

ISSN 0970-7247

# THIRD CONCEPT

**English Monthly**

**Annual Subscription Rs. 200**

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**Vol. 30**

**No. 350**

**APRIL 2016**

**Rs. 20.00**

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- ❖ **India-Russia Relations**
- ❖ **Relevance of Gandhi**
- ❖ **Nehru's Contribution**
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## An International Journal of Ideas

Vol. 30 No. 350 APRIL 2016 Rs. 20. 00

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**Published, Printed and Owned by**  
Babuddin Khan  
Third Concept  
LB - 39, Prakash Deep Building,  
7, Tolstoy Marg, New Delhi-110 001.  
Phones : 23711092, 23712249  
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Website: [www.thirdconceptjournal.co.in](http://www.thirdconceptjournal.co.in)

Designed by: Pt. Tejpal

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# National Interest!

**A**lmost all political parties swear by safeguarding India's national interest. Preservation of national interests in the realms of defence and foreign affairs are governed and nurtured by the well-defined and set norms established over the years since the attainment of India's independence and all political parties are almost unanimous on it. However, domestic parameters of national interest are defined by each political party according to its own whims and fancies. Recent developments in country's prestigious institutions and the response of the ruling dispensation to these developments has given new perspectives to the national interest which has come to be construed in terms of 'national versus anti-national' and it has given rise to the debate on nationalism. Viewed in a broad spectrum, the terms "national", "nationalism" and "nation-state" came into vogue in Europe after the Westphalian Peace Treaties in the 17th century. According to some experts, the European concept of "nationalism" was never inclusive of the entire population even within the territory of the "nation" and it always invoked an "enemy within". The imperialistic nature of European "nationalism" has led many analysts to brand it as an aggrandizing nationalism.

The post-independent India adopted, what many experts have described, 'democratic nationalism', which developed in India during the national freedom struggle. Since India's freedom struggle was against the colonial rulers, it had to be inclusive, to mobilise every possible segment of the population for the cause. Likewise it had to develop solidarity with other such struggles, and for that reason had to have a fraternal rather than an aggrandizing relation with other Third World countries. According to one opinion, the contemporary Indian leadership, while adhering to 'democratic nationalism', had to put the welfare of the "people", as distinct from the greatness of the "nation" *per se*, as its central focus, a fact poignantly expressed by Gandhi when he said that the objective of freedom was to "wipe away the tears from the eyes of every Indian".

Thus, the concept of nationalism that developed in post-independent India was essentially a democratic and egalitarian nationalism as opposed to the aggrandizing European nationalism. Tolerance, accommodation and negotiation in the event of differences, not the use of brute force to enforce silence and assert hegemony are the salient traits of democratic nationalism. However, with the rise of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to the national mainstream politics, especially from the 1990s onwards, efforts were underway to redefine the parameters of nationalism. Much greater political space was provided for the affirmation of Hindu identity, which according to BJP zealots, couldn't be separated from Indian nationhood.

During 1999-2004, when BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) was the ruling dispensation at the Centre, it always flaunted its Hindutava nationalism and the emphasis has become more louder after Narendra Modi-led government was installed at the Centre in May 2014. The recent incidents in JNU, Hyderabad University and other institutions of higher education have been turned into debate over 'national' *versus* 'anti-national.' Some experts are of the view that the revival of the Hindutva plank in the name of nationalism *versus* sedition is perceived across the Sangh Parivar as an important political and ideological achievement in the early months of 2016, particularly in view of the significant reverses suffered by the BJP in the Assembly elections in Bihar and Delhi in 2015.

The BJP-led NDA government finds itself cornered over its economic and political failures in the past couple of years. Rising unemployment, economic distress across vast stretches of the rural hinterland, price rise, recent electoral failures, and a policy paralysis has put the government on the back foot. Following Rohith Vemula's suicide, the government was also perceived as anti-Dalit. The increasing social cleavages, worsened by the economic distress, perhaps forced the BJP to deflect public attention from the major issues, even at the cost of civil liberties ensured to Indian citizens in the Constitution. The nationalism debate has reportedly given a fresh lease of life to the BJP and the Sangh Parivar to energize its cadre and distract public attention from serious problems plaguing the country. Concurrently, these developments have also brought together secular political organizations like Left parties, the Congress, the S.P., the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) etc as never before. Self-interest of the parties seems to have superseded the national interest and it abodes ill for the country.

