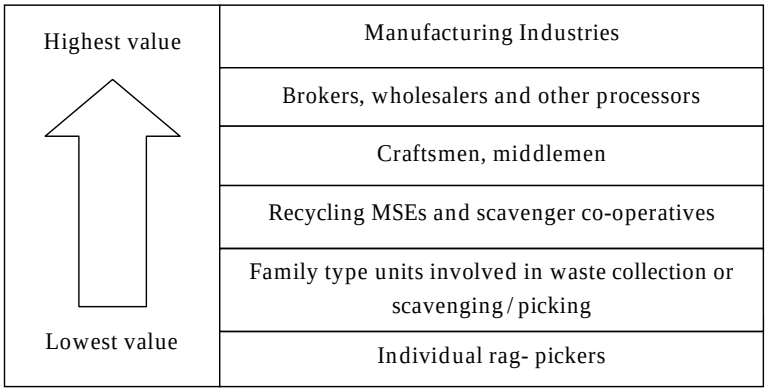
Waste workers had been involved in door to door waste collection 'services' in the residential areas of the cities (as door to door waste collection services had not extended to other sectors i.e. commercial, institutional, miscellaneous) shared by the respective Sanitary Inspectors (Chandigarh, Amritsar, Jalandhar, Ludhiana). Such workers were hired by a private party on monthly payment basis. The workers collected waste from the residential areas using tricycles/two wheeler or three wheeler provided by the company. The collected waste was transported to secondary storage centres where from it was transported through big vehicles to the dumping site. Another category of municipality workers were deployed for waste transportation. These workers loaded waste manually in open trucks or tractor trolleys and took the waste to the disposal site. Generally, six sanitation workers were deployed to load a truck and two-four to load waste into a tractor-trolley.

On the other hand, rag-pickers were not involved in the formal system of solid waste management. During focus-group-discussions, they shared that they collect valuable

waste from various spots. It is important to highlight here that a well-coordinated method of working appeared to exist within the informal sector. There was a clear demarcation of area / boundary and the waste pickers of one particular area did not encroach into other areas. They had divided the work between all the members – areas covered by different family members (community bins, dumpsites, residential areas), specific role i.e. collection and selling. Usually, they worked on individual or family basis. Largely, women and children picked up valuable materials from the secondary storage centres, community bins, dumping sites, and roadsides and sorted the collected waste, whereas men sold such collected items to the dealers.

It was found that the rag-pickers constituted the bottom layer in the waste recycling hierarchy (Figure 1) in the selected cities of Punjab State. They sold the segregated waste to the small or medium dealers.

Figure 1: Hierarchy of Informal Sector Recycling



Source: (Agarwal et.al, 2008)

At various levels, the dealers and workers were engaged in mutually beneficial economic relationships. On one hand, the rag-pickers borrowed money when in need or as an advance from the small dealers *(kabriwala's*). On the other hand, the well established dealers paid advance money to rag-pickers to have adequate supply and hold over the market. The study of Agarwal et.al, (2008) also highlighted that dealers often paid advance capital to smaller retailers who faced space and capital constraints.

Working Conditions

Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016 mention organising awareness generation workshops and camps for the waste workers to handle waste in a safe manner by providing personal protective equipment. However, during focus group discussions, waste workers revealed that loading and unloading of waste was done manually without use of any such equipments (Figure 2 and 3). The waste workers usually used a cloth to cover their faces while loading / unloading of waste. Buying safety equipments is their low priority; food-grains, cloths, commute, education, health were higher. Municipal Corporations were also not providing safety equipments to them. Some orange jackets were distributed to the workers by the private party. However, such jackets did not serve any safety purpose.

As discussed at the various places in the value chain of waste management, majority of the waste workers were not aware about the safe waste handling norms such as usage of facemask, wearing gloves and shoes. Very few were aware of the fact that they were prone to various health problems due to unsafe waste handling.

The private party responsible for waste collection had introduced three wheelers (Auto Tippers) in Ludhiana and Amritsar city. Such vehicles had reduced the manual handling of waste, but it was not widely practiced as these vehicles were of limited number and unable to operate in congested parts of the cities (in the narrow lanes). On the other hand, due to mechanised vehicles, the requirement of manpower had reduced considerably. Thus, some workers had lost their jobs which had resulted in conflicts between the workers and Municipal Corporations and unrest among the workers.

In case of rag pickers, it was observed that they worked in filthy environments, surrounded by crows or dogs under any harsh weather conditions and had to search through hazardous waste without the protection of gloves or shoes. They often ate the filthy food remnants they found in the garbage bins or in the dumping ground. Using the dumping ground as a playing field the children run the health risksfrom exposure to hazardous waste which was unsegregated from other waste.

Further, the rag-pickers were also subjected to exploitation because they constituted the bottom layer in the waste recycling hierarchy. Usually, they sold the collected waste to the local waste dealer on a daily basis, as they had no place to store the waste. Since they had little savings they depended on the waste dealer for loans and advances. Even after several years of waste picking they did not acquire any special skills and were thus unable to move into any other occupation. Thus, as Sarkar (2003) aptly remarks "*Trapped in the vicious circle of poverty and debt they are forced to continue with waste picking*". They were unable to change their profession and their dealers.

Moreover, both categories lamented that the response of the public was not cordial towards them. Some workers, especially of organising committee, shared that they made good money from this profession but there was no respect in this profession. Thus they were educating their children to enable them to change their profession and live a respectful life.

Occupational Health Hazards

The occupational health hazards of waste workers arose from two aspects – poverty and the occupation itself. Since they belonged to the poorest and most deprived sections of the urban population, they were, in any case, prone to various diseases. Sarkar (2003) highlights that *"Under nutrition, growth retardation, anaemia, tuberculosis and other bacterial and parasitic diseases are very common amongst waste workers. These make them all the more susceptible to occupational health hazards"*. Various research studies and first hand interactions revealed that most of the workers indulged in drinking, smoking and gambling. Thus, they spent money on such unproductive and harmful activities on a daily basis.

In the hope of discovering some valuable items, the rag-pickers look through heaps of mixed waste (including toxic medical waste) using their bare hands and feet and hence come in direct contact with infectious waste materials. Such exposure results in various infections. UNEP highlighted three types of occupational hazards associated with waste handling: infections, chronic diseases and accidents.

The waste workers are prone to various occupational health hazards such as infections of skin, blood, eye,

respiratory, and intestinal. Due to exposure to dust and other hazardous compounds, they are prone to chronic respiratory diseases. Further, they are victims of accidents i.e. bone and muscle disorders resulting from the handling of heavy containers, wounds, poisoning and chemical burns, gas explosion at landfill sites. Similar problems were highlighted during FGD's in the selected cities of Punjab State. It was found that they suffered from various types of injuries and infections. In a few cases, infections resulted in severe disabilities i.e. imputation of limbs to control the infection. They shared that due to lack of money they were unable to consult doctors at the preliminary stage. Consequently, they ended up with facing severe problems in terms of physical health and financial loss. This further made them prone to stress, depression and substance abuse. Thus, it disturbed their personal and professional lives.

Figure 2 Rag-pickers- I

Figure 3 Rag-pickers- II

Organisation of Waste Workers

Historically, the caste system of Indian society is a determining factor in the solid waste management system. Across the country, the workforce carrying out solid waste collection and transport activities consisted primarily of socially excluded communities on the margins of society. Waste picking along with any work related to garbage or handling of carcasses and human excreta is traditionally bound to the lowest caste – the' untouchables' (Sarkar, 2003 et. al; Agarwal et. al, 2008). Therefore, workers belonging to this caste claimed their right over waste. This claim has resulted in conflict between private operators and informal sector waste workers as well as with other workers (migrate labour) involved in waste picking in the waste management sector in the selected cities of Punjab State. The resistance of the informal sector workers resulted in absence of waste

segregation and processing practices in selected cities of Punjab State as shared by respective Sanitary Inspectors of selected cities of Punjab State.

The workers had formed their unions in order to protect their rights in selected cities of Punjab State. They elect their President and other members. In Chandigarh, Rag-pickers formed their union named as "Door to Door Garbage Collection Society" and working from last 17 years with registration no. 3477. Its current strength is about 4100 (approximately).

As there is strong connectedness among the workers and their leaders, they believed that their leaders would fight for their rights. It was also observed that there was strong connectedness among the workers. They supported each other during their difficult times i.e. illness, lean periods of work. They were ready to go on strike on the order of their President and raised their voice for their rights. Moreover, their President and working committee members were seen to speak out boldly to place their demands before the authorities. Due to the strong existence of the Unions, the PPP mode had not been implemented successfully in the Punjab State. The unions believed that collecting waste is their profession since ages and they will not allow any other party to take it over. Such interventions of the government threatened their existence.

The focus group discussions with waste workers also showed that the unions of established sanitation workers belong largely to marginal communities were stronger than rag-pickers (the migrant labours) in terms of stability and power. Their union was quite old and well-established as compared with informal workers.

Integration of Waste Workers

SWM Rules (2016) have mentioned that it is the duty of the urban local bodies to establish a system to recognise the organizations of waste pickers or informal waste collectors and promote and establish the integration of these authorized waste pickers and collectors to facilitate the participation in solid waste management including door to door waste collection. Moreover, the workers should be integrated by forming their self help groups and providing identity cards to make them part of the formal system of waste management.

It was shared by a sanitary inspector of MC Jalandhar that the process of integration of workers by issuing identity cards had been initiated. Moreover, no private party had been involved in solid waste management in the city due to opposition of workers and general public. Thus, the workers had full control over the generated waste. In case of Amritsar and Ludhiana city, the private party had hired the same workers who were earlier working under resident welfare associations or private contractors.

Conclusion

The study therefore reiterates that even though waste workers constitute an integral part of the solid waste management 'system', their contribution has largely unacknowledged. It is apparent that they were forced to work in inhumane conditions which posed certain occupational health hazards to them. They had very limited knowledge and awareness about the health hazards and they lacked exposure to modern systems and generally resisted change or improvement in the system for the fear of

losing their employment. Moreover, they have both social and economic conflicts with general public, municipal corporations and private parties. They were not integrated with formal system of solid waste management. The need of the hour is to integrate them in the formal chain of solid waste management with mutual co-existence and respect.

