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**Prof. Sangit Kumar Ragi**

Editor-in-Chief, Indian Studies Review,

Room No. 14, Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Science,

University of Delhi, Delhi -110007, India.

Email: indianstudiesreview@gmail.com

Website: www.cspgindia.com

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# Tablighi Jamaat: The Fountainhead of Global Extremism

Mahesh Ranjan Debata\*

## Abstract

*The Tablighi Jamaat is a transnational radical extremist organization having footprints in more than 150 countries with an estimated 70-80 million active followers. Even though it claims to bring wayward Muslims back to more orthodox practices of Islam as its main motive, in practice, it maintains strong links with regional and transnational radical groups and terrorist infrastructure and preaches global jihad. Against this background, while highlighting the radical ideology the Tablighi Jamaat espouses, this paper argues that the Tablighi Jamaat is a fountainhead of global extremism that poses an insuperable challenge to mankind, and peace and stability across the world.*

**Keywords:** *Tablighi Jamaat, Islam, extremism, jihad, terrorism*

## Introduction

The Tablighi Jamaat (henceforth TJ) is a transnational radical extremist organisation with solid footprints in more than 150 countries across four continents (Asia, Africa, America and Europe) of the world. Since its creation in 1927 by Mohammad Ilyas Kandhlawi till date, it has been able to mobilise some 70 to 80 million active followers from different ethnicities and nationalities, which make it “the largest Islamic organisation in the world.” (Salam, 2020) A recent commentary (EFSAS, 2021) put the figure at 400 million, with 20 million Tablighis in Pakistan alone. This “dominant form of Sunni Islam in contemporary India” (Ahmed, 2019) is the most “visible” (Masud, 2000) and “influential” religious movements in 20th Century Islam. Even though some Western scholars (Metcalf, 2010; Ritz, 2006; Fuller, 2002) in their observations have described the TJ as non-violent, non-political, missionary, revivalist, transnational Islamic pietist or reformist, the TJ has just been the opposite and is accused of spreading radicalism, extremism and terrorism across the globe. Against this background, this paper exposes the myths and realities revolved around the TJ and its activities. This paper explores the nature of its extremist ideology and its links with

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\* Dr. Mahesh Ranjan Debata teaches at the Centre for Inner Asian Studies, School of International Relations, Jawaharlal Nehru University

the global “Islamist ecosystem.” (South Asia Democratic Forum, 2020) This paper analyses and explores the TJ’s global jihadi and terrorist network, and its influence and potential to radicalize individuals. This paper mostly uses secondary source materials in English language such as books, research articles, newspapers and web materials.

### **Preaching and Working of the TJ: Myths and Realities**

The religious ideology, preaching and working of the TJ are shrouded with myths and mysteries. What it preaches and professes, in real sense, it does not put everything into practice. It is, therefore, important to note herewith few points to corroborate the aforesaid argument.

Firstly, the TJ describes itself as “the Society for spreading faith,” but in reality, it believes in and works for a kind of Tablighisation of the world to establish a transnational Islamic regime through a “planned conquest.”(Gaborieau, 2006) The statement of Mohammad Yusuf Kandhlawi, who led the TJ for nearly two decades (1944-1965), after his father Mohammad Ilyas’s death, stated: “the collective community of Islam should be supreme over groups of nations...” (Mayaram, 1997) This idea is as similar as the world view of terrorist organisations like the ISIS and Al Qaeda.

Secondly, the TJ vociferously preaches that “Islam must subsume all other religions.” (Alexiev, 2005) One of its basic tenets, *Ikram-i-Muslim* (others are *Kalima*, *Salaat*, *Ilma* and *Dhikr*, *Ikhlas-i-Niyat* and *Tafrih-i-Waqt*) calls upon the Tablighis “to pay respect of all forms of Islamic religious practices and avoid those actions which may lead to religious arguments and confrontations.”(Ahmed, 2019) But in practice, it not only disregards other religions such as Hinduism, Christianity and Jewish, but also shows intolerance to the Muslim brethren like Shiites, Sufis and Barelvis. According to Indian scholar Yoginder Sikand (2002), the founding of TJ aimed at countering the Shuddhi movement of the Hindus. Besides, the TJ denigrates the mystical-sensual practice of the *Dargah* (Mayaram, 2020) and calls for eradication of shrines and the cult related to the Sufis. (Malik, 2008) Even, the TJ and Hizb ut-Tahrir (henceforth HT), a prominent Islamist group in Central Asia, are in conflict with each other, notwithstanding their belief in Sunni Islam. (Biard, 2018) There is even a deep rooted ambivalence in Tablighi texts with regard to the envisaged pattern of inter community relations, and some dub non-Muslims as *kafirs* (infidels) (Mayaram, 1997).

Thirdly, the TJ's claim of being a non-violent and pacifist organisation is baseless. It is worthwhile to mention here that the TJ has never ever condemned any sort of violence, even terrorist attacks that have resulted in loss of lives and property and wrecked havoc across the globe. The TJ believes in power and use of force as rightly deduced from Mohammad Ilyas's views: "first acquire power, then prevail upon the people by dint of force to live upto the organisation's (TJ) expectations" (Troll, 2014).

Fourthly, the TJ propagates a radical form of Islam. For instance, the TJ's central concept or *raison d'être*, (Siddiqi, 2012; Salam, 2020) known as *Dawah* (inviting people towards God), is understood as "the propagation of the radical Islamic ideology." (South Asia Democratic Forum, 2020) Similarly, the TJ makes a fundamentalist and literalist reading of the holy Quran, and believes in obscurantist and extremist ideologies, which in turn lead to Islamic neo-radicalism (Mohammed, 2015) and neo-fundamentalism. (Biard, 2018) Its bonhomie with Deobandis since its inception adds more rigour to the TJ's brand of theological and ritualistic Islam, (Ahmed, 2019) conservatism, Salafism and "orthodoxy". (Salam, 2020) Even the TJ and the Deoband along with Jamiat-e-Ulema Hind were known as "three corners of a single fabric." (Mayaram, 1997) Like the Deobandis, the TJ rejects modernity and dubs it antithetical to Islam, and also opposes technological advancements. (Salam 2020) While indicating an inherent elitist bias towards women folks, (Rashid, 2006) the TJ excludes women, (Alexiev 2005) even prescribes *purdah* (veil) for women. (Troll, 2014) It staunchly believes that the "women must be prohibited by all Islamic rules and they must not have permission for *gasht* (rounds)." (Mayaram, 1997) Further, the nexus between the TJ and the Wahhabis was unearthed when late Sheikh Abd al Aziz ibn Baz, perhaps the most influential Wahhabi cleric in the late twentieth century, recognized the TJ and supported its activities as well. (Alexiev, 2005) The TJ's Wahhabi connection is further disclosed by noted Indian historian Irfan Habib (NDTV, 2020). While speaking to NDTV, Irfan Habib pointed out the closeness and similarity between the ideology of TJ and the Wahhabis of Saudi world. According to him, most of the TJ's funding comes from Saudi government. Irfan Habib rejected the TJ's claim of being apolitical. He even dubbed the TJ as the "enemy" of Islam and is against modernity, and is sectarian, puritanical and reductive. It is understood that the TJ does not believe in the virtues of secularism, democracy, constitutionalism, and modern history of colonialism and

nation states, (Metcalf, 1993) as many people, groups, communities, institutions and nation states in the world believe in.

The influence and radical activities of the TJ in the Indian subcontinent (especially in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh) has been so much that scholars like Ziya Us Islam (2020) are tempted to point out, “you can take the Tablighi Jamaat out of India, but you cannot take India out of the Tablighi Jamaat.” The TJ is supported by radical organisations like Jamaat-e-Islami (India), and Jamiat e ulema-Islami and Jamaat-e-Islami (Pakistan). When the Tablighis travel to Pakistan for initial training, radical Islamist and terrorist groups like Al Qaeda and Taliban not only offer but also provide military training. Two examples are important to mention herewith: i) John Walker Lindh, known as the American Taliban, had travelled to Pakistan in 1998 with Tablighi cadres to brush up his Islamic studies before joining the Taliban; and ii) the members of Lackawanna Six Cell travelled through Pakistan to Afghanistan in 2001 on the pretext of studying Islamic religion and culture at the TJ training centre, from where they moved to Al Farooq terror training camp run by Al Qaeda. (Burton and Steward, 2008)

Similarly, France has claimed that the TJ is one of the four most active Islamist organisations in the country (Muslim Brotherhood, Salafists and Turkish Movement are the other three) and 80 per cent of the radical Islamists the country has encountered have had some sort of contact with the TJ that had made serious and constant efforts to re-Islamize working class in suburban areas. The TJ has been instrumental in a) indoctrinating the teenagers and parents through their supervisors, b) influencing children education through imams, and c) helping non-Muslim families (especially Jewish) in the enrolment of their wards in Muslim dominated public educational institutions. Similarly, the Netherlands accuses the TJ (along with Muslim Brotherhood and HT) of encouraging Islamic neo-fundamentalism. (Biard, 2018) Besides, the TJ is using Portugal as a platform for spreading its pan-Islamic message to Portuguese speaking populace in Africa and Latin America (Brazil) (South Asia Democratic Forum, 2020).

Sixthly, the TJ is hierarchical, dynastic, and ruled and controlled by one family, the Kandhlawis lineage of its founder Muhammad Ilyas Kandhlawi, hence there is no transparency about its activities. His son Muhammad Yusuf (1944-65), grandson Inamul Hassan (1965-95), and great grandson Muhammad Saad Kandhlawi (1995 onwards) have

been controlling the TJ for the last nine decades or so. Because of the dominance of one family and one person, the TJ was split into two in 2015, one group led by Muhammad Saad and the other was known as Shura Alami that set up its headquarters first in Navi Mumbai and then in Raiwind in Pakistan (Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict, 2020).

Lastly, the TJ's claim of sponsoring its activities on *khuruj* (self financing) is often contested. It seems hard to believe that a part-time employee would be able to finance an international itinerary as Tablighi. (Rashid, 2006) The TJ receives huge sums as donations from wealthy patrons, non-government institutions, traders and governments (Saudi Arabia) to establish and run mosques and madrassas. For example, former Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's father, Mian Mohammad Sharif, had been a patron of the TJ who donated astronomical sums to the TJ activities in Pakistan. (The Dawn, 2018) An interesting account regarding the TJ's influence and assertiveness is important to disclose herewith. Saudi organization the World Muslim League donates generously to the TJ exchequer, to cover the transportation costs for thousands of poor Tablighis, even for building of the Tablighi mosque in Dewsbury (England) in 1978, the TJ headquarters in Europe. The TJ's claim of not paying any fee or salary to Tabalighis was exposed when Wahhabi sources paid salaries to Tablighi cadres in Africa (much higher than the European Union pays teachers in Zanzibar). (Alexiev, 2005) In addition, the TJ is also not averse to membership in other religious organisations, which fetches enormous financial resources, especially to arrange funding for unemployed young Tablighis to visit India and Pakistan. (South Asia Democratic Forum 11 December 2020) The *ijtema* or the annual gathering in Pakistan (Raiwind, near Lahore), India (Bhopal) and the *Biswa ijtema* in Bangladesh (Tongi) since 1967, (Bjorkman, 2010) are other sources of amassing enormous wealth for TJ's transnational activities. During the *Biswa ijtema*, garment factories, book publishers and producers of daily commodities, who make temporary stalls to sell their products, reportedly pay \$590 to \$1,180 to local landlords for every stall. (Kamruzzaman, 2020) It is believed that the TJ demands and receives a huge sum from the local organisers to fund its activities.

Even the TJ's claim of being apolitical is contested too keeping in view its affiliation with state and non-state apparatus across the world, especially in the South and Central Asia region, which will be elaborated in the next section.

## **Affiliation with State and Political Apparatus**

Notwithstanding the TJ's claims of being "a non-political global Sunni Islamic missionary movement" or apolitical as emphasized by scholars like Barbara Metcalf, Mumtaz Ahmad and van der Veer, there have been "definite political overtones" to the TJ and the Deoband. (Mayaram, 1997) The TJ wields considerable influence amongst powerful institutions of the state and prominent politicians across countries, (Siddiq, 2020) especially in South Asia (Pakistan and Bangladesh) and Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan). For example, the TJ had maintained close ties with a number of Pakistani politicians in the 1990s, including the family of former Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif, in addition to the top army brass of Pakistan. Sharif had visited the TJ *markaz* at Raiwind on 24 November 2018 to condole the death of TJ chief, Haji Abdul Wahab. (The Dawn, 2018) Nawaz Sharif during his second tenure (1996-99) visited Tablighi congregation at Raiwand, Lahore and had requested TJ leader Omar Palanpuri to convince militant terrorist groups Sipah-e-Sahaba and its splinter group Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) to end their violent anti-Shia terror campaign. Palanpuri's reply "there should always be a hot wire along with a cold one to light up the bulb", made Nawaz speechless (Zahid, 2015).

The TJ's nexus with Pakistan's political establishment is so strong that when recently Saudi Arabi banned the TJ dubbing it a "gate to terrorism" and "danger to society", there was a hue and cry in the Indian subcontinent, especially in Pakistan. Even the Punjab's provincial Assembly adopted a resolution on 21 December 2021 in support of the TJ and castigated the Saudi act. (The Nation, 2021) The same day Pakistani Prime Minister's Special Representative on Religious harmony met the Saudi Ambassador to Pakistan and briefed him about the TJ's activities.

Further, during Pakistani general elections in 2002, the TJ supported Muthaida Majlis-e-Amal, the alliance of Islamist parties. Former Pakistani presidents, Farooq Ahmad Legari and Mohammed Rafiq Tarar, well-known Pakistani cricketers Shahid Afridi, (Ahmed, 2020) Saeed Anwar and Inzamam ul-Haq have also been members and supporters of TJ. (Raman, 2007) Abdullah Gul (son of late Lt General Hameed Gul, who was known for his contacts with jihadis in Pakistan

and Afghanistan) criticized the media for blaming the TJ as one of the major sources of Corona virus infection in Pakistan. Further, the TJ's militant offshoot, Taxila (Pakistan)-based Jihad bi al-Saif (Jihad through the Sword), had hatched conspiracy to overthrow Benazir Bhutto because of her abhorrence towards the TJ (Salam, 2020).

In addition to the political leadership, the TJ used to host top military and intelligence officers of Pakistan. In the 1980s, the TJ cadres were allowed to visit Pakistan Military Academy to indoctrinate and convert the officers to the kind of Islam espoused by it. (Zahid, 2015) General Muzaffar Husain Usmani, the Deputy Chief of Army Staff, who was sacked by General Pervez Musharraf in October 2001, (Grare, 2001) was believed to have extended support to the TJ activities. Similarly, former Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) Chief Javed Nasir, the mastermind of the 1993 Mumbai serial blasts, has been a staunch TJ follower (Sareen, 2020).

Bangladesh too witnessed the influence of the TJ at the top political and military level. For instance, the chiefs of Bangladeshi Army, Air Force and Navy used to take part in the TJ's *Biswa Ijtema*. Even former Bangladeshi President Iajuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia used to take part and deliver inaugural address at the *Biswa Ijtema*. (Bjorkman, 2010) Similarly, the influence of the TJ on the religio-political situation in Central Asia should not be underestimated. The TJ's disinterest in politics is mere eyewash. The TJ's strategic goals are connected precisely with politics and power. For example, the TJ imposes its demands, claiming that the decisions made on the *mashfar* (meeting) are distributed to supporters and defenders of TJ around the world, where they are locally customized by the leaders of TJ. (Duysheeva, 2019) Barbara Metcalf (1996) summarises the myths regarding the apolitical nature of the TJ stating that whenever and wherever needed the TJ never hesitates to utilise governmental assistance to secure permits for buildings and meetings, as well as visas for travel. Further, Barbara states that the exigencies and opportunities presented by state recognition, TJ seems to have adopted a higher institutional profile in the West than the status it enjoys in South Asia.

## **Fountainhead of Extremism, Jihadism and Terrorism**

The TJ has become a constant source of violent extremism, jihadi and terrorist activities, because of which, it has been banned in some countries. In the Eurasian landmass, Russia and four Central Asian nations (except Kyrgyzstan) have banned the TJ (Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan in 2004, Tajikistan in 2006 and Kazakhstan in 2013) (Raymann, 2014) for constituting an extremist group. Kyrgyzstan has become one of the major centres of the TJ and it is even represented in the Muftiate. The TJ has been accused of recruiting young people, (Soliev, 2015) students, teachers and entrepreneurs. The following sequence of events in the last dozen years or so gives a clear cut analysis of legal and constitutional actions taken by some countries against the TJ. For example, the TJ was included in the Russian Federal List of Extremist Organisations. Russian Supreme Court, in a ruling in May 2009, depicted the TJ as an extremist organisation and banned its activity stating that “the TJ’s structural divisions threaten inter-ethnic and inter-religious stability in Russian society and the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation,” and “its purposes include the establishment of global supremacy through disseminating a radical form of Islam and the foundation of a unified Islamic state called the Global Caliphate on the basis of regions with traditionally Muslim populations.” (Duyshееva, 2019) In October 2012, more than 200 TJ cadres were banned in Kazakhstan, which was nearly half a dozen times in comparison to 35 in 2011. (Interfax, 2012) Further, in early 2013, a District Court in Astana banned the TJ at the behest of the Prosecutor General who declared the TJ an extremist organization. The Court accused the TJ of distributing and circulating extremist literature. At a conference organized by the State Agency of Religious Affairs in March 2013 on the theme “Tablighi Jamaat - A Destructive Religious Movement”, the Chair of the conference, Kairat Lama Sharif, explained that 80 per cent of extremists in Kazakhstan were from the TJ. (Wolters, 2014) Similarly, in 2020, the State Religious Affairs Committee of the Central Asian Republic of Uzbekistan brought out a 40-page list of banned religious literature, websites, and other materials by all outlawed groups,

such as the TJ along with ISIs, HT, Nurchilik, Akramiya, and Katiba Tawhid wal-Jihad. (Najibullah, 2020) Most recently, Saudi Arabia, once a chief patron of the TJ activities and main financial sponsor, has banned the activities of the TJ.

The TJ preaches the radical Deobandi-Wahhabi-Salafist jihadist ideology that so many global terrorists share and follow. One radical wing of the TJ goes one step further advocating jihad through the sword (*jihad bin saif*). (Alexiev, 2005) Because of the TJ's introduction to religion, a significant number of jihadis were inspired to join terrorist organisations. (Siddiq, 2020) In this context, western scholar Marc Gaborieau (2006) summarises how jihad has been the warp and weft of the TJ's activities. Firstly, TJ has connection with the Deobandis, who advocate jihad through violent means. Secondly, the first book of Maulana Maududi (1903-1979) on Jihad, which marked the birth of Muslim fundamentalism, appeared first in a Deobandi journal in 1927, the birth year of TJ, and has been a source of major inspiration of the TJ for its direct or indirect jihadi activities. Thirdly, the view of Mohammad Ilyas on jihad, which has profoundly affected the hearts and minds of Tablighis, states: "the travel (for Tabligh) has the same characteristics as the raids (*ghazwat*) (in jihad), and therefore, we hope to earn the same reward. Even though it does not constitute "physical fighting with weapons" (*qital*), it is still a branch of jihad. It is lower than *qital* in some respects, yet it is higher in certain respect." Syed Abul Hasan al Nadwi, who has written extensively on Mohammad Ilyas, reiterates Ilyas's view on Jihad in the following words: "it is binding on all Muslims to take an active interest in Jihad, which is nearest to the method of the holy Prophet" (Nadwi, 1979).

The TJ's jihadist ideology has enticed many disillusioned and disgruntled Muslim youth into the world of jihadism. At the behest of the TJ, Pakistan based terrorist organisation, Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HuJI) recruited many young Muslims for jihad during gatherings at Raiwind. (Rana, 2004) HuJI's founder Qari Saifullah Akhter and Fazal ur Rehman Khalil were former TJ members. International terrorists like

Masood Azhar have reportedly travelled extensively in East Africa (Sudan, Somalia and Kenya) to help build TJ network there. (Sareen April 2020) In this context, the statement of Tariq Pervez, former Director General of Pakistan's National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) seems important: "*Tablighi Jamaat attracts youth and brings them into the mosque, but, then, cannot control them. In the mosque, people associated with jihad and sectarian groups, and, in some cases, their networks are also present. Most vulnerable are the new entrants to the Tablighi fold.*" (Rana, 2009) Many jihadists express desire to travel to Pakistan and Afghanistan for jihadi training. Jeffrey Battle and the other members of the Portland Seven had travelled to China with the intention of entering Afghanistan via Pakistan. (Burton and Steward) The TJ's jihadi connection is further corroborated after former ISI Chief and an avid TJ supporter, Javed Nasir had admitted in a court affidavit with regard to supply of weapons in Bosnia and other jihadist hotspots in complete violation of UN sanctions (Sareen, 2020).

Tablighis do have many common similarities with the militants and terrorists, as summarised by an erudite scholar, Barbara Metcalf (2010): a) a belief that Islam must be defended; b) a commitment to individual action as effective in shaping the larger world; and c) the conviction that a faithful few, who act "in the way of Allah," can achieve far-reaching transformations. Pakistan based and sponsored terror outfits like Harkatul Ansar, Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami, (HuJI), Harkat-ul Mujahideen, Jaish-e-Mohammad, Jihad bi al-Saif, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and Sipah-e-Sahaba have been associated with the TJ somehow or other. Harkat ul Mujahideen and the TJ even make up a truly international network of jihadis and Hizb-ul-Mujahideen and Tehrik-i-Nifaz-i-Shari-at-i-Muhammadi (TNSM) maintain a close link with the TJ. (Alexiev, 2005) Hundreds of Uyghurs from China's Xinjiang were sponsored by the TJ for jihadi training at the Islamic University (Islamabad) and Syed Mawdudi International Institute (Lahore) (Warikoo, 2016).

In addition, those who joined militant jihad in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and other countries have unleashed terror attacks in their home countries

after being brainwashed by the TJ. It is reported that among the Indians who have gone to wage jihad on behalf of ISIS in Iraq and Syria, some 17 had links with the TJ. (Timesnownews, 2020) The ISIS sponsored online English magazine, the *Voice of Hind*, brought out its special 17-page lockdown edition hailing the TJ Chief Muhammad Saad and calling upon Muslims to become Covid-19 virus carriers in order to spread it and kill *kuffars* (non-believers). (Ojha, 2020) The TJ has also been directly benefited from Islamisation process of Bangladesh, which helped in the rise of terrorist organisations in Bangladesh, such as Jamatul Mujahiden Bangladesh (JMB), Horkatul Jihad, Hizbut Tahrir, Al Bayinaat and Hefazat-e-Islam. (Siddiqi, 2017) Intelligence reports claim about that the JMB militants joining the TJ in large numbers, (Sharma and Behera, 2014) after the JMB was hounded out by the security forces. In North Africa, the TJ's activities involved the formation of the Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria. A section of Moroccan Tablighis are under investigation for their link with terrorist organisation At-Takfir wal-Hijrah. Another Tablighi has been convicted for masterminding the Casablanca terrorist bombings of 2003. Investigation is also on to probe the links between the Moroccan cells and the murder of Theo van Gogh (Dutch filmmaker in Netherlands in 2004). In May 2017, more than 100 militants entered into the Philippines and used the TJ's *johor* (an international and local gathering) as cover to sneak out Isnilon Hapilon, a top ISIS terrorist in Southeast Asia (Dancel, 2017).

A Brussels-based think tank, South Asia Democratic Forum (SADF) summarises the TJ's violent extremist and terrorist activities in Western world in a report published in 2020. According to the report, the TJ not only serves as a "springboard" for terrorists and the "operational headquarters for terrorist cells", but also "a nursery for indoctrinating Islamist terrorists" as well as a "de facto conduit" for terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda to recruit new members. According to the report, some 50,000 TJ cadres are active in USA operating through Tablighi mosques in California, Texas and New York. The Al-Falah Mosque in the Corona area of Queens, New York, happens to be the TJ's *markaz* in North

America. The report has found out the direct or indirect complicity of Tablighis in the Portland Seven (October 2002) and Lackawanna Six attacks (September 2002) in the US, and the plot to bomb airliners en route from London to the United States (August 2006). Further, the ‘shoe bomber’ Richard Reid, the ‘dirty bomber’ Jose Padilla, and Lyman Harris, who sought to bomb the Brooklyn Bridge were associated with the TJ, the report adds. Two perpetrators of San Bernadino massacre (December 2015) had paid their obeisance at the local TJ mosque. Similarly, the report jots down the grave concern European countries express over the activities of TJ in Europe. Some terrorists are initially trained by TJ and then transited through the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafist movements to wreak havoc in Europe. TJ too has a strong presence in the United Kingdom. Its cadres were involved in London underground bombings (7 July 2005) and attempted bombings in London and Glasgow, Scotland (July 2007). The 7/7 London attackers, Mohammed Siddique Khan and Shahzad Tanweer, had prayed at the TJ’s Dewsbury mosque before the attacks. Similarly, Spanish security had found out 14 suspects (12 Pakistanis, an Indian and a Bangladeshi) of the TJ for planning to attack vital installations in the country. Further, three leading members of the TJ were found to be the masterminds of Madrid train bombings (March 2004). In Germany, the TJ was first mentioned in 2004 as a potential threat. German Administrative Court (VG) Ansbach’s (State of Bavaria/Bayern) rulings on 9 and 18 May 2005 state: “TJ not only supports terrorism, but also endangers the liberal democratic basic order and security of Germany. It also serves as a recruitment base for violent Islamist groups and jihadist networks.”

## **Conclusion**

It is found from the above analysis that the Tablighi Jamaat is out and out an extremist organisation that believes in the conquest of the world by any means. It is also found that the noble principles or salient features the TJ has been talking about are nothing but eyewashes. The unwavering faith the TJ has on the Deobandi-Salafist-jihadist brand of Islam shows its fundamentalist side, and many a times the tone and tenor of radical

and militant Islam. This exclusivist Islamic organisation is against the liberal social and political order, nation-state, the concepts of democracy, secularism and inclusiveness to which many countries on this earth swear by.