— BK



# India-Russia Relations in Regional Context

Dr. Sachinkumar M. Kattimani\*

*[In the changing dynamics of international politics set in motion by the end of the Cold War and the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991, there were paradigm shifts in the nature of relations among countries. India and the Russian Federation, however, were soon able to find a new basis for re establishing their close and friendly relations. Within a span of nine years, Indo-Russian relations have evolved into a strategic partnership. This implies a qualitative higher level of relationship reflecting mutual trust and confidence. It was this compatibility of geopolitical and strategic interests that augured well for Indo-Soviet ties in the past, although the context was different, and augurs well now for Indo-Russian ties.]*

**T**he regional scenario has been in a state of constant flux. For Indo-Russian relations, the regional context presents not only new challenges to their relationship, but new opportunities as well, especially with a view to analyze India's relations with Russia.

## The Regional Context

After the breakup of the erstwhile Soviet Union, there was uncertainty about the future of India's relations with the successor Russian Federation. Indian concern was whether the special relations it enjoyed would undergo a change or not. Immediately after the breakup of the Soviet Union, there was a debate even in Russia about its future policy towards South Asia. There was a view that Russian policy should be equidistant, in which both India and Pakistan enjoyed the same emphasis. Hence, in the early years, Russian policy towards India was one of benign neglect.

However, this phase soon gave way and in January 1993, during President Yeltsin's visit to India, the earlier treaty was replaced by a new one: The Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation. However, it was with Prime Minister Narasimha Rao's visit to Russia in June 1994 that Indo-Russian ties were put on a firm foundation. "The Moscow Declaration on the Protection of

Interests of Pluralist States" signed by India and Russia has become the bedrock of the relations.

The Declaration drew attention not only to the nature of the challenges faced by the two countries, but also focused attention on the source from which this threat emanated for both. It also reiterated support of the signatories for each other's territorial integrity. This seemed highly important given the fact that India and Russia were battling with these challenges in Kashmir and Chechnya, respectively.

In the changed context, it was the space that lay between India and Russia that acquired significance. Once again, it was the commonality of their geopolitical interests that paved the way for the relationship to become strong and stable. Later, India and Russia backed opposition to the Taliban that had crystallized into the Northern Alliance. On the issue of religious extremism and terrorism, India and Russia share many commonalities: the source of tension, funding, training, etc.

India and Russia wanted a secular Central Asia working towards a democratic setup. From this perspective, stability and security were important. Instability hampers growth and helps in sustaining extremism and terrorism to an extent. Consequently, India and Russia have established institutional linkages to strengthen this aspect. To date, this commonality has not diminished. Russia views India as a major regional power

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whose involvement in international politics would make a positive contribution.

From Russia's vantage point, the unfolding developments in Europe, Eurasia, and the energy security issue were reminiscent of the Cold War mindset. Its response was the propagation of the idea of a multi-polar world. In this regard, a historic agreement with China on a "Multi-polar World and the Formation of a New World Order" was signed in Moscow in April 1997. This was the beginning of a partnership with China.

A multi-polar world is an order that is just, fair and democratic in which all nations are considered as equals and more importantly, enjoy equal security. It is a world order in which there is no place for hegemony. In this order, the UN would occupy a position of centrality. On its part, India upheld that the world order was not a uni-polar one, as new centers of power and influence were emerging.

While acknowledging the need for a multi-polar world, the Indian approach was not in terms of blocs, but the need to maintain a balanced and stable world order. Since a uni-polar world could lead to instability, there was a need for a balancing force. Among the other initiatives taken by Russia is the idea of an India- Russia-China strategic triangle, coming together in the interests of the challenges faced by them in the region. During Primakov's visit to India in December 1998, he proposed at an informal level that India-Russia- China should come together to form a strategic triangle in the interests of peace and stability in the region.

The initial response of India was one of caution that could be explained by the fact that a strategic triangle implied common perceptions and convergence of interests *vis-à-vis* a common threat. Similarly, China expressed no opinion on this idea. One of the impacts of the events of 9/11 has been that China has developed a positive attitude towards the idea of trilateral cooperation. Possibly, the renewal of Pakistani-American cooperation could have had an impact on Chinese strategic thinking.