To conclude, Sarkar (2003) puts their situation in perspective by mentioning that "*Their contributions remain unacknowledged and they continue to languish due to various occupational health hazards arising out of abysmal working conditions. Moreover they receive extremely low economic returns and are victims of harassment from the police, municipal workers and the general population. Government approaches to the needs of the waste pickers are too compartmentalized and fails to have a holistic view of their problems and requirements. It is imperative that policies be so designed that they are more responsive to the needs of the waste pickers"*.

Suggestions

- Awareness camps should be organised about importance of using safety equipments and health education should be imparted in order to reduce occupational health hazards.
- Health insurance must be an essential part of the package provided to waste workers.
- The databases of waste workers need to be developed. Identity cards can be issued to them and records related to employment and health maintained.
- The workers unions were seen to be playing an important role in affecting various aspects of the solid waste management 'system'. Therefore, representatives

of the Workers' unions should be involved in the planning process of SWM to provide smooth services. There should be clear communication between MC and Workers' Unions.

- The conflict between rag-pickers and private party can be minimised by providing a level-playing to both parties for participating in the service provision. Various research studies had highlighted that these unions have rich experience in collection and recycling; Thus, they should be mainstreamed into the formal system of SWM.
- The waste workers should be integrated with the formal system of waste management by addressing the various operational hurdles i.e. social acceptance of waste workers, regularity and punctuality in waste workers. The best practice of SWaCH in Pune showed that the transition from waste pickers to service provider was not an easy task. It required new attitudes and behaviour from both waste pickers and residential communities. However, these changes were mutually reinforcing. The waste pickers had to learn punctuality, regularity and cordiality in their work and to professionalize their appearance. The residents learned to treat them as workers and fellow humans. Waste workers were first trained and then integrated into the formal system of waste management.
- Capacity Building of waste workers requires a systematic plan. Skill trainings should be provided to practice composting and run recycling units. Moreover, they should be trained in production activities using waste materials. Their services can be hired part-time by entrepreneurs working on waste recycling products/

materials prepared by waste workers can be used for beautification of the cities; this would also supplement their income. For example: old tires can be painted and can be used to develop small green belts on the roadsides.

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Article

Globalization and the New Indian Middle Class: The Multidimensional Dialogues

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Abstract

This article discusses the syncretic evolution of globalization in India, which, despite seemingly new, can be traced back to its colonial days, promoting emergence of the middle class, and underwent changes in the postcolonial days, particularly following the national policy of opening up the economy in 1991, with emphasis to the days in this 21st century. This paper goes deep into the ethnographic analyses of how globalization has impacted the socio-economic life in India and has given birth to a new variant of the middle class—the new Indian middle class (NIMC). It covers the changes in the politics of division within the population, reflected by brand economics, media economics as also health consciousness convergently turned into a democratic hype leading to the assessments of the public policies to the genre of mass hallucinations to some extent.

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Keywords: Middle class, new economic era, globalization, new Indian middle class, displacements of the marginalized section, brandonomics, cyberculture

Introduction

Globalization is a word, the world has been emphatic about since the fall of the Berlin Wall. The term had been, however, felt as much back as the *Washington Consensus*. Etymologically, the word — *globalization* — comes from the word *global*, thereby deriving the nature of spherical approach to the international economy. Let me first try to define globalization. This seems to be easily understood, yet difficult to be unanimous in terms of its parameters of definition. Different thinkers have expressed differently in accordance with different connotations; for instance, those thinkers who reiterate the ideals of Communism can never be synchronised with those in support of neo-liberalism. Martin Albrow expressed globalization as a *single world society, global society*(Albrow, 1990). Anthony Giddens wanted to explain globalization as *local happenings* [being] *shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa*(Giddens, 1990). Martin Khor defined globalisation as being *what we in the Third World have for several centuries called colonization* (Khor, 1995).

Evolution of Globalization in India

Interestingly, Joseph Nye preferred the term *globalism* to *globalization*(O. Keohane & Nye, Jr., 2000). The problem is, in fact, not concerned with the grammar of the term rather than the institutionalization of the *open economy* and changes accordingly in different factions of life. Anyway, it is difficult to ascertain the exact definition of globalization. However, it cannot be ruled out that globalization is the qualified combination of the domestic elements with that of the world. In other words, the mingling of the domestic and world affairs should be termed as *globalization*. Even if it starts with economy, its tentacles are spread across culture,

society, religions, and by far, with a spill-over effects on politics as well. For instance, a CD of Indian classical music can be recorded anywhere in the world and sold everywhere thereof. As it is an economic activity in one sense, it determines culture as another invisible that leaves its influence across the world.

The proofs of the pre-historical days are found to have some European impacts, thereby, indicating to a prevalence of international trade and commerce thereof with the Indus Civilization. Similarly, later down the ages in the Indian economic history, the same practice is found to have repeatedly taken place. On the other hand, if we explore the cultural history of India, we find ourselves at home while traversing to the South-East Asia only to find various architectural erects having been built over there much back during the ancient historical period. Today we read in Indian history the activities of *Cholas*. If scrutinised historically, it would be found that the then Indian culture was transplanted to various lands of the South-East Asia. Therefore, globalization of the Indian culture took place at that time apart from the exports of spices etc. In modern era as well, the seeds of globalization began in the interests of the ancient Indian capitalists. The European merchants sailed to India much after.

Globalization in Europe began basically in the wake of the *Industrial Revolution* over there. This led to the promotion of the colonialism and, thereby, traversing of the merchants across the globe in search of markets for the products in excess of the local demands. Therefore, it can be said that globalization did start occurring at the time of *Renaissance* in Europe. The British merchants assembled *inter alia* in India with the mission of selling products. But shortly they fell acutely involved in the domestic politics of this land. They gradually required more man-power to tackle their affairs. Only then few Indians got the opportunity to come close with the British. Thus crated the new group within the society as *middle class*, trying to tear out the limitation of use of vernacular only in favour of English, socializing to their next

generation the indispensability of western culture to keep up with the needs of the era well justified under the alien colonial rule eclipsing the medieval-era-feudalism. Particularly, in trade and commerce, the British needed engagements of a considerable percentage of the then Indians. They were found joining the British firms as junior partners in the ambience that there was no bar to the membership of the European trade organisations and primarily there was also no distinction between the British and Indian businessmen(Misra, 1983) Gradually, the aliens institutionalized the Indians' involvements in their colonial affairs more by means of launching the *Permanent Settlements* (1793), the *Indian Civil Service* (ICS), as well as mobilizing a considerable number of the educated Indians through legislation of different laws including the *Government of India Act*s and the like which were *essentially* British or European. In that sense, the colonial rule in India ushered in an approach to Indian polity and administration, which was absolutely beyond Indianhood. Therefore, globalization in effect already took place in the wake of the evolution of the Europeans from the capacity of traders to colonial masters in India. it justifies to what extent globalization was imbibed in the making of India as a nation gradually. Even the Constitution of India, as drafted by adopting features of different foreign constitutions, indicates to the feature of political cultural globalization that took place in India as early as 1950. However, globalization seems to claim a universal acceptance in the wake of the fall of the Berlin Wall. Incidentally, in India the new economic order got its way almost simultaneously with the fall of the Berlin Wall or the global launch of globalization,thereby, symbolizing a global effect towards India's policy of new economic order that promoted Indian economy to be at competition with the rest of the world. It ushered in a fluid economy to India generating a new socio-economic genre in the sense that like the global, India, too, slipped off the law of economic certainty although looking seemingly high as per yielding capability of the services sector of the economy.

India in the New Economic Era: Interactive Growth of Middle Class

The features of those who emerged in capacity of these new potentials grew ahead of indulging in casteism led to the birth of a new genre of middle class. In fact, reservation in itself ushered in opportunities for the downtrodden to ameliorate their socio-economic condition (see Jodhka 2017,Sheth 2014). Jaffrelot (2003) described it as a *silent revolution*. In fact, a considerable extent of upward mobility has been taking place people belonging to the communities like SCs and STs even when the communities they represent remain largely poor and marginalized (Jodhka and Prakash 2016, Srinivas 2016). Further, indulgence in corporate economy further aggravated the situation of making a new lobby of middle class. However, these two acted in opposition to each other since while reservation encouraged upliftment of the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and the OBCs at the public higher education and public services, the neo-liberal economic boom nullifies any potential of caste-driven affirmative action. It puts into the system an overhauling change by bringing change into the paradigm of reservation itself; very recently, the Government of India put emphasis upon reservations on account of socio-economic condition in terms of EWS (Economically Weaker Section) instead of belonging to a particular caste or tribe. Therefore, it heralds a new approach to egalitarianism in India, that as an aftermath seems to be more encouraging to the making of the new middle class. Another important point to be mentioned here is that with the emergence of the middle class the role of the upper class started being eclipsed except taking global leadership in capitalist enterprises. Alternatively speaking, members of the middle class have come up with supportive role towards global capitalism by means of their socio-economic conditions, education, professions, and the keenness to remain detached from the mass. The fallback situation is that these people basically make the white collar workers as against the blue collar ones that pervaded capitalism in the pre-globalization tenure. Incidentally, the basic tenets of middle class can be traced well to the parlances

of Antonio Gramsci who meant it to be the *educated class* of the *traditional intellectuals*.... [with the growth of] *that social utopia, by which the intellectuals think of themselves as "independent", autonomous, endowed with the character of their own*(Hoare and Smith, n.d.). Even if, Gramsci's work was dedicatedly based upon the Italian studies, still the behavioural theory of his attempt has been suited to the Indian society as well. Satish Deshpande described the members of the middle class as the *owners of cultural capital....possess[ing]innate talents,...[being] hardworking, disciplined and so on* (Deshpande, 2004). These are as unique qualities as enable distinction from the mass. This is how, the concept of elite and mass surfaced out in the then society of India and that still exists. This middle class came out with the main part in the administration and economy of the independent India. This class maintained its homogeneity by keeping up its aloofness which got waived with the Narasimha regime taking recourse to the announcement of the *Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization* (LPG) in the Annual Financial Budget of 1991. The tag of *middle class* itself faced an overhauling transformation in the governmental efforts towards the new economic era at the behest of the then Union Finance Minister and later two-times Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh (Baru, 2015). At this stage, besides the urban middle class, industrialists and big farmers, the so-called backward and erstwhile untouchable classes tried to topple the concept of *command polity*at the behest of demanding from the government various privileges more seriously than in the past. In other words, the pressure as such on the government exchequer during 1980s by means of myriad favourable policy-prescriptions caused deficit between the government expenditure and the revenue receipts (Mukherji, 2007). This led to the unearthing of the new economic policy of globalization at the sovereign level (See, Ganguly and Mukherji, 2011). Therefore, globalization became meaningful to the caste-ridden Indian society. It has been found quite interestingly that the caste-awareness in terms of *demand polity* developed sharply in the age of globalization. The more the Indian society went globalized, the more sensitive different communities fell to be. Before the

Narasimha regime, globalization had been well ushered into the Indian economy by none other than Rajiv Gandhi during his Prime Ministership. He had initiated the promotion of domestic private sector with emphasis (Jenkins, 1999).