The TJ feigning to be apolitical is largely contested as this extremist group has not only been involved in political processes of many countries, especially in South Asian countries like Pakistan and Bangladesh, but also has influenced politics there. The TJ “committed a crime against humanity” (Taskin, 1 April 2020) by defying Indian Government’s orders banning large gatherings during the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, when TJ cadres were taken away from the Nizamuddin mosque for quarantine and testing of Covid-19 in March 2020, their behaviour towards the female nurses on duty was appalling and indecent. The TJ cadres disrobing in front of the female staff, roaming without their pants in their wards and passing lewd and derogatory remarks reflects their fundamentalist mindset.

Further, it is proved that the TJ is a vital component of an “Islamist Ecosystem” that has spread its tentacles across the globe as a sympathiser, supporter and sponsor of violent religious extremism. There are verifiable evidences against the TJ for its direct and indirect involvement in jihadi and terrorist activities across the globe, which jeopardise world peace and stability. It is a clear cut fact that the TJ has been overtly and covertly associated with international terrorist organisations such as Al Qaeda, Taliban, the ISIS, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammad and others. The TJ is basically anti-state, anti-government, anti-culture and anti-humanity thus posing an insuperable challenge to the entire world community. Time has come for the international community to find out combined strategies how to tackle the menace of religious extremism propounded and spread by organisations like the Tablighi Jamaat.

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# Not so Social Media: Theoretical Insights into the evolution of the Social Media as a tool of Information Warfare

Col Amardeep Singh, SM (Retd)\* & Sonali Chitalkar\*

## Abstract

*Information Warfare (IW) is a constituent of Fifth Generation Warfare (5GW) that needs to be integrated into the strategic Policy environment for National security in India. The use of social media as a weapon in providing an anonymous, unverifiable, disruptive network to Information Warfare needs to be researched and analysed in a broader national security context. Case studies of Russia and the farm protests in India serve to illustrate the importance of this field. Systematic research into the field taking Russia, China and USA is required.*

**Key Words:** *Information Warfare, Social media, Ukraine. Farm protests, Influence operations, National security*

## Introduction

Can the social media cause an elected government to topple, lead to violent street protests and determine outcomes in a war? Can it lead to geo-political outcomes like incorporation of territory and loss of sovereignty of a Nation State? Empirical evidence suggests that the social media has emerged as a tool of warfare in an environment of Fifth-generation warfare (5GW). Originally conceived as a social network bringing together human beings in seamless contact for the exchange of ideas and camaraderie, social media has acquired dimensions that need recognition and study as a part of National policy. The paper aims to bring out the recent rise of the social media and related activism by bringing forth relevant case studies.

Social media can cause elected governments to topple. On 17 December 2010 Mohamad Bouzizi a twenty six year old fruit and vegetable vendor in the Tunisian town of Sidi Bouzid set himself on fire in protest against

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\* Col. Amardeep Singh is a veteran of the Indian Army with 25 years of active service. He has dealt with the subject of information warfare, media and social media for over 10 years.

\* Sonali Chitalkar teaches Political Science at Miranda House, University of Delhi.

the confiscation of his wares and his weighing scales. As he was slapped, spat at and abused by Fadia Hamdi , a lady municipal official on the streets of his town, Bouzazzi ,he could take the continued abuse no longer. He acquired a can of gasoline and set himself afire. His cousin who witnessed the incident filmed the horror and posted the video on Facebook. By the time Bouzazzi died the video had spread like wildfire. Before the government could react and clamp down , the video had reached international audiences. Within days of the death of Bouzazzi the government of President Zine el-Abidine in Tunisia had fallen. The Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia led to the Arab Spring in MENA (Middle East and North Africa). This was the first instance wherein social movements received impetus and were carried through social media. Media hyper-activity around geo-politics was once again evidenced since 2021 around the Ukraine issue and the Russian and American standoff thereof. A key feature in this calibrated march towards a potential war and substantial brinkmanship is the involvement of the social media in this latest international stand-off between global power players.

The thesis in this paper is that the social media which was initially a form of social networking has rapidly become a weapon of warfare which can have significant consequences for national security and stability This thesis is established in this paper through case studies.

Part 1 of this paper traces the evolution of social media focusing on its grey aspects. Part 2 lays down the empirical context in the form of well established case studies. Part 3 gives suggestive conclusions in the context of India's Geo-political code and proposes directions for future research.

### **Media, Social- Media and Information Warfare: Isolating and Defining Variables**

In its most basic form, media is a tool of communication. One to one and mass communication, both have a social dimension. Communication is the cord that creates the networks for man to exist in his most natural social state of communication with each other. Humans thus, created their own

ways of communication and disbursement of information. Over time media established itself as a key in social processes.

In the modern age, the first big event that established the media as a key in social movements was the role of the media in the French Revolution. Closer home the national movement had a huge mass communication aspect to its evolution. Strategic communication played a vital role in the Indian movement for independence. The internet age brought with it the rise of the social media.

Social media is a form of social networking that resonates with the basic human need to connect with each other. In communication parlance, social media covers many-to-many communication. It has certain important features that distinguish it from traditional media. Social media can be best characterized as 'uncontrolled media'. It is not regulated by any frameworks or ethics. The State has very little control over social media. The lack of control is also because of the speed that social media ingains. Transmission of events, news on social media is very fast and not controlled by national boundaries. This could be seen in the Jasmine revolution where a Facebook post of the self-immolation of a beleaguered Tunisian citizen went international overnight. By the time the government in Tunisia tried to control the spread of this video, it was already unstoppable.

Traditional media is bound by professional ethics to follow a procedure of verifiability. Unlike this, social media has no such strictures governing its content. Despite these grey features, social media has acquired immense significance. Whereas its social form is used by citizens to connect with each other, to share information and news and to influence others, in its not-so-social form it is a source of concern. The not-so-social media has acquired the characteristics of a weapon. For instance, social media was used by the Islamic State in Syria (ISIS, Daesh) to their advantage. Gory videos of beheadings and killings by the Daesh were a part of the propaganda strategy of this terror organisation. The use of social media by terror organisations also came to light in the recruiting of youths to the ISIS in the Indian State of Kerala. Social media is also an active ground of child abuse, sexual grooming and paedophilia. These grey aspects are buttressed by the anonymity that social media grants to users. Suddenly everyone has the power over the narrative. This is also being used by non-state actors to take on the nation states and for spreading their ideology and propaganda.

The not-so-social aspects of social media demand more attention because social media usage is also an exponentially growing phenomena. The table 1 below shows the depth and reach of social media usage throughout the world. According to statistics available in open sources in 2021 there are 4.48 billion social media users in the world which is an increase of over 13 percent over 2020. In six years since 2015 this number has increased from 2.307 billion which is an increase of 115.59 percent. Amongst the social media applications Facebook is extremely popular which rapidly crossed one billion registered accounts and at present has 2.89 billion monthly active users. Facebook at present as the core platform now also owns WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, and Instagram making its reach phenomenal. The social network Twitter, which is essentially a microblogging network with limited characters for posting, is extremely popular in the United States. As of October 2021 Twitter had a reach of 77.75 million users making it the leading Twitter user globally. Japan and the India were ranked second and third with more than 58 and 24.5 million users respectively. China has Sina Weibo which is its own version of Twitter.

United States tops the charts in most social network users, but services like Chinese social networks WeChat, QQ or video sharing app Douyin are also popular due to their local language appeal. Through social networks which are also available in multiple languages, users can reach out globally to connect across geographical, political, or economic borders. In the year 2022, the numbers of social media users is estimated to rise to 3.96 billion. It is estimated that as mobile device usage deepens these numbers will grow.

**Table 2: Social media usage by country:- ( source:- datareportal.com)**

|       |                      |                  |
|-------|----------------------|------------------|
| 2021  | (+13.13%)            | 4.480            |
| 2020  | (+13.7%)             | 3.960            |
| 2019  | (+9.2%)              | 3.484            |
| 2018  | (+9.0%)              | 3.196            |
| 2017  | (+21%)               | 2.796            |
| 2016  | (+11%)               | 2.307            |
| 2015  |                      | 2.078            |
| Years | Growth in percentage | Users in billion |

**6 Year Social Media Growth Statistics:- ( source:- Statista.com)**

| Country | Users         |
|---------|---------------|
| CHINA   | 930.8 MILLION |
| INDIA   | 448.0 MILLION |
| USA     | 240.0 MILLION |
| ISRAEL  | 6.81 MILLION  |
| RUSSIA  | 99.0 MILLION  |

As stated above most top ranked social networks with more than 100 million users originated in the United States, but services like Chinese social networks WeChat, QQ or video sharing app Douyin have also garnered mainstream appeal in their respective regions due to local context and content and are considered influential.

The leading social networks are usually available in multiple languages and enable users to connect with friends or people across geographical, political, or economic borders. In 2022, Social networking sites are estimated to reach 3.96 billion users and these figures are still expected to grow as mobile device usage and mobile social networks deepen.

Clearly social media is a key variable in understanding social changes and movements happening all around the world. Given its significance social media is a variable that the armed forces globally have begun to integrate in their strategic planning. As militaries realise the depth of 5GW, they are also realising the role of the social media in National security.

Social media comes together with military and strategic national interests in the area of Information and Influence operations.

‘Information operations and warfare are also known as influence operations are the tactical collection of information about an adversary as well as the dissemination of propaganda in the pursuit of a competitive advantage over an opponent.’

Further, American Policy defines Influence operations as.. *‘the coordinated, integrated, and synchronized application of national diplomatic, informational, military, economic, and other capabilities in peacetime, crisis, conflict, and post-conflict to foster attitudes, behaviours, or decisions by foreign target audiences that further U.S. interests and objectives.’*

At least three countries have very advanced influence operations. These are Russia, China and USA. Influence operations of all three are worth study in a comparative framework. The control of narrative is a tool that has also been developed to the level of State policy by Israel. It has effectively adopted social media to its Hasbara aims. Hasbara is a well framed Public policy in Israel aimed at projecting Israeli national interests to an international audience.

The most important point that one sees in the survey of literature is that both Russia and USA *have recognised information warfare as a part of their strategic military doctrines*. Important in the frameworks adopted by Russia and USA are the aims of Information security which are central to their military doctrines. Also clearly underlined is *the need to achieve information superiority to win future wars*. Thus they use a rapidly growing social media as a weapon of warfare, which is used in the cognitive mind space with lethal effect. As the case studies given below show, social media is used by militaries to give effect to their strategic and geo-political aims. Social media can be used to affect a loss of territory, weaken the adversary and win wars without firing a bullet. On the other hand social media can also be used by non-State actors to challenge the legitimacy of the Nation-State and undermine national security.

## **Not so social media; Case studies in use of Social media as a tool of Information Warfare**

### **a. Russian Influence Operations in Ukraine**

Russian-USA and NATO are all invested in Information Operations in the region of Ukraine. This is an important case study in the context of ongoing geopolitical tensions in the region. The current tensions between Russia and USA combined with the NATO in Ukraine have a history. If one looks at the utilisation of the social media in the Ukraine crisis in 2013–15 one sees the following key features. The social media in this crisis was used in the following ways: it was used to organise events, indulge in information warfare, spread rumours, half truths. One also saw the use of social media trolls to capture the narrative. The aim of these operations was to confuse the enemy, generate uncertainty and anxiety. Of all social media platforms Twitter was seen as important in the narrative war between Russia USA and NATO in 2013–15. The main narratives could be observed on Twitter. The Russian narrative focused on the Theme of NATO expansion into Eastern Europe. It also focused

on the narrative of one nation wherein Ukraine was traditionally seen as a part of the Russian world. The NATO and USA recognised and countered this Russian narrative in the following ways. Five main themes were *used to* counter the Russian narrative. These were: the theme of Russian militarism, the narrative of a despotic Putin, appeals to a Slavic ancestry and ties to Europe and the overall narrative of NATO intervention to establish just world.

The tactics used by the Russians were as follows: Paid Russian trolls would insert pro-Russian news in social media post of American media outlets. Russians also spammed posts on horrendous crimes allegedly committed by the Ukrainian extremists on all social media platforms. Russia has portrayed Ukraine as pro-Nazi on social media platforms. Analysis by the British media has isolated top themes that Russia has propagated in the current conflict which started in December 2021. Such analysis of Russian social media posts show spikes that overlap with world events and could include any diplomatic event in an international forum like the United Nations which goes against Russian diplomatic efforts. Secondly Russia has been able to label its adversaries as Nazi.

Analysis by British media also show that Russian social media pro-Kremlin trolls have been able to post comments in 32 prominent media websites across 16 countries which support the Russian view of Ukraine. The aim was to create a distrust of all Western media. During this time period Russia also started the Russian today network (RTV) which broadcasts in foreign languages. Studies on the use of social media by Russia also revealed that in 2014 during the annexation of Crimea, the Russian government spent a substantial amount of money to fund social media operations with respect to the annexation. There were some prominent aims of such social media operations. They were to sway public and international opinion in the favour of the Russian annexation of Crimea. Further media operations were aimed at overwhelming the voices of dissidents to create an image of population in Crimea which supported the Russian takeover. The idea was to dominate the cognitive space. Not only was the influence operation targeted at international audiences also at pro-Russian population in Crimea to support the Russian annexation of the region. Several stories were released in the social media showing the Ukrainian forces bad light. Most of the stories were found to be untrue and in the category of rumours. Russia also appealed to ethnic loyalties in Crimea. According to some news reports almost 71% of Crimeans viewed the Russian annexation as a positive event.

Seen in the background of the Crimean influence operations of 2014 which were engineered by Russia it is illustrative to understand and decode the Russian social media operations in the current crisis which started in December 2021 when Ukrainian officials reported that the Russian government placed 100,000 troops near the border with Ukraine. In December 2021, the Russian administration released a list of demands toward Western countries, one of which was a legally binding guarantee that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) would not expand any further to the east. Multiple talks have been held on the international level, with the participation of NATO and the U.S. In January 2022, the U.S. and NATO submitted written responses to Russia's demands, urging the use of diplomatic means to solve the conflict. The U.S. reinstated its commitment to the 'open door' principle of NATO, in accordance with which, its allies agreed at the Bucharest Summit in 2008 that Ukraine, as well as Georgia, would join the bloc at some point.

According to Russia's foreign minister Sergey Lavrov, NATO expansion to Ukraine, as well as placement of Western troops on the Ukrainian territory under bilateral agreements, is a 'red line' for Russia because that would mean the presence of NATO forces in close proximity from the country's border. However, the Kremlin has denied any plans to invade Ukraine. The minister highlighted that each country had a right to freely place its troops within its territory. The government of Ukraine, which considers NATO accession the country's strategic goal, accused Russia of backing a coup and organizing cyber attacks. Both Russian officials and Ukraine's President criticized Western countries, such as the U.S., for creating panic over the situation.

The key variable in Russian social media operations spanning 2013 to 2022 in Ukraine is the effectiveness of the social media as a weapon system in war. Russia was able to leverage one section of the population against another, without using large conventional forces. Social media narratives were properly timed, properly targeted and suitably messaged to choose to support Russian strategic aim Games in Kenya and Ukraine. As such this case study holds a number of important messages for any nation trying to understand information warfare.

## **b. Policy contestation over Farm Laws in India**

The second case of the use of social media to engineer and steer social movements is also to be seen in the policy contestation over the farm laws which were passed by the Indian Parliament in 2010. What is seen in the policy contestation were 12 months of street protests by the interest groups that were against the legislations. Twitter and WhatsApp were used by groups protesting the farm laws. However protest in social media was not limited only to the contestation of farm policies. This protest buttressed by social media, with international networks weighing in on social networks, played on national faultlines in India. The entire movement which went on for over one year represented war in the classic cognitive battle space.

In the past three decades, India has faced two cross-border terrorism i.e. in Punjab and in Kashmir both which border Pakistan. Political configurations in Punjab rapid spilt into Policy contestation over the farm laws. In 2022, Punjab was also a poll bound state and the farm protests on social media soon acquired political dimension. Internally it became an issue for influencing populations in the poll bound states especially Punjab. Internationally it became a focus of anti-government and anti-state posturing by external actors and networks. Non-resident Indian populations common between India (Punjab) and Canada, UK and USA were seen to be active participants in street protests in the national capital Delhi. These protests also turned violent.

Genuine farmer issues were soon left aside and these street protests soon acquired the characteristics of a cognitive battle space in which social media played a key role. Key features of the social media i.e. inability of the state to impose controls, lack of verifiability, anonymity, lack of validity led to a democratically elected government withdrawing a public policy. A vibrant democracy can be seen as responsive and open to stakeholder views. However in the case of the farmers the government did not foresee the cognitive battle for which it needed to be prepared and therefore it was possible for adversaries to manipulate the perceptions of citizens. It was also unable to control the external environment eventually opting to withdraw the farm legislations. While data on the farm protests has not yet emerged a similar street protest had taken shape in Canada where the Freedom Convoy of truckers started protesting against vaccine mandates. These protests had spread to New-Zealand, Italy and Belgium.

Canada imposed mandated Law and order statutes and had cleared the street protests within days of their initiation. In the case of the Farm Laws protests, India on the other hand fell prey to Influence operations that had national and international origins.

### **Conclusion and Key Takeaways**

In the brief survey of empirical cases and theories delineated above there are some key conclusions that can be discerned:

- a. The social media is an expanding phenomena world- wide and is projected to rise exponentially in the coming years. The tools have a life of about 10 years and hence constant updating of policies and strategy is required. New platforms are being added as also the old ones being updated almost every six months. The enabling technologies have facilitated a smooth interface and thus the user require little or no training to use these.
- b. Social media has certain key characteristics i. e. anonymity, lack of accountability, lack of validity. This has led to manipulation of information. There are no laws, treaties and policies governing the use of social media other than the platforms own code of conduct which they use at will and which is affected ideologies of the owners/ employees. Twitter blocking Donald Trump's account is a case in point.
- c. Social media dissemination is characterised by intense speed. The traditional media can never match this. The media houses have their own social media presence but the common users and influencers have the ability to control the narrative.
- d. Social media has acquired the characteristics of a weapon. It can cause immeasurable damage. The Arab Spring and Burhan Wani episodes are the examples of destructive power than can be attributed directly to the social media.
- e. Various countries mainly Russia, USA, China and Israel recognise social media as a key variable in their military strategies and have doctrines crafted for the same.
- f. The cognitive battle-space has become an important dimension in modern day warfare along with the physical dimensions like land, sea, air, space and abstract dimension like cyberspace.

- g. Information and Influence Operations are carefully crafted out by nation states and have well defined aims and effects.
- h. The nature of the social media is such that it has the potential to swiftly erode the powers of the Nation-State.

Some directions for future State policies in India can include:

1. Incorporation of Information and Influence operations in the Indian Military doctrine both at tactical and strategic levels.
2. Creation of a Strategic definition of what constitutes a war in the Information Space.
3. A thorough investigation and recognition of fault-lines and the need to shape the information environment to meet these fault-lines.
4. The evolution of a *Stated Party line* for national security that goes beyond individual political-ideological party lines.
5. Research into Information and Influence Operations as a part of curriculum and academic programmes.
6. Restructuring of curricula in International Relations and Security studies to meet National Security needs.
7. Evolution of protocols for defensive Information Warfare.
8. Incorporation of social media ethics framework vis a vis the Fundamental right to Freedom and expression.
9. Evolution of clear red lines for communication at the international level of what constitutes an incursion into sovereign spaces as far as the information dimension of warfare is concerned.
10. A whole nation approach that would require policy formulation to ensure advantage in Information Warfare.

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# From Drivers of Economy to Forgotten Indian Citizens: Addressing the Social Welfare Rights of Migrant Workers

Anuranjita Wadhwa\*

## Abstract

*Migration is a salient demographic variable. The scale of internal and external migration has multiplied many times in recent decades having colossal ramifications for realizing human rights, often inaccessible in case of internal migration or denied to immigrants. People migrate from less affluent or underdeveloped regions to developed or urbanised space in search of opportunity. Migrants are key agents in the economic growth of a region as development gains occurs in both the sending and destination places. However, it has been observed that a close relationship exists between development gains resulting from people moving to regions providing opportunities and provision of securing rights of potential actors, benefitting the economic sector of origin and destination regions. A major gap exists between rights enshrined in the constitution and accessible to migrants. The movement of people to another region alongside economic prosperity brings in its fold plurality of culture, diverse political ideas as harbinger of democratic development. The numbers of internal migrants in India are far more significant than those moving out, yet accorded low priority towards their social inclusion. Successive governments in states have failed to protect or promote the rights granted to the citizens of the country. The challenge of providing social security cover to the movers of economy became evident with the sudden nationwide lockdown during the spread of Covid 19 virus. The paper explores the existing challenges faced by in migrants and analyses government mechanism aimed at better social inclusion of migrants.*

**Key Words:** *Migrants, citizens, rights, social protection*

## Introduction

Migration is a critical demographic variable affecting states worldwide in the twenty first century. People move in search of employment opportunities and better living conditions. Migration is an expression of desire of people on move to better their wages, to seek more opportunities, security and better life chances in a highly competitive

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\* Dr Anuranjita Wadhwa is Assistant Professor at Bharati College, University of Delhi

unequal environment. The increase in urbanisation and development offers more opportunities and better living conditions. The scale of internal and external migration has increased multifold in a transforming world incapsulated in hope, opportunities and challenges. An estimated 272 million were migrants globally in 2019, 50 million more than in 2010. More people are settled in other parts of the region than where they were born. The interdependence of urbanisation and migration are important drivers of economic development and societal transformation witnessed by states world over since historical times. Movement of people has a significant impact on economic and social development. The United Nations Agenda on Sustainable Development 2030 gives significant importance to migration as it contributes in reducing poverty and inequality amongst people and regions by developing and enhancing human capital. Goal 8.8 of the SDGs proclamation to “Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment” cited in The Health Aspects of Labour Mobility side event organized by ILO on 12 October 2017 is one of the focus targets of ILO (ILO,2017). Migrants are rational decision makers, they move to a labour market corresponding to their capabilities providing employment to earn higher wages and better their life chances of oneself and their families. “Throughout human history, migration has been a courageous expression of the individual’s will to overcome adversity and to live a better life” (Wickramasekara, 2006). As a global phenomenon migration occurs due to economic factor but the influence of other push pull factors like social, cultural environmental, education opportunities cannot be discounted.

People migrate across national boundaries and within having far reaching implications for the host and destination they arrive. Though migration to other countries has been talked about and debated, however magnitude of internal migration is far greater, as bulk of the migrants are labour having potential to contribute to the economy of the state or district they settle. Internal migration is inevitable in the context of existing regional imbalances and the demand of labour at other places though there are differences in the pattern of migration between developing and developed part of the world. In India, push factors -unemployment, regional disparities, marriage, social restrictions induce migration. Nearly 37 per cent (45.36 crore) of the population in India are internal

migrants as recorded in Census 2011. As Supriyo De (2019) writes, ‘This is an increase of 45% over the 309 million recorded in 2001’ (Supriyo De,2019). There exists a close nexus between migration from rural to urban regions contributing to the development process as posited by neo-classical migration theory. As in most part rural regions are underdeveloped, surplus labour makes way to urban industrial set up as supply of workforce. Haas in *Migration and Development: A Theoretical Perspective*, postulate that ‘migrants were expected to play positive role in development and contribute to the accelerated spatial diffusion of modernization in developing countries, also remittances have been attributed an important role in stimulating economic growth’ (Haas,2010 p.231). Migration results in development gains at the place they move and from the place they move. Being as source of labour they contribute significantly in the development gains of the destination place and with their earnings they send remittances to their home state to enable them to invest further. However, development cannot exist in exclusion of providing rights to the drivers of economy. There is a close nexus between development gains and protection of rights of migrants. Protection of rights including social rights where the migration takes place provides security net to the migrants in terms of health and education benefits having a positive impact to stay for longer duration and contribute to the productivity. Studies have found a direct correlation between migration and securing rights of the migrating population at the place they move. United Nations in its report on the *World Social Situation 2018: Promoting Inclusion through Social Protection*, has highlighted the provision of ‘well-functioning social protection systems contribute to migrants’ desire to stay in their new homes’. (United Nations, 2018, pp.130-31).

The article analyses the non-availability of social welfare schemes to in migrants due to non-portability nature of rights requiring domicile and consequent hardships encountered by migrants. The paper critically studies initiatives taken by the government of India to protect the interest of migrant workers and the gaps in the policy to be addressed for the availability of core rights of life and dignity.

### **Internal Migration in India: Movement from Distress to Opportunities**

Part III of the Constitution of India on Fundamental Rights guarantees freedom of movement to people in Article 19(1)(d) and 19(1)(e).

Faetanini and Tankha in a UNESCO publication (2013) quote The Constitution of India 1950 which states, “All citizens shall have the right (...) to move freely throughout the territory of India; to reside and settle in any part of the territory of India” (UNESCO,2013, p.4). Internal movements, intrastate or interstate is not restricted by any law. Large number of citizens move out of their place of birth for various purposes. However internal migration in India is induced by push factors of poverty, unemployment, regional underdevelopment social and cultural exclusion or natural calamities. The involuntary nature of migrant force people to leave their place of origin due to distress arising at their place of origin in search of opportunities at the place of destination. Intra or interstate migration is primarily due to regional disparity and unequal level of development in the regions as migration provides much needed hope of survival. While analysing the statistical data one notices considerable increase in internal migrants in the Census 2011 in comparison to the previous one.

With 1.21 billion of India’s population according to Census 2011,37 per cent or 453 million population migrated within the state or interstate, a substantial increase in numbers in comparison to previous decade. This escalation of number is a considerable increase in comparison to Indians migrating across countries i.e., approximately 1.14 crores. Rapid urbanization from 2001 to 2011 has been accompanied with an approximately 31.8 decadal growth. Urban growth has risen with the increase in migration and with more cities adopting policies like National Smart Cities Mission, projects to revamp the cities infrastructure, the rate of people migrating to urban clusters is expected to grow in the coming years. Rajan and Sami (2020) stated that, ‘During 2001-2011, India saw an increase of 139 million to its migrant workforce, the internal migration almost doubled throughout twenty years—from 220 million in 1991 to 454 million in 2011’ (Rajan & Sami,2020).