It was perhaps with the idea of furthering the cause of trilateral cooperation that President Vladimir Putin embarked on his Asian tour by visiting China and later India in December 2002. In a TV interview, Primakov said, "It is shared interest in maintaining security and stability in Central Asia and Afghanistan that may give flesh and blood to the idea of a Moscow-Beijing-Delhi triangle."

The foreign ministers of the three countries have been meeting on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly to discuss issues of common concern at the global and regional level. Issues such as energy security, trade and enhancing contacts have been discussed. In May 2005, the foreign ministers of the three countries had their first full-fledged meeting.

As mentioned before, the turn of the century saw fundamental changes in the region. The Western military presence in Afghanistan and Central Asia radically altered the geopolitical landscape. With the passage of time, Russia was convinced that a multilateral approach was best suited to the evolving situation. Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov in an interview said that multilateral approaches are the best solutions to global problems and regional conflicts.

With increasing focus on multilateral approaches, a regional grouping that has come into prominence is the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Prior to the formation of the SCO in June 2001, it was known as the Shanghai Five with a limited agenda of maintaining peace and stability on the border and promoting a good neighborly attitude in the region. The Shanghai Five felt the need to transform itself into a regional grouping as the security problems in Central Asia became complicated and a collective approach was necessary.

The SCO's agenda expanded to include security and economic issues. The essence of the SCO lay in peace and good neighborly ties among the countries. The primary concern of China, an active participant of SCO, was the security of its periphery and its Xinjiang region. A

declaration by the heads of the member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (June 7, 2002) stated that the SCO has been established with a view to strengthening mutual trust, friendship and good neighborliness.

The objectives of the SCO were combating religious extremism, separatism, and terrorism, and, at the economic level, it meant energizing economic links. In August 2003, the first multilateral anti-terrorism military exercise was held within the framework of the SCO. At the wider political level, the SCO has expressed its views on issues of international significance. For instance, a statement issued at the end of the St. Petersburg Summit in 2002 reiterated support for the One-China Policy and the principle that “Taiwan is an inalienable part of China.” Similarly, in a clear reference to the US-led war in Iraq, it was stated at the Moscow Summit in 2003 that “we have a common stance. There is no alternative to the UN as a universal organization in an international system.”

Although the SCO has emerged as a proactive and dynamic regional grouping, it nevertheless faces certain challenges. A great deal depends on the nature of Russia-China relations, the two most powerful players in SCO. In the opinion of the author, differences among them cannot be discounted. Similarly as the Russian and Central Asian societies evolve towards democracy and openness, albeit slowly, would their perception of SCO also undergo a change?

Moreover, the SCO faces a challenge from the CSTO, of which Russia is an active member. The CSTO also espouses similar objectives. For the present, it seems that the SCO is not likely to expand its membership. Currently, there are India, Iran, Mongolia and Pakistan as countries with observer status in the SCO.

India could play an effective role in the grouping. Firstly, India has a rich experience in multilateral diplomacy. After all, it was the founder of the Non-Aligned Movement. India has also been a member of G-77, South-South Cooperation, etc. Secondly, Indian experience in combating

extremism, terrorism and separatism could be useful. Indian membership would certainly make it broad based, and given India’s rising profile, would certainly lend weight to the SCO.

It appears that for China, the SCO is a tool to engage with Central Asia for the foreseeable future ensuring its core objective of maintaining peace, stability and good neighborliness on its common borders.

The CSTO, a Russian initiative, is also emerging as an active grouping, although its focus appears to be on military and vigorous defense cooperation among the member states. The CSTO is not likely to open its membership to states other than those of the post-Soviet space. As mentioned, this emphasis on multilateralism has to an extent diluted the regional context of Indo-Russian relations, especially when India is not a full member of these regional groupings. India’s role is stymied in this situation. New areas of cooperation have nevertheless emerged. One area is joint cooperation in Central Asia. India and Russia stand to benefit by increasing their involvement in Central Asia.