The middle class post-LPG is termed as the new Indian middle class (hereinafter, NIMC) which is a combination of both the traditional or old Indian middle class and the new entrants as an output of the globalized socio-economic conditions. Before going to the definitions and redefinitions of middle class, new middle class and new Indian middle class seriously put forth by different ideologues and experts, we should first sketch out who could be drained into the lobby of the middle class and its *new* fellows. This is basically based upon some econometric inferences identified through empiricism and various quantitative means of research. The 2019 Economics Nobel Laureates Abhijit V. Banerjee and Esther Duflo defined middle class as those people who would have the daily per capita expenditure to be valued at PPP between $2 and $10 (Banerjee and Duflo 2008). Still, it is clear that if x and y do have the per capita expenditure leaning to two extremes as defined by Banerjee and Duflo, x and y must not be enjoying the same social security. Therefore, there must be some hierarchy in this regard. So, categorization is necessary as had already been suggested by Sridharan (2004). Yet, if the income slabs are the same irrespective of rural and urban households, it would be some gross irregularity to be found in the procedure of the life-styles respectively. It has to be kept in mind that the urban people are by default required to enjoy or avail of everything in modes of a currency economy. But the rural counterparts are much detached from the modern currency economy; they are more based upon nature and barter economy. The concepts as well as functions of wealth and property are different in rural and urban economies. Therefore, one who is rich or *elite middle class* [italics by the author] (after Sridharan) in rural fringes, may have to struggle in urban settlement. And, that one starts feeling moderately once migrating to towns or very astutely, to cities.

Now, it is a perfect time to lean towards the qualitative discussion which is, however, reliant upon the quantified knowledge as well as empirical changes in data. Carol Upadhya opined that the difference between the old and new Indian middle classes is basically driven by demise of erstwhile Statist ideologies but reorientation of market-based ideologies (Upadhya, 2015). The new entrants to the middle class consider the condition of their old counterparts as suffocated with the closed economic system and globalization has heralded optimum potential to grow according to ability in absence of any inhibition like the *License Raj*. Therefore, the NIMC enjoy the demise of ideologies in favour of globalization. They have been even said of as garnering *celebratory rhetoric about globalisation* (Deshpande *op. cit.*). The old Indian middle class was integrated with the first two sectors of the national economy whereas the new entrants to the NIMC are the outcome of various economicpolicies of the governments like direct taxes, deregulation, privatization and the like (Kumar, 2012). However, this has been contradicted by SuhasPalshikar; he opined that the NIMC has derived from the middle class ethics of the national political parties like the Indian National Congress (INC) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) as if the NIMC has acted spontaneously like an agency instead of an outcome of spill-over of different policies (Palshikar, 2001). On the other hand, Fernandes with her strong conviction seemed to be indicative to the autonomy of the NIMC as an economically driven political pressure group; she said, "[T]he new Indian middle class represents the political construction of a social group that operates as a proponent of economic liberalization" (Fernandes, 2006). However, it can be unequivocally said that this class is a heterogeneous one. So, automatically, interests of different factions thereof also fail to be homogeneous as well. In other words, different factions of the NIMC are oriented to different tendencies and interests. The most significant potential is that in many cases the so-called idea of class-conflicts has now been replaced with the intra-class conflicts of the NIMC. To be more specific, the NIMC is innately hierarchical with the socio-economic

discrepancies within. Therefore, it can be classified into upper middle class, middle-middle class and lower middle class. One point here is very much important; that is, the economy is now directly influenced by globalization whereas the rest of the affairs do also get metamorphosed as the spill-over effects of globalization. The people find their cultural tastes and approaches to life etc. have been rationalized over metaphysical treatments, all being influenced by the fluctuations in the economy of the capitalists. Here, one thing has to be fostered with conviction that this is unlike the Marxist idea of *Economic Determinism*. It is rather somewhat associated with the relative autonomy of their tendencies that are *essences* instead of *existences.* The cultural essences acquired in this age of *brandonomics* by all members of the middle class do not always go commensurate with their financial capacity. While higher education is a parameter for the membership of the NIMC, earning in the service sector with not so high academic qualifications, too, is a factor of belonging to the NIMC. Even, there is sharp distinction among the service sector employees in terms of their perks and perquisites varying on the basis of their academic qualifications. So, conflicts generate among the sub-classes of the NIMC in the garb of *an intelligentsia vs. lower- and middle-middle class split*(Rudra, 1989).Truly, the technocrats nowadays are all the members of the upper rung of the NIMC(Deshpande *op. cit*.). He said more that this class segment was one or two generation(s) back identified itself with the demands for development (ibid). Interestingly enough, Deshpande (ibid) observed that the NIMC did not face any discontinuity between the phase of development and that of globalization. Even in this era of globalization, too, there developed a steady progress of *politics of forgetting* (Fernandes, 2004) that evolved as a link between development and globalization. In brief detail, it can be said that the NIMC does have essential inclinations towards environmental standardization of the life-style in terms of the *Green Economy*, beautification of the natural canvas around, urban forestry, and sectoral and non-haphazard settlements for the urban poor and the urban slum-

dwellers. To that effect, the members of this class require the government respond to such interests so much so that their floating electorship does not become avowed against the regime in power. The latter also is very much conscious to mobilize the vote-bank of the NIMC and makes policies of beautification, urban forestry, and developed urban slums, even organizing the hawkers in separate pockets arranged in way that would not cause any kind of dissatisfaction and rage in the mindsets of the NIMC. Fernandes thus intended to term such policy-making as the politics of forgetting the mass, below the level of the NIMC. Therefore, it is clear that there has been an overhauling change in the leadership quotient as well. Unlike before, leaders are nowadays hardly influenced only by the *politics of the governed.* Partha Chatterjee showed in his book *The Politics of the Governed* how a group of refugees taking refuge in an urban slum becomes a cornerstone of the state-centre politics and ultimately become successful in getting their basic needs authorized by the government itself. In this era of globalization, the scenario has changed paradigmatically in a way that the *politics of the governed* has been sharply replaced with the *politics of forgetting*. Obviously, this has been possible because the days of the Communists are now obsolete at the initiative of the capitalists of globalization. Incidentally, however, equilibrium has been earmarked on the part of the capitalists of the globalized age through taking responsibility for the development of the society at large, thereby positively affecting particularly those who are socio-economically not so self-reliant and have to depend upon the welfare activities of the government. But the latter, too, seems to be a competitor of the private enterprises in the era of globalization. The government takes to the welfare schemes only to prevent the vulnerable from becoming the *dangerous classes*(Chatterjee, 2008). So, that vacuum is now filled up also by some large business tycoons who come forward with the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) to stand by those belonging to the inaffluent rung of the NIMC. This is also a strategy of the private sector to waive the negative rumours, if any, of the profit-making orientations of the private investors (Mallick,

2016). Actually, this approach can be analysed in terms of the *transfer of resources....from the accumulation economy to programmes aimed at providing the livelihood needs of the poor* (Chatterjee, *op. Cit*.).

Incidentally, it has to be remembered that demise of ideologies has been eclipsed by the continuous assessments of the political entities by the citizens. Alternatively speaking, this has caused acute behaviouralism prompted by the requirements of the exchanges of the *invisibles*. This has also promoted Trans-national relations that took the place of International relations. While the latter focuses the relations between two or more States at the governmental level, the former fosters just the reverse, that is, generating relations among the different nationals by means of *inter alia* the Social Networking Sites (SNSs) without seeking or requiring to seek any permission from the governments concerned. If properly compared, it would not be difficult to find out that trans-national relations basically do foster the idea of the global citizenship instead of the geo-politically compart-mentalized citizenship of separate States. This has been termed as the new *post-patriotic identities* (Appadorai, 1997)of the NIMC that overcomes the limitations of the national borders in favour of the cultural globalization. The members of the NIMC consider themselves as the *portrait* of the nation rather than politico-legal members thereof (Deshpande, *op. cit*.; Spivak, 1988).

Thus, the government now follows the trends of the citizens, not the other way round. This situation is more reflected in case of the new social movements. If asked what a regime is, it can be very simply analysed that when a political party or an alliance of some of them come in power, then it becomes a regime. In that manner, political parties follow the tempo of the people enraged due to some reasons to come to streets (Mallick, 2015). Earlier, the political parties used to take the initiative of convincing the electors in accordance with their electoral mandates. But democracy in India is now mature enough. It does not require any party to guide the common people. It has been instead the endemic that the political parties do not initiate any protest staged by the

common people. They appear only on observing the trends of the affairs and act accordingly (ibid). In short, all political parties need to organize a reliable vote-bank which is necessary for them to be triumphant in elections amidst the political dissatisfaction-turned-multiparty system in the backdrop of globalization. Not only this, there is also another dimension. Since a majority of the new middle class is involved in the service sector of the economy, they always go in for the political parties which coming to power by means of the elections would ultimately stand staunchly against the political chaos. In other words, the citizens deliberately non-align with the manifestos of those political parties, which call for *demand polity* by means of various resentments. Does this anyway affect the momentum of *demand polity per se* at all? The way Rudolph and Rudolph termed *demand polity* has been of late transformed by nature. Therefore, *demand polity* has, now, gained its momentum more articulately but more peacefully than before. As already mentioned, the citizens do not come to streets politically, but in a manner that can be termed as *new social movements*. Such movements help the citizens require the governments to respond to their demands hopefully in manners of allowing the political parties just as the agencies to operate in elections and not beyond. So, very innately describing the matter in pictographic sense, globalization here acts as an external catalyst to the citizenry political activities so much so that they are mere evaluative of the politics as a process, that is, the behavioural essences of the institutional existences.