Labour generally from the geographical regions of the Northern and Eastern India move to the Western and Southern regions. Migrant labour in abundance in regions of developing states move to developed states of India. Raja and Sami (2020) posit that, ‘this can be as a result of the demographic divide between the regions of South and North in terms of demographic dividend and transition’ (Rajan et al.,2020).

Mahapatro(2012) outlines push factors to migrate as she writes, ‘There can be contrasting reasons for this current increase in the migration rate...increasing unemployment, poverty, population pressure, environmental degradation, depletion of natural resources, etc. limit the livelihood options and may force people to migrate’ (‘Mahapatro, 2012,p.2). Migration primarily is an offshoot of regional disparities compelling people to move to places whether rural or urban with better livelihood. Some pockets of rural regions and urban areas are equipped with better infrastructure providing employment, better wages, educational opportunities and also transport connectivity motivates people to migrate. In the post liberalization period migration received an impetus with labour migrants constituting a major chunk.

Historical experience has shown that with urbanization, migration receives a boost and becomes an integral feature of economic development and at the same time bring change in the societal structure. The emergence of India as a major player in the economy and the development of cities as major contributor to the GDP, the contribution of labour of migrants are immense. ‘Migrants are indispensable and yet invisible key actors of socially dynamic, culturally innovative, and economically prosperous societies’’ (UNESCO,2013, p.iii).

### **Curtailed Citizenship Rights of the Forgotten Citizens**

The movement of people across borders and the right to admission within the territorial boundaries of the state is the distinguishing feature of modern citizenship. Citizenship grants a membership in an association assuring citizens’ rights and participation in the matters of polity. Bauböck (2016) elaborates by stating, ‘The conceptual field of citizenship can be roughly outlined by distinguishing three dimensions... these are, first, citizenship as a political and legal status, second, legal rights and duties attached to this status, and, third, individual practices, dispositions and identities attributed to, or expected from those who hold the status’’ (Bauböck,2016, p.16). As a member of polity described as citizenship, is distinguishable from other related terms describing individual affiliation with territorial societies.

Migration entails far-reaching implications for putting into practice an exhaustive declaration on human rights. Universal Declaration of Human Rights are applicable to all individuals in any part of the world as core

human rights are available to people in any part of the world without any distinction (Godwin Gill, 1978). However, in practice these sacrosanct claims are not available or denied to migrants. The contemporary world is witnessing the mass movement of people within the national territory and inter nation-state. The crossing of the boundary is not accompanied by a corresponding assurance of rights enjoyed by people in their origin place. As Grant (2005) writes that, "the rights are agreed to by governments world over however their denial or non-availability to workers makes them vulnerable depriving them of dignity".

Movement of people and settlement within (interstate and intra state) is fundamentally recognized for citizens of India. Citizens' rights and participation in polity is assured with the movement of people crossing boundaries from the place they were born maintaining continuity in availability of rights and performance of political obligations towards the state. Bauböck (2006) quotes Constitutional lawyer Georg Jellinek pronouncement "citizenship as a positive status that implies a duty by the state to promote the interests of individuals through a system of public rights and an active status that entitles its holders to participate, or be represented in, democratic institutions" (Bauböck, 2006, p26). Jellinek's statement implies obligation of the state to protect the rights of individual. With T H Marshall essay in 1965 on *Social Citizenship and Class*, the obligation of the polity to provide and promote social citizenship became implicit as it held that provision of basic social rights e.g., health care, schooling for children are considered human rights and strengthen the equitable ethos incorporated in the constitution. These rights intensify individual safety and autonomy primarily based on assuring equality to ensure a dignified life (KumarChoudhury,2021). But the availability of these rights effectively is uncertain, depending on the place of residence.

As large population move out of their place of origin, they encounter numerous constraints due to limited social protection offered by the state. Large chunk of vulnerable poor labour migrating intra state or interstate, employed in informal sectors of economy confront wide range of challenges in managing their livelihoods. Amongst the many difficulties faced are the non-portability of social welfare schemes in offered by state or local government and requirement of domicile to avail educational and job opportunities leaves them at risks of fulfilment of basic needs or

denial of right to education or work. Without proofs of residence, migrants are unable to avail social protection and benefits of government sponsored schemes. Their children too remain deprived of education in schools adversely affecting the development of human development indicators leading to transference of poverty from one generation to another. Instead of acknowledging their efforts in the economy they are seen as ‘burden’, and often mistreated and held responsible for unhygienic practices and disturbing the city planning initiatives.

UNESCO in its publication on *Social Inclusion of Internal Migrants in India (2013)*, states the constraints faced by internal migrants, ‘Internal migrants face numerous constraints, including a lack of political representation; inadequate housing and a lack of formal residency rights; low-paid, insecure or hazardous work; limited access to state-provided services such as health and education; discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, class or gender; extreme vulnerability of women and children migrants to trafficking and sexual exploitation’ (UNESCO,2013,p.7). As a result, they remain excluded from the political, social, economic and cultural lives of the place they give their substantial labour. The non-availability of reliable data base of in migrants is a severe handicap for labour departments to provide public welfare schemes to migrants at all levels of governance. Furthermore, due to diverse labour market the incoming labour remains fragmented and consequently unable to unionise.

The lockdown implemented by the Government of India on 25 March, 2020 to curb the spread of Covid-19, brought to light the mammoth task of ensuring rights with dignity of the vast majority of marginalised workers working mostly employed in informal sectors of economy in India. The problem for years did not receive a centre stage as it remained invisible from the consciousness of decision and policy makers. The news briefs and videos in various media platforms of anguished migrant workers eager to reach back home walking, or boarding whatever means of communication available to them brought to fore their insecurities and deplorable conditions. Due to lockdown workers had no work and consequently no wages to sustain themselves, is a reminder of an existing reality of the wide gap in the provisions of rights to citizens and actual entitlements.

The unavailability of rights to citizens under different circumstances, question the principles of democracy premised on freedom and equality. Such issues are often missing from the discussion as it is assumed that the working of liberal democracy has made provisions of political equality thereby including all and the focus is on socio economic equality and recognition of cultural liberties. As Bauöck quotes Joseph Carens in *Migration and Citizenship* (2006), “Citizenship in the modern world is a lot like feudal status in the medieval world, it is assigned at birth; for the most part, it is not subject to change by the individual’s will and efforts; and it has a major impact upon that person’s life chances” (Bauöck,2006, p.16).

### **Initiatives to Promote Inclusion of Invisible Indians**

In order to safeguard and promote migrants’ access to social protection and to include them as socially and politically active citizens impediments to access constitutional rights has to be looked. Rights play a crucial part for the wellbeing of migrants, conceived as prime agent of development and their availability is decisive in developing the required skills. Lack of rights have a grave impact on developing the capability of migrants whereas providing rights aid in its developing. (Böhning, 2009).

Böhning cites The United Nation’s International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families that explicitly spells out sets of rights for different categories (Böhning, 2009). Article 14 of the constitution of India provides dignified life to the citizens by guaranteeing the right to equality. To strengthen the ethos of dignified life, the Government of India implemented in 1979 Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, to protect the interest of workers migrating from other states. The act aimed to provide economic benefit of minimum wages, travel allowance, medical aid and social security such as shelter for the duration of stay. However, the Covid 19 disaster brought to forefront the ineffectiveness of the claims guaranteed in the act due to its improper implementation, defeating the purpose of its enactment. Nonetheless visionary interventions from the transferring and destination states together will show the way forward in putting into practice the rights given to citizens in any part of the country without any reservations for migrant workers.

Towards making social entitlements realisable the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation in 2015 set up a Working Group on Migration headed by Partha Mukhopadhyay. The report submitted by the expert group on 1 March, 2017 urged the central government to secure the constitutional rights of the migrants as they are potential contributors in the profitable growth of the economy of the country. The report made it explicit for the inclusion of migrant workers with other workers as Rajan and Sami (2020) refer to the recommendations of the report, "in principle there was no reason for specific protection legislation for migrant workers, inter-State or otherwise, that they should be integrated with all workers as part of a legislative approach with basic guarantees on wage and work conditions for all workers, as part of an overarching framework that covers regular and contractual work" (Rajan & Sami,2020).

International Labour Organisation, Aajeevika Bureau and the Centre for Migration and Inclusive Development (CMID) in their report 2020, stated the urgency for the Indian government to initiate inclusive policy framework to guarantee basic rights to vulnerable migrants entering the informal sectors of economy within the country borders. The process of codification of central labour laws which began in 2014, 29 central laws have been merged into four codes. CMID in its report(2020), specified four codes as code on wages, on occupational safety, health and working conditions, on industrial relations and code on social security (ILO,2020),which came to be adopted by September 2020. The Occupational Safety code, Health and Working conditions broadened the term interstate migrants to also include workers migrating on their own besides already providing protection to people migrating through contractors. Their inclusion broadens the extend of social security networks. In addition to this, the code provides for portability of public distribution system to provide notable benefits to large number of people from other states or districts. The Code on Social Security directs governments at the centre and state to establish funds for employees working in informal sectors of economy and to make provisions for their registration (ILO,2020). However, by not making social security measures portable, large number of migrants stand deprived of welfare measures necessary to sustain life.

Neeta Lal in *India's Government Focusses on Internal Migrants, at Last(2021)*, expresses hope in the NITI Aayog draft on National Migrant Labour policy 2021 for migrant workers that, “emphasizes the political inclusion of migrant workers so that they can demand their entitlements; advocates setting up interstate coordination mechanisms; suggests embedding a migration wing in each state’s labor department; and aims to get source states and destination states to work with each other” (Lal,2021).It is proposed in the draft to set aside provision and delivery of welfare services while rights grounded approach to be championed.Kingshuk Sarkar(2021) expresses faith in the right based approach perceived in the draft national policy on migrant workers. “The policy urges to remove restrictions on true agency and potential of the migrant workers” as the aim, “should not be to give temporary or endless economic or social aids”, viewed as “a rather limited approach”. The draft pronounces migration, “should be conceded as an integral part of development” (Sarkar,2021). The draft further states “government programmes should not hamper but...seek to facilitate internal migration” (Sarkar,2021).

Neeta Lal adds (2021),”Calling on employers to be transparent concerning about their value chains and formalize work contracts with migrant workers, the draft policy advocates a “rights-based” approach to tap the migrants’ potential rather than issue hand-outs and cash-transfers”. It is perceived the draft may be significant in mainstreaming internal migrant labour. Experts say the draft could be vital in mainstreaming migratory labour. Presently the imperfect Inter-state Migrant Workmen Act, 1979 is the legal document with its restricted scope as it provides protection to workers moving out through a contractor, not covering large number of freelance migrating workers.

The proposed policy framework could be a comprehensive one as Mehrotra in a write up on, *What is NITI Aayog’s draft national policy on migrant workers? (2021)* says the draft policy” describes two approaches to policy design: one focussed on cash transfers, special quotas, and reservations; the other which “enhances the agency and capability of the community and thereby take away aspects that come in the way of an individual’s own natural ability to thrive” (Mehrotra,2021). The recommendations enclosed within the report would give a legal basis to produce social protection to safeguard the migrants.

## Conclusion

The new era has created opportunities for people to migrate within the territorial boundaries on a large scale than ever. The clear linkage between migration and development at both origin and destination has ushered improved economic and social conditions in the lives of people and society at large. The improved national GDP is a constant reminder of the labour force contribution to the economic development of India. The contribution of interstate migrants to development is recognised at various platforms and urgency expressed to adopting a human rights-based approach instead of a handout one. Migrant workers are most vulnerable section of migrants facing challenges of claiming political and social rights.

In spite of migrants' contribution to economy, culture and as service providers, they are forgotten citizens of India, their voices remain unheard. Their rights are rarely respected and their dignity is hardly recognised. Though the fundamental rights do not make any discrimination in the provision of rights but the socio-economic milieu of the country has generated specific perception of rights applicable on the diverse section of the population in accordance with their socio-economic position in the society.

The non-portability of social benefits in spite being citizens of India relegates them to secondary citizens to face arduousness in availing health care, ration facilities and other social welfare benefits at the destination place. The non-maintenance of credible database of internal migrants is a further hindrance in framing effective strategy in ensuring benefits of social protection. The NITI Aayog draft policy document highlight on ‘rights-based approach’ is a significant move to include migrants in mainstream society rather than treating them as invisible Indians. The recommendations put forward by the think tank addresses the gap of the sole legal framework adopted in 1979, the Act of Interstate Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service), covering rights of labour settling in other states, as the flawed provisions are applicable on labours migrating through contractors, leaving others out of its purview. There is no institutional mechanism to identify and collect credible data of migrating labour and consequently resulting in flawed policies.

The recent pandemic revealed the harsh fact of the vulnerability of migrant labour and the dependence of economy especially unorganized sector on their services. The vulnerabilities of these workers make a strong plea for universalising a dignified work agenda. The imposition of nationwide lockdown to contain Covid 19 virus has necessitated an urgency to implement policies providing safety net to the vulnerable section of migrant labour. Universalisation of providing social security benefits to migrant workers without any discrimination makes a strong plea for provision egalitarianism and access to social justice. The ILO International Labour Standards on social protection provides a comprehensive framework for improving social welfare coverage. A policy framework that adopts rights-based approach to enhance the capability of the migrants and its implementation in true spirit is a step towards building an inclusive society admiring the nexus between migration and development.

Migrants are productive assets towards building a sustainable society only if we aim at an inclusive and equitable economy. India is placed at an advantageous position as the demographic dividend will reach its peak at around 2036. Migrant Labour policy should comprehensively create a credible database so as to create comprehensive social security mechanisms and its availability of social protection through continuous tracking and if required interventions can be planned.

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# Rural Non-Farm Sector Development and Poverty Reduction in Bangladesh

Biswajit Choudhury\*

## Abstract

*The importance rural non-farm sector in the livelihoods of the rural poor in developing countries, particularly in Bangladesh, is increasingly acknowledged. The understanding of the factors and processes that affect the ability of the poor to engage in more sustainable and remunerative activities helps design policies and interventions that increase the pro-poorness of the rural non-farm sector. Moreover, working in more or less decentralised contexts, development organisations, governments and researchers seek to develop rural non-farm sectors find that this generates strong interest among rural poor. Employment in rural non-farm activities has become an essential aspect of the lives of many people in the rural areas of Bangladesh, as in several other developing countries. While this is an economic phenomenon, it has an essential social aspect because those affected are mostly the rural poor. For the growing number of these people who are not absorbed enough in agriculture or urban-based industry and are obliged to leave the land partially or entirely, non-farm activities are a part of their survival strategies.*

**Keywords:** Poverty Reduction, Non-Farm Sector, GOB, Grameen Bank, SAARC

## Introduction

Poverty alleviation and social sector development have been the core issues in development planning in Bangladesh since 1971. Among the least developed countries in Asia, Bangladesh is among the most densely populated (866 per square kilometre) countries, with a population of 124.8 million squeezed into 144,000 square kilometres (Rahman, 2002). Urbanisation is low, but the infant mortality rate is high. The share of manufacturing is common, but the manufacturing sector's growth rate is high. Bangladesh is a delta, mostly plains through which the Ganges and the Brahmaputra flow to the Bay of Bengal.

In Bangladesh, development projects of agriculture, rural development, primary and mass education, health and family welfare, women and children affairs, labour and employment include poverty alleviation

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\* Dr. Biswajit Choudhury teaches as Assistant Professor (Sr. Grade) at the Department of Political Science, Handique Girls' College, Guwahati-781001, Assam, India.

programmes. The social sector comprises all poverty-related programmes minus agriculture, education, youth and sports, mass communication, cultural affairs, and public administration.

As a pre-given idea of the outer world, the Greek philosopher Plato used the term Outer World in the theory of Forms in his classic work Republic. A poor person is considered one without a job, who cannot help or cater to his family, and has no money, farm or business. Children are poor if they have no parents, no education, no good food, clothes and health. A poor person is described as malnourished and ageing fast, one without self-confidence looks dirty and lives in a filthy environment, one who cannot cater to his family, train his children in school and unable to pay medical bills.

The Millennium Development Goals: Bangladesh Progress Report, jointly prepared by the UN and the Government of Bangladesh, notes how Bangladesh is steadily keeping on track in meeting the UN Millennium Development Goals. For Bangladesh, the goals include (i) lowering the poverty rate to 29.4 per cent, (ii) providing 100 per cent universal primary education, (iii) reducing child mortality to 50 per thousand live births, and (iv) improving maternal health to 143 or fewer fatalities in one hundred thousand natal conditions, and ensuring environmental sustainability by 20 per cent, all by the year 2015. The report found the pace of poverty reduction at an average of 9.2 per cent from 1991 to 2000 had picked up since Bangladesh entered the new millennium with a poverty level of 49.8 per cent. In related fields of human development, the report showed that the enrolment rate at primary schools, including those of various denominations, rose to 82.7 per cent in 2003 compared to 73.7 per cent in 1992. The child mortality rate fell to 82 per 1,000 live births compared to 151 in 1990. Maternal mortality per hundred thousand births had decreased from 570 to 320. Environmental sustainability went up by 1.2 per cent as the proportion of forest cover of land mass increased from 9 to 10.2 per cent. Not many countries at Bangladesh's income level can list so many of these achievements (UNDP, 2005).

This paper highlights the meaning and approaches to the poverty alleviation process and the potential of the rural non-farm sector to

overcome rural poverty in Bangladesh. This study carries using historical and analytical methods.

### **Poverty Discourse in Bangladesh**

Although poverty in the South Asian Sub-Continent was a subject of interest during the British Colonial period (Jack, 1916; Siddqui, 1982), there was only one research on this issue during the Pakistan period 1947-71 (Siddiqui, 1982). Poverty began attracting researchers' attention after the famine of 1974, and the decade saw several studies mainly devoted to counting the poor. Only Alamgir (1978) and Griffin (1977) tried to provide macro-level analysis of the poverty process in the country. Alamgir had developed a Marxist analysis of poverty. Griffin sought to understand the problem regarding a high level of inequality and the dominance of the rich in the state machinery. Two ethnographic studies, however, were significant in exploring rural poverty. In Jhagrapur, Arens and Beurden (1977) provided a graphic account of the livelihoods of the poor and the exploitation process in a village of Kushtia, focusing on women from a Marxist perspective. In 1977 Siddiqui (1982) mounted a meticulous study of poverty in a village of Narail again from a Marxist perspective, which tried to link micro-level poverty with macro societal processes. Hartman and Boyce (1979; 1983) undertook an ethnographic study of a Rangpur village and underscored patron-clientelism and parochialism as the vital instrument that kept the poor dependent, fearful and voiceless.

A particularly speculative but influential study on the poverty of the 1980s was undertaken by Maloney (1986), who sought to explore deep behavioural and cultural contours in Bangladesh that led to the perpetuation of poverty in the country. Central to his analysis is that Bangladesh society's 'overall socio-economic texture' was traditional. A particular drawback of this conventional society was (i) the notion of atomistic individualism, (ii) the characteristic of the Gangetic delta that impedes crystallisation and (iii) durable organisations and thus prevents modernisation.

More detailed studies of poverty have become available from the 1990s onward. While there are five key data sources for understanding poverty in the country, the most important is the Household Expenditure Survey (HES), which started in 1973-1974; 13 rounds of these surveys have been conducted

(BBS, 2002). But HES data have generally been reliable since the 1990s (Rahman, 2002). The second primary data source is The Analysis of Poverty Trends (APT), undertaken by the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) and later on Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC) in 1989. The feature of this study is the use of panel data (Rahman, 2002). A third source is information on the nutritional status of children collected by Helen Keller International in 1990. The fourth source is the dietary data provided irregularly by the Institute of Nutrition and Food Sciences (Rahman, 2002). A fifth source is the survey of 32 villages conducted by IRRI in 1987-1988 and 2000. Apart from these, several specific surveys and qualitative studies were carried out to understand poverty in particular circumstances and in greater depth. One product of this type of study is 19 reports published by PROSHIKA under its 'The Livelihoods of the Extreme Poor Study'.

### **An attempt at Poverty Reduction in Bangladesh**

Since 1973 the successive development plans in Bangladesh have highlighted the issue of poverty alleviation for the country itself. The plans also prepared several strategies to face the challenge. The First Five-Year Plan (1973-1978) laid stress more on a socialistic restructuring of the economy so that the benefits of development could be distributed more equitably among the different groups of people. In a sense, the Plan was preoccupied more with the task of post-independence economic reconstruction and the international economic crisis arising from the oil price hike than with the country's poverty problem. The Two-Year Plan (1978-1980) was expected to give the country a direction for future planning and development. However, it got bogged down in rationalising the portfolio of ongoing projects in the face of acute resource shortages.

Bangladesh's Second Five-Year Plan (1980-1985) focused on poverty reduction through income and employment growth. Growth with equity through employment expansion was expected to raise the purchasing power. For poverty alleviation, planners provided an incentive to agricultural support and agro-process industries as these contribute to the development of the rural economy.

The Third Five-Year Plan (1985-1990) of Bangladesh relegated poverty alleviation, defined as 'satisfaction of basic needs of the people, to the sixth position among eight pronounced objectives. Employment generation

through the dynamic private sector, a fulfillment of minimum essential requirement through increased supply, higher income, and faster economic growth was expected to take care of poverty.

The Fourth Five-Year Plan (1990-1995) held poverty alleviation and employment generation through human resource development as one of its primary objectives. The Plan emphasised the resilience of the poor and the disadvantaged groups to survive against most adverse circumstances. When properly organised and supported, these economically backward groups could show resourcefulness regarding savings, investment, technology adaptation, and entrepreneurship. The Fourth Five-Year Plan attempted to integrate sector-based planning with socio-economic group-based planning to ensure more significant poverty alleviation and economic growth. According to the Fourth Five-Year Plan, it would be necessary to formulate special projects for the poor and the disadvantaged group to alleviate poverty after direct integration with sectoral programmes.

The Fifth Five-Year Plan (1997-2002) aimed to alleviate poverty through accelerated economic growth on an annual 7 per cent to a noticeable improvement in the living standard of the people by raising their level of income and meeting their basic needs. Other objectives of the Fifth Five-Year Plan were to: (i) alleviate poverty through employment generation and raise at least half the people below the poverty line above that level, and (ii) develop socio-economic infrastructure with particular emphasis on human resources development in a science and technology-based society, (iii) distribute the benefits of economic development equitably with the provision of safety net for the most vulnerable people and accelerated development of backward areas, and (iv) reduce gender disparity (Hye, 1996).

The strategy of rural development in the draft perspective plan drawn up for the sector covering the period 1995-2010 is a continuation of the strategy paper prepared for the rural sector in the Third Five Year Plan in which the targeted production and employment programmes for the rural poor featured prominently. According to this strategy, rural development projects were to be one or more of the development of physical infrastructure, irrigated agriculture and minor drainage, and production and employment for the rural poor. The draft perspective plan for the rural sector envisaged the

continuation and expansion of successful targeted poverty alleviation programmes/projects and the addition of new pro-poor projects based on social mobilisation (Hye, 1996).

The Bangladesh Government has also adopted a long-term vision for the country's development which reflects in the long-term Perspective Plan (2010-2021). To realise the idea, the Bangladesh Government start implementing the Sixth Five Year Plan (FY 2011-2015) in July 2010. The NSAPR-II (revised) remained in force till FY 2011, and its performance is reviewed annually in a regular course. Eventually, the time frame for MTBF (Medium Term Budget Framework) is extended from three to five years, facilitating the continuation of spillover projects or programmes and the inclusion of new ones (GOB, 2011).

In the light of the long-term vision, Bangladesh Government has identified five priority areas for medium-term action, such as (i) maintenance of macroeconomic stability and control over commodity price hikes, (ii) effective action against corruption, (iii) sufficiency in power and energy, (iv) elimination of poverty and inequality, and (v) establishment of good governance.

An overview of these Five-Year Plans of the Bangladesh Government on rural development indicates that poverty alleviation has always been a core concern of the development trajectory. It also depicts a priority attachment to poverty alleviation in terms of objectives and strategies. A follow-up review of these policy statements, however, manifests that, in most cases, no serious attempts have been made to translate such policies into concrete programmes and projects within a coherent institutional framework. As a result, the sectoral programmes, particularly in agriculture, health, social welfare, infrastructure development, water resource development etc., were designed in isolation without focusing on poverty alleviation. Even with the existing institutional framework, there has been a noticeable lack of coordination in the management of the projects on poverty alleviation carried out by different agencies of the GOB as well as NGOs (Aminuzzaman and Nunn, 1993).

### **Approaches toward Poverty Reduction in Bangladesh**

Since its independence, Bangladesh has virtually become a laboratory for designing and experimenting with different rural development models

and approaches. Various agencies of the Government of Bangladesh (GOB), international donors and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) have experimented with other models and techniques of institution building for rural and local level development (Holtsberg, 1990). The goals, objectives and strategies for implementing these experimental approaches varied depending on the sponsor of the projects. But alleviating poverty has always been one of the core objectives of those practical approaches. Despite all these different institutional and experimental interventions over the years, poverty alleviation remains a significant challenge for Bangladesh (Jahan, 1991). Given the present trends in population and economic growth and the absence of a concerted plan of action for poverty alleviation, experts fear that the poverty scenario in Bangladesh will be even worse in the years to come (GOB, 1991; SAARC, 1992; BIDS, 1993).

In the mid-1960s, the Comilla Model of cooperative received international fame as an alternative approach for rural development in resource-poor countries (Aminuzzaman, 1985). However, the Comilla model virtually became redundant in post-independent Bangladesh with the changed socio-economic and political reality. Since then, given the high poverty level and extreme dependence on foreign aid, Bangladesh has become a veritable laboratory for rural development and poverty alleviation interventions. Without a comprehensive, transparent policy, rural development has become a patchwork of public and private initiatives and interventions (Willmann, 1990; Siddiqui, 1985; Jones, 1982; Holtsberg, 1992). The GOB agencies and NGOs have developed a wide variety of intervention packages. Bilateral or multilateral donor agencies have mainly financed these interventions. All such interventions can broadly classify under three different project approaches (Aminuzzaman, 1997):

- Direct Capability-Raising Projects,
- Growth-Oriented Projects with a Strong Immediate Impact on Poverty, and
- Targeted Special Employment Schemes for the Poor.