The systemic transformation in these countries is still incomplete. India-Russia cooperation in broadening the basis of the Central Asian states’ economy is probable in the spheres of textiles or textile machinery, light industry, and agriculture in the use of new farming techniques. In addition, Central Asia’s industrial base shows that light and food industries are common to all. This is followed by machine building, metal processing and ferrous metallurgy. Indian experience in operating a Soviet type of industrial infrastructure could be useful.

At another level, Indian managerial skills can be matched with Russian expertise in upgrading, modernizing and building new enterprises in the medium- and small-scale sector. Indian and Russian cooperation in the energy sector as well as the defense industries located in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan could be accelerated. India has already invested nearly \$2.7 billion in the Sakhalin project on natural gas. Indian cooperation in building the export pipeline

infrastructure holds significant promise.

Secondly, India-Russia cooperation in the developmental activities of Central Asia can be accelerated if they can provide the landlocked countries access to the outside world. In this regard, the North-South Corridor connecting St. Petersburg with Mumbai is the best option. The corridor, a combination of sea, rail, and road routes was planned in 2000 with Russia, Iran, and India agreeing to this ambitious project. Russia has already constructed a container terminal at Ol'ia and Makhachkala on the Caspian Sea.

On July 1, 2003, Kazakhstan also joined the North-South Corridor, and one branch of the corridor now goes to Aktau on the Kazakh side of the Caspian Sea. From the Russian side, it is much easier and cheaper to provide this Eurasian region with goods from India than from Europe. Although the North-South Corridor is operational, it is not functioning up to the desired capacity. Difficulties need to be resolved.

In order to open the Siberian part of Russia, it is necessary to give this isolated region access to the outside world. This is possible if one branch of the Trans-Siberian (transsib) Railway from Omsk Oblast could be connected to Aktau in Kazakhstan. Such a proposition is not too difficult because Aktau is connected by a rail and road network. Kazakhstan, on the issue of a transport corridor, would certainly like to widen its options. Hence, it could be India-Iran-Kazakhstan and Russia (Omsk Oblast).

It could give this region an outlet to the south. A whole new vista for Indian goods could open up not only in Central Asia but in Siberia as well. Landlocked Siberia would also be able to interact with Southeast Asia, Africa, etc. Importantly, the opening of the Siberian region via the North-South Corridor would facilitate Indian labor to go to the region. In Siberia, there is a shortage of labor. Indian labor is known to be efficient and hence could play an important part in the development of Siberia.

The question is how to ensure the smooth functioning of this corridor when the North-South

Corridor is operating below capacity. One option could be to have sub-regional cooperation among Russia, Kazakhstan, Iran, and India. If sub-regional cooperation takes off, many of the problems related to the transport corridor could be sorted out. A joint coordination committee could be set up comprising members belonging to the four countries.

The committee could oversee and address problems such as the harmonization of trans-shipment rules, custom duties, tariffs, etc., and ensure the smooth functioning of the corridor in the interests of all concerned. The physical infrastructure and development that would occur in the process could act as a tool for development and strengthen cooperation.

### **Bilateral Context**

While regional input has played an important role in Indo-Russian relations, the bilateral context is equally substantial. At the political level, both India and Russia have steadfastly supported each other on issues of crucial importance. Russia's position on the Kashmir issue is very close to India's position. Taking note of President Pervez Musharraf's speech of January 12, 2002, a joint statement issued at the end of Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov's visit to India (February 3-4, 2002) said, "Pakistan's commitment can only be judged by the concrete action Pakistan takes on ground."

In other words, Russia showed complete understanding of India's position on cross-border terrorism and its reluctance to engage in a dialogue with Pakistan at that time, while on the Chechen issue, India expressed support for the steps taken by Russia to protect its territorial integrity and constitutional order in the rebellious Chechen Republic. On the question of terrorism and the need to initiate countermeasures, India and Russia had similar views. In the international forums, India and Russia have vigorously championed the need to combat this menace with a greater sense of urgency. The two countries have often reiterated their deep commitment to fighting religious extremism and terrorism. Several institutional linkages have been established to facilitate exchange and sharing of

information and advancing the common interests in the best possible way.

The congruence of views between India and Russia had a favorable impact on defense cooperation. This cooperation was put on a firm footing with the landmark Sukhoi deal signed in late 1996. The salutary features of Indo-Russian defense cooperation were its long-term-basis transfer of technology, modernization of existing equipment, and access to the latest equipment, weaponry, etc. in the Russian arsenal.