Diasporic Interaction of NIMC

Finally, it has to be mentioned that in recent past there has emerged the diaspora culture in the event of new Indian middle class. Actually, this class is now basically the global citizens. Their actions are now oriented to continuously replacement of international relations with trans-national relation. Incidentally, the issues of involving the citizens as a part of the politico-socio-economic *Confidence Building Measures* (CBMs) become a

cornerstone of the recent development of the governments following the intents of the people, not the other way round. The two other politico-legal dimensions of the diaspora culture is, first, launching the *Dual Citizenship* as already pursued by the Government of India for last few years, and secondly, initiative if the Election Commission of India (ECI) starts e-voting for the Non-Resident Indians (NRIs). In 2010, an amendment was undertaken to allow the NRIs to register themselves at the place of their residences as mentioned in their individual passports (Moona, 2015). Obviously, this attempt can be described as the effect of the growth of awareness among the NRI citizens about the policy-making in the Indian legislatures.

The largest impact of globalization with respect to the NIMC as also its diaspora perspectives can be traced in the affairs of media and communications. This should be discussed at varied length along with different connotations. First, I intend to wipe out the confusion with modernity and westernity. I think the word—westernity—carries in itself an indicative conflict with the East of the human globe. But modernity is something different and seemingly postulates a chance to get rid of the backwardness of the past. In other words, for the sake of arguments, a society of the East—albeit being an *Eastern*, that is, being an *anti-western* society—can be modern by getting over the past drudgeries by means of technology. Exploring the accounts of the past, however, both are found to have overlapped with each other. After Chatterjee (1993), it can be said that the *Bhadralok* (socio-economically and culturally defined as *middle class*) had grown a sense of being modern by means of welcoming western values in order to justify their sense of nationality. The Indian middle class in postcolonial era gradually became modern, that is, technologically sacrosanct. On the other hand, this class now grows parallel perspectives of being culturally western; somehow they like to identify themselves with the culture of the west rather than the East, South-East and the Far East. In fact, most of them do not act upon their choice; they are not even aware of the East. As a consequence, they always identify themselves with the idea of

being modern by means of western culture. In recent times, many of this class are fascinated with the East for the purpose of tourism as if to justify how modern as well as western they are in their behaviour. Obviously, the East subsists on this falsified self-satisfied sensibility of the NIMC. Amidst various types of postcolonial colonialism, *visual colonialism*, too, is very much significant. "....[T]he media are significant carriers of the ideals the 'new', liberalized India and in so doing promote the ideology and practices of consumer modernity—the act of.....reinforcing one's superior middle-class status" (Ganguly-Scrase and Scrase, 2009). Gupta (2000), however, hesitated to rely upon the essence of *westernization* instead of terming the consumerist behaviour of the people as *westoxication*. According to him, the westoxicated society instead of being westernized relies upon consumer items and aesthetic preferences imported from the west without any indigenous mediation (*ibid*). The NIMC is, therefore, westoxicated, not westernized *per se*. They undergo a great sigh of relief out of the versatile uses of internet. This prompts out as a pillar of the Indian democracy beyond its classical instruments in practice. In other words, NIMC lives an era of internet democracy superscribed by the basic aesthetics of democracy, that is, the sense of remaining well. This involves various modes of activities in interaction with one another that so far has mattered the Indian society and the Indian rationales. The internet democracy largely satisfies in terms of the number of population in the Indian society, primarily, the technocratic individuals—who constitutes the majority—and, then the rest—the ineffective minority in a trickle-down manner. Therefore, in this era of cyberculture in India, the NIMC people feel safe and secure by being exposed to the rest of the society at large, particularly when the global is the limit of the society. The use of media is no more relegated to films and news on television only. It involves a wide array of market based on internet. Incidentally, television is now gradually eclipsed by the internet-based android and iOS technology that give the NIMC people access to cultural items at their convenience. Surveys show that most of the eligible NIMC people despite being in services sector are prone to the

cultural affairs thanks to YouTube, facebook, WhatsApp rather than television itself. The FM involvement, too, is largely on the wane. This ensures a new market that contributes well to the economy. This also evinces candidly that the more the NIMC becomes *net*ocratic in a postcolonial journey of democracy, the more the tertiary sector economy gets uplifted and the more they fall *westoxicated* [emphasized by the author] with the imagination of being westernized. This is the latest development of the new Indian middle class which becomes a catalyst in the silent cultural colonialism of the West through the myriad means of globalization India.

Globalization and Civil Society Institutions of the NIMC

Globalization makes democracy more democratic by promoting citizens' involvement in daily affairs more spontaneously. As already apprised, democracy is no more only institutional, thereby, legal and political in India at present. It is now highly social as well. This is an era when State is not identified identical with civil society. This is grossly benefited by the NIMC. This is found expanding the power of the NIMC by means of human rights movements, anti-corruption movements and other types of non-caste and non-traditional social movements called as the new social movements (NSMs). “Civil Society....is posited as a site that ostensibly expands space for associational and protest politics” (Gudavarthy, 2013). A new approach in the conglomeration of this class has appeared; that is a new club culture called upmarket clubs. These are not new at all but “the expansion of such social spaces as well as the stark increase in membership fees” is the newest development in this regard (Fernandes, 2004). The citizens' groups intervene between the State and local self-governments actively so much so that the NIMC people become decisive in the policy-making, policy-adjustments and policy-readjustments.

Many of the civil society institutions function as the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). The NIMC utilizes such

NGOs in varied ways, not only for the primary benefits of their own interests but also those of the poor and the marginalized section. Yet, at the bottom of all, the basic target remains how to set aside the latter from challenging the former. In alternative parlance, many NGOs are *prima facie* understood as helping the poor but actually by doing this they ultimately dilute the vulnerability of the elites or upper middle class to the wrath of the poor (Harriss, 2006). Thus, the NIMC tries to regulate the society in favour of its own interests. This has been a *new politics* as different from the *old politics* in which Harriss described the former as behaviouralism and the latter as the normative institutional politics respectively.

Health Economics and the NIMC

Once Leela Fernandes (2004) identified beautification as an approach to differentiating new middle class from the lower class of the population. If we explore it deeply, it will be found that it basically relates to ensuring the health and hygiene above the standardized rationale of development. Obviously, a good maintenance of hygiene requires good affordability; the NIMC does have that while the lower classes do not. Sanitation and related elements are of particular significance in this era of globalization in India. Therefore, the most conspicuous development here in the urban studies is based on to what extent and intensity health and hygiene is attained deliberately. To the mass who do not have the capacity to afford that level of hygiene due to lack of sufficient means, it is treated as beautification. In reality, the implementation of the policy of beautification amounts to evacuation of the lower classes *en masse* from some areas stipulated for the settlements of the NIMC. That is also identified by exploring what Fernandes termed as the *politics of forgetting* (ibid) while Sibley (1995) had termed as the *spatial purification*. This results in an embodiment of a new cultural citizenship. It can be said that this is how globalization is enabled to get over the traditional casteism and convert it into class-conflicts. The practice

of displacement is, thus, the newest development of the politics of the NIMC.

This class invests a huge amount for health. Primarily, it sounds that people of this class are health conscious. But, actually, they do have that financial capacity to decide something beyond their basic needs. Unfortunately, the lower classes or the marginalized section of the society do not earn that much so that they could afford their health benefits. The NIMC people do feel secure by investing mediclaims (health insurance) which are forfeitable if unused. In general, the NIMC people are accustomed to carrying drinking water in branded water-bottles or thermo flasks along with tiffin packed in globalized models of boxes and foils. On the other hand, the poor who are even vulnerable to various types of diseases due to not-up-to-the-mark sanitation and round-the-clock precautions cannot maintain so mainly due to poverty. The resources, too, are to be divided into many children in the marginalized families whereas the NIMC people maintain self-proclaimed decent family-planning with a very few numbers of children so that the standard of living remains well off, particularly in terms of health and hygiene. Therefore, it raises a valid question as to how many of the marginalized people can fight spread of pandemics like Coronavirus (COVID-19) by getting over all these deficiencies, particularly when assemblages of people go markedly reduced out of phobia, since most of the poor subsist on feeding enjoyment-foods to the people of the NIMC in such assemblages! It is found in reality that the way people belonging to the NIMC are well versed with health knowledge and awareness as well as financially equipped to afford precautions, those belonging to the marginalized section are not so. It is learnt that health consumables of the NIMC like sanitizers and masks are so in demand that they anyhow go out of market! Even car sale is found to be on rise as compared to the past when there was a sudden stumble in car sale and production. Health consciousness, therefore, is eligible enough to promote sale of expensive items like cars that ensure safe health being detached from the mass modes of transportation (ET 2020). Therefore, it transpires the fact that not

only do the congruent displacement and rehabilitation of the marginalized section pay the good health dividend for the NIMC, but also their occasional assemblages, where the two classes come close to each other anyhow, may be the challenge to the next round of *politics of forgetting* or *spatial purification*.

Over health consciousness sometimes takes the shape of hallucinations and hysteria; that is a major feature of the NIMC people. They also appreciate it to some extent. Out of this grows the crisis of spreading rumours that create further phobia and anxiety in the society; that has the capability to fundamentally change people's food behaviour and purchasing behaviour. Obviously, that puts impacts upon market, trade and commerce, thereby, the national economy. Therefore, this becomes feasible more so because the NIMC people do possess, on a large scale, the access to android, and thus, their orientation to socialize virtually as if to justify, in a self-satisfying manner, their awareness and belongingness to the society primarily and the economy at large. But, it becoming an addiction, they graduate into misusing the technology to the utter challenge of the society itself. Interestingly enough, people belonging to the NIMC and their children can afford the luxury of such an addiction. In fact, virtual life has become indispensable for the NIMC in its multidimensional dialogues.

Conclusion

Globalization grew with the potential of encouraging the people to depend upon the State only for international security and currency. It makes people learn how to be mature citizens! Besides revolutionary changes in the economy and, accordingly, in the approaches of the individual economic behaviour, they are even oriented to justifying the self-defence in terms of appointing private security. Their basic motto is to lead a good, safe and secure life at the cost of minimum expenditure while the *modus operandus* is to reduce reliance upon the State gradually. On the other hand, it has to kept in mind that their financial behaviour commensurate

with their social and family orientations is considerably responsible for the changes in the bank rates besides the external influences. As a result, they consider themselves as more constitutive of the State power thereby, justifying, their importance in this era of globalization. The State as well admits the no-negligibility of the NIMC so far as policy-making is concerned. Political parties irrespective of their manifestos and ideologies have no choice to distance from this class as this class pledges the fulcrum of the globalized economy of India.