The Direct Capability-Raising Projects' indirectly address poverty through enforcing higher investment in social sectors like health and education,

enhancing human capabilities and improving the standard of living indicators. These projects, in effect, do not directly impact employment or income generation.

The Growth-Oriented Projects with a Strong Immediate Impact on Poverty is based on the assumption that poverty addresses through fostering a higher growth process through a complex interplay of macro-economic policy instruments.

Again 'the Targeted Special Employment Schemes for the Poor' was developed in 1984 by the Government of Bangladesh as a new Strategy for Rural Development Projects (SRDP). The strategy emphasised the inclusion of Rural Poor Projects (RPP) as a component of all future rural and area development programmes. In line with the process, several new generations of Area Development Programmes were negotiated and launched with an RPP component. Under these Area Development Programmes, a targeted self-employment scheme with varying input support such as credit, training and extension services is implemented. These schemes have promoted the landless-poor's joint ventures by forming groups and cooperatives. Under these programmes, assets are transferred to the target groups on a collective basis, e.g. common cultivation of land, pisciculture, irrigation, and power tiller schemes run by the landless groups and cooperatives. In almost all cases Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB) was assigned to implement the programme. In addition to these approaches, GOB also took some special programmes like Food for Works (FFW), Vulnerable Groups Feeding etc., to address seasonal rural unemployment and the causes of needy women.

Moreover, the approaches and interventions for rural development and poverty alleviation in Bangladesh have been discussed under five different institutional models such as (Aminuzzaman, 1997):

- (a) Bangladesh Rural Development Board Model,
- (b) Donor-Line Agency Collaboration,
- (c) NGO-Government Collaboration Model,
- (d) Poverty Alleviation Projects (PAPs) of Large NGOs, and
- (e) Small and Local NGO projects.

**(a) Bangladesh Rural Development Board Model**

Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB) was assigned to develop the cooperative system and implement various rural development programmes. BRDB is the most extensive institutional set-up of the GOB, which is directly engaged in organising and managing rural development and poverty alleviation programme in Bangladesh. Eighty-five per cent of the BRDB efforts are carried out in the form of projects in which 91 per cent of the share is contributed by different multilateral and bilateral Donor organisations (Interchain 1990); (BRDB, 1991).

**(b) Donor-Line Agency Collaboration**

In this approach, the GOB and selected Donor agency have designed poverty alleviation projects, at least on paper. However, in reality, most of these projects have been the products of different mission reports commissioned by the donor. In fact, on the whole, these projects are the manifestations of the Donors' disbelief in the capability of GOB Agencies. Under this model, a specific GOB line agency is formally assigned to run the project while the Donors provide a Project Advisory Team. The Donors usually impose elaborate project-specific institutional arrangements. The project is managed by an international project management firm with highly salaried expatriate resident advisers and consultants (Raquib, 1992).

**(c) NGO-Government Collaboration Model**

Another emerging model in PAP is the collaboration between the GOB line agencies and the NGOs, which one study notes as a 'Promising Alternative Institutional Approach to Poverty Alleviation (Hossain, A. 1995). This approach combines the extensive experience of NGOs in group formation, awareness raising, human resource development and income generating activities with the large-scale capacity of GOB line agencies to deliver inputs of technical expertise and resources. In other words, NGO staff's local knowledge, human resource development expertise, motivation and enthusiasm are expected to demonstrate by GOB staff interacting with each other.

#### **(d) Poverty Alleviation Projects (PAPs) of Large NGOs**

NGOs in Bangladesh radically transformed and became agents of development in the post-independence era. The GOB had neither the capacity nor the appropriate institutional mechanism to address the volume and diversity of immediate crises of the post-independent period to handle alone. Then, several international NGOs and voluntary organisations extended their helping hands to assist Bangladesh in its striving efforts to rebuild the infrastructure and the economy. Thus, the decade of 1970s witnessed the emergence of several local NGOs and the arrival of several International NGOs in Bangladesh. Since the 1970s, NGOs have become a part of Bangladesh's institutional poverty alleviation framework (Sobhan and Bhattacharya, 1990).

#### **(e) Small and Local NGO Projects**

This institutional arrangement aims to upgrade small local NGOs' capacity to implement poverty alleviation projects. *Palli Karma Sahayak* Foundation (PKSF), established in 1990 by the GOB, is the leading agency in such an approach. The PKSF's broad goal is to implement income and employment generating programmes to alleviate poverty for the landless and the restless people in the rural areas through various NGOs. The PKSF calls these the Partner Organisations (POs). The Foundation, during the financial year 1992-1993, through its 79 POs, has distributed a sum of Tk.100 million. The total sum of the direct loans and the revolving loan provided by the POs have rendered credit support to over 70,000 landless, asset-less people in rural Bangladesh, of which 83 per cent are women (PKSF, 1992).

#### **Linkages between Rural Non-Farm Sector and Poverty Reduction**

Most of the literature on the linkages between rural non-farm sector income and rural poverty indicates a strong relationship. When average income from the rural non-farm sources is higher than that of the farm sector (agriculture), access to rural non-farm sector jobs represents upward mobility improving the welfare of both individuals and households. Secondly, by diversifying their sources of income, rural households can augment their gains and minimise the extent to which they are affected by adverse income shocks from farm activities. Thirdly, as rural non-farm incomes increase the households' cash liquidity, they

can buy farm inputs more quickly, thus increasing their farm productivity. Finally, the rural non-farm sector offers landless families (unable to engage in farm activities because of their lack of land) an essential option for generating income.

Since agricultural growth provides only limited possibilities for labour absorption, the burden of absorbing additions to the rapidly growing labour force is shared by rapid employment expansion in the non-farm (non-agricultural) sector. The process in the classic dual economy growth models with rapid growth in the non-agriculture sector leads to progressive labour force shifts from the low-income agriculture sector into the high-income non-agricultural industry. As the size of the rural non-farm sector increases relative to the farm sector, its growth has a more significant potential impact on poverty through a larger capacity to absorb surplus labour from agriculture (Ahluwalia, 1990).

### **Rural Non-Farm Sector Impact on Poverty Reduction in Bangladesh**

The rural non-farm sector's impact on poverty alleviation in Bangladesh is vast and varied. Some key terms related to the diversification and rural non-farm sector address three issues. Firstly, it reviews the main theories of rural non-farm sector growth and highlights a model for thinking about various stages of diversification in the rural economy. Secondly, it considers the diverse impacts on poverty, inequality and well-being caused by participation in the rural non-farm sector. Finally, it feels policy options, outlining the choices and trade-offs that face rural planners and policymakers.

Five key issues need clarification before discussing the diversification of the rural non-farm sector. Firstly, diversification can refer to an increasing mix or diversity of activities, regardless of the industry, or a shift away from traditional rural sectors such as agriculture to non-traditional, often non-agricultural activities associated with the growth of rural non-farm sector activities.

Secondly, diversification takes place during various issues of economic growth. That's why the diversification of a rural economy (and thus the expansion of the rural non-farm sector) is distinct from the diversification of a household or individual economy (and hence the development of rural

non-farm sector income shares). There are links between these issues, and they are not always direct.

Thirdly, 'non-farm' or 'non-agricultural' are sectoral definitions. In case of consistency between micro and macro levels of discussion, the National Accounting concepts of primary, secondary and tertiary enterprises are a useful benchmark to carry.

Fourthly, and related to this, 'rural' is a spatial definition. It comprises rural towns, growth centres and their industrial units.

Lastly, other proper conceptual dimensions exist beyond the sector and space to consider in thinking about livelihood and economic activities. These include (a) the degree of linkage to agriculture or other sectors, (b) the relations of productions, (c) the level of technology, capitalisation or modernisation, which often has a direct bearing on, and (d) the levels of productivity and associated returns.

An essential measure of the rural non-farm sector's performance is its impact on poverty and income distribution. The resources from the Household Expenditure Survey (HES) prepared by BBS uses to investigate the effects of the rural non-farm sector on incomes, poverty and inequality in the rural economy of Bangladesh:

- The rural non-farm sector per capita income growth has been positive over the 1980s, unlike the per capita agricultural and rural wage income.
- The rural non-farm sector's per capita income improvement occurred mostly in self-employment but not substantially in wage-employment.
- The rural non-farm sector was an important income source for the poor and non-poor alike.
- The incidence of poverty for the rural non-farm sector households is lower than the farm (agricultural) labourer households.
- Increasing participation in the rural non-farm sector is likely to reduce income inequality.

## **Conclusion**

In Bangladesh, alleviating rural poverty under the changing economic conditions is a colossal task for which international cooperation is needed, in

addition to wise domestic policies. In this regard, Bangladesh has strongly projected its views in regional and global forums. Bangladesh took the initiative in formulating the SAARC Dhaka Declaration for Poverty Alleviation, which regards the poor not as liabilities but as assets and emphasises the need to bring the creative dynamics of the poor into the mainstream of development. An institutional mechanism to ensure this has already started. Bangladesh is committed to the Agenda for Action adopted at Copenhagen Social Summit in March 1995, the Platform for Action agreed upon at Beijing World Conference for Women in September 1995, and the decisions taken at World Food Summit in Rome in November 1996. In each of those forums, poverty alleviation was a primary concern. At the World Micro-Credit Summit in Washington, inaugurated by the Prime Minister of Bangladesh in February 1997, micro-lending was endorsed as an essential tool for alleviating rural poverty. Based on its success in Bangladesh, the *Grameen* Bank concept of micro-credit has now been replicated worldwide, including in China. The Summit led to the generation of global awareness that to finance the micro-lending programmes on a large scale, funds needed to be raised through joint efforts at the national and international levels.

The importance rural non-farm sector in the livelihoods of the rural poor in developing countries, particularly in Bangladesh, is increasingly acknowledged. The understanding of the factors and processes that affect the ability of the poor to engage in more sustainable and remunerative activities helps design policies and interventions that increase the pro-poorness of the rural non-farm sector. Employment in rural non-farm activities has become an essential aspect of the lives of many people in the rural areas of Bangladesh, as in several other developing countries. While this is an economic phenomenon, it has an essential social aspect because those affected are mostly the rural poor. For the growing number of these people who are not absorbed enough in agriculture or urban-based industry and are obliged to leave the land partially or entirely, non-farm activities are a part of their survival strategies.

Jahan (1997) found out about the development challenges of the nineties as well as the poverty alleviation strategy of Bangladesh. The approaches are (a) enforcing more significant investments in social sectors, (b) fostering a higher growth process, and (c) promoting targeted employment and income-generating programmes are essential. Again the targeted employment

generation schemes and the issue of sustainability of poverty alleviation programmes in Bangladesh are remarkable. During the 1990s, the issue of poverty alleviation was not only a development constraint but also a socio-political challenge for Bangladesh.

The World Bank (2000b) has laudably blueprinted the vision of the social protection of the poor or vulnerable so that they can manage risks better, mainly through safety nets. The fiscal crisis of the state and the absence of donor support undermine the realism of such a vision. Jeffery Sachs (2001) recently held that IMF and the World Bank were accomplices in 'grossly underfunded and insufficient strategies' (Sachs, 2001: 44) for poverty reduction. But even under the existing constraints, there is scope for new and innovative programmes such as health insurance and disaster insurance for NGO clients, which can fund from the savings of the poor. There can be GO-NGO collaboration in protecting the poorest of the poor.

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# Menstrual Health Management: Knowledge and Practices in Rural Kaushambi District, India

Anjali Yadav\* , Arpana Pandey\* & Chanchal\*

## Abstract

*Menstrual health, hygiene, and management are still not given the required attention in the majority of India. In our society, menstruations as well as females during menstruation are considered as tainted and impure, resulting in unhygienic menstrual practices and consequential varied infections and diseases. Although this is the problem of every society in our country, the condition of adolescent girls and women in rural areas are more grave and miserable. This study is based on a community-based survey conducted in the year 2019-20 in the rural Kaushambi district of Uttar Pradesh. The main objective of the study is to access knowledge, attitude, and practices regarding menstrual health and hygiene management in rural society. The study found that about 72% of girls in a rural area doesn't have any awareness regarding menstruation before their menarche and more than three-fourth of the respondents don't have any knowledge regarding the cause of menstruation even after menarche. The study came to know that less than one-third of respondents don't have access to hygienic sanitary absorbents to manage their menstruation and the majority of participants don't adopt sustainable ways to dispose of their used sanitary absorbents. Respondents were also informed about various kinds of socio-cultural restrictions during menstruation, which makes their life wretched during their periods.*

**Keywords:** Menstruation, Hygiene, Awareness, Menstrual health, Rural.

## Introduction

Menstruation is a natural physiological process in which female bodies transform for a potential pregnancy. Menstruation has been experienced by all adolescent girls and women in their life till their menopause. Every menstruator menstruates each month but there is variation in maturation days, which is for two to five days and occasionally up to seven days, in which they bleed through the vagina. Menarche is considered as a

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\* Anjali Yadav is a Research Scholar at Centre of Science and Society, IIDS, University of Allahabad, Prayagraj (U.P.), India- 211002

\* Dr. Arpana Pandey is faculty at Centre of Science and Society, IIDS, University of Allahabad, Prayagraj (U.P.), India- 211002

\* Chanchal is a Research Scholar at Centre of Science and Society, IIDS, University of Allahabad, Prayagraj (U.P.), India- 211002

transformation period between childhood and adulthood, leading to various physical, psychological, and biological developments of healthy adolescent girls, transgender men, and non-binary persons of reproductive age (*WHO, 1996*).

According to WHO (World Health Organization), an individual between the age of 10-19 falls under the adolescent stage and the average age of menstruation would be 12 to 13 years which is consistent across most of the population. (*Bagga and Kulkarni, 2000; Diaz et al., 2006*). In India, over 355 million menstruators are present, however, major sections of menstruator still facing barriers in their menstrual hygiene management (MHM) (*Dasra, Kiawah Trust, and USAID Report, 2014*). The menstrual flow may differ across the range of people. To deal with it in a healthy and dignified manner, the menstruators have to practice safe menstrual hygiene management (MHM). Menstrual Health Management is defined as “Menstruator should use clean menstrual hygiene product such as cloth, cotton, sanitary pads, menstrual cup or any such things to collect the menstrual blood which can be disposed or changed in privacy within a short interval of time and the one should wash their body parts by using soap and water” (*SHARE Consortium, 2017*).

Indeed, menstruator all over the world have invented various methods to handle menstruation which may or may not be hygienic. These methods are diverse owing to personal priorities, availability of resources, economic status, cultural value, educational status, and knowledge of menstrual management. These menstrual management techniques are of main concern because they have a wide impact on the whole life of menstruator. It affects the well-being of menstruator sociologically as well as economically and mismanagement may lead to major health issues such as toxic shock syndrome, reproductive tract infections (RTI), Urinary tract infection (UTI), and other vaginal diseases (*Khanna et al., 2005; Narayan et al., 2001; Rajaretnam & Hallad, 2010*).

Menstruation is disgraced all over the world. The topic of menstrual health has not given proper attention and is also considered an impure and forbidden subject resulting in a lack of knowledge, preparedness, and management. The same reason leads to unhygienic use of sanitary material as well as unhygienic disposal practices. The study found that

lack of knowledge is the main barrier to proper menstrual management. Inadequate knowledge and practice make the adolescent girls miss school for several days in a month and also restrict them to meet anyone in the house. These girls are kept isolated in the house. These actions leave a deep impact on the well-being of adolescent girls. Sanitary health care is very important for adolescent girls and women, especially in rural areas, who depend on different options other than sanitary pads such as unsanitized cloths, rug, sand, ash, mud to manage their periods. In rural and remote areas, there is still a lower percentage of menstruators using sanitary napkins because of the lack of awareness, availability, and affordability; hence they are forced to continue with unhygienic practices. Most of the menstruator in our society denied the basic right to hygienic, dignified, and healthy menstrual management practices. These issues are prevalent due to gender inequality, educational inequality, sexism, cultural taboo, economic inequality, poverty, and lack of basic sanitation facility associated with menstruation and challenges faced by menstruator at global, national, and local levels. May 28<sup>th</sup> is recognized as Menstrual Hygiene Day since 2014 worldwide (*United Nation Population Fund, 2017*). Also, it is well known that poor Menstrual Hygiene Management Practices adversely affect the initiatives and performance of the countries achieving the important number of Sustainable Development Goals by the United Nations. (SDG-3, SDG-4, SDG-5, SDG-6, SDG-8, and SDG-12.) (*Tiwary and Anuradha, 2018*).

### **Previous Studies**

Menstruation sterility is a major concern that is faultily addressed and not earns decent- consideration in the reproductive health, water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) zone in flourishing countries along with India. Menstruation and its related practices are still equivocal by sociocultural restriction inmates in adolescent girls halting ignorance of the scientific facts and hygienic practices, which meantime opposes the health outcomes. Menstruation is static with reference as unclear and dirty in Indian society. Women who have proper knowledge about menstrual hygiene and its proper practice are less prone to UTIs and other consequences (*Yasmin et. al., 2013*).

The scantiness of relevant and correct information references to

menstrual hygiene in adolescent girls may result in wrong and unhealthy behavior during their menstruation period. Also, many mothers don't know the proper process of menstrual hygiene, and inadequacy of skills to communicate with their daughter lead them to pass wrong information by them propagate false attitude, beliefs, and practices (*Lawan et.al., 2010*). Isolating the menstruating girls and imposing restrictions on them creates an apprehensive outlook towards this process (*Singh et.al., 2001*).

The studies show that during the pre-menstruation and menstruation period, 75% of girls in late adolescence combat problems associated with menstruation such as physical, psychological, and financial (*Senthil et.al., 2013*). Menstruation is an important cycle in the human reproductive process but many functionality disorders affect the lives of adolescents (*Olowokere et.al 2014*). Many studies show that majority of adolescents have improper knowledge and miss apprehension about menstruation and those who know about menstruation, are practicing the erroneous technique associated with hygiene and menstrual management. In developing countries like Nigeria, Uganda, India, adolescent girls are forbidden during the period from doing any kind of household work such as cooking, attending religious practices, etc. The study shows that during menstruation absentees of girls range between 2% to 61.7%. Also, a survey shows that every fifth girl in India and Egypt frequently changes their absorbent in school compared to half of the counterparts in Nigeria. Survey also suggests that urban adolescents take baths more frequently compared to rural adolescents during menstruation. This also indicates that adolescents in India also clean their genitals twice a day during menstruation. These practices also fall under MHM education (*Chandra-Mouli & Patel 2017*).

Contradictory to our belief, a survey static shows that 67.4% of adolescents were well known to MHM, about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of (26.4%) of them have plenty of knowledge of MHM. Referencing attitude of menstruation survey shows that half of the adolescent has a positive attitude towards MHM (*Yadav et. al., 2017*). In western parts of Ethiopia, the survey state that 60.9% of adolescent had plenty of knowledge of MHM. The same survey also found that the primary source of this information was their teachers. Meanwhile, in Nepal, it found that a major number of

adolescents had an eminent level of knowledge on MHM and that knowledge of MHM was predicated by mental education. The menses are considered a typical biological process and a major sign of reproduction health (*Upashe et.al., 2015; Gultie et.al., 2014; Santra, 2017*).

A similar study on adolescent girls in Katsina state in Nigeria showed that only 1/ 3<sup>rd</sup> of them has only primary knowledge of menses, 3 in 5 has no knowledge of the cause of menses and its process. The studies also show that the source of knowledge of proper menstrual hygiene practice was a predictor. Although in Nepal the studies show 5% of adolescent girls have good knowledge of MHM (*Okafor-Terver, & Chuemchit, 2018*).

In India, studies show that less than half of adolescents have menstrual knowledge before menarche. In India, menstruating girls observe religious limitations, while 24% of them miss school during menses. It also shows that every third girl changed their absorbent in school facilities but a quarter of them improperly disposed of their used material (*Barthakur & Barkataki, 2017; Van Eijk et.al., 2016*).

The studies in Uganda show that every fifth adolescent missed their school due to pain during menses whereas menses is treated as a curse or discase by adolescents. In India, most of adolescents received health education at school about 12.4% of them consider the menses blood impure (*Miuro et.al., 2018; Nemade et.al., 2009*).

It is also showing that most adolescents in Uganda use reusable pads. Although in these areas where there is none of any support structure menstruating girls back out, follow unhygienic practices, or miss their school during menstruating. Whether some of them use exempted materials such as wool, cotton, cloth newspaper, etc. as absorbent. (*Hennegan, 2016*).

According to UNESCO, 23% of the rural schoolgirls in India quit their school due to period which potentially shows the irreversible effect on their personal development, socio-economic status, and as well as on their health. 66% of Indian schoolgirls didn't know anything regarding

menstruation before their first period. It is also reported that 87% of the females in rural India were completely heedless regarding menstruation and its biological importance.

In its study, UNICEF has found out some shocking data regarding the menstrual products that are used by the rural schoolgirls in India. 43% to 88% of schoolgirls use reusable cloth which is frequently washed with soap, 41% of schoolgirls should hide their menstrual cloth in their room while 22% of them hide them on the roof and 11% of them have to share their menstrual cloth with others while 75% of schoolgirls use a cotton cloth and 27% of adolescent girls didn't use any type of material to absorb their period blood during their cycle (*UNICEF, 2018*).

### **Objective**

- To analyze the knowledge, attitude, and practices regarding menstrual health and hygiene management in rural society.
- To understand the current status of adolescent girls and women's experience with menstruation and its management in rural society.

### **Materials and Methods**

This is a group based cross-sectional study accomplished in 2019-2020 among the population of Kaushambi district of Uttar Pradesh. This survey was executed on school /college going girls and young menstruating women living in the villages of the study area. Considering the sensitivity of the topic, the girls and women who participated in the study, are explained about the purpose and protocol of the study and has been ensured about the confidentiality of the survey. According to the objectives, a semi-formal questionnaire counting both concealed and indefinite questionnaire has been prepared. For the convenience of participants, the questionnaire was translated into the Hindi language and the researcher assisted the participants in the local language. Information was collected on socio-demographic variables, menstrual health care, and hygiene, availability and affordability of sanitary products, restrictions, and social taboos associated with menstruation, and disposal of sanitary waste. Data were analyzed statistically by simple proportions and percentages.

## Results

[Table-1] This study of menstrual health management has been on the adolescent girls of the age group 10-20 years and women of age group 21 to 50 years living in the villages of Kaushambi district of Uttar Pradesh. A total of 700 respondents participated in the study. Out of 700 respondents, 182 (26%) respondents are of 10-20 years age group, 188 (26.87%) are of 21-30 years age group, 174 (24.85%) are of 31-40 years age group, and 156 (22.28%) are of 41-50 years age group. As data in Table 1 revealed that, the study tried to include the representatives of each age group equivalently, so that study can find out the factors affecting menstrual health and its management at each stage of life of a woman.

**Table 1: Demographic Characteristic of the Study Population**

| Variable                        | Samples collected in Raksarai (n) | Samples collected in Bara (n) | N %   |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------|
| 10 - 20 Years                   | 98 (21.25 )                       | 84 (35 )                      | 26%   |
| 21- 30 Years                    | 120 (26.08 )                      | 68 (28.34 )                   | 26.87 |
| 31-40 Years                     | 132 (28.69 )                      | 42 (17.5 )                    | 24.85 |
| 41-50 Years                     | 110 (23.98 )                      | 46 (19.16 )                   | 22.28 |
| Total No. of a collected sample | 460                               | 240                           |       |

**Table 2: Knowledge and Perception Regarding Menstruation**

| Variable  | Samples collected in Raksarai (n=460) | Samples collected in Bara (n=240) | % (N= 700) |
|---|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------|
| What is the cause of menstruation?              |                                       |                                   |            |
| Physiological process                           | 87 (18.92 )                           | 58 (24.16 )                       | 20.72      |
| Don't Know                                      | 368 (80 )                             | 179 (74.59 )                      | 78.14      |
| Curse of god                                    | 5 (1.08 )                             | 3 (1.25 )                         | 1.14       |
| Which organ does the menstrual blood come from? |                                       |                                   |            |
| Urethra/Vagina Uterus                           | 80 (17.39 )                           | 20 (8.34 )                        | 14.28      |
| Don't Know                                      | 56 (12.17 )                           | 16 (6.66 )                        | 10.28      |
|   | 324 (70.44 )                          | 204 ( 85)                         | 75.44      |

| Village Name   | Raksarai (Bara) (n=460) |     | Kanaili (Bara) (n=240) |     | % (N= 700) |
|--|-------------------------|-----|------------------------|-----|------------|
|  | YES                     | NO  | YES                    | NO  |            |
| Awareness about menstruation before the first menarche |                         |     |                        |     | 27.15      |
| Source of information before menarche                  |                         |     |                        |     |            |
| Mother   | 45                      |     | 26                     |     | 10.15      |
| Sister   | 42                      |     | 22                     |     | 9.15       |
| Teacher  | 9                       |     | 10                     |     | 2.71       |
| Friend   | 20                      |     | 16                     |     | 5.14       |
| No one   |                         | 344 |                        | 166 | 72.85      |
| Total  | 116                     | 344 | 74                     | 166 |            |

Menstruation is a very normal and essential physiological process and menarche is the first occurrence of menstruation in a girl's life. However, it is very strange to find out that about 72% of girls in rural areas don't have any awareness regarding menstruation before their menarche. [Table 2] Data reveals that only 27.15% of the interviewees were aware of menstruation before their very first period. Those who have some knowledge about menstruation, that knowledge is either transferred to them by their mothers or by elder sisters. The study also found that some participants gained knowledge about menstruation from their friends and teacher also. It has been observed that 547 (78.14%) of the interviewee were not well informed about the actual reason for the bleeding during menstruation even after menarche. Only 145 (20.72%) girls know that it is a physiological process. However, 8 (1.14%) interviewees thought it was an imprecation from God. A major section of the girls [528 (75.44%)] had no idea regarding which organ was involved in the menstruation process and the origin of the menstrual bleeding. However, 66 (10.28%) were well informed that the origin of the menstrual bleeding is the uterus.