In fact, defense cooperation had gone beyond the main “buyer-seller” syndrome and had moved to the plane of joint design, research, and production. Recently, the chief of the Indian Armed Forces was in Russia to assure the Russians that enhanced interaction with the United States would not lead to a drift towards that country on the question of defense cooperation.

Even on the nuclear issue, Russia showed considerable understanding of the Indian position when the Pokhran-II blasts took place in 1998. Initially, there was disquiet in Russia over the blasts, but later, Russia did not go public in criticizing India. Importantly, it did not impose sanctions. In fact, in June 1998, an agreement for the construction of two 1000-MW reactors at Kundankulam was signed during the visit of the Russian minister for atomic energy, Evgenii Adamov.

### Conclusion

It can be said with some degree of certainty that Indo-Russian ties will not witness any drastic fluctuations. As long as core interests continue to coincide, such a possibility is ruled out. Moreover, there is no direct clash of interests to anticipate such an eventuality. The above-mentioned new areas of cooperation would further strengthen the relationship.

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# Recognising Nehru's Contribution

Dr. Neeru Sharma\*

*[After formation of Modi Government, Pt. J. L. Nehru had been the subject of criticism for his policies. It does not sound nice to ignore or criticise his policies. It is true Nehru's policies had many domestic and foreign critics. Such criticism has been counted by experts not driven by narrow political ideologies. Not to forget India of 1947 when on every front we were facing problems of nation-building be it foreign policy or internal, defence, agriculture, industries, irrigation, science and technology. Facing so many problems and to administer a country like India was not an easy task. Only a broad-minded person with a pan-Indian appeal could manage such mammoth task and Nehru undertook all tasks with determination and had been complemented as the prime builder of modern India. Present paper makes an attempt to glorify Pt. J.L. Nehru's contribution. It ends up with the view that every Prime Minister had contributed in the nation's progress. One Prime Minister cannot take the whole credit for progress.]*

A debate on Nehru's failures as the Prime Minister has always been the subject of criticism or praise. But after the unexpected victory of Prime Minister Nariander Modi, there are attempts to diminish Nehru's iconic status and devalue the Nehruvian Institutions. The statements and decisions coming from the ruling political formation make such institutions controversial. Old idols are sought to be replaced with the newly manufactured ones or those appropriated from other faiths<sup>1</sup>.

Nation-building was at the heart of Nehru's activities across a wide field- in planning, in community development, in scientific research and development of atomic energy. For Nehru, several concepts were mounded into the idea of India: Development, a secular order, the uplift of the poor, and abolishing illiteracy.

After independence, Jawaharlal Nehru began the ambitious and formidable project of India's modernization and nation-building. This postcolonial project was based on his ideas of democratic socialism, secularism, agrarian redistribution, planned economy, rapid industrialization and non-alignment. The French writer, Andre Malraux, had once asked

Jawaharlal Nehru what had been his "greatest difficulty since independence". Nehru's instant reply was: creating a just state by just means and creating a secular state in a religious country<sup>2</sup>.

Pt. Nehru did his best for building secular India. He was convinced that in a multi-religious, multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, plural and democratic society like India, the secular framework was imperative. But nowadays, India is facing the growth of intolerance, religious fanaticism and fundamentalism. Pt. Nehru visualized a secular state as one in which every group and every individual had the full freedom to function according to his own way. Nehru viewed secularism as a mental attitude on the part of various communities which could bring about harmony and feeling of fraternity towards one another.<sup>3</sup>

Jawaharlal Nehru was one of the greatest men the world has known. He worked to make India prosperous. Throughout his life, he endeavored to carry India forward on the path of progress. He used to work for as many 15 hours a day. He wanted trade and industry in India to expand and flourish. Under his guidance, plans were formulated to set up many heavy industries.

Blue prints were prepared for the production of steel and heavy machinery in India itself. Steel

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plants were set up at Durgapur, Bhilai and Rourkela.<sup>4</sup> He gave top priority to expansion of irrigation facilities that would improve the condition of farms and farmers. Big irrigation projects like Bhakra Nangal, Hirakud Nagarjuna Sagar etc. were planned; large dams and canals were constructed under the projects.