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Article

Hindu Identity in the Nineteenth Century: Swami Dayanand Saraswati And Pandit Shardha Ram Phillauri

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Abstract

This paper will examine and compare various strands of ideology, of two well-known socio-religious reformers of the nineteenth century: Swami Dayanand Saraswati (1824-1883) and Pandit Shardha Ram Phillauri (1837-1881). They were contemporaries and shared the context of socio-cultural transformation under colonial rule. This period was marked by reform movements in nearly all parts of India. Swami Dayanand Saraswati founded the Arya Samaj movement first at Bombay in 1875 and then at Lahore in 1877. Pandit Shardha Ram was regarded as the earliest protagonist of the Sanatan Dharm movement in the Punjab. They represented two ends of the same continuum. It is believed that in their travels the two men never met, although supposedly challenges to formal debates were issued by both. These two Hindu reformers contended with each other and each evolved a

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distinct Hindu identity in the new challenging socio-political environment.

Keywords: Hindu identity, socio-religious reform, scriptures, beliefs and practices,caste system, *dwija*, untouchables.

Introduction

Juxtaposed to each other, Swami Dayanand Saraswati and Pandit Shardha Ram Phillaurie merged as spokespersons' of their respective beliefs in the second half of the nineteenth century, reflecting a new consciousness of their Hindu identity. On one hand, Swami Dayanand represented relatively radical ideas of the Arya Samaj, and on the other, Pandit Shardha Ram, representative of traditional Punjabi Hindus, upheld the orthodox position. We must begin first by placing these Hindu leaders in their historical context.

Establishment of colonial rule in the Punjab after annexation in 1849, brought about a social transformation with the introduction of new administrative and legal systems, new educational policy, new technology, and new patterns of trade. The introduction of western civilization, challenged traditional life of the Punjabis. In addition they also faced the presence of officially backed Christian missionaries, displaying aggressive proselytizing zeal and open and direct condemnation of Hinduism. For manning the administrative system in the Punjab, the British brought trained English-speaking Indians from Bengal. With these educated Bengalis came the Brahmo Samaj, which was first founded in Lahore in 1863. The majority of western educated urban middle class Punjabi Hindus were not comfortable with the 'doctrinal eclecticism' of the Brahmo Samaj which appreciated positive features of other religions including Christianity and its social radicalism that advocated inter-dining and inter-caste marriage. The Arya Samaj that was established by Swami Dayanand Saraswati first in Bombay in 1875 and then in Lahore in 1877,

appealed to Punjabi Hindus who were concerned with the threat of Christian conversions and who wanted to reform Hindu society, albeit not radically. Swami Dayanand Saraswati in his *Satyarath Prakash* published first in 1875, revised and reprinted in 1884 aimed at forging a new and distinct Hindu identity by reinterpreting existing beliefs and practices. Pandit Shardha Ram Phillauri found Hindu orthodoxy under attack from all directions, including from within, by individual reformers like Kanhaiyalal Alakhdhari and groups like the Brahmo Samaj as well as the Arya Samaj. Under threat Shardha Ram redefined Hindu religion and society displaying his concern for a distinct Hindu identity as reflected in his writings. (Banga, 1989 ; Jones, 1998)

This paper is based on primary source materials like Swami Dayanand Saraswati's *Satyarath Prakash* (1884) and Pandit Shardha RamPhillauri's literary works like *Dharm Raksha* (1876), *Dharm Samvad* (1876), *Bhagyawati* (1877) and Shardha Ram's biography *Shraddha Prakash* published in 1896.

I

In his *Satyarath Prakash* Swami Dayanand Saraswati presents Aryavarta as the golden land that was the source of all knowledge, learning, science and religion. The Aryas, the original inhabitants of the land, were men of quality and they were also the sovereign rulers. (Saraswati, 1884: 284) The four Vedas were revealed by God to the sages and their religion thus became the oldest faith. The Vedas are eternal, universal and infallibleas they are the 'revealed word of God'and are thus the 'touchstone of all knowledge'. (Saraswati, 1884: 134-38)

Swami Dayanand denounced the teachings of the Puranas as corrupt. The bulk of what was given in the Puranas was false. The few things which were true were retained from the Vedas and the Shastras. The Brahmans in Swami Dayanand's view, wrote the Puranas under the names of ancient sages like Vyasa. (Saraswati, 1884: 313, 314, 320, 345) But Vyasa could never have written false

texts like the Puranas as he was a religious man of immense learning. A perusal of Vyasa's works, such as his commentary on the *Yoga Shastra and Vedanta Shastra,* would prove this. Swami Dayanand further states that the 'Puran' was not the name of any text, like the *Shiv Puran*, but the *vachan* of the *Brahmana* and the *Sutra. The Brahmana texts like the Aitreye,* the *Shatpath, the Sam* and the *Gopath* were known by five names: *Itihas, Puran, Kalp, Gatha* and *Narashanshi. All these works were helpful in understanding the Vedas.* (Saraswati, 1884: 343, 344)

Swami Dayanand points out that the Puranas do not have one common supreme deity, or even cosmology, and the cosmologies embodied in the Puranas border on the impossible. The statement made by the Swami on this issue is quite clear. Again, the *Shiv Purana* describes *Shiva*; the *Vishnu Purana, Vishnu*; the *Devi Purana, Devi*; the *Ganesh Khand, Ganesha*; the *Surya Puran, Surya*; *Vayu Puran, Vayu*, as the author of the creation and dissolution of the Universe and then each of them considers them as created beings. (Saraswati, 1884: 345, 346).

Swami Dayanand states emphatically that the Puranas cannot be regarded as branches of the Vedas, and their study does not promote understanding of the Vedas. The true meanings of the Vedas, is known by the study of the *Vedangas,* the four *Brahmanas*, the *Angas,* the *Upangas*, and other books written by sages and seers, hence it is that they are called *shakhas*'. The Puranas promote false practices like idol worship and pilgrimages. Swami Dayanand refutes the claim that these practices were given in the branches of the Vedas which were lost by asserting that the oldest works of Jaimani, Vyasa and Patanjali were true commentaries of the Vedas and even they make no mention of these practices. (Saraswati, 1884: 365, 366)

Swami Dayanand rejects the idea of incarnation. The Vedas state that God is unborn, indivisible and formless and he is not subject to birth and death. As God cannot be contained in a body, the idea of incarnation does not stand the test of logic. The supporters of the orthodoxy accept that God is Formless, but they

believe that He is incarnated as Shiva, Vishnu, Ganesha, Surya and Devi, etc., and also appeared in flesh as Rama, Krishna, etc. That was why the images of the deity were worshipped. Swami Dayanand insists that the '*Veda* declares God to be "Unborn Indivisible, Formless," etc., and, therefore, not subject to birth and death and the necessity of incarnation'. (Saraswati, 1884: 189-91)

Swami Dayanand points out that there is no reference to idol worship in the Vedas. According to him, idol worship was introduced by the Jains and adopted by the Brahmans to earn a livelihood. Swami Dayanand asserts that no image can depict the formless God who pervades the entire universe and cannot exist in a particular object. As earth, water, fire, air and vegetation all are creations of God one can keep them in sight and pray, there is no need of an idol. 'It is altogether wrong to say that the sight of an idol makes one think of God. This would mean that when the idol is out of sight, the devotee would not think of God and, consequently when all alone, may succumb to the temptation of committing theft, adultery and sins'. (Saraswati, 1884: 319, 320, 321, 323) Swami Dayanand refutes the miracles associated with idols by logic and reasoning.

Swami Dayanand refers to the adverse or evil effects of idol worship: money wasted in construction of temples for idol worship; freedom in the temples leading to adulterous relations, fights and diseases. As people regard idol worship to be a means of salvation they waste their lives in following this useless practice. As people worship numerous idols there is no unity of faith, which leads to mutual clash and ultimately the destruction of the country. (Saraswati, 1884: 327, 328)

Rejecting the existing beliefs and rituals Swami Dayanand in his *SanskarVidhi* provided ceremonies along with instructions and Sanskrit texts for each of the life cycle ceremonies like birth, marriage, death etc. He rejects the use of Brahman priests for these ceremonies. (Jones, 1976: 96) Swami Dayanand also regards the mortuary rituals as useless. The oblations offered to the spirit of the dead did not reach them. The cow donated to the Brahman priest

for the departed soul was appropriated by him. (Saraswati, 1884: 332, 357, 358, 363) Swami Dayanand is critical of the numerous fasts prescribed for various occasions and times in different Puranas. Keeping fasts does not fulfil human desires for wealth or birth of a son. The Brahmans designed all these fasts for their own gains.(Saraswati, 1884: 363, 364, 365) Swami Dayanand points out that the practice of pilgrimage did not exist in the Vedic times, nor were any places held sacred then. According to him there was no merit in pilgrimage (*tirath*) as it did not wash away sins, nor did it result in any benefit. (Saraswati, 1884: 338, 339, 340, 341, 342) Swami Dayanand's rejection of astrology (*jyotish*) is based on a rational argument. Eclipses and the like events are foretold with the help of the Science of Astronomy and not of Astrology. 'Astronomy is a true science, while Astrology, excepting in so far as it relates to the natural influence of the planets such as the heat of the sun, coolness of the moon, is false'. (Saraswati, 1884: 355, 356, 357) Swami Dayanand emphasizes that the Brahmans developed astrology to deceive ignorant people.