[Table-3] Data divulge the study over practices during menstruation showed that 208(29.73%) respondents used sanitary pads during menstruation, 426 (60.85%) respondents used old cloth pieces, and 66 (9.42%) respondents use some combination like cloth pieces, napkins, etc.

[Table 4] Data showed the disposal of used absorbent. The study has been found that a majority of the girls; [127(18.14%)] dump in open, 52 (7.42%) burned it, 43 (6.14%) threw it in an open pond, 40 (5.71%) dispose in a public dustbin, and 414 (59.14%) after the period is over, is the cloth disposed or kept for further use.

**Table 3: Sanitary Products used during Menstruation**

| Variable                | Sample collected in Raksarai (n=460) | Sample collected in Bara (n=240) | % (N= 700) |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------|
| Disposable Sanitary Pad | 152 (33.05 )                         | 56 (23.35 )                      | 29.73      |
| Reusable Pad            | 0                                    | 0                                | 0.00       |
| Cloth pieces            | 262 (56.95 )                         | 164 (68.33)                      | 60.85      |
| Some Combination        | 46 (10 )                             | 20 (8.34 )                       | 9.42       |

**Table 4: Sanitary Waste Disposal Behavior**

| Variable  | Sample collected in Raksarai (n= 460) | Sample collected in Bara (n= 240) | % (N= 700)   |
|---|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| Disposal in public dustbins   | 32 (6.95 )                            | 8 (3.33)                          | <b>5.71</b>  |
| Dump on open  | 99 (21.52 )                           | 28 (11.66)                        | <b>18.14</b> |
| Burning   | 40 (8.69 )                            | 12 (5)                            | <b>7.42</b>  |
| Throw in open pond  | 25 (5.43 )                            | 18 (7.5)                          | <b>6.14</b>  |
| Flush in toilet   | 14 (3.04 )                            | 10 (4.16 )                        | <b>3.42</b>  |
| After the period is over, is the cloth disposed of or kept for further use. | <b>250 (54.34 )</b>                   | <b>164 (68.35)</b>                | <b>59.14</b> |

[Table 5] Data depicts different types of restrictions that have been imposed on girls and women during menstruation. All respondents (100%) informed that they all not allowed in the temple or even not attended any religious function during their periods. 502 (71.71%) girls were not allowed to touch stored food, 302 (43.14%) girls were not allowed to (or not willing to) attend their schools during menstruation, 367 (52.42%) girls were prohibited to do any household related chores, 244 (34.85%) girls were not supposed to touch anybody, 424 (60.57%) girls were not permitted to take bath and 478(68.28%) girls were even not allowed to touch plants.

**Table 5: Restrictions during Menstruation**

| Sl. No | Variables (Restrictions)                      | Sample collected in Raksarai (n=460) | Sample collected in Bara (n=240) | Percent of girls N = 700 No (%) |
|--------|---|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1.     | Not allowed attend religious functions        | 460 (100)                            | 240 (100)                        | 100%                            |
| 2.     | Not allowed touch stored food                 | 342 (74.34)                          | 160 (66.66)                      | 71.71%                          |
| 3.     | Not allowed to go to school                   | 194 (42.17)                          | 108 (45)                         | 43.14%                          |
| 4.     | Household work                                | 229 (49.78)                          | 138 (57.5)                       | 52.42%                          |
| 5.     | Not allowed touch family members              | 167 (36.30)                          | 77 (32.08)                       | 34.85%                          |
| 6.     | Taking bath on the fourth day of menstruation | 259 (56.30)                          | 165 (68.75)                      | 60.57%                          |
| 7.     | Not allowed touch plants                      | 305 (66.30)                          | 173 (72.08)                      | 68.28%                          |

## Discussion

Menstruation is the vital physiological and natural process in the girls when they reached their teenage, but lack of proper knowledge and hygiene leads the several diseases related to the reproductive life of girls and women (*Kamath, 2013*). Recent studies found that most teenage girls have basic knowledge of the menstrual cycle, age, and duration of menstrual bleeding. In a study done over the 700 volunteers, 208 volunteers (29.73%) were using only sanitary napkins as an absorbent material and almost three fourth 426 (60.85%) reported that they were using an only cloth every time and 66 of them (9.43%) reported they are using both old and new cloth as per the availability. In this study, data revealed that 10.28% of teenagers know menstruation occurs through the uterus whereas 78.14% of them are unaware of the real reason for menstruation. The same study conducted in 2012 Karnataka revealed that 72% of teenagers were unaware of the reason for menstruation in the rural area and 67% in West Bengal, (*Dasgupta & Sarkar 2008; Khan, 2012*). but the same study contradicts with the study, which was conducted in Guntur District, Andhra Pradesh in 1994 which reveal that over 78.5% menstruators knows that menstrual bleeding takes places from the uterus (*Drakshayani & Venkata, 1994*). There is a vast gap in the educational system where menstrual health education is neglected as

it is considering insignificant & unsocial, and the main source of knowledge about this topic are mother, sister, and friends. Previous studies conducted in West Bengal in 2014 and Maharashtra in 2010 also revealed similar findings (*Barathalakshmi, 2014; Munday et.al., 2010*). In the present study, 29.73% of respondents using sanitary napkins, in which more than 90% of respondents dump used absorbent by enfolding it in the paper either in the dustbin, pond, flush in the toilet, or dump in open. These same study findings are equivalent to the study conducted in 2008 in Singur, West Bengal (*Dasgupta & Sarkar 2008*). The study also revealed that there are various kind types of limitations which were performed in menstruation. Most of them followed various restrictions linked with food, religious rituals, touching plants, going to temples, taking showers, etc. These studies agreeing with further studies conducted in 2008 in Singur, West Bengal, in 2010 Maharashtra, and in Saoner, Nagpur District respectively (*Munday et.al., 2010; Omidwar & Begum 2010; Thakre et.al., 2011*).

## **Conclusion**

People are still not very comfortable talking about periods. Not only men but also women who menstruate but they still not comfortable talking about menstruation either culture, religion or different reasons may be having for it. Here we are trying to break the silence to normalize the period because it is not a condition, it's not diseased, it is natural, biological, and it is beautiful that should be an embrace. We have to stop demonizing the period and have an open conversation. When we have an open conversation about the period, then only we can talk about its hygiene aspects. The moments we understand how it works; our minds will open about it. It just matters of perception. When people understand the importance of menstruation and the importance of health and hygiene associated with it, they will start talking about it. This could be a way to eradicate taboos associated with menstruation from our society. Menstrual education for both girls as well as boys is necessary for proper understanding and knowledge about menstruation in the youth and only by providing them the proper knowledge and education, we can improve menstrual health and hygiene management practices particularly in rural areas. A community-level education for the mothers of adolescent girls

should be encouraged which could lead to menstrual and pubertal hygiene practices and sound women's health.

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# Gendering Politics: Explorations through the Framework of Political Representation, Democratisation and Peace Processes

Pushpa Singh\* & Chetna Sharma\*

## Abstract

*Women around the world face gender exclusion in politics and political processes. This has not only resulted in their political disempowerment but also in their lower status in the society. It is crucial to understand and analyse the nature and patterns of these exclusions. This article aims to do so by employing the frame of political representation, democratisation and peace processes as these categories are significant markers of women's political empowerment or the lack of it. They are foundational political values that define the domain of politics and serve as decisive yardsticks to examine the gendering of political spaces. These frames illustrate how political practices are shaped by the masculine discourse of politics which deny space and recognition to women by excluding them from the corridors of power. Hence, these are employed to serve as the frame of analysis for the subject matter of gendering politics. Rather than analyzing these categories as independent variables, the idea is to emphasize their inter-dependence and capture the nonlinear and cyclic nature of these processes in a broader cross-cultural, cross-regional and cross historical context.*

**Keywords-***gender, politics, political representation, democratisation, peace processes*

## Introduction

The study of gender<sup>i</sup> and politics has become a pertinent subject of scholarly engagements in the field of Politics. There has been increasing realisation of how gender as an independent category remained mostly absent from the broader framework of political analysis; why it needs to be established as a dependent as well as an independent category of understanding and how its incorporation will change the nature of the discipline. However, gender is not to be understood as exclusively referring to women; rather it includes the constructs of masculinities and

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\* Dr. Pushpa Singh is Associate Professor at Department of Political Science, Miranda House, University of Delhi, India.

\* Dr. Chetna Sharma is Associate Professor at Department of Political Science, Kamala Nehru College, University of Delhi, India

femininities, the relationship between men and women and how these shape politics and political outcomes.

The objective of gendering politics is to establish gender as a central analytical category in politics (Singh, 2019). The aim is not just to foreground gender issues and perspectives but also to examine those dimensions of politics that may have been obscured by the male, heterosexist bias in the discipline (Weldon, 2006:246). It seeks to provide a critical account of perpetuating gender inequality in different countries and contexts and demonstrate how ideas about masculinity and femininity shape behaviours, construct relations and privileges, a certain form of conduct establishing them as norm. These imbued gender norms permeate all political spaces based on which organisations institutionalise 'definitions of femininity and masculinity, perpetuate gender hierarchies and construct gender cultures' (Connell, 2005:18). Therefore, positioning gender as a crucial category of inquiry, equal in weight to other dimensions of analysis like class, race, ethnicity and religion is pertinent (Tripp, 2010).

### **Research Design**

The article attempts to map the idea through the three crucial frames of analysis: political representation, democratisation and peace processes. These categories are the most significant indicators of women's political empowerment or the lack of it; hence are employed to serve as the frame of analysis for the subject matter. Political representation, democratisation and peace processes are foundational political values and highest desirable goals for any society. They are the key concepts that define the domain of politics and serve as decisive yardsticks to examine the gendering of political spaces. These frames illustrate how political practices are shaped by the masculine discourse of politics which deny space and recognition to women by excluding them from the corridors of power. Participatory exclusion remains the norm for women and even when they participate, their engagements seldom translate into their empowerment.

So far, these categories have mostly been studied separately; without giving much attention to their inter-dependence and inter-connections as scholarships in these fields exist in their independent silos. The aim here is to abridge this gap and capture the nonlinear and cyclic nature of these

processes in a broader cross-cultural, cross-regional and cross historical framework. Efforts towards women's empowerment such as demand for increase in women's representation in public offices, reforms in parties and other political institutions to further democratise the political spaces, active participation of women in peace building processes should not be understood in a segmented manner. As they are mutually reinforcing, their collective account would possibly provide a better approach to gendering of the discipline. These frames of analysis are informed by understanding of the historical, political and cultural legacies as well as divergent pathways of different societies that enable or restrict space for women's agency and power struggles. Political representation, democratisation and peace processes are interlinked concepts that could possibly act as the most effective instruments to assess the extent and nature of gendering of politics itself.

## **Frames of Analysis**

### **A. Political Representation**

Political representation is considered as a ubiquitous indicator of women's status in a society. Therefore, this section analyses women's political representation and also incorporates analysis from different countries which highlights the dilemma of women's 'partaking inclusion' but 'participatory exclusion' making them invisible and irrelevant in institutions. Off late, there has been a greater effort towards advancement of women's political representation in the national legislatures. Nevertheless, across the countries, women are under-represented in national parliaments and top political offices. The explanation partially lies in the correlation of the societal, cultural and religious attitudes that have an apparent bearing on women's political participation. On the other hand, the type of the electoral system and voting pattern also influence the nature and scale of political representation of women. For example, proportional representation tends to provide greater scope for women's participation compared to majoritarian systems. Understanding factors determining women's political representation need a multifaceted approach of analysis (Tremblay, 2007). As the inherent patriarchal bias shapes political institutions, structures and the prevailing norms that govern the civic spaces; women's political representation becomes an uphill task. Legislatures, judiciary, political parties, and bureaucracy: none of them have been immune from the patriarchal biases as women

remain underrepresented in them and in all top tiers of government across the countries (Sharma & Singh, 2021).

Political institutions are gender regimes with distinctive ideologies of how women and men should act, think and feel (Lovenduski, 2005:26). The masculine nature and discourse of institutions becomes natural and unquestionable as men predominate the political spaces (Kronsell, 2005). When women enter a male-dominated institution, they face structural barriers that prevent them from wielding influence in the legislative process. Even when women manage to win a place in a gendered institution, they remain out-siders (Duerst-Lahti, 2002:22). Legislatures are informed by the work norms defined by the parameters of males by practicing irregular hours of work that are unwelcoming to women with more than their share of family responsibilities (Kittilson & Schwindt-Bayer, 2012). Tiffany Barnes (2018) in her study compares the legislative behaviour and working pattern of female and male legislators. She argues that female legislators have to engage in more collaborative and position building projects to achieve their goals than their male counterparts as they lack power and influence.

Exploring the ways in which gender is imprinted upon the institutions help in the assessment of political opportunities and constraints facing feminist actors: it can assist in determining when and which institutions will be more open (or closed) to gender equality demands (Chappel,2006:224). Conventional role, domestic responsibilities, societal prejudices, power asymmetries, hierarchies make it tougher for them to compete and make their places in public offices. For example, study by Olle Folke and Johanna Rickne (2016) highlight that whereas family offers a support structure for men across the professions; it may become a source of stress or conflict for women because of the patriarchal conditioning of societies. The data revealed that in the first three years after the promotions, the rate of divorce increases among the promoted women, whereas no such pattern was visible in the career graph of men (Folke & Rickne, 2016).

The conventions in the established democracies also assumed the legislature to be male. The androcentric norms are mirrored in all political spaces including the parliaments, for example, in Britain until 1998 both men and women were required to wear a top hat when making

a point of order. The top hat and tie requirements are manifestations of embedded masculinity that characterizes all-male institutions (Lovenduski, 2005). Similarly, the strict dress code and code of moral conduct was required of women. Surprisingly, women were forbidden from wearing pants in the Senate in the US Congress, though there was no written rule as such, yet was enforced by Senate doorkeepers. However, this rule was challenged by Moseley-Braun when she wore a pantsuit to the floor of the Senate. Women are always vulnerable to what they wear. Sexism, harassment and violence against women parliamentarians in the form of sexist remarks, online sexist attacks, and psychological harassment are also widespread across nations, as discussed in Inter-Parliamentary Union studies.<sup>ii</sup>

These are examples of glaring gender bias in the institutional structure and their norms. Nonetheless, these norms can be challenged to open new spaces of emancipation as in case of Australia; Senator Larissa Waters became the first politician to breastfeed on the Senate floor based on the rule framed in 2016 that allowed babies to be breastfed in the Parliament.<sup>iii</sup> Jacindia Ardern, the prime minister of New Zealand, became the first female world leader to bring along her three months old daughter to UN General Assembly to attend its meeting. Ardern could do so in light of the recently reframed government rule that allows the prime minister or ministers to travel with a nanny on an overseas assignment.<sup>iv</sup> However, such moves are not often accepted as ‘appropriate’ as in case of Danish MP Mette Abildgaard, who was asked to remove her five months old daughter from the parliament chamber by the speaker Pia Kjaersgaard.<sup>v</sup> Scandinavian country is seen as a promoter of gender equality and women's rights, and as a child and family-centered nation with generous parental leave and yet displays these gendered norms of working place. Efforts towards feminized transformation of politics could be ensured with a high proportion of women legislators (Norris & Lovenduski, 1995), but this rectification would require special provisions like quotas for women. Quotas can also have considerable impact on women’s agency and may catalyse transformation of politics at the grassroots’ level.

**Gender Quota:** To address the underrepresentation of women, many countries in the world have adopted different provisions like quotas, laws or policies requiring candidate lists or representative bodies to include

women, racial, ethnic, or religious minorities. The United Nations Convention on the Political Rights of Women adopted in 1953 acted as a great precursor for the advancement of political rights of women and also inspired framing of legislations in this regard with an aim of bringing more women in the political domain. Though quota has been the matter of fierce political debate, several countries have reserved seats under gender quotas to improve women's participation in legislatures. Pakistan and Rwanda, for example, reserve specific seats for women in their governments. Voluntary party quota is used in European countries to secure women's representation in political parties. On the other hand, Latin America has created a mandatory legislative quota for women to be followed by all the political parties. In Latin America, gender quota has been widely implemented for women's political inclusion, and by 2017 most of the countries of Latin America have adopted them except Guatemala and Venezuela.

However, after occupying political office are women able to make a difference? There are various responses to this question. Some believe that women's numeric increase is strongly linked with several positive consequences like new outlooks in policies and legislative agendas. Amy C. Alexander conducted a comparative study to understand the correlation between women's presence in parliament and change in women's belief in their ability to govern across 25 diverse nations covering different regions and cultures (Alexander 2012:448). The study concluded that the increased representation of women in legislatures carries great symbolic value and bolsters general women citizen's faith in their capability to govern. While women may not necessarily be represented by women only; however, in all likelihood, when women are in leadership positions, they tend to push more for pro-women policies compared to men. Female representatives have brought in gender-sensitive legislation in many countries such as the Netherlands, France, Sweden, Egypt, Rwanda and South Africa. Reyes-Householder in her study on Latin America, proposes that female presidents tend to ensure higher female cabinet representation by appointing more women to their cabinet than their male counterparts (Reyes-Householder, 2016). In a similar study, Tiffany D. Barnes and Mark P. Jones show that numerous landmark laws have been passed by Argentina to expand women's rights, which has been possible due to the rise of women in the national and provincial legislatures in the last two decades. (Barnes and Jones,

2018:132). In Mexico, more bills about women's interest were written and passed by women legislators across party lines compared to their men counterparts, as highlighted by a study conducted by Jennifer Piscopo (Piscopo, 2014). In general, there is a steady rise in women occupying a significant leadership role in politics as depicted by the data of IPU stating that in 2020 ten per cent of countries are led by women.<sup>vi</sup> The proportion of women ministers has also increased, but they are most likely to get portfolios related to family and social affairs.

However, increase in women's political representation do not necessarily result in policy gains for women as a group. This may be due to these possibilities: women's minority position among the larger elected body despite the affirmative provisions; male legislator's backlash against their increasing numbers; lower proportion of women may lead to targeted legislations without undermining male domination and arrival of diverse group of women legislators not keen on pursuing women's issues (Krook, 2010). Studies also reveal that quota alone is not sufficient to ensure the gendering of the political space, women's presence in top political offices alone cannot ensure her empowered status as a group. Also, the numeric increase in women's political representation may not always induce a concerted effort to bring women-centric legislation resulting in larger societal gains for women. For example, the presence of women in the highest political positions in Bangladesh has not encouraged any collaborative approach among women political leaders in passing women-specific bills. Hence, a mere increase in the numbers of women legislators may not suffice; rather use of proactive political leadership positions for influencing policy-legislation in favour of women would be required. Though number of women legislatures has increased from 11.3 per cent in 1995 to 25 per cent globally by 2020, nonetheless, women remain underrepresented in leadership roles with just 20 per cent occupying the position of the speaker.<sup>vii</sup> World Economic Forum's Report on Gender Gap 2021 that studied 156 countries highlights that women represent only 26.1% of 35,500 parliament seats and just 22.6% of over 3,400 ministers worldwide, with 81 countries that never had any women as head of the state (Global Gender Gap Report, WEF, 2021). It also concluded that it would take 145 years to achieve gender parity in politics.

Hughes, in his study, concluded, 'the quota policies in effect today rarely challenge men's majority dominance of national legislatures' (Hughes, 2011:604). In all political parties, women struggle hard to get in the crucial positions, and they hardly get access to top leadership posts. O'Brien, in her study of 71 political parties in 11 advanced industrialized democracies between 1965 and 2013, suggests that in situations where parties perform well electorally there is no incentive to change the male dominance in the party (O'Brien, 2015). However, when the party performs poorly or the male political lead is caught up in a scandalous situation, women may get the leadership opportunity.

Along with political representation, democratic transitions carry immense possibilities of new opportunities and channels for women to create political space and influence policy formulation. It will be interesting to explore how women's political participation impinges on the democratisation process discussed in the section below.

## **B. Democratisation**

In recent times, many parts of the developing world have witnessed democratisation. As a process, democratisation ideally should result in extension of citizenship rights, equal opportunities and voice of all in governance. On the contrary, in many cases, it excludes women despite their participation in large numbers in democratic transition movements. Unfortunately, women's presence failed to leave a mark on the broader debate of democratisation literature implying that their role was of little significance. (Caraway, 2004:443) This is because gender acts as a significant gatekeeper which makes it difficult for women to challenge formal as well as informal networks due to pre-existing masculinist practices. The nature of the process of democratisation and democratic transitions have clear gender dimensions (Alvarez, 1990; Beldez 2002, 2004; Waylen, 2007). Nonetheless mainstream democratisation literature remains gender blind and fails to emphasise on framing gender research in democratisation as mainstream research (Beldez, 2002). Democratisation studies of different countries illuminate how women actively participated in such movements, their processes and outcomes and yet, the comparative theorization rarely focused on the role of women in them. The mainstream literature on comparative democratisation does not put the question of gender in the centrality of

its discourse and a disjunct can be observed between the literature on ‘comparative democratisation’ and ‘gender and democratisation’. The scholarships in both these areas appear as not engaging with each other despite addressing the same area of concern. The reason being, while mainstream scholars rarely question whether gender is relevant to politics; gender scholars rarely question whether gender isn’t relevant to politics (Baldez, 2010).

One of the remarkable features of women’s participation in the process of democratic transition is that, while gender question occupies a crucial place in the political agenda during movements and protests; it is relegated back to insignificance as soon as the state of normalcy is attained. The reflection from the transition processes in some parts of the world affirm this proposition that despite women’s very active roles in such processes their contribution did not translate into any formal share in political power, institution building and decision making (Razavi, 2001; Waylen, 2007, 2010).

A brief revisit to women’s participation in the anti-colonial struggle in India highlights that it failed to fetch women any substantial gain in the formal political institutional arrangement in the post-independence period. Nationalism like colonialism was a masculinist project in which male agency was prioritized and female agency circumscribed. The late nineteenth and early twentieth century witnessed women’s active participation that reached mass scale under the leadership of Gandhi and his espousal of women’s ennobling virtue of motherhood, perseverance and suffering. But women were not seen as having an agency of their own. The discourse of nationalism and anti-colonial movement reinforced the gendered logic that used the vocabulary of ‘new women’ who were educated but yet rooted in the tradition and seen as the repository of the nation and its identity. This made them play multiple roles ranging from the image of women as ‘housewife’ to ‘modern and educated’; participating in passive resistance to armed revolutionaries. This period saw the likes of Sarojini Naidu, Kamala Devi Chattopadhyay, Aruna Asaf Ali, Durgabai Deshmukh who showed stealth in the agitation and rose to great heights. However, it appears clear that after independence, women’s activism was subdued, relegating them to the realm of domesticity.

The reasons behind the exclusion of women and their issues in post independent India were many. The women's participation in the anticolonial movement did not challenge traditional gender hierarchy as it was foreign domination that was seen as enemy and not patriarchy (Forbes, 2000; Pai, 2013). Politicians rarely displayed the political will to make any radical change in the conventional societal arrangements and women assumed that equality guaranteed by the newly written Constitution of independent India would live up to its promise. South Asian societies, deeply informed by a matrix of pre-modern culture, masculine identity and patriarchal religious constructs, conveniently reinforced the status-quo. The hypermasculine cultures of political parties, legislatures, and all other political spaces became a barrier for women's participation. Though some early women political leaders were able to covet high office in some South Asian countries by inheriting them from their male relatives. Ascendance of women leaders like Bandaranaike and Kumaratunga in Sri Lanka, Indira Gandhi in India, Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan, Khaleda Zia, and Sheikh Hasina in Bangladesh, Aung San Suu Kyi in Myanmar was legitimized because of their political legacy. Though some women leaders could make it to the top by their sheer hard work and grit.<sup>viii</sup> Even after reaching the highest echelons of power, women political leaders have to struggle as in South Asian societies institutional changes and legislative reforms did not necessarily spur shifts in social, cultural and gender norms.

Similar trends of partaking inclusion in the democratic transition processes and participatory exclusion in the post-transition phase are visible in some countries of Africa. Women have shown a streak of exemplary courage by protesting against the most brutal state repression, as in the case of Mali against President Muossa Traore and in Togo against Faure Gnassingbe's presidential win in 2005 and 2017. In Sierra Leone and Liberia also, women were central forces of resistance defying the autocratic state structures and demanding free elections. In the post-conflict era, women significantly contributed to constitution-making and attempted democratic consolidation. For instance, in the 1990s, women were at the forefront of protest to defend the human rights of imprisoned activists in Kenya. Kenyan women were seen as the most active civil society group within the constitution-making process by Yash Ghai, the head of the Constitution of Kenya Review Commission.<sup>ix</sup> However, this

momentum got lost with the beginning of ‘usual politics’ that favoured party politics over social mobilization.

Women’s limited participation in post-transition period also results from the reemergence of ideological and political differences dissolving feminist solidarity witnessed during transition phase. Generally, old established political parties display less enthusiasm for gender claims as these do not resonate with the electorate on ground (Razavi, 2001). For example, issues concerning reproductive rights and divorce have been strongly resisted by male dominated party structures. In Chile women played an important role in mobilizing against human rights violations by the administration of Pinochet. But the level of women’s representation dwindled in the post-transition phase.

The process of engendering democracy in Latin America in general and Mexico in particular shows similar possibilities and limitations. Though women got the right to vote in 1953, yet the real process of women’s empowerment started as late as the 1970s. A quota law was passed in 2002 that made it mandatory for the parties to include 30 per cent female to 70 per cent male to ensure women’s representation. This split was later on changed to 40 per cent female to 60 percent male by the law in 2008. However, despite quotas in the electoral arena women are found to be giving their seats to men to fulfil political party discipline. As the parties are dominated by men having decision-making power, women do not want to offend them and endanger their careers. (Ortiz-Ortega and Barquet, 2010:111)

The Arab Spring presents a recent example of reaffirming this gender paradox. The participation of women in the political mobilization was almost at par with men demanding justice and freedom.<sup>x</sup> However, the outcome of the Arab Spring has been disappointing as social, political and economic demands of women remained unfulfilled. Instead, many countries ended up with more dictatorial and repressive regimes, reviving the discriminatory policies against women. Egypt’s previously decided 10 per cent quota for women’s participation was abandoned along with repealing laws that advanced women’s rights such as the right to divorce and child custody. Wilson Centre (2016) in a report remarks that the Arab Spring ignited high expectations for better lives and new opportunities for women. Yet so many years later, women are

increasingly losing their lives, homes, land, relatives and families in parts of the Middle East where sectarian wars continue.<sup>xi</sup>

Peace processes provide another opportunity of furthering the democratisation process in conflict-ridden societies. The following section discusses women's engagement in peace processes to see if similar patterns of gender exclusions are reflected there as well.