Pt. Nehru extolled the importance of dams, power plants and factories by calling them new temples and pilgrim centers of new India. Many institutions for scientific research in agriculture were set up. Green Revolution initiative resulted in self-sufficiency in food production<sup>5</sup>. He was a great advocate of development of science and technology. He worked for the development of atomic energy in the country and wanted atomic power to be used for peaceful and constructive purposes. Many scientific laboratories were established to achieve this objective. His vision has enabled India to have self-sufficient manpower of excellent scientists and experts in technology<sup>6</sup>.

One special characteristic of Nehru was that his thoughts were always spanning the future. What shape the future India will take? What will be its image before the world? What will the people here and abroad think of India? He used to ponder over such and many more questions. He wanted to make India a nation strong enough to perform fearlessly its distinguished role on the world stage<sup>7</sup>.

When India became free, Jawaharlal became both Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. He knew the most about foreign affairs, and so he remained Foreign Minister till his death. He called the Asian Relations Conference, and it became a rallying point for Asian people who were still fighting for their freedom. He introduced truth, non-violence and other ideas of Gandhiji into relations with countries. It was the strong leadership of Nehru when he opposed the Cold War and military blocs led by USA and USSR<sup>8</sup>.

Nehruvian foreign policy was based on the ideals such as maintenance of sovereignty of nation states, anti-imperialism, positive neutrality,

mutual peace and non-interference. He had to accommodate diverse interests for creating consensus on all areas of domestic, political and economic governance. He was relatively unconstrained in foreign policy making<sup>9</sup>.

Nayantara Sahgal (Nehru's niece) in her book, *Jawaharlal Nehru: Civilizing a Savage world* said: "Nehru's most memorable human quality was the way he dealt with human beings. Punctuality in his public and private appointments was a matter of courtesy and consideration. He did not like to keep people waiting. He strongly objected to VIP treatment that inconvenienced the general public<sup>10</sup>.

Peace was Nehru's prime objectives, as a fundamental human need and as the condition for lifting India out of colonial stagnation and building a modern nation. Equally he pledged to the freedom of Asian and African countries and removal of all colonial domination. He took an active part in international affairs primarily in pursuit of these objectives.

That India's voice carried weight and was heard with respect in world councils was a unique tribute to a country without economic or military power. At home, his commitment to socialism within a democracy founded on universal suffrage was an enterprise without precedent. The direction he gave to domestic and foreign affairs was the direct outcome of his vision of the kind of world he wanted to see<sup>11</sup>.

Jawaharlal Nehru's contribution to the development of parliamentary democracy in India forces us to recall the glorious beginning of parliamentary democracy where healthy debates and discussions were order of the day. It is significant to note that independent India's first parliament had the distinction of having spent the maximum time on legislation.

During Nehru era parliament discharged its function of charting out the path of social engineering with the utmost sense of responsibility. He was punctilious in attending the two houses, shepherding his flock in the art

of persuasive speech and deferring to the opposition benches, despite their paltry representation. Those were the days of intellectual giants and fluent speakers keeping the country and the Press agog<sup>12</sup>.

When asked how he would like to be remembered, he wrote an epitaph for himself: This was a man who with all his mind and heart loved India and the Indian people. And they in turn were indulgent to him and gave him their love most abundantly and extravagantly<sup>13</sup>. His greatest contribution was to establish India as a democracy, safeguard its diversity through secular policies and build this base for development and modernization. He had his failures too; but the balance was hugely positive<sup>14</sup>.

Public sentiment and attachment to Nehru are a fact of life in India. Emotions and sentiments have their own significance. But today the need is even more for an objective assessment, a dispassionate appraisal. Nehru taught us to be reasonable and sensible, therefore, when we seek to learn from his life, let our vision be clear and intellectual. Our estimate would then be truer, more definitive, and more meaningful.

Nehru was himself convinced of the clear and irrevocable need for parliamentary democracy as the system best suited to the genius of the people of India, their complex, composite culture and need therefore for a system that would allow full expression to individuals in a diverse society in consonance with national interest<sup>15</sup>.