Swami Dayanand rejected the taboo on foreign travel. A person of good character was not affected adversely by going abroad. This was evident from the fact that the ancients used to travel abroad for trade. 'The present day bug-bear of loss of one's character and faith through travelling abroad is simply due to the false teachings of the ignorant people and the growth of dense ignorance. Those who do not hesitate to go abroad, and thereby associate with peoples of various foreign countries, study their customs and manners, increase their trade, and augment their political power, become fearless and bold, and attain great power and prosperity by studiously imbibing the good qualities, and adopting the good customs and manners of the foreigners, and rejecting their faults and evil habits, and bad manners'.(Saraswati, 1884: 270, 271, 272)

Swami Dayanand emphatically underlines that an individual's place in the *varna* order was determined by education, virtues and actions. He explains the emergence of the caste system based on birth in terms of the neglect of the Vedic knowledge and

the self-interest of the Brahmans. With the passage of time not only the other castes but also the Brahmans became destitute of knowledge. The Brahmans only crammed the Vedas by rote, without understanding, to earn a living. They began to claim: 'Whatever a Brahman declares is as infallible as words falling from Divine lips'. They also declared that all the best things of the earth were meant for the Brahmans only. In other words, they subverted the whole system of classes and orders, replacing all other considerations by the mere accident of birth with total disregard to qualifications, character and work of the people, which was originally the consideration. Henceforth, the Brahman became a 'pope', that is, 'a person who robs another through fraud and hypocrisy and achieves his selfish end'. These popes fabricated many superstitions and laws according to which without their permission an individual could not sleep, rise, sit, go, come, eat and drink. (Saraswati, 1884: 288, 289, 290, 291)

Continuing in the same vein, Swami Dayanand states that the Brahmans composed false religious texts and the eighteen Puranas and assigned them to famous ancient sages and seers like Vyasa to lend them antiquity. This was done to establish the authenticity and authority to these texts.(Saraswati, 1884: 291, 313, 320) The Brahmans also invented twenty-four incarnations of God, temples and idol worship, and instituted pilgrimage and fasts.(Saraswati, 1884: 313, 339, 340, 365) They encouraged idol worship through deceit to earn a livelihood. These popes fooled ignorant people and told them that God had visited them in their dream and asked them to dig their idols from the ground from a particular area, install it in a temple and asked the pope to become a priest.(Saraswati, 1884: 320)

Swami Dayanand was dissatisfied with the prevalent rules of commensality. He allowed the *dwijas* (the Brahmans, the Kshtriyas and the Vaishyas) to eat food cooked in their own kitchen by a Shudra. Swami Dayanand explains that it was the duty of the *dwijas* (both men and women) to devote themselves to the dissemination of knowledge, the service of the state, the breeding

of cattle, and to agriculture, trade and arts (and not to waste their time in cooking etc.). Before cooking food, a Shudra should bathe and wear clean clothes and shave and pare his nails regularly and he should cover his mouth during cooking. However, the *dwijas* should not eat or drink from a utensil of a Shudra. Food cooked in a Shudra house was only to be taken in an emergency. Swami Dayanand makes a clear distinction between a Shudra and a *chandal*, a *bhangi* or a *chamar*. The latter, called *antayaj* (untouchable) were not allowed to cook food for the higher castes nor to interdine with them. Only vegetarian food was to be taken. (Saraswati, 1884: 272, 273, 274, 279, 399).

With regard to women Swami Dayanand's views were significant. He laid stress on a basic education for a woman to enable her to be a better wife and mother and an efficient manageress of a household. He opposed child marriage, polygamy and widowhood. (Banga, 1996: 30) Swamiji stood for cow protection and in his pamphlet, 'Gokarunanadhi' (1881), he gave moral, economic and environmental arguments against killing of animals, particularly the cow and declared kine-killing to be a sin.(Banga, 1996: 32)

Swami Dayanand argues for the revival of the *dev bhasha*, Sanskrit. He even propagated spread of Sanskrit education among Shudras as he regarded it as a vehicle of social awakening. (Banga, 1996: 27, 30)Swami Dayanand used the term 'Arya Basha' for Hindi in the second edition of the *Satyarath Prakash*. He promoted the spread of *devnagari* and Hindi instead of Urdu as the language of administration and instruction in schools. Hindi was regarded not only as the appropriate medium of communication but also as a means of unifying the Hindus. (Banga, 1996: 25, 32)

Swami Dayanand in his *Satyarath Prakash* devoted two separate chapters denouncing the 'others', the Christians and Muslims. Being a converting faith, Christianity threatened the existence of Hinduism. Labelling the Christians as 'barbarians', he criticized the Christian faith. Swamiji called them flesh-eating, kine-killing and spirit-drinking foreigners. (Saraswati, 1884: 321-

59) For Swami Dayanand the Muslims were worse than Christians and he addressed them as barbarians as well as *mlechch* (an outsider; unclean people). Muslim rule resulted in kine-killing. Islam as a faith taught only greed, treachery and cruelty. (Saraswati, 1884: 362-404)

II

In his *Dharm Raksha*, Shardha Ram asserts that as the Vedas were revealed, human beings could neither apply reason nor selectivity to the Vedas. He quotes from the *Shrimad Bhagvad* to the effect that the Vedas were revealed to Brahma all afresh after the deluge. Brahma passed this knowledge on to his son Manu, from whom it was passed on to Bhrigu and other sages (*rishis*). Phillauri maintains that the verses of the Vedas were the form of Brahma who had an attribute of God Almighty (*parmeshwar*). (Phillauri, *Dharm Raksha* 1876: 76-87, 88-116) Shardha Ram insists that the Puranas had their own importance in relation to Vedas as they elaborated the ideas given in the Vedas. He also maintains that on the operational plane it were the Puranas that sanctioned and recommended the worship of gods like Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Indra, Agni, the sun and the moon, the incarnations like Krishna and Rama and the performance of religious rituals like idol worship, pilgrimages, *shradha*, fasts, *hom*, *yagya*, caste system, notion of pollution and wearing of the top knot and the sacred thread. Shardha Ram quotes the *Vishnu Puran*, *Bhagvat Puran* and the *Markandey Puran* in support of his argument for each point. (Phillauri, *Dharm Raksha* 1876: 17-29, 47-56, 57-75)

Upholding incarnations, Shardha Ram asserts that there was proof in the Vedas in support of human form of God. *Purushparmeshwar* having thousands of heads, eyes and feet was one such example from the Vedas. Further, Vishnu and Shiva who were praised as *parmeshwar* in the Vedas, were also given human attributes. Shiva for example, was Lord *Pashupati* who rode the *Nandi* bull, wore matted locks, and his neck was blue. The Vedas also contained reference to the Vaman (dwarf) incarnation of

Vishnu. Furthermore, in the Upanishads too the names of incarnations were given. Dwelling at length on the position of Krishna, Phillauri maintains that in the *Gita*, Krishna told Arjun that he did everything as a human being for the instruction of the world. According to the *Bhagvat* itself, whereas the other incarnations represented only one attribute of God, Shri Krishna was Lord Almighty Himself.(Phillauri, *Dharm Raksha*1876: 47-56)

With regard to idol worship, Phillauri underscores that the worship of idols was recommended not only in the Vedas but also in the Puranas. He cites several verses from the Vedas and Upanishads in support of idol worship. (Phillauri, *Dharm Raksha*1876: 29-32) Shardha Ram concedes that it was not proper to regard a piece of stone or wood as God. However, as it was difficult to concentrate on God, who has no colour, form or dimension and who cannot be seen, it was considered valid by the ancestors of Hindus to concentrate on a tangible object. Actually, what was worshipped by Hindus was an idol sanctified by the *mantras*. Shardha Ram attaches great importance to the rituals of *avaahan* (invoking a deity)and *visarjan*(to ceremoniously put the idol into the river), both of which were accompanied by the chanting of *mantras*. Before the former was performed no idol was worthy of being worshipped, and after the latter ritual no idol could be worshipped. In his view, though an idol is not Brahm, but Brahm descended into the idol through the ritual of *avaahan*. This implied that the devotees did not worship a piece of stone or wood but God who is present everywhere and accepts His worship in every form. This should not be taken to mean, however, that God could not be worshipped without an idol. There were devotees who, through the grace of God could meditate on Him without the aid of an idol. (Phillauri, *Dharm Raksha*1876: 17, 18, 19, 20-21)

Pandit Shardha Ram regards the Ganges as the object of holy pilgrimage. He maintains that a bath in the Ganges that flowed in the Bharat Khand had the merit of performing the *ashwamedh* and *rajsuyayagyas*. He quote's the sage Narad in a Dharmshastra that, 'those who regard the water of Ganges as simple water are the lowest of the low because its water should be regarded as *tirath*'.

(Phillauri, *Dharm Raksha*1876: 28-29) Shardha Ram underlines the importance of keeping fasts as it led to salvation. Equally important was performance of *shradha* and going on pilgrimage. (Phillauri, *Dharm Raksha*1876:11, 12)

Shardha Ram upheld the hierarchy of *varna* order on the basis of birth and the notion of purity and pollution. He uses the authority of the *Gita* to uphold the *varna* order. According to the *Gita*, the Brahmans are supreme (*shresth*); therefore, the people of lower caste follow them. The Brahman, being intelligent, would not adopt anything blindly. He has the authority to approve or condemn. The ideas and actions practiced by the elite are accepted and imitated by the rest of the people. (Phillauri, 1877: 9,11, 16, 26, 28-9, 36-7,61, 86, 88, 118-19)

Jat-pat (caste system) and the notion of pollution (*chhut-chhat*) were obligatory and essential *dharm* of a Hindu, asserts Shardha Ram. In a verse quoted by Shardha Ram, Mahadev tells Parvati that a Brahman was worth worshipping even if he did not possess any quality, and a Shudra could not be worshipped even if he had all the good qualities. Or, a cow remained worthy of worship even if it did not produce any milk and a she-ass giving milk did not become worthy of worship. In other words, the Shastras did not support any equation of a Shudra with a Brahman. Shardha Ram also underscores the sacredness of a cow. (Phillauri, *Dharm Raksha*1876: 57-75). Shardha Ram emphatically upheld the superiority and dominance of the Brahmans.

Shardha Ram argues that according to the Shastras, touching and associating with the untouchable (*neech: chamar, chuhra, dhobi, nat, mallah, jallad, butcher)* was forbidden by the Dharmshastras, and if one came into contact with them then penance (*prayaschit*) was to be performed. In fact, the Dharmshastras suggested that a *neech* could not be called a Hindu unless he loved God and accepted the *dharm* appropriate for himself. It was due to their devotion (*bhakti*) to God that men like Sadhna, the butcher, Kabir, the weaver, and Ravidas, the leather worker, were counted among Hindus. Shardha Ram asserts the sin incurred by bathing or

drinking water from a tank or a well excavated by a *neech* could be removed by reciting the *Sandhya*. (Phillauri, *Dharm Raksha*1876: 6-7, 76-87). Significantly Shardha Ram staunchly defended the caste system and used the term *neech* for the untouchables.