### **C. Peace Processes**

The recent waves of democratisation in the world have also catalysed peace processes in some of the conflict-ridden societies across the world. Though women as a group are most impacted in conflict situations yet, neither are they represented in the formal peace negotiations nor are their concerns made the central part of the discourse. This is due to the reason that hegemonic masculinity entrenches institutional exclusion preventing women from formally participating in peace negotiations and agreements. The patriarchal norms ensure that women remain invisible and unnoticeable at negotiating tables. Moreover, the gendered dynamics of conflict associate certain issues as 'women's issues' and only these issues are seen as requiring women's intervention. This further disassociates women from the larger peace negotiations.

Gendering of peace processes is required for lasting peace and to settle issues related to rehabilitation and resettlement of women, planning refugee camps, peacekeeping operations, and reconstructing war-torn societies (Hudson, 2005: 786). Critical works in the area of women and peace process also highlight this, for example, Rita Manchanda (2017) underlines the role of women as decision-makers, negotiators, peace activists, projecting women, not as victims but agents in social transformation. However, the invisibility of women is connected to their absence in various political processes that includes leadership positions in political parties, state, or non-state groups that gets translated into their absence at the peace table (Anderlini, 2007: 58). Cynthia Cockburn also argues patriarchy is reinforced on peace processes through the conventional notion of militarism and war (Cockburn, 2007). Despite engaging at different levels women are kept out of participation and leadership roles in peace processes. Many of the men perpetuating violence in the conflict phase, become party to the post-conflict

negotiation process, thereby scuttling the chances of redefining the peace processes based on the experience of women.

Lately the United Nations Security Council recognized the crucial role played by women in conflict transformation with significant emphasis on their participation and inclusion in peace building and decision making. To address the gender gap, the Security Council adopted resolution 1325 in October 2000, followed by eight more resolutions as of 2019. Despite overwhelming evidence (Council on Foreign Relations Notes, 2019) that women's participation increases the likelihood of the success of peace agreement, it remains an exception rather than a norm. There is numerous evidences to suggest that women's inclusion in peace operations enable better information gathering, greater credibility and higher chances of success. The field experience of the peacekeeping mission in Liberia shows that the presence of female soldiers made the working of the operation smoother by reducing tension and building trust. This was possible due to the local population's better acceptability and comfort with the female security forces. In culturally conservative societies like Iraq and Afghanistan, where gender segregation is firmly reinforced, male soldiers are not supposed to interact with women whereas women soldiers can quickly establish communication with men as well as women getting greater access to the population.

Women's representation in peacekeeping forces also prohibits the sexual misconduct perpetrated by some male soldiers, apart from engendering trust and improving the reputation of peacekeepers among the local population (Bridges and Horsfall, 2009). These premises were reinforced by the study *Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Operations* (2000) by the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operation. It states that a high percentage of female soldiers in peacekeeping as in the case of Namibia (40 per cent female) and South Africa (50 per cent female) ensured a higher rate of success of these operations.<sup>xii</sup> It has been also observed that the presence of 30 per cent or more female soldiers galvanized quicker participation from the local women in the peace committees (Carey, 2001: 49).

It is noteworthy that to create space for dialogue women have tried to initiate peace processes in different societies through informal mechanisms and track II peace processes. However, these are not given

valuable recognition. In particular circumstances, women have made an exceptional attempt to cross the border and initiate dialogue with women of other countries and communities. For instance, through the platform of *Ahotsak* (voices in the Basque language) formed in 2006 by women parliamentarians and politicians in the Basque country, almost 200 women came together from various political parties to negotiate the peace process. Similarly, women from Israel and Palestine tried to work together by forming alliances to initiate peace activities since the 1980s. In the case of Northern Ireland, women from the catholic and protestant sect joined hands to form the political party Northern Ireland Women's Coalition (1996), which played an important role in the peace agreement. They drew huge social trust from public consultations which helped the approval of the Good Friday peace agreement in a public referendum. The efforts of Somalian women present a compelling case where women from different clans attempted to unite themselves irrespective of attempts by the warlords to destroy their initiatives. Nevertheless, they succeeded in taking part and putting their signatures in the Somali National Reconciliation Conference in 2004. These trends were also shown by other countries deeply affected by ethnic conflicts such as Burundi, Rwanda and Bosnia, where women keenly participated in community-based conflict resolution and reconciliation.

Despite women's initiatives and contribution in peace processes not much change has been noticed in the nature of peace agreements. As reported by the Council on Foreign Relations (2019), the analysis of 1187 peace agreements signed from 1990 to 2017 shows only 19 per cent made any reference to women and only 5 per cent refer to gender-based violence. This study further notices that among all these peace agreements, only 3 percent of women were represented as mediators, 4 per cent as signatories and around 13 per cent as negotiators.

This exclusion of women at the peace table led to the absence of their concerns in peace agreements. UN study substantiate this assertion as in the past few years only 16 per cent of peace agreement contains specific provisions on women's rights and needs and just 5.7 percent of actual budgetary outlay of multi-donor trust fund finance women's empowerment project in post-conflict countries. Less than 30 countries have incorporated provisions implementing UN Resolution 1325 in their national action plan. Women's participation in peace negotiations

provide an opportunity to translate it into increasing their representation and participation in post conflict countries (Anderson 2016). High level of gender equality in institutions also ensures durable and prolonged peace after ceasefire (Gizelis 2009, Shair-Rosenfield and Wood 2017). However the dilemma of partaking inclusion of women at different levels and their exclusion in peace negotiations reinforce their invisibility in such processes.

The review of women's role in all three frames of analysis suggest that though women play a significant role in all these three processes, yet they continue to be excluded due to the profoundly gendered nature of the institutions, social structures and norms. The three frameworks discussed in this paper function differently and produce different results across diverse social and political settings, yet a common pattern of women's 'partaking inclusion' but 'participatory exclusion' define them.

## **Conclusion**

This article conclusively suggests that gender mapping and gender-specific analysis can create a better canvas for the narrative of politics. Political participation, democratization and peace processes serve as crucial categories of gender analysis which requires a synchronized understanding rather than segmented. These categories are mutually reinforcing and interdependent in some ways, making gender inclusion a puzzle requiring focus on inter-linkages as well as the interaction of gender structures and their intersectionality. The discussion in this paper demonstrates that all these categories perpetuate gender exclusions that are nonlinear and cyclic in nature and process and need to be studied in reference to each other, as women's absence at one level leads to their invisibility in another as well. Whereas women's higher political representation would possibly feminise democratic institutions and spaces, women's seminal presence in democratisation and peace processes would further ensure their inclusion in top political offices and change the narrative of political discourse. Vice-versa, women's absence in one domain influences the possibility of inclusion and representation of their concern in other domains. This also produces a compounded effect, further limiting their political representation and role in democratisation in a cyclic process of exclusion. At the same time, only adding more women would not be sufficient. Rather, broader societal

norms require re-engagement from a gender perspective. It is important that gender-specific case studies must speak to each other, across the regions, to develop a generalized understanding while maintaining the particularities of their experiences.

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## Endnotes

- i Gender signifies an analytic and descriptive category that shows how sexual differences structure the lived experiences, often in ways that produce and sustain unequal power relations and inequalities. Gendering comparative politics seeks to provide a persuasive account of gender inequality with respect to different countries and contexts. The idea is to push the boundaries of analysis and discuss how our studies and practices advantage certain groups and forms of life, how the idea about masculinity shapes behaviours, construct relations and most importantly create a system that privileges a certain form of behaviour accepting them as norm. ‘Gender is never just about sex but varies by race, ethnicity, nation, class, and a variety of other dimensions of social life’ thus, the intersectional nature of identity add to the complexity that requires serious engagement. ( Celis Karen et al 2013)
- ii For details refer Inter-Parliamentary Union, “Sexism, harassment and violence against women Parliamentarians”.
- iii For details refer, BBC News, “Australian politician becomes first to breastfeed in parliament” 10th May 2017 Available at <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-australia-39853360>
- iv For details refer Roy, E.A. “Jacinda Ardern makes history with baby Neve at UN general assembly.” *The Guardian*, September 24, 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/sep/25/jacinda-ardern-makes-history-with-baby-neve-at-un-general-assembly>
- v For details see France-Presse, A. “Danish MP told her baby not welcome in parliament.” *The Telegraph*, 20th March 2019 <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/03/20/danish-mp-told-baby-not-welcome-parliament/>
- vi Refer data available at Inter-Parliamentary Union website <https://www.ipu.org/our-impact/gender-equality/women-in-parliament>
- vii For details refer Data available at Inter-Parliamentary Union website <https://www.ipu.org/our-impact/gender-equality/women-in-parliament>
- viii A classificatory framework to understand the women leaders in India has been proposed by Sudha Pai; dynastic succession (Indira Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi), institutional climbers (Uma Bharti, Mamta Banerjee); leaders falling in between (Mayawati, Jayalalithaa, Sheila Dikshit), proxy women leaders (Rabri Devi) (Pai, 2001:109).

- ix For further details kindly refer Cottrell and Ghai, “Constitution Making and Democratization in Kenya (2000-2005),” and Tripp, “Women’s Movements and Constitution Making after Civil Unrest and Conflicts in Africa: The Case of Kenya and Somalia.
- x Young activist from Yemen, Tawakkol Abdel-Salam Karman was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011 for her leadership role and her demand for greater involvement of Yemenese women in the political processes. In 2015, a women’s team from Tunisia received the Nobel Peace Prize for their role in the mediation process to bring peaceful change.
- xi Wilson centre, “Five Years after the Arab Spring: What’s next for Women in the MENA Region?” pp. 1-27.
- xii UN DPKO, “Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Operations,” This UN study included the gender analysis of peacekeeping operation in Bosnia, Cambodia, El Salvador, Namibia and South Africa.

# Environmental Justice Perspective on Indian Forest Laws: Decolonizing Forest Governance

Kamal Kumar\*

## Abstract

*This article seeks to critically analyse the Indian forest laws, and more specifically the “Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006”—popularly known as ‘Forest Rights Act’ (FRA)—enacted by the parliament in 2006 and the subsequent amendment brought in 2012, from the environmental justice perspective. The study finds that there are several provisions incorporated in the FRA that are explicitly influenced by the global environmental justice discourse. The inclusion of environmental justice principles (such as basic human right to access the natural resources, local participation, recognition of traditional knowledge and sustainable development) in the FRA enables the post-colonial state to dismantle the exploitative, undemocratic and violent colonial structure of the forest governance. The study also demonstrates how the apt recognition and incorporation of environmental justice principles (pertaining to the natural resource including forests management) in the forest laws and policies offers potentials to ensure environmental and social justice to the forest communities at the local level.*

**Keywords:** *Environmental Justice, Forest Rights Act, Forest Communities, Social Justice, Participation, Traditional Knowledge.*

## Introduction

Forests are one the key natural resources upon which the survival of both human and non-human living beings are depended. They provide a wide range of benefits such as herbal medicines, food products, habitat to microscopic species and earthly animals, wealth, raw materials (like timber and paper etc.) to the industries, protection to wildlife, and employment opportunities for millions. Besides it, they provide space to the forest communities (like tribals) and others to grow economically, culturally and spiritually. Furthermore, forests play a central role in purifying the air—and so in ensuring a healthy and clean environment—by absorbing greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. This is probably why the forests are attributed as the ‘lungs of earth’. They also

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\* Dr. Kamal Kumar is Assistant Professor at Department of Political Science, Shivaji College, University of Delhi, New Delhi

“regulate soil development and erosion, water quality and stream flow, and...provide recreational opportunities, and spiritual values for humans” (Paehlke eds., 1995: 288). In this way, they play a constructive role in maintaining the ecological balance. The existence of human as well as wildlife significantly depends on the ways of managing forest resources. Hence, sustainable and prudent management of these resources is essential to keep receiving its benefits.

Given the enormous benefits (in particular economic and commercial) attached to the forest resources, they have always been a significant source for achieving swift and high economic growth in both developing and developed nations. Probably that is why the Indian state since the colonial period tried to establish stringent and monopolistic control over forests (to manage, conserve and use them) through different institutional mechanisms and laws. However, in last few decades, a shift observed in the state’s approach towards the forest governance as well as the forest communities—especially the tribals—who economically, socially and spiritually depend on the forest resources. This study primarily intends to evaluate the Indian forest laws—with a special reference to the Forest Rights Act, 2006—from the environmental justice standpoint in order to highlight its contribution in dismantling the exploitative and violent colonial structure of forest governance. The concept of environmental justice emerged in the end of twentieth century to divulge the dominant patterns of injustice and inequality in the context of environmental policies and governance, primarily the injustice done to indigenous and tribal communities, colored people, and underprivileged sections (Bullard, 1993; Dobson, 1999; Cunningham et al., 1998; McNeil and Maudlin, 2012). Also, it calls for democratic and inclusive decision-making procedures in the context of natural resources (including forests) management, ensuring participation and social justice especially to those whose lives are being affected from such decisions (Grass, 1994; Roberts, 1998).

### **Indian Forest Laws: An Environmental Justice Perspective**

This section analyses the colonial and post-colonial Indian forest laws from the environmental justice perspective with the purpose of analysing the interactions between the global environmental justice discourse and the forest laws. It begins with analysis of colonial forest laws that is followed by a post-colonial forest laws analysis. It then examines the, in a separate sub-section, FRA, 2006 to highlight its key provisions dismantling the colonial forest management structure by offering important rights to the

forest communities as well as recognizing their contribution in preserving and conserving the forests.

### **Colonial Forest Laws**

Forest laws and policies brought during the colonial period reflected the western conception of natural resources management and promoted commercial forestry. The origin of colonial forestry era in India is considered in the latter half of the nineteenth century while Lord Dalhousie, the then Governor-General of India, announced the “*Charter of the Indian Forest*” in 1855 to conserve the forests. In reality, it was largely an attempt to establish a control over teak and regulate its local trading rather than conservation (Kulkarni, 1987: 2143). However it was the year 1865 when the colonial government had introduced its first forest act entitled, “*The Indian Forest Act VII of 1865*”, to establish its unilateral control over forests considering their immense economic and commercial values. However, the Act was not extended to all the provinces, and there were many provinces (like Madras) where the forest communities had control over forests and were freely using its produce for their day-to-day social and customary practices. Surprisingly, the forest act of 1865 was completely silent about the traditional and customary rights of the forest dwellers and other communities who were depended on forests for numerous reasons. Rather, the locals including tribals were prohibited to access them by pronouncing certain local activities illegal (Jha, 1994: 11-12). At the same time, the 1865 Act declared the customary practices (based on indigenous values and knowledge) of using and managing the forest produce unlawful.

To further strengthen the control over forests, after the thirteen year of introduction of first forest act, a much tougher, comprehensive and systematic new law, entitled as “*the Indian Forest Act VII of 1878*” was brought into practice. This new act introduced several fresh provisions. Most importantly, it divided the forests into three main categories in line with degree of control excused by the government; first type of them was referred as the ‘*reserved forests*’ (Chapter II), second as ‘*protected forests*’ (Chapter IV), and third and the last one was declared as ‘*village forests*’ (Chapter III). With this categorisation, the colonial stated had able to enjoy ownership rights over lands of reserved and protected forests, and confined its role to the management only with community-ownership of locals over lands in village forests (Sivaramakrishnan, 1995: 10-11). It was initially felt that unlike its predecessor, the 1878 act would at least partially

recognize the peoples' right to access the forest produce by allowing them to use specified 'villages forests'. But it was remained a daydream for the local indigenous communities. Firstly, all valuable trees were declared as 'reserved' by the government so that it had undisputed claims over them. Hence, the key implicit purpose was to exclude the locals from forests and own them as 'government reserves'. The provisions (contained in Section 27) relating to the formation of 'village forests' for local use was not implemented at the ground since the forest bureaucracy was primarily focused on expanding the 'reserved forests' area only which in turn, further intensified the conflicts between the local forest communities (peasants and tribals) and colonial forest department (Hazra, 2002: 25).

Given the widespread criticism and opposition to 1878 Act, the colonial government brought a new law, entitled as the "*Indian Forest Act, 1927*". The newness was noticed in the 'title' of the act merely, since its intents and contents were the same as like the preceding laws. Like earlier, it was observed that the term "conservation finds no mention in the Act and this exposes once again the exploitative designs of the colonial government" towards the forests (Hazra, 2002: 27). The Act was primarily designed to attain the three key objectives: first, the consolidation of existing forest management's legal structure, second, the "regulation of and transit of forest produce, and lastly, to levy duty on timber and other forest produce" (Desai, 1991: 2). In other words, the colonial state continued with its policy of excluding indigenous peoples from the forest and expanding its reserved forest area. In order to crush the local peoples' opposition and resistance, this law further empowered the forest authorities as now their officers could "arrest any person without a warrant, thus making any violation of the Act a cognizable offence" (Desai, 1991: 2). Similar to 1865 and 1868 Acts, the Act of 1927 reflected imperialist understanding about the forests where the major focus was on extensively exploiting them in order to meet the industrial requirements (at home) and revenue generation. Perhaps this is why it had nothing constructive and positive to offer to the local indigenous communities like tribals.

In summary, forests in colonial period were considered as the good source of "revenue extraction" that was much reflected in the British government's approach and attitude (in terms of laws) toward forests. Forests were simply referred as the commodity (source of raw materials for industries) rather than a natural resource to extract the maximum revenue and commercial benefits. This is probably why the words like 'conservation' was never found a place in any of colonial forest laws, and

thus, no attempt was made to preserve the forests to avail the ecological and environmental benefits by the colonial state rather focused singlehandedly on availing the maximum economic profits. At the same time, they had little to offer to the local indigenous communities like tribals, and also did not pay heed to their intimate relations with forests as well their ways (based on centuries-old experiences, and values and knowledge systems) of using, managing and conserving them.

While analysing the colonial forest laws from the environmental justice standpoint, this present study offers some afresh understanding about the former. They are on several grounds against the principles of environmental justice. First, the colonial forest laws promoted distributional injustice in India, albeit in different manner not similar to the western societies where racial minorities and poor disproportionately bear the environment burdens (Steady eds., 2009). Forest resources and forestlands were unequally distributed as the colonial government brought all the valuable trees/floras (timber and medicine plants) into the 'reserved forests' and also established its control over fertile forestlands in order to extract the maximum commercial benefits on the one hand, and allocated—though very seldom—forest regions with wastelands and unusable trees to the local forest communities.

Second, colonial forest laws also caused procedural injustice to the Indian forest communities by keeping them aside from the decision-making process, while the participation of locals into the latter process is considered as a significant mean of ensuring environmental justice to the affected communities (Low and Gleeson, 1998: 530-531). The laws and policies relating to forests in colonial ear were based on closed and exclusive model of decision-making, and participation to the locals was never a matter for consideration. It is because of the fact that the colonial regime was very dictatorial in nature given their belief in dominance and oppression as well their violent imperialist character. Third, the colonial forest laws violated the basic human rights of forest communities (such as peasants and tribals) to access the forests regardless of their dependency on them for survival as well as customary and cultural practices. Their concerns and interests never attracted the attention from the colonial government, and they were further marginalised through exploitative forest policies.

Fourth and last, colonial forest laws were remained silent over the contribution of indigenous communities in sustainably maintaining and

conserving the forests for many decades. Historically, traditional knowledge (based on their peculiar experiences, values and culture) possessed by such communities played a crucial role in managing the forests without doing any harm to it. But this fact was not recognized by the colonial government because “indigenous knowledge [was placed] in the categories of primitive, simple, ‘not knowledge,’ or folklore” (Robyn, 2002: 201). At the same time, the ignorance of indigenous knowledge by colonial state had also put the lives of the local communities into danger. As Linda Robyn (2002: 200), environmental justice scholar and human right activists, argues that the survival of indigenous “peoples depended on their being able to utilize knowledge in balance with the natural environment.”

Hence, the environmental justice perspective highlights that colonial forest laws were the main source of environmental and social injustices to the forest communities since they denied equal distribution, local participation, basic human rights (especially the right to access natural resources including forests) and also did not acknowledge the role of traditional knowledge in forest management. In other words, colonial laws and policies relating to forests were against the principles and norms set by global environmental justice discourse. At the same time, they caused environmental injustice to the Indian forest communities by not identifying their symbiotic relationship with forests as well as their traditional rights and responsibilities.

### **Post-Colonial Forest Laws**

With attaining independence in 1947, post-colonial Indian state felt the need to review the colonial forest laws and policies. It was essential because of the “revolutionary changes which have taken place during the interval in the physical, economic and political fields called for a reorientation of the old policy” (Haeuber, 1993: 58). With the aim of review the old forestry rules, the “Central Board of Forestry” (CBF) was constituted in 1950. On the basis of CBF recommendations and urgency to conserve the forests, the government announced the first “*National Forest Policy*” in 1952. This new policy was comprehensively inspired by the provisions contained in the 1894 colonial forest policy, and its primary aim was to manage the forests in a view of meeting national interests. Surprisingly, the word ‘conservation’ found no place like earlier in this new policy which in turn, underlined the fact that forests were still considered a source of raw materials to industrial growth and economic development rather than an essential natural resource to

maintain human and natural health. Ravi Sankar Sahay (2012: 1352) further illustrates the colonial character of this 1952 policy as he puts, “the destruction of forest for the construction of roads, bundling irrigation and hydro-electric projects was justified in the name of national interests.” In other words, it continued to deny participation in decision-making, importance of traditional knowledge in forest management and social justice to them, thereby denying environmental justice to the forest communities.

Given the rapid deforestation causing the rapid decrease in the forest cover, the Indian government announced “*The Forest (Conservation) Act*” (FCA) in 1980 with a purpose of slowing down deforestation and conserve the forests by putting “restriction on the de-reservation of forests or use of forest land for non-forest purpose” (GOI, 1980: 1). Its main focus was on conservation and so the FCA remained silent about the basic rights of the forest communities as well as their (especially tribals) historical role in managing and protecting the forests for many centuries. Despite the fact that many scholars have offered plenty of substantial evidences indicating the significant contribution of traditional knowledge (possessed by indigenous or forest communities) and local participation in managing and conserving the natural resources including forests as well as in ensuring sustainable development, the FCA 1980 did not contain a single provision on traditional knowledge neither on the participation of local forest communities (Agrawal, 1997; Kumar, 2001). However, in the 1990s, a somewhat shift was noticed in the post-colonial forest management structure with an announcement of new “National Forest Policy” (NFP), and a novel programme, popularly known as “*Joint Forest Management*” (JFM) in literature, via a circular by the Ministry of Environment and Forest (MEF) in 1988 and 1990 respectively (Lele and Menon, 2014).

In contrast to the Forest Policy of 1952, the new NFP 1988 recognises the ecological significance and benefits of the forests and thus encourages the governments of both centre and state to sustainably manage and conserve them in order keep availing its benefits. Since its key objectives are defined as “maintenance of environmental stability through preservation... Conserving the natural heritage of the country by preserving the remaining natural forests... Increasing substantially the forest/tree cover in the country through massive afforestation and social forestry programmes... Creating a massive people's movement with the involvement of women...” (GOI, 1988: 2-3). A separate section on rights of forest communities (with special reference to tribals) about forest produce is incorporated in this new policy that has theoretically distanced

it from the earlier exclusive and undemocratic forest polices. In fact, NFP 1988 explicitly states (in the Section 4.3.4) that the basic rights (with respect to forests) of tribals and other forest communities should be acknowledged and valued by the authorities. Above all, it affirms that their right of accessing the forest resources in order to meet the daily essential requirements are to be prioritised (GOI, 1988: 5). Moreover, the NFP 1988 is also consisted a provision under Section 4.3.4.2 to motivate the local communities to safeguard and manage the forests. This policy is, thus, commonly credited to recognise the importance of local participation in the management and conservation (Behera and Engel, 2004: 353).

In addition to NFP 1988, with an introduction of JFM programme, the 1990 Circular, entitled “*Involving of Village Communities and Voluntary Agencies for Regeneration of Degraded Forest Lands*”—issued by the MEF via a circular “vide no.6-2/89-F.P”—has further strengthened the role of local forest communities. Its main purpose is to engage the locals especially tribals, in the process of forest restoration and preservation with help the ‘participatory’ model of natural resource management that is widely popular for encouraging the local participation at various levels in many developed and developing countries (Mutamba, 2004). Beside this, it is explicitly stated in the Circular that the everyday “requirements of fuelwood, fodder and small timber such as house building material” of the forest communities including tribals should be given a top priority while distributing forest produce (GOI, 1990: 1). In other words, the government has acknowledged the demand put by several tribal groups and struggles, recognising the primary right of all the local communities (living in and close to the forests) on forest resources. It further states, “the forest communities should be motivated to identify themselves with the development and protection of forests from which they derive benefits” (GOI, 1990: 1). In that sense, this 1990 Circular further strengthens the role of forest communities (especially tribals) in forest management by seeking their participation not just in its management and protection, but also in restoration process with the help of age-old experiences and environmental knowledge. However, the term ‘traditional knowledge’ still did not find its place in the formal forest rules and regulations.

Upon independence in 1947, it was the popular belief that the state’s approach towards forests would be changed and the long-denied rights of the forest communities were to be granted. However not many changes occurred, for a very long period, in the structure of forest laws and its governance in post-colonial India. Until the 1990s, there was a no shift

observed in the attitude and approach of the state towards the forests as it had continued with same colonial forest management structure in independent India as well. It was the 1990s when the new trends and shifts were observed in the context of state forestry policies as the government announced the new NFP in 1988 and JFM programme in 1990. Considering the positive outcomes, it has been over two decades since these two new policies relating to forests introduced and the Indian government in recent times proudly “claims that a third of the country’s forest estate is under participatory management” (Lele and Menon, 2014: 5). There are many studies which support the government’s latter claim, and also further states that the NFP and JFM programme have enabled the Indian state to democratise the forest management structure on the one hand, and to resolve the unending conflicts between the local communities and the forest authorities on the other (Lele and Menon, 2014).

### **Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006: Decolonizing Forest Governance**

In December 2006, the Indian government enacted the FRA to safeguard the long overdue forest rights of the forests communities, particularly their traditional right to access and live in harmony with environment (forests) upon which their livelihood, lives and identities are dependant, and their responsibility of managing and protecting the forests. After independence, the Indian state, for the first time, acknowledges the historical injustice (or denial of environmental as well as social justice) done to the forest communities during the colonial and post-colonial periods as the Act’s Preamble explicitly states:

“WHEREAS the forest rights on ancestral lands and their habitat were not adequately recognised in the consolidation of State forests during the colonial period as well as in independent India resulting in historical injustice to the forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers who are integral to the very survival and sustainability of the forest ecosystem” (GOI, 2006: 1).

The FRA therefore intends to undo the historical injustice by recognising the rights and responsibilities of forest communities. It has contained (in its Chapter II) thirteen important forest rights that have been raised over the years by many human right activists, regional political parties and forest communities’ voluntary groups among others (Srinivas, 2013: 1015). The “right to hold and live in forest land... right of ownership, access to collect, use, and dispose of minor forest produce...rights of

settlement and conversion of all forest villages, old habitation, unsurveyed villages and other villages in forests...rights to protect, regenerate or conserve or manage any community forest resource which they have been traditionally protecting and conserving for sustainable use” are the few of the key forest rights (GOI, 2006, 4). In this way, there are many provisions incorporated in the FRA 2006 that have been highly cherished by many tribal groups, human rights activists and environmentalists.

The 2006 Act is widely attributed to bring a radical shift in the domain of forest governance as well as conservation policies by democratising the structure and recognizing the traditional rights of forest communities. To further decentralise the structure of forest governance, the Central Government has amended the FRA in 2012 to strengthen the *Gram Sabhas* to effectively implement its key provisions. The amendment, entitled as the “*Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Amendments Rules, 2012*”, has not only extended the rights of the forest community, but importantly “provided opportunities to them to participate and share their own ideas of conservation of forests” (Sahay, 2012: 1354). In other words, it has recognised the considerable contribution of forest communities in sustainably managing and conserving the forests through their knowledge system based on the values, age-old experiences and customary practices, thereby recognizing their wider contribution in maintaining the ecological balance.

While analysing the post-colonial forest laws from the environmental justice perspective, this present study highlights some interesting facts about the former. The independent Indian state till 1990s largely followed the colonial legal structure to govern its forests and adopted an apathetic attitude towards the rights of the forest communities as it continued to deny participation in decision-making, significance of traditional knowledge in forest management and protection, equal distribution basic human rights (most importantly right to livelihood and life), and social justice, thereby denying environmental and social justice to the forest communities. It was the 1990s when a shift was observed in the state’s approach towards the forests as well as the forest communities with the announcement of the new forest policy in 1988 and JFM programme through a Circular in 1990. These two initiatives are largely considered as the first of its kind in the post-colonial India that officially recognised the “symbiotic relationship between forests and forest-

dwelling communities” (Rajagopal, 2019: 1). The NFP 1988 attached more importance to the environmental benefits (rather than the commercial benefits) of the forests and also recognised the first claim of forest communities on forest produce. And, the 1990 Circular strengthened the role of locals in forest management by seeking their participation not just in management, but also in ecological restoration with the help of age-old experiences and environmental knowledge. However, it is worth noting here that “neither the National Forest Policy nor the 1990 Circular refer to equity and social justice goals, except emphasising the needs of tribal communities” (Lele and Menon, 2014: 27). In other words, both the initiatives of 1990s are not in sync with the ideals of environmental justice.

With the enactment of FRA in 2006, a new era of forestry governance has commenced in independent India as suggested by many scholars. This study finds that there are several grounds on which the FRA appears to be in sync with the principles of environmental justice on the one hand, and dismantles the exploitative, un-democratic and violent structure of colonial forest governance on the other. First, its announcement marked the first instance in the history of forest governance in India where the state has acknowledged the fact that environmental and social injustice historically imposed on the forest communities. Its Preamble explicitly states that the state forest polices during the colonial and post-colonial periods caused injustice to those local communities “who are integral to the very survival and sustainability of the forest ecosystem” (GOI, 2006: 1). Similarly, the global discourse on environmental justice has considerably disclosed the embedded patterns of injustice in the context of natural resource management (Adeola, 2000). This study argues that acknowledging the historical injustice done to the forest dwelling communities in the FRA is a notable event as solving a problem first requires recognising it. This is probably why the Indian state has made efforts (in terms of announcing the FRA in 2006 and subsequently amending it in 2012) to ensure environmental and social justice to such communities by radically revising the forest legal structure.

Second, the FRA 2006, unlike the colonial forest polices, intends to undo the distributional injustice (in terms of correcting the unequal distribution of forest benefits and basic rights pertaining to forest resources) as its Section

3.1 consists of several rights that recognises the historic claims as well as the rights of forest communities on forests, forestland, minor forest produce, and the products (such as fish) of water bodies among others (GOI, 2006: 4). More specifically, it specifies that the daily requirements of the forest communities are to be given a top priority while distributing forest produce. Moreover under Section 3.1.10, it has acknowledged their customary rights “which are recognized under any State law or laws of any Autonomous District Council or Autonomous Regional Council or which are accepted as rights of tribal under any traditional or customary law of the concerned tribes of any State” (GOI, 2006: 4). Such claims and rights have been raised on different national and interactional platforms by the many tribal associations, non-governmental organisations and political parties. By acknowledging their historical claims and customary rights in FRA, the Indian state has not only extended the human rights to the politically and economically marginalised tribal communities, but also protected their livelihood and lives as they are historically depended upon the forest resources for their very survival and cultural identities.

Third, the FRA has ensured a wider participation to the forest communities in the forest management and conservation, and this is how it prompts procedural justice by recognising the significance of local participation in the forest governance. However, the word ‘participation’ has found mention once in the whole act, but its various provisions tends to promote the participation of forest communities at different levels of forest governance. For example: its Preamble acknowledges the key role in achieving the “sustainability of the forest ecosystem” (GOI, 2006: 1). Unquestionably, the latter requires participation of the forest communities not just at the level of decision-making, but also in the implementation process. In addition to FRA, the 2012 amendment has offered “more opportunities to them [forest communities] to participate” in the forest management by further decentralising the forest governance structure by giving more powers to the *gram sabhas* (GOI, 2012: 3). In other words, the local participation is considered a key to achieve the sustainable forest management, as suggested by the ideals of environmental justice.

Fourth, the FRA unlike its predecessors is the first such act that has incorporated a provision relating to traditional knowledge possessed by indigenous forest communities, especially tribals. Traditional knowledge system holds the potential of making a rich contribution towards evolving a

sustainable model of forest management. This is probably why the FRA has timely recognised the contribution of traditional knowledge in the “sustainable use, conservation of biodiversity and maintenance of ecological balance” (GOI, 2006: 1). In other words, the FRA confirms the fact that forest communities inherit a knowledge tradition that establishes a sustainable connection with environmental resources including forests. Under Section 3.1, the forest communities are encouraged to share their traditional knowledge based local structures of protecting, managing and conserving the forests.

Fifth and last, given the above FRA analysis from the environmental justice standpoint, this study traces an impact of the global environmental justice discourse on its structure and provisions. In fact, the incorporation of ‘participatory model’, distributional concerns, basic human rights, and social and equity concerns into the FRA is appeared to be highly inspired by the ideals of environmental justice. These all concerns are situated at centre of global discourse on environmental justice (in both developed and developing countries) by the beginning of twentieth-first century. At the same time, the deliberation and debates on the preliminary draft of FRA also began in the same period that underlined the potential interactions between these two events. In essence, the FRA 2006 along with the amendment of 2012 has ushered a new era of forest governance in India that appears to be highly structured by the global discourse of environmental justice.

## **Conclusion**

This study adopts the environmental justice perspective as its analytical framework to examine the Indian forest laws—with a special reference to FRA, 2006 and its 2012 amendment—with the purpose of analysing the interconnection between the global discourse of environmental justice and the act. In doing so, the study has learned that the post-colonial forest policies and laws, for a long time, continued to follow the colonial legal framework and structure even after independence. For example: the NFP 1952 was comprehensively inspired by the provisions contained in the 1894 colonial forest policy. The announcement of FRA in 2006 is unquestionably a historic moment in an Independent India as it recognises the rights of forest communities, contribution of traditional knowledge in maintaining the forest, as well as the importance of local participation,

thereby dismantling the undemocratic and exploitative colonial structure of forest governance. However, many studies have pointed several limitations in implementing the FRA provisions at the ground, but it does not undermine its importance in decolonizing the structure of forest governance as well as situating the basic rights of forest communities at the centre of governmental discourse on forest laws and policies.

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# Geopolitics in Central Asian Region: Implications for India

Satyam Singh\* & Neeta Rani\*

## Abstract

*The purpose of this paper is to provide a brief history of evolving geopolitics in Central Asian Region (CAR). The geostrategic and geo-economics importance of the region have been addressed in this paper. The abundance of natural resources, particularly hydrocarbons located in this region has turned global attention to it. To have an access to these resources there is an ongoing rivalry and competition between great powers. The paper seeks to provide an outline of regional and international actor's interest in the region, as well as their impact on India-Central Asia relationship. The paper has emphasized on connectivity of this region with other regions as the Central Asian region is a landlocked area. The lack of direct connectivity has hindered India's ability to strengthen its relationship with the region. The geopolitics revolving around the CAR may harm Indian interests in the region. It still as good relations with all the republics in Central Asia which are undergoing transition, but the growing influence of other major powers in the region will be a setback to India. The paper clearly deals with how the presence of other countries in the region can have implications for India. Moreover, the greater threat has also emerged to India from the Taliban in Afghanistan which can have its reach to Central Asian republics.*

**Keywords-** Central Asia, Geopolitics, Great Game, hydrocarbon reserves, Oil

## Introduction

Central Asian region (CARs) comprises five nations which are Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. In north-south the region extends from Russia to Afghanistan while in the east –west it extends from China to Caspian Sea. The region also serves as a connecting bridge between Europe and Asia and has a geostrategic significance to the world because of its location and its vast natural reserves (Roy, 2001). Central Asian region has also gained a lot of

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\* Satyam Singh is a Ph.D Research Scholar at Department of National Security Studies, Central University of Jammu, Rahya-Suchani (Bagla), Jammu -181143, Jammu and Kashmir, India.

\* Dr. Neeta Rani is an Assistant Professor at Department of National Security Studies, Central University of Jammu, Rahya-Suchani (Bagla), Jammu -181143, Jammu and Kashmir, India

attention and become an arena of intense political rivalry because of its immense natural resource; the presence of ample amount of hydrocarbon reserves is majorly located in the three nations of Central Asia - Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Kazakhstan has 3 percent of world's total oil reserve making it a country with the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest proven oil reserves in Eurasia (after Russia) and 12<sup>th</sup> largest in the world. Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, on the other hand, have significant amount of natural gas reserve; Turkmenistan has ten percent of the global natural gas reserve making it the 4<sup>th</sup> largest proven natural gas reserves in *the* world.

Central Asian region was a part of the Soviet Union. After the disintegration of the later in 1990s, there was a political vacuum created in the Central Asian region, in which various regional as well as external actors were trying to establish their presence in the region. The newly independent nations of Central Asia wanted to explore more for their benefit in this process as each went through a great transformation. These used their abundant natural resources as a tool of foreign policy and for economic development. Each Central Asian nation had its own policy to interact with external actors. In this regard, Kazakhstan was favourite of all because it was most stable and opened which attracted the foreign investment mostly through its 'multi-vector' policy. While Turkmenistan applied the policy of neutrality and gave no political leverage to any external actor to increase its presence on its land, whereas Uzbekistan followed the path of self-isolation and became self-reliant. It was after 2016 when new elected President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev made some moderate changes in its policy to attract investors. As only Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan have middle economy, rest all three- Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan have weak economy. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan don't have much of hydrocarbon resources but both can be very vital in the production of hydro power electricity as both the nations have a lot of potential in this sphere. Most of gas production in Uzbekistan is used to meet its own domestic requirement.

Since the ancient time, this region has held historical significance as most of the trade used to flow from the ancient Silk Road through which merchants traded with one another. It was also the route from where ideas and culture flew from one civilization to another. The region had a rich heritage of the prominent scholars such as Al-Biruni who was born on 973AD in Uzbekistan and was called as the "founder of Indology", "father of comparative Religion". Avicenna also known as Abu Ali Sina,

born on 980AD in Uzbekistan, was a physician, thinker and astronomer. Also, Sufism flourished and spread from this region towards India and then to rest part of the world (Menon & Rajiv, 2019). Even Buddhism from India via ancient silk road to Central Asian region went to East Asia, from this region evidence of Buddhist cave were found in few parts of Central Asia.

### **Great Game and the Soviet Union**

The Great game is referred to as the historical rivalry between Russian Czars and British Indian Empire and culminated in late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. As both the empires had an expansionist mindset so the Central Asian region along with Afghanistan became a zone of contention between them. This power struggle between them to establish a hold in the region is termed as the Great Game. In this great game, the British Indian Empire was fearful of Russian empire intension, that if they occupied the region of Samarkand, Bukhara and Khanate of Kokand (prominent ancient regions of Central Asian region) then they could advance towards Afghanistan and from there they could get an easy access to the North-western frontier Province of British Indian Empire. Later this fear of British Indian Empire became a reality when Russia annexed Tashkent in 1865 and later after one year it also occupied Samarkand and Bukhara which further deteriorated and boiled the tension between British Indian empire and Russian empire. To prevent Russian advancing towards the eastern side, British Indian empire tried to create its dominance in Afghanistan through a series of Anglo-Afghan wars (first in 1838, second in 1878 and third in 1919) in which both were trying to contain each other in Afghanistan and Central Asia. Later in 1884 to terminate the Great Game, Russia and Britain demarcated the border between Afghanistan and Central Asia. Afghanistan was the centre of conflict and later acted as a buffer zone between the great powers. As both the empires had mutual distrust and they were wary of that other can create unrest in their region, therefore to avoid any sudden turmoil they acted accordingly. This great game was waged to block any further Russian and British expansion in this region.

In 1914, First World War started in which Russia was preoccupied with the ongoing war because of which it was not able to devote much attention as it was required in CARs. During this period, Russian empire went through turmoil which led to unrest in the empire which later got converted into Russian revolution (also known as Bolshevik revolution)

that started in 1917 and resulted in the end of Czarist regime in Russia. With the end of civil war in Russia, Bolshevik established the Soviet Union by merging various regions including the Uzbek SSR (Soviet Socialist Republic) and the Turkmen SSR which were formed in 1924 and a new region was created and renamed as the Kazakh Autonomous SSR in 1925. Tajik SSR was formed by separation of Uzbek SSR in 1929. Lastly the Kyrgyz autonomous oblast became a part of SSR in 1936.

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, the former Soviet Socialist Republics (SSR) became newly independent nations and five among them are collectively known as Central Asian region comprising republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

### **The New Great Game and Big Power Rivalry**

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, new independent Central Asian Republics emerged on the world map as five-stans. The region is the heart of Asia because of its geography, economic and geostrategic location. This region holds enormous quantity of natural resources especially hydrocarbon reserves which are present in the region. Although Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan have border with the Caspian Sea but the landlock characteristic of this region limits its trade and economic growth. Due to the landlock status, this region is mostly dependent on its neighbours for proving feasible trade route for the flow of their commodities to the outside world and for economic prosperity of the region (Batsaikhan & Dabrowski, 2017).

During the Soviet period, the economic structure of the region was controlled from Moscow. They followed a policy of 'one region one production' in which and all the construction of infrastructures and pipelines for the flow of oil and gas was made via Moscow. Hence the independence of these nations from USSR created a lot of turbulence in Central Asian region which had all their setup created in convergence towards Moscow. Numerous complications came in to run nations with limited economy and infrastructure setup. There was problem of ethnic disruption which arose in the region. All Central Asian republics (CARs) mostly share common history and culture but have ethic issues in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, many regional and international actors showed their interest in CARs to have an access to its natural resource potential. The oil and gas sector received most attention from the outside world. There was a significant shift in world focus towards the geopolitics of this region, mainly from Russia, USA, European Union, China and to some extent from Iran, Turkey, India and Pakistan. In the guise of establishing stability and developing the region, the foreign powers had their own interest in mind. This shift of the world's focus towards Central Asian region is termed as New Great Game.

Even after the collapse of Soviet Union, Russia (the largest and most populous of the former soviet socialist republics) remained the dominant power in Central Asia, as economies of CARs was hugely dependent on Russia because of the lack of infrastructure development in the region. For this reason, Russia saw Central Asian region as its own backyard. The dependence of CARs on Russia and its dominance in the region was seen by other actors as a threat to their own interests in the region which can later be a challenge to the global world order.

Russia also utilised its energy diplomacy to challenge growing Western presence in the region. Russia has dominance in the region because of its historical connection and for the flow of CARs trade Russia was only viable option available for them for many years. Russia handled the hydrocarbon trade between CARs and the European Union with ease and was able to establish friendly relations with both. However, the European Union later made significant investments in the region, including the construction of new energy corridors that avoided Russia. Merging with new powers such as Turkey may severely erode Russian dominance in the region, and NATO's military presence might allow this valuable region slip from Russia's grasp. To deal with this, Russia established the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) in 2002, a military alliance of former Soviet Union member which consists of Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan (withdrew in 2012) (Joshi, 2005). Later, in 2015 Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan formed the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU). It was built on the European Union model, in which there will be a single market with free movements of commodities, services and people. Russia established two organizations to bring former Soviet Union members together on a single platform to discuss security and economic challenges faced by them. By doing so, Russia hopes to reclaim its lost dominant position in the region.

USA's approach towards the Central Asian region has many aspects. Firstly, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, USA was wary of Russia's influence in the Central Asian Region and was concerned that this region might go back to its former communist ideology. Hence, to decrease the influence of Russia in this region, USA started to show interest in CARs energy sector. With the active involvement of the European countries, USA was able to establishing its own influence in the region. The countries of European Union are highly dependent on external sources for their supply of energy. Russia is the main supplier of crude oil, natural gas and solid fossil fuels to the EU. In order to diversify its energy resource and have regular and secure supply of energy, the European Union is actively involved in the Central Asian region – as it has an abundance of hydrocarbon reserve. This is the primary objective of European Union's active involvement in this region. Previously, Russia used to import oil and gas from CAR at a reasonable rate, and then exported that to the European Union and earned huge profit from it. This used to happen because CAR lacked connectivity owing to its landlocked feature and infrastructure development; in order to supply its energy resources, Russia was the only option available to them. This directly influenced Russian presence in the region. To reduce Russia's growing influence in the region USA led NATO was able to polarise Georgia and Azerbaijan, former members of the Soviet Union. With the help of Turkey, the western countries wanted to create a new trade route between CARs and European union bypassing Russia and Iran. Turkey had ethno-linguistic ties with CARs from its historical background; post-Soviet time turkey played a key role in forming a bridge between newly independent states with Western countries and worked to curtail Iranian presence in the region. Turkey was greatly backed by western powers for their own interest. This entire formation in CARs region helped Turkey to become NATO member.

USA backed many major projects that could diversify CARs export routes especially towards the western world. With the development of pipelines, such as Baku- Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline connecting Azerbaijan to Turkey via Georgia transports oil from Caspian Sea towards Mediterranean Sea. Another is South Caucasus pipeline that runs parallel to the BTC pipeline. USA also endorsed Trans-Caspian gas pipeline; this project was purposed to transport Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan's natural gas to European Union via Turkey. Many thinkers stated that USA aiding support and endorsing in the region's energy

sector had more of a political dimension than economic benefit for the USA (Raimondi, 2019). The western countries employed energy diplomacy to enhance their influence in the region while decreasing Russian presence in the region. Hence to pursue these objective western countries invested in this region, but they failed to exert concrete influence in the region, because Russia and China already had a stronghold in the region.

USA's second approach to the region was for security reason. Following the terrorist attack on the United States on September 11, 2001, the United States initiated a global collective response on terrorism and launched 'War on Terror'. Immediate actions were taken in Afghanistan from where most of the terrorist organisations used to operate; it resulted in trafficking and narcotics trafficking from Afghanistan to Russia via CARs. USA along with NATO forces began with counter-terrorism operation in Afghanistan and was able to establish military bases in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Many thinkers were of the view that the event of September 11, 2001, transformed the global scenario in such a way that big powers viewed Central Asia as the new conflict-ridden region. After the attack, there had been a drastic shift in the geopolitical situation where CAR became the focal area for many big powers. Eventually, these events led USA to lead its military forces step up in this region which promoted more cooperation between western countries with CARs with new level of technical cooperation and formulating new trust of mutual understanding.

China has shown great interest in the region from past two decades. It has many reasons to have cordial relations with CAR, such as for security of Xinjiang region - an unstable region with ethnic Muslim minority issue; this part of China shares border with three central Asian countries Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan which have almost similar ethnicity and tradition as practiced in Xingang region (Pradhan, 2017). Hence, there is possibility of spread of religious extremism from CAR towards Xingang region. This can be one of the biggest challenges for China's national security. China is world's largest energy consumer and is dependent on others to fulfil its huge energy demand. For China, the Central Asian Region is very vital to meet its domestic energy requirements. Therefore, it invested heavily in the CARs and got access to their major oil and gas field stakes with the construction of Central Asia- China pipeline, started in 2007 and operating since 2009. This is the world's longest pipeline that connects Turkmenistan to China via Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Currently this pipeline fulfils 20 percent of

China requirement of oil and gas requirements. The massive investment by China in this region has resulted in establishing stability in the region; it also stabilised the Xinjiang region by developing its infrastructure and connecting various projects through this region.

China knows the significance of Central Asian region for success of its ambitious project of 'One Belt One Road' which is a Global Infrastructure Development Project connecting Asia, Africa and Europe through rail and road connectivity. Central Asian region is the only option for China that could provide a bridge to connect with Europe. This project was announced from Astana capital of Kazakhstan (the biggest and most stable country in Central Asia) by Chinese President Xi Jinping on September 2013. Currently China has surpassed Russia and has become CARs biggest energy trade partner. Its growing influence through huge investments has marked China as the new dominant power in the region.

### **India's Perspective**

Central Asian region is of utmost significance for India because of its geographical location and presence of abundant amount of natural resources. The region is regarded as India's extended neighbour, as India does not share a physical boundary with it. Due to lack of direct connectivity with the region, the cordial relations have been constrained in their ability to strengthen the economic and strategic relationship for the benefit of both the Central Asian region and India. For India, the Central Asian region is critical for security, meeting its energy needs and combating China's expanding footprint in the region.

India and Central Asia have had a long-standing relationship dating back from ancient times. Many scholars from this region visited India in order to learn about Indian culture and to interact with their belief system. There was flow of ideas and culture from India which spread in some parts of Central Asia. Also, via the old silk route, there was a massive flow of trade between the two. At present, both have undergone significant transformations and are struggling to revive old cordial relation which they had in ancient times. Since India's independence, India has friendly relations with former Soviet Union republics which is seen as the foundation of forming a healthy relation with the Central Asian region after the collapse of the Soviet Union. India was one of the first countries to recognise the newly formed Central Asian states. Later,

the former Prime Minister of India P.V. Narasimha Rao visited four out of the five countries of CAR; Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan in 1993, followed by Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan in 1995 (Menon & Rajiv, 2019). The objective of visit by the former Prime Minister was to strengthen India's relation with the CARs in the field of trade and investment and drawing attention on common threats such as religious fundamentalism, Islamic extremism, illegal smuggling of small arms and narcotics.

In order to secure its border in the north western region, India needs to have a significant presence in the Central Asian region, as if Central Asian republics fail to create stability within the region, then religious extremism, terrorism and ethnic dispute can start to flourish in the region and this could severely impact India's national security as India is currently facing separatist movement in Kashmir valley and if its neighbouring part gets in control of any terrorist or extremist group, it can create more trouble for India. Moreover, Afghanistan has become another threat to CARs as well as to India's security. Hence to maintain peace in this part of country India needs to counter any growing threat in CARs.

Another significant aspect of this region for India is the enormous amount of the hydrocarbon present in this region, as India is dependent on the import of hydrocarbon to fulfil its domestic energy requirements. The issue of the connectivity with this region is the biggest barrier for India in order to maintain energy relation with CARs. To overcome the connectivity issue, India has tried to develop or to become a part of some projects. Such as India along with Turkmenistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan initiated a gas pipeline project known as TAPI gas pipeline project in 1990s that would export natural gas from Turkmenistan to India, through Afghanistan and Pakistan. Later in 2010 inter-governmental agreement (IGA) was signed by the heads of the all four members; but the project is still pending because of mutual distrust between India and Pakistan and the instability in Afghanistan. The motive of this project was not just limited to the transportation of gas but it could have had a substantial impact in fostering cooperation thereby establishing peace and security in both the regions.

The International North-South transport corridor (INSTC) is another project by which India will try to connect with Central Asian region. INSTC is proposed to connect European Union's port of St. Helsinki, which is on the top of St. Petersburg in Volga river basin and will go through Caspian Sea to reach down to Iran port of Bandar-Abbas, thereon it will be connected with the Mumbai port (Adnan & Fatima, 2015). As in March 2016 India agreed to join trade transit agreement which is also known as Ashgabat agreement which would enable India to have access in Central Asian region. Hence synchronizing INSTC with Ashgabat agreement would open a route of connectivity of India in CARs.