Furthermore, Shardha Ram asserts that at the time of the Vedas being read or the rituals like *jap, hom*, and *yagya* being performed, the sight of an untouchable was inappropriate, particularly in the morning. A Brahman not following these norms became a Shudra. To reinforce his general position, Shardha Ram quoted Hariyat*rishi* to the effect that one should never accept instructions from a Shudra even if he happened to be a learned person and a master of knowledge. Invoking a Dharmshastra, Phillauri states that accepting instruction from a Shudra was like drinking milk contained in a receptacle made of the skin of a dog. (Phillauri, *Dharm Raksha*1876: 4-5, 32-47)

Shardha Ram suggests that food should preferably be prepared by oneself, and if it were not possible then food should be accepted only from the *dwijas*. He quotes verses 18 and 19 from the *Dharma* of Ved Vyas to the effect that every morsel of food eaten from the house of a Shudra unwittingly or due to greed was a sin; all the merit of one's good actions was destroyed by this act. Strictly speaking, even raw grain, according to Shardha Ram, could not be accepted from any category of Shudras. For him, the Brahman's food was like nectar (*amrit*), that of the Kshatriya like milk, that of the Vaishya like food and that of the Shudra like blood. When so much sin was attached to taking even grain from a Shudra, it would be much worse if cooked food was accepted from a *neech*. Shardha Ram also quotesHariyat*rishi* to the effect that if a Brahman ate unknowingly with a Chamar or a Chuhra, he became degraded, but if he did it deliberately, he became a *neech*. (Phillauri, *Dharm Raksha*1876: 3-5, 32-47)For Shardha Ram, the *dwijas* was synonymous with 'the Hindus' who could not accept food even from the Shudras let alone the untouchables. Significantly, Pandit Shardha Ram equated Hindu faith with *dwijadharm* that is the upper three *varnas*, the Brahmans, the Kshtriyas and the Vaishyas.

Shardha Ram asserts that if a Brahman did not know the essence of the Vedas, it did not follow that he should remove the sacred thread. The practice of wearing the sacred thread was not started by a man, it came into existence along with Brahma. Furthermore, according to the injunctions of the Shastras, only *dwija* that is a Brahman, a Kshatriya and a Vaishya should put on the sacred thread. All the three were said to be superior to the Shudra and the *mlechch*. The criterion of this distinction is the cleanliness of the heart. (Phillauri, *Dharm Raksha*1876: 76-87) For Shardha Ram, the traditional attire was the norm to be worn by all Hindus.

Quoting the *Manu Samhita* regarding marriage, Shardha Ram asserts that a Brahman, a Kshatriya and a Vaishya should marry within their own caste. Even in the most helpless situations, he points out, that a Brahman, Kshatriya and a Vaishya should marry only a woman from the four castes and never a woman who was a Chandal (in all probability used for an outcaste) or a *mlechch* (an outsider).(Phillauri, *Dharm Raksha*1876: 57-75)

In his literary works, Pandit Shardha Ram projects several ideas regarding a woman's education, age of marriage, and widow remarriage. Shardha Ram states that a girl remains physically occupied and her mind does not dwell on 'impure' thoughts if she is pursuing education. She should be taught Hindi, Sanskrit and basic arithmetic. She should also study *Sahastranam Gita, Bhasha Vyakaran, Rijupath, Hitoupdesh, Atamchikitsa, Paksadhni Pothi, Sahitya Shastra, Kanoon ki Pothi* and poetry. From an early age a girl should be trained to cook, sew and stitch perfectly. She should be educated at home, but the idea of sending girls to an all-girls school, where Hindi and Sanskrit are taught, is also put forth. The importance of female education is emphasized: it enables a woman to run the household in an efficient and practical manner, and she gains the ability to tackle different kinds of situations, both inside and outside the home. Acquisition of qualities like purity, goodness, equipoise, forgiveness, and self-reliance are ascribed to education.(Phillauri, 1877: 14, 15, 34, 38, 45, 72, 95, 97-98, 114-15).

Promoting the idea of a higher age for marrying girls and boys, Shardha Ram remarks that 'it is only at a later age that the good and bad points of both the girls and boys are revealed'.(Phillauri, *DharmSamvad*1876: 99) The argument used for extending the age of marriage for males and females is interesting. Shardha Ram recommends that the age for marriage for males should be extended to eighteen years. According to him it was unwise to marry younger boys as they were immature and did not have a developed sexual urge. In such a situation the relationship between the husband and the wife was marked by indifference, which was not conducive to a happy marriage. Applying the same rationale to females, Shardha Ram proposes to extend their age of marriage to eleven years. Enumerating the evils of early marriage, he refers to a situation in which a young widow indulged in extra-marital relations; in another case, the husband worked far away and the wife fell into bad company; there was also the example of a young widow who was imprisoned for committing an abortion. Marriage at a ripe age results in procreation and the child becomes the focus of the mother's emotions; she does not stray even in the absence of her husband.(Phillauri, 1877: 8, 9-10)

Significantly, Shardha Ram approved of widow remarriage. He points to the deplorable condition of widows and gave concrete instances in support of his view: one widow had to serve a harsh prison sentence for committing abortion; another ran away with a *palki* bearer; another committed suicide, and yet another became a prostitute. Shardha Ram favours a second marriage thousand times more than these misdeeds. He argues that if a male could not control his sexual urge and needed a spouse, how could a woman be expected to do without a spouse? According to Shardha Ram, certain Dharmshastras approved and others disapproved of this practice. He quotes Parashar and Vashist is support of his view.(Phillauri, *DharmSamvad*1876: 97, 98; 1877: 13, 14). Shardha Ram upholds widow remarriage in the interest of moral life as marriage was expected to enable widows not to resort to illicit sexual relationships. It is the duty of every woman to marry and reproduce. Pandit Shardha Ram stood for revival of Sanskrit and

spread of Hindi and *devnagari* script. He set up a school for the promotion of Sanskrit and Hindi at Ludhiana. (Deva, 1896: 28, 72, 75)

Denouncing Christianity, Pandit Shardha Ram asserted that it was inappropriate to compare it with the *dwijadharm* as the former was an insignificant, contemptible and coarse faith. According to Shardha Ram, the only two things presentin Christianity which were absent in the Hindu faith were drinking alcohol and eating leftover food and meat. Jesus Christ could not be the son of God. The claim of the Christians that salvation could be attained only by worshipping Christ was false. (Deva, 1896: 32, 52; Phillauri, *DharmSamvad* 1876: 102-03)Shardha Ram had no appreciation for the beliefs and practices of Islam and he did not regard the *Quran* to be a revealed scripture. He rejected the common claim made by the Muslims that faith in the Prophet Muhammad alone could lead to the right path. Shardha Ram stated that if a Hindu associated with a Muslim he should bath according to the prescriptions of the *dharm* (*prayaschit*) to remain a Hindu. (Phillauri, *DharmSamvad* 1876: 102-03, 113; *Dharm Raksha* 1876: 3-15).

III

Religious beliefs and practices, caste system, and language proved to be important markers of Hindu identity for both Swami Dayanand Saraswati and Pandit Shardha Ram Phillauri. Meeting Swami Dayanand halfway, Shardha Ram conceded that as revealed word of God the Vedas were above human reasoning. With regard to the Puranas he differed significantly from Swami Dayanand who rejected the Puranas. Phillauri maintained that on the operational plane it were the Puranas that sanctioned the worship of gods like Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Indra, Agni, the sun and the moon, the incarnations like Krishna and Rama and the religious rituals like idol worship, pilgrimages, fasts, *shradha, hom* and *yagya.* For Swami Dayanand, the teachings of the Puranas were corrupt and did not conform to the Vedas. He rejected the idea that the Puranas were the branches of the Vedas and argued

that the study of the Puranas did not promote an understanding of the Vedas.

Unlike Swami Dayanand, Shardha Ram defended the idea of incarnations by stating that they were the tangible form of a formless God. Logically, he upheld idol worship. However, Shardha Ram conceded that it was only in the initial stages of meditation that a devotee focused on an image of a deity to enhance his concentration and that this procedure need not be followed by learned people. SwamiDayanand, on the other hand, hammers the point that no image depicts the formless God who pervades the entire universe and cannot exist in a particular object. In contrast with Shardha Ram, Swami Dayanand denounced the practice of pilgrimage and fasts as it was not sanctioned by the Vedas. Unlike Shardha Ram, he rejects the mortuary rites.

In contrast with Swami Dayanand, Shardha Ram regarded the caste system based on birth and the notion of purity and pollution as essential parts of the *dharm* of a Hindu. The Brahman dominated the caste hierarchy based on birth. The twice-born (*dwija*) were not supposed to have social relations with the Shudras and the untouchables (*neech*). Significantly, for Shardha Ram only the *dwijas* (the Brahmans, the Kshtriyas and the Vaishya) were Hindu.

Unlike Shardha Ram, Swami Dayanand uses the sword of logic to point out that the Shudras should cook food for the *dwijas* in their kitchen. The *dwijas*devoted their time in dissemination of knowledge and did not waste time in cooking. In the interest of cleanliness, Swami Dayanand asserted that the Shudras should maintain personal hygiene while cooking for the *dwijas*. However, it is significant to note that in consonance withShardha Ram, he firmly asserts that the untouchables were not to cook food for the higher castes nor to inter-dine with them, thereby upholding the taboo regarding food. In tune with Shardha Ram, Swami Dayanand propagates vegetarianism.

Significantly, Swami Dayanand's views regarding nature of education of women, and support for higher age for marriage and widow remarriage coincided with Shardha Ram. Similarly, both stood for the revival of Sanskrit and promotion of *devnagari* and Hindi as the language of all Hindus. Protection and veneration of the cow was another point on which they both agreed.

Predictably both Muslims and Christians are bracketed in the eyes Swami Dayanand and Pandit Shardha Ram as the 'other' or *mlechch* (outsider). They were both beef-eaters and kine-killers and were thus unclean. They also posed a great threat to Hinduism as they were converting Hindus to their faith. Therefore, logically Muslims and Christians are excluded from among the Hindus. Despite the differences of degree on several counts, both Swami Dayanand and Pandit Shardha Ram were acutely conscious of their Hindu identity and above all, both stood for the protection of the interests of Hindus.