India poured many efforts to establish its ground in Central Asian region but all those were constrained to some extent which could provide a strong ground for India to strengthen its relationships with CARs. Such as in 2012, India's External Affairs Minister E. Ahamed tried to draw an attention on Central Asian region by giving "*Connect Central Asia policy*"; the policy focuses on the cooperation between India and CARs in the field of strategy and security, energy and connectivity. He also highlighted the growing significance of Central Asian region on global politics and the impact on world order with the sudden shift in regional geopolitics in past few years. Even then, there was limited progress that India could achieve from Connect Central Asia policy in the succeeding years (Menon & Rajiv, 2019). India's 'Connect Central Asia Policy' was reinforced in 2015 when Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India visited CARs between 6<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> July 2015. He also became the first Indian head of state to visit all five countries of CARs (Menon & Rajiv, 2019). Since then, there has been significant progress in cooperation, particularly in the field of defence, energy and connectivity. His visit in Central Asian region has a chartered new life to India's revelation in establishing a foothold in the region.

In the field of defence and security cooperation with Central Asian region, India has been able to create strong alliances almost with every country in Central Asian region despite having direct connectivity issue with the region. As when there was an ongoing civil war from 1992 to 1997 in Tajikistan, which was backed by Pakistan in the form of

establishing Afghan Mujahedeen. To counter the growing Afghan Mujahedeen India started to provide Tajikistan forces military training on its own soil. In 2002, India signed bilateral defence agreement with Tajikistan under which India refurbished Ayni airbase (various means of media speculated that India was very much interested in the establishment of a military base at Ayni in order to expand its strategic footing in Central Asia). It is India's only overseas airbase at Farkhor in Tajikistan which is operated by Indian Air Forces with the collaboration of Tajik Air Force. India started to hold bilateral military exercise with Kyrgyzstan from 2011 named as "Khanjar" which focuses on high altitude and mountain operations to counterterrorism. Its 8<sup>th</sup> edition was conducted in the month of April 2021 where Indian troop's contingent was welcomed by Kyrgyzstan forces.

Indian Prime Minister Modi's visit to all the Central Asian countries in 2015 has enhanced India's defence cooperation through bilateral level meeting with all countries of CARs. The visit marked the signings of MOUs and agreements with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan in the field of defence and military technical cooperation. India and Kazakhstan also initiated a joint military exercise in 2016 Prabal Dostyk, which was later renamed as KAZIND, in 2018 (Menon & Rajiv, 2019). The focus of this exercise was to counter insurgency, counter terrorism, low intensity conflict and jungle warfare. With Uzbekistan, India agreed to expand its cooperation in the area of military education and military medicine in 2018 and cooperate jointly to eliminate terrorism with counterterrorism exercises.

India had already signed strategic partnership agreement with Kazakhstan in 2009, Uzbekistan in 2011 and Tajikistan in 2012, in order to enhance its relation with these nations in the field of security cooperation and jointly work to develop economic and health infrastructure in the Central Asian Region.

### **Implications for India**

The significant shift of the world towards Central Asian region is due to the presence of natural resources in this region such as oil in Kazakhstan, gas in Turkmenistan and cotton in Uzbekistan, as western countries

along with China and India are highly dependent on import of energy; especially hydrocarbons to fulfil their domestic energy needs. For them CARs is the most reliable source to fulfil their energy demands because of the uncertainty in Middle East region and the ever-changing terms and conditions of OPEC on supply and price. One of the key concerns for every nation in the twenty-first century is to ensure energy security for itself (Joshi, 2005). Today, nations which are dependent on others to fulfil their energy demands, are trying to diversify their sources as much as they can, to tackle any unwelcome situation. India and China's expanding economies and populations have resulted in very high energy demand, which has a direct impact on global energy demand. The Central Asian region has the potential to be one of the most consistent and dependable sources for both India and China to achieve their energy requirements.

In recent times, China has affected the regional geopolitics with its giant economy. In order to fulfil its demand of energy, China has heavily invested in CARs infrastructure projects, developing gas pipeline projects that provide connectivity for the transportation of CARs gas energy to China (Indurthy, 2016). It has also brought stakes in major oil fields of CARs particularly in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. Currently Turkmenistan exports 80 percent of its total gas export to China, which can give a broad picture of China's growing influence in the region. Before China established its foothold in the region, the regional geopolitics was revolving around Russia as its centre. As Russia always treated this region as its "natural sphere of influence" as CARs member were part of former Soviet Union.

In comparison to other regional actors such as China and Russia, India's trade and commerce with Central Asia is quite limited. There are several reasons for India's low trade flow with CARs. Previously, India's foreign policy was focused on its immediate neighbours and Indian leaders did not give much attention to the importance of this region to maintain or improve the relationship that existed in ancient times. The lack of direct physical connectivity with this region is one of the key causes that has affected India-Central Asia trade relation. In the post-1999 era, India took steps to boost its relations with Central Asia but the geopolitical rivalry among the great

powers to a great extent stymied its greater engagement in the region, where India tried to establish energy relationship with individual countries of CARs. After much competition with other powers present in the region India was able to secure a stake in Satpayev oil Bloc of Kazakhstan. Gradually, India also took steps to get a share in the energy sectors of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan; also India got a stake over hydroelectric projects in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. In 2008, Kazakhstan supported India to be allowed in civil nuclear cooperation without being the part of Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). Later both the nations signed civil nuclear deal in which Kazakhstan supplied around 2,100 tonnes of uranium to India in 2014. This civil nuclear deal is now ungraded in which India is planning to increase its uranium supplies from 7,500 tonnes to 10,000 tonnes (Chaudhury, 2019). India has also signed a uranium supply agreement with Uzbekistan.

From past two decades there is an ongoing India-China rivalry to have an access on CARs hydrocarbon reserves. The growing Chinese dominance in the region has been detrimental to India, like in 2005 when Indian ONGC Videsh Mittal venture was offered to purchase stakes in Petrokazakstan's, but due to political pressure on Kazakhstan from China, the deal went from India's hands to China (Raimondi, 2019). In 2013, again 8.3 percent stakes of Kashagan oil field deal slipped from India's lap and went to China (Ali, Khan & Gul, 2019). India needs to gain mutual trust with Central Asian countries by investing in their infrastructure, supporting them on global dice and cooperating with them to counter the rise of China in the region. As China is trying to trap Central Asian region in its "debt trap diplomacy" via which China will dominate in the region.

The withdrawal of USA troops and Taliban seizing power in Afghanistan has serious security concerns in neighbouring countries. The porous borders in some parts of Central Asian countries have raise the issue of flow of Afghan refugees on their land; along with cross-border arms and drug trade and exportation of terrorism. The local terrorist groups operating in CARs have ties to the Taliban, so the growth of the Taliban will have an impact on regional stability and national security. Afghanistan land could become a hotbed for foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) as recently Al-Qaeda praised Taliban after Taliban capture Kabul

and urges its support for liberation of Kashmir (Mehra & Wentworth, 2021). The Taliban gaining control in Kabul will not only poses security but will also have economic challenges which India needs to address.

India was an observer member of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) for twelve years before becoming a permanent member in 2017. India can use SCO as a platform to address common threats and opportunities with Central Asia. The SCO has provided a stage to India, where it can frequently meet the head of states, ministers and diplomats of CARs, through which India can consolidate its relations with Central Asia on strategic as well as economic level. In 2019, the first India-Central Asia dialogue was organised jointly by India and Uzbekistan in Samarkand (Gupta, 2020). It was a significant step taken by India in a direction to establishing its ground in Central Asian region. In addition to this, India initiated “India-Central Asia Business Council (ICABC)” to promote business and economic diplomacy in the region.

India is not unwelcomed by Central Asian countries; they embrace India because they want to diversify their trading partner and routes. Because their landlocked status limits options and these want to have an access of sea routes. Thus, India should engage with them by providing assistance in the field of transportation, agricultural, information technology and military training to build a strong and lasting relationship with the region. The withdrawal of American soldiers from Afghanistan and the resurgence of Taliban in Afghan will have direct impact on the CARs peace and stability, which will, further, have an impact on India’s national security. China, on the other hand, is trying to create its domination in Central Asian region with its economy.

The Central Asia has emerged as the epicentre of global geopolitics; all this has compelled India to strengthen ties with the region. Also, India’s economy would grow rapidly in the upcoming decades and will require more energy to meet its energy demands. Hence, this is the correct time for India to ensure and diversify its energy sources with keeping Central Asian region of the top priority.

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## **Book Review**

**Haagh, L. (2019). The case for universal basic income. India: Polity. 140 pp. Rs. 1027.**

Universal Basic Income as an idea has drawn the interests of political theorists, economists, policy makers as well as several tech entrepreneurs of the twenty first century. This idea of universal basic income aims to provide each individual within a political community with a basic economic security in the form of cash without having any conditions attached to it. Historically, the idea of basic income ranges from Thomas Paine's design of ground rent to Milton Friedman's proposal for negative income tax. The fundamental objective of these different concepts that argues for basic minimum income has been to build a support for essential economic security for individuals. The arguments in support of basic minimum economic security have existed over a long period of time and they were revived again by the end of twentieth century through the writings of Philip Van Parijs and Guy Standing in context of failure of neoliberal economic promises as well as rising automation in production processes. Their arguments for the defense of the policy of universal basic income ranges from individual freedom to social justice. In this backdrop, Louise Haagh's book "The case for Universal Basic Income" published in 2019, by polity publication is an attempt to build a case for basic income security on the lines of its ability to prioritize human development and its capacity to shape public institutions that can lead to incorporation within the society.

Louise Haagh has articulated her arguments in support of universal basic income in three separate but interrelated chapters. Each chapter attempts to provide an argument for the support of universal basic income. The first chapter looks into the idea of individual security and how the fragmented claim making progress leads to dissipation of public responsibility and on these lines the writer argues for a wider re-democratization of state is required through basic income reforms. In the succeeding chapter, the author is trying to build a case for universal basic income with respect to its ability to enhance civil rights and equality in the backdrop of political and economic competition. And the last chapter takes a look at the ability of basic income to create a new model of democratic governance that has the capacity to increase incorporation in society, in place of existing constant competition that is cutting off the

self from the society. However, the arguments presented in these chapters are closely interlinked as incorporation in society leads to creation of stable institutions and greater human development.

According to Louise Haagh, the book “The case for Universal Basic Income” is arguing for the idea of basic income "*as part of democratic reconstruction at a juncture of global crisis in governance*". The major arguments supporting the idea of basic income in a democratic and stable society are: Firstly, basic income has the capacity to stabilize the human condition by providing a sense of existential security. The confidence provided by the income security enhances the independence enjoying capacity of an individual. Secondly, building on the first argument, basic income in extension will lead to a greater stability and equality in social relations, resulting in greater cooperation at the societal level. Furthermore, at the level of the system, the stable monetary foundation provided by basic income mixed with other public developmental social policies can build a mutually supporting system that can support and enhance each other's effects.

Furthermore, the author goes on to argue that the idea of basic income is not a fad because firstly, this idea of unconditional right to monetary security has enjoyed cross-cutting support from market liberals such as Frederick Hayek to Milton Friedman and Charles Murrey to Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg. It has also enjoyed the support of left liberals such as Bertrand Russell to Claus Offe. They all agreed on one argument that the modern state has failed to secure the basic independent status of citizens. Secondly, the idea of basic income is already electronically viable and supported by half of the population of Europe. And lastly, the libertarians' argument for a smaller role of state is linked with their support for basic income.

She couples the argument for basic income with human development and social equality with the already existing argument for freedom and security as mentioned above. She propounds that basic income fills the gap in the infrastructure of modern democracies and economies and can lead to democratization of the economy. Hence, the author's argument made in support of basic income on the basis of basic human development has four major aspects. Firstly, basic income is architectural meaning it provides the foundation for building a complex economic security infrastructure. Secondly, basic income is a progressive step towards bringing out institutional changes that are more important than

the initial payment of basic income. Thirdly, the case of democratic human development focuses a great deal on governance and therefore emphasizes on the role of state and strategic planning required for human development. Lastly, basic income has the capacity to create a stable institution which is important for freedom and human development.

The second chapter titled 'Human Development Freedom' is attempting to build support for the idea of basic income on the ground that basic income can work as an institution that expresses humanist norms i.e. developmental provision which is designed to support the agency and self of an individual throughout his or her life. The idea of democratic humanist perspective developed throughout this chapter pays attention to both the human development approach and for rethinking the idea of competition economy and justice.

The idea of human development approach as illustrated by the author is subdivided into several human functions of existential need, cognition dependence, and reliance on structure. These facets of human development approach are analyzed with reference to basic income's ability to safeguard these human functioning. The author argues that basic income is fundamental for human security structures that support human functioning and she also highlights an experimental research which argues that "*problem solving is linked with the absence of pressure*". So, basic income provides the guarantee for the right to subsistence in a situation where individuals feel coerced by society and that restricts their opportunity to carry out basic duties with dignity. Basic income also recognizes a form of status independence that is fundamental for human functioning and it makes a case for a system of learning and working without constant competition and testing. Basic income also has the ability to build cooperation in care and greater relations across gender and in society. Cooperation in care is directly linked with mental and physical health and individual security which gets enhanced in the presence of basic income. A case for control over time is also made with reference to freedom and basic income. Basic income provides greater control over work and leisure which in turn leads to greater control over leisure and freedom.

The case for basic income is also made to reassess the idea of a competition economy and how it affects the process of justice. Haagh argues that basic income is important in reshaping the rules that it may serve to reinforce legal and normative expectations that are concerned

with equality in the basic developmental process framework. The author argues to re-examine the idea of justice in the context of competitive economic culture. The competitive economic culture creates exclusion, deepens inequalities and eventually leads to the weakening of state and society. To illustrate, she provides the argument of how 'supermanagers' have been able to set their own wages since the 1980s whereas the global share of workers in unions has fallen drastically. Therefore, she argues that the idea of justice exists when it is embedded in the conditions individuals receive. In this context, basic income firstly restores the status of individuals and helps them in gaining a control over their own lives and secondly, it also becomes elementary and critical in correcting and forestalling injustices from occurring.

In the succeeding chapter titled 'Democratic Development' the author Louis Haagh looks at the long term implications of a policy like universal basic income in the broader context of analyzing and re-examining the relationship that exists between the different levels of democratic development. In this context, the author begins with arguing a case of universal basic income on the basis of its ability to constitute a civilised development path. The idea of civilised development looks into the ability of universal basic income in creating stabilising incorporating mechanisms within a society. So, as the cooperative structure within a society can be formed. Contemporary globalization has created great inequality and has failed in creating a stable society. To build on this argument, the author employs Ralf Dahrendorf's understanding of anomie to argue that the competition processes of modernity have led to creation of new vulnerabilities that is separating self from social bonds and human reality. She also draws from David James' idea and claims that modern capitalism is unjust because it divides stability unequally. So, the author Louise Haagh on the premises of the major critics of basic income, that is the high cost of a program like universal basic income and the concern that contributions will fall in the long run, makes a case for a reverse developmental incentive structure that is based on creating stabilized incorporation mechanisms in the society that will lead to creation of cooperative structures. Secondly, she sets out to understand the relevance of universal basic income in the context of other policies and benefits. For this, she compares the idea of universal basic income with negative income tax, universal basic services and universal basic infrastructure. She argues that the problem that lies with negative income

tax is that they reproduce and idealise market fluctuations and implementing a policy like negative income tax would have to trace these fluctuations in income with respect to the market. With respect to universal basic services and universal basic infrastructure, she argues that income security and services are not strangers but extensions of each other. However, universal basic infrastructure and universal basic services would not be able to solve the problem of developing capital investments or in-house work conditionalities. The author also derives her argument for the support of building a policy like universal basic income on the impact that new technologies would have under globalization. She argues that a new age of inclusive artificial intelligence employment would require a combination of social corporation and more advanced technical skills which can be developed under the aegis of an economic security in the form of basic income. Lastly, the author analyses different forms of basic income experiments that have been taken up in countries like Denmark and the United Kingdom. These partial basic income brought out several shortcomings that exist in the already existing welfare system which can be solved by universal basic income. She argues that partial basic income gets stuck with the targeting approach and universal basic income, even if it is initially low, can help build structures of shared norms.

However, she goes on to argue that basic income would not be able to solve the question of dependency if it's pursued in isolation and in existing underlying inequality. Therefore, she argues for a three-tiered system of welfare with basic income as the foundation to build a new cooperative system on which a three layered system of welfare could be built. The other two would include public regulation and investment to rebuild occupation economies and public support for a system of contribution and saving. This system would ensure that the return on the investment on human learning is optimized over the individual life cycle and across society as a whole. Therefore, she argues for basic income to build the defense of the public realm and underpins this argument for the idea of civic equality and human development.

Universal basic income as an aspirational idea has been revived in the last three decades with respect to the failure of neoliberal market economy in creating an equal and just society. This book is an attempt to enrich the idea of universal basic income by building a normative case

while also employing empirical examples to analyse the impact of other welfare policies with respect to the idea of universal basic income. The idea being explored in support of a policy like universal basic income is that basic income has the capacity to improve and secure individual security as well as can lead to greater incorporation in society. This is favorable for creating co-operative institutions and inclusive growth. However, the author also warns us about putting all our eggs in the single basket of universal basic income. She argues that basic income with its lifelong security structure can improve civic development of society and give normative priorities to human development but it should be the part of the scheme but not the whole.

Consequently, the book's argument of building basic income as a part of democratic reconstruction at a time of crisis at the global level in governance looks into basic income's capacity to work against the existential threat for individuals, to help in cognitive development of individuals as well as its capacity to work as an institution for social incorporation. This book's attempt to touch on the wide array of arguments in support of universal basic income, somewhere makes it lose the depth of the arguments. This book employs several theoretical concepts throughout the book such as idea of anomie, human development ethics, idea of autonomy, etc. However these theoretical concepts are not explored in depth. This book also builds its case on the long term implications of a policy like universal basic income and doesn't thoroughly deal with its short term challenges. Nonetheless, this book's understanding for building a case for the idea of universal basic income adds to the already existing defense in favor of the idea of a policy of universal basic income.

**-Rishabh Raj**

Ph. D. Research Scholar  
Department of Political Science  
University of Delhi

**Chandra, Y. (2021). The Tale of the Horse: A History of India  
On Horseback: Picador India. 336 pp. Rs. 464.**

Chandra's work brings a breath of fresh air in the field of Indian history writing. It deals with Indian history making horse the pivot around which everything else revolves. She talks about the role of the horse in Indian culture and mythology. She attributes the introduction of horses in India to the Indo-Aryans who migrated to the subcontinent from the North and the West in waves from circa 1500 BCE. The book is divided into three parts and nine chapters. The first part of the book deals with cultic importance of the horse in different religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam. It then tells us about the sea and caravan trade in horses. The author informs us about 'droves after droves' of horses reaching the court of Akbar from Central Asia and Iran. Infact horses from Central Asia including Khorasan and northern Afghanistan, constituted the chief item of import in the overland trade until the seventeenth century (p.37).

The Mughal rulers supported the trading activities. Caravanserais were set up on trade routes for the traders to provide shelter to them. These caravanserais contained quarters for caretakers and stores. They also had separate place for the animals brought by the traders. The author provides the example of a caravanserai called Nur Mahal near Jalandhar in Punjab. Named after its patron Nur Jahan. Different activities took place at these caravanserais and the author is successful in painting a picture which almost takes one in the middle of the hustle and bustle of these past day motels. We find that farriers selling horseshoes, sellers of grass and hay, cloth sellers, musicians, dancing boys and girls, barbers, tailors, washer men and prostitutes all gave their services to the traders and travelers at the serais.

Horses were also brought to India through sea. They were transported from the ports of Persian gulf and the Red Sea. The author empathetically brings out the ordeal faced by horses on these journeys. They were bled before the journey 'to render them extremely tame and without any vice', forced to stand throughout, secured with straps (p.57). For the rulers of Deccan and South India sea trade in horses was a better way to obtain horses than getting them from overland routes. Traveller and horse trader Athanasius Nikitin, described the port of Dabhol on the Konkan coast as a bustling meeting point for horses from Central Asia as well as the Middle East. The two main powers of the south, the

Bahamani and Vijayanagara rulers, competed to buy up the shipments of Arab-Persian horses. The sea trade in horses between the Middle East and South India lasted nearly a millennium since about the eleventh century until the twentieth.

The book provides us important information about the native breed of horses in India. Abul Fazl himself records that ‘Hindustan was breeding horses of its own by the late sixteenth century’ (p.81). The author argues that horses could be bred in India and it was well established by thirteenth and fourteenth centuries as against the views held by many foreign travelers and writers. Indeed as author says horses reared in the subcontinent were better suited and easily adapted to its climate. In the Mughal army too 30 to 40 percent of horses were homegrown. An important argument is made by the author about how colonial rule proved detrimental to native horse breeds. Breeding of native breeds such as the Kathiawari was sidelined (p.56).

This work goes beyond the trade and warfare paradigm in relation to horses. It gives us a multifaceted picture of the horse in Indian history. Everyday information such as foreign travelers spending a night in cowshed and surviving on peacock meat is given. How the popular hindi idiom ‘Ghoda Bech ke Soya’ is related to a horse’s sale by a trader is explained by the author in terms of the hard journey that horse traders undertook to sell their horses.

The second part of the book talks about Rajputs and the role of horse in their history, culture, evolution, and power. The Rajputs were devoid of the supply of horses until the Delhi Sultanate ruled but from the sixteenth century it changed. The author brings out the symbolic importance of horse in the Rajput culture. She as many others have done recently identifies that Rajputs became a closed caste group only in the fifteenth-sixteenth century and their ascent to this position was based on performing services and establishing marital relations with older and established lineages. The author describes the role of Colonel Tod and his work *‘Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan’* in the making of the Rajput identity as the warrior on horseback.

Horse played an important role in establishing the Rajput power and identity. The book also gives us details about horse breeding in Rajasthan. An interesting point brought to light by the author is that in Rajasthan along with stallions, mares too were given similar status. We get information about past sports such as ‘chaugan’ (polo) being played

by the Mughal emperor and his close aides. It became a way to exercise the tactics of the battlefield. It made them better riders. Matches were organized in the night too with the help of Masaals.

The author not only shares the pain of the warriors on the battlefield but that of war animals too. The author shows through paintings that women of elite Rajput households knew the art of riding and practised equestrianism within the confinement of purdah. Three paintings from Jodhpur are cited as example that show women playing polo (p.184). The book mentions Shalihotra and its role in the maintenance and keeping of horses in India. The horses are divided in this particular text on the basis of castes such as ‘the horse that emits sweat as sweet smelling as flowers through the different seasons is considered of the Brahmin caste’. However Shalihotra does give contain relevant information such as training and managing of horses, advice on examining horses and telling their age by scrutinizing their teeth and about different diseases that can affect a horse.

The third part of the book gives us information about horse fairs and role of marginalized groups in the history of horses. The people who were appointed as caretakers and stable hands never quite get the attention of a scholar. The author tries to fill that lacuna. However a better reading of various bahis (revenue registers) of eighteenth century Jodhpur state would have made the work more holistic. We find information about the organization and payment given to different classes of non-combatants that served the Jodhpur state. But the author is successful in conveying to the reader that history of Rajasthan is not just history of Rajputs but also includes history of various communities that inhabited the land and contributed to its culture and magnanimity. The detailing about horses from its feed to its tack (bridle, saddle, bit etc.) shows the mastery of the writer over her craft. In the end it can be said that its time to shed the colonial mindset that looked down upon the colonies and write histories of the subcontinent by moving beyond the Eurocentric view.

By  
**Dr. Deepak Solanki**  
Assistant Professor, History Department,  
Kirori Mal College  
Delhi University

## Author Guidelines

**Language:** Articles must be submitted in English language and in soft copy preferably through email.

**Words limit:** The preferred length of an article is between 4,000 and 6,000 words for research articles and surveys, and 3,000 words for commentary. This length can be waived for certain articles in consultation with the editor. Book reviews should be between 1,200 and 1,800 words.

**Note:** *All articles must have Abstract, Key Words, Introduction and conclusion followed by in-text Citation.*

**Title Page:** The author's name and address should appear only on the title page, which should be separate from the main text of the manuscript.

**Illustrations, diagrams, graphs:** Illustrations are welcome for all kinds of articles. Maps, diagrams and graphs essential to the subject of the article should preferably be camera-ready.

**References:** Authors should use in-text citation for the purpose of citations. The author is solely responsible for quotations and illustrations in their respective papers. Accuracy in citations is also the author's responsibility. They should follow APA (6th edition) referencing style.

Refer the following examples.

- **Chapter in an Edited Volume**

Baker, F. M., & Lightfoot, O. B. (1993). Psychiatric Care of Ethnic Elders. In A. C. Gaw (Ed.), Culture, Ethnicity, and Mental Illness (pp. 517-552). Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Press.

- **Article in a Journal**

Thompson, C. (2010). Facebook: Cautionary Tales for Nurses. Kai Tiaki: Nursing New Zealand, 16 (7), 26.

- **Book**

Collier, A. (2008). The World of Tourism and Travel. Rosedale, New Zealand: Pearson Education New Zealand.

- **Newspaper Article**

Matthews, L. (2011, November 23). Foodbanks Urge Public to give Generously. Manawatu Standard, p. 4.

- **Government Publications**

Ontario Ministry of Health. (1994). Selected Findings from the Mental Health Supplement of the Ontario Health Survey. Ottawa, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario.

- **Internet Documents**

Kak, S. (2018). Indian Foundations of Modern Science. Retrieved from file:///C:/Users/DUSC/Downloads/IndianFoundationsofModernScience-SubhashKak-Medium.pdf

- **Submission Checklist**

The text is 1.5-space; uses Time New Roman 11-point font size. Employ italics, rather than underlining. If any tables or illustrations submitted have been published elsewhere, the author should obtain prior written consent to republish from the copyright holder and the author(s). All illustrations, figures etc. must be of high resolution/quality, preferably jpeg or equivalent but not power point, and preferably attached as extra files.

All enquiries and submissions should be directed to:

**Prof. Sangit Kumar Ragi**

Editor-in-Chief, Indian Studies Review,  
Room No. 14. Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Science,  
University of Delhi, Delhi - 110007,  
Email: indianstudiesreview@gmail.com

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