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Navneet Arora*

Maitrayee Chaudhari's *Refashioning India* presents the historical account of contemporary India, its journey towards refashioning and restructuring of Indian society. Out of the total 12 chapters in the book, 10 have been published by author during 1995-2015 in reputed journals. Throughout the book, author has tried to maintain the wonderful and magical capacity of the media i.e. to construct and reconstruct images of society and the way it shapes and changes the public discourse. When India initiated liberalization, new policies, new media, new political visions became a part of every state document and public discussion. Alongside, gender too always remained a central point of every public discourse. Author's idea of connecting 'Media, Gender and Public Discourse' is to present the nature and scale of changes that took place in the Indian society since the establishment of National Planning Committee in 1938.

Chapter two begins with Nehru and Gandhi's contrasting viewpoints on planned economy and position of women. It then

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shifts to the detailed analysis of 265 page report of Sub-committee on women entitled Woman's role in Planned Economy (WRPE). It was informed that WRPE was a well planned document, the first of its kind, based on primary investigation and covered woman as an individual worker. Whether it was leisure, health, birth control, widowhood etc. woman was seen as a useful citizen and productive worker of society. Chapter 3 locates women's position in nation building and Nationalism and is discussed from three stand points: Indian women as beneficiaries and agents of development; as participants in Indian politics and as emblems of National culture. The author has dealt with two questions towards the end of the chapter: Who decides who speaks legitimately for a 'community'? who decides what constitutes the 'culture' of a community? (p.80). Responding to these questions, the cases of Shah Bano and Roop Kanwar have been cited. In both the cases the state's orders were flouted and the order of the community and its culture prevailed. This pointed out that women have to surrender themselves to culture and the author has called women as 'emblems of culture' (p. 76).

Chapter four presents the idea of freedom of 1990s as articulated by advertisements. It is argued that globalization has helped in transforming the public discourse and is very much evident in advertisements. The advertisements now present new Indian as one who is ready to 'experiment', is 'body conscious', 'hybrid', and indulge in global and cosmopolitan lifestyles. From analyzing advertisements, the author divulged the role played by corporate sector and advertisement industry in engaging the trained researchers to know their 'consumer', his/her likings, responses, etc. (Chapter 6). Interesting observations have been incorporated on the changing gender roles in the Indian family (Chapter 7). Family has been discussed from two standpoints. One is based on the popular belief of the Indian family is a joint family, a cultural marker of Indian society and is still maintained in the academic writings. Secondly, the portrayal of Indian family in the Media based on market research by media prophets whose sole intention is to sell.The changing rhetoric, the changing capitalism,

new global cultures changed the public discourse but family continued to dominate in public sphere.

Author was conscious of the fact that in the contemporary situation, entire media content is digitized and is gaining popularity. The most powerful medium of interacting with public via new media has been witnessed in Nirbhaya's case (Chapter 11). There is no denying the fact that cases like Nirbhaya, Ram Rahim, Kathua, Unnao, #MeToo movement were extensively highlighted through new media for creating alertness in society. The interesting part is as times moved, the public discourse changed but the core issues of society viz., poverty, gender justice, unemployment, education, etc. remained and are still a part of every election campaign and governmental policy. The public discourse changes with time and who decides agenda for the public discourse has been well settled in our society. Whether the media is the fourth pillar of democracy or not is not the contention of the author. Author submits that media is not just an external institution of society but its impact is evident on the economic, political, social and cultural life of the members of society.

The book is extremely useful for those interested in media and gender studies as it provides access to historical account of Indian society and its transformation to contemporary India in a capsule form. The book captivates the reader with each progressing chapter and one finds himself/herself connected with various observations presented in the book. Author's sharp observation skills and meticulous analyses of the sociology of everyday life is appreciable. There are few subtitles that catch the interest such as 'woman as emblems of Culture', 'woman love 'Shingar', etc. While quoting academic writings, media texts, advertisements and other sources-the bracketed remark, 'emphasis mine' has been used at many places throughout the book. This gauges the intention of the author in drawing attention towards an analysis of the issue. The book gives a limited dosage on new media and media convergence as these have grown exponentially in present times.

Nikhil Govind, Edited. *Inlays of Subjectivity: Affect and Action in Modern Indian Literature.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press,2019.

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Sevali Hukku*

Author and Society: The Suffering Subject in Modern Indian Literature

Largely focusing on six novels, written in a variety of languages, Nikhil Govind's new book *Inlays of Subjectivity: Affect and Action in Modern Indian Literature* traces a connection between the social subject, literature, and society. Through an analysis of various writings, the author wants to depict how an intense act of injustice can stir a sense of moral subjectivity in an individual. Nikhil allows the thinking-feeling subject to lead the reader from one chapter to the next, bounded by the notion of how deeply pain is connected to some form of a creative rupture with one's past self.

Nikhil sets the tone of his book in the prelude itself by discussing Ambedkar's fragments – *Waiting for a Visa*, an autobiographical piece of writing where Ambedkar describes the various difficulties that befell him as an untouchable. He talks about various personal misfortunes and events which victimized and discriminated Ambedkar for being born a Dalit. In *Waiting for a Visa*, Ambedkar skirts between literature and society linking them

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as a discerning social subject. A large share of Nikhil's book also talks about this triangular intersectionality of the author, society, and literature. Ambedkar points out how oppression and untouchability breach all boundaries of region, caste, religion, and social status. A view Nikhil also emphasizes in his book by pointing out exploitation that permeates across the edges of a majoritarian society to the minorities that often suffer under not one, but overlapped oppressions. However, Nikhil's book also talks about the spirit and resilience which seeks justice amidst socially inflicted cruelties. He suggests that one tool to seek a resolution can be through writing and talking about oppression. Although, simultaneously he also warns his readers "the undoing of justice is never quite fully achieved".

The book is divided into five chapters. The first novel that the author looks at is K.R Meena's *Hangwoman*. A story about a female executioner who inherits the trade from her father and finds herself caught in a vicious circle of desire, media-circus, and urban violence. The second chapter focuses on Urmila Pawar's *Aaydan* (translated and retitled as *Weave of my Life: A Dalit Woman's Memoirs*), a sensitive and self-reflexive Bildung memoir which traces the writer's journey as a Dalit woman. The third chapter consists of two novels read simultaneously, Ismat Chughtai's *Tehri Lakeer* (translated as *The Crooked Line*) and Agyeya's *Shekhar: A Life* (original in Hindi titled *Shekhar: Ek Jeevni*). Both these novels focus on aloof and wayward protagonists as they try to come to terms with their misfit identities. The fourth chapter focuses on Saratchandra Chattopadhyay's *Srikanta*, an expansive four-part novel and the fifth chapter talks about Krishna Sobti's *Mitro Marjani* or as its English Translation is called *To Hell with You, Mitro.*

In every chapter, Nikhil traces the suffering individual and talks about how the characters or authors negotiate with the prejudice that the world presents them with. He attempts to follow the journey of the individual subject as he or she gains a sense of self through various means.Such as going to prison in *Shekhar: A*

Life, breaking suffocating gender norms in *To hell with you Mitro* and *Crooked Lines*or writing a memoir as seen in *Weave of my Life*.The author tries to explain that Literature and societyare interconnected to each other through the expression of emotions such as pain, suffering, loneliness, anger, etc.These emotions are conveyed to us through discussion of various characters, fictional and non-fictional. They become the essence of a new reading of the unjust world around us. However, the link between Literature and Society is an old and complex one and will remain so for a long time to come. It might seem a little simplistic at first to assume that such a reading carries any newness since the topic in itself has been written and discussed ad nauseam. It remains up for discussion to what extent the present project was successfully able to offer something fresh to the readers. The novelty of this book might lie in the fiction that it has picked up to assess.The writer is well versed with the Hindi and Urdu texts he discusses, as his last book focused solely on these. Furthermore, the first two novels are interesting inclusions because they are the only 21st century contemporary writings included. They talk of themes that have been generating a lot of debate in academic and political circles, be it a crazed drama-fed predatory media out on a prowl for sensational news in *Hangwoman* or Pawar's sensitive story of finding her corner in the world through writing and talking about her Dalit identity. “In their fierce commitment to speaking the truth of a fragmented, injured self and mind” is how Nikhil puts it. Chapter four which offers a simultaneous reading of Agyeya and Chughtai makes for a highly interesting read. One finds out how similar the two protagonists are to each other and to readthem together throws a new light at their unique sense of bias and distance from the world.

A book subtitled *Affect and Action in Modern Indian Literature* speaks directly about its project. An affective reaction can be seen as a privileged peek into the thrashing subjectivity of the character or author. Be it the quiet anger of the suggestively named Chetna in K.R Meena's*Hangwoman* or the suffocation of a sexually frustrated Mitro in *To Hell with you, Mitro.* The affective subjectivities

suggests Nikhil, give the reader a privileged access into their psyches, which might make the motivations of their actions a little clearer. The book paints a larger picture by informing us that emotions act like an incisive inlay into the psyche of these subjects hinting to the reader that "trauma long predates one's biological life and is a part of an immemorial order of Indian society". However, it also raises the question of whether trauma also comes along with responsibility? And whether the affective individual is morally responsible to put the emotions out on a platter to be scanned so that some closure or tolerance can come out of it. It's a question that Nikhil does not examine at close quarters but looks at from afar here and there in the book.

The writer let his bias show slightly when it comes to memoirs / autobiographical writings or Bildung. Concerning the main task of the book, he seems to suggest that they fulfill the purpose more agreeably as compared to the rest of the texts. The second chapter which focuses on Urmila Pawar's *Weave of my Life: A Dalit Woman's Memoirs* can be seen as an example. A Bildung or a memoir is an utterance of the most direct and heartfelt experience and *Weave of my Life* can provide a deeply compassionate view into the subjective interiority of Pawar. It helps the reader situate the character / author by understanding its suffering, healing, and return to the world. It's a narrative of the self that can provide solidarity in shared grief between the affective subject and the world the grief is being shared with. In the Bildung or the memoir we are presented with a rewriting of subjectivity that sides exclusively and privileges the perspective of the one that it is written about or by.

Nikhil says that a narrative that respects a peek into the inside of the mind helps in a profound reflection and deeper understanding of itself. With this book, the author makes his case for more such readings which honor moral-ethical action as a product of an emotional response, because in those affective layers lies the true challenges and complexities of being typically and unabashedly human.

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Contents

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