As Prime Minister, Nehru by force of personality and personal commitment ensured that government remained truly responsible to parliament. Questions concerning his portfolios were answered by him personally. He insisted that replies to questions tabled for answer, should be fulsome and informative in due measure<sup>16</sup>. Pt. Nehru's address on January 24, 1948 at the Aligarh Muslim University gives an indication of the total perspective of his secular vision. He said: "India will be a land, as in the past, of many faiths, equally honoured and respected, but

of one national outlook. The only ultimate aim we can have is that of one world<sup>17</sup>.

Looking back, Nehru was a giant who strode the Indian stage at a propitious time. He laid the first solid bricks in the edifice of a newly independent nation. That India has weathered wars and other shocks in the succeeding decades in an abiding tribute to his vision and persistence. So let's recognize the contribution of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru as a Maker of modern democratic India. The efforts by Narendra Modi Government to demolish his image are not sending the good signal. In making of modern India present leaders have their own contribution but they should bear one thing in mind that its foundation was laid upon by our great leaders of pre-1947 era. Of course J. L. Nehru deserves that recognition.

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## Religion, Politics and Indian Parliament

Mrs. Meetu\*

*[The social life of a man, in addition to its economic, political, philosophical, scientific and others aspects, has also religious aspects. Religion is the major concern of man. Religion revolves around man's faith in supernatural forces. Religion is associated with emotions, especially with fear, awe or reverence.<sup>1</sup> the constitution and other laws and policies protect religious freedom and in practice, the government generally respects religious freedom. India is a birth place of several religions – Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism – and has been home for thousands of years to Jewish, Muslim and Christian communities. The vast majority of citizens of all religious groups lived in peaceful coexistence and was conscious of religious freedom and minority rights.]*

The partition of India had taken place on communal lines. It was to their great credit that even after agreeing to the partition as the price for freedom, the Indian leaders did not accept the theory that the Hindus and Muslims were two different nations. The Indian variant of secularism gives equal status to all religions without state patronage to any one religion.<sup>2</sup>

When the Indian Constitution came into force on January 26, 1950, India became a republic and the Congress party came to power with Nehru as India's first Prime Minister. A great challenge for independent India was how to cope with the volatile situation caused by continuation of the social structures based on castes and religious division established under the colonial rule.<sup>3</sup>

The Constitution of India as given to us by the founding fathers did not recognize any state religion. It embodied the principles of non-

discrimination on grounds of religion among the fundamental rights vide articles 14, 15, 16 and 19. By article 25 it guaranteed that all persons were equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practice and propagate religion.<sup>4</sup> Article -26 guaranteed every person to establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purpose; to own and acquire moveable and immovable property; and to administer such property in accordance with law.<sup>5</sup>

Article - 27 prohibits the levying of a tax the proceeds of which are meant specifically for payment of expenses for the promotion or maintenance of any particular religion or religious denomination.<sup>6</sup> Article -28 described that no religious instruction shall be provided in any educational institution wholly maintained out of state funds.<sup>7</sup>

The question of secularism is not one of sentiments, but one of law. The secular objective

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of the state has been specifically expressed by inclusion of the word 'secular' in the Preamble by the Constitution (42nd Amendment) Act, 1976.<sup>8</sup> Secularism is a part of the basic structure of the Constitution. There is no provision in the constitution making any religion the 'established church' as some other constitutions do. This is one of the glowing achievements of Indian democracy when its neighbouring countries, such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Burma uphold particular religion as state religion.<sup>9</sup>

In *Keshvanand Bharti v. State of Kerala*, and in *S.R. Bommai v. Union of India*, the Supreme Court of India held that secularism is a basic feature of Indian Constitution. The minority found the Act violative of the principles of secularism. It denied the power of acquisition of a place of worship to the state to preserve public order because public disorder may be caused by a majority community. To condone the acquisition of place of worship in such circumstances is to efface the principle of secularism from the Constitution. Religious freedom cannot be used as a protection against acts inimical to the public order, health and morality.<sup>10</sup>

Today, religion and politics have been mixed together in Indian society so it's senseless to talk about them separately. The use of religion in Indian politics can be linked to the country's pre-independence era. It is believed that the Britishers who ruled India for 200 years had pitched one community against the others to weaken the freedom struggle. The religious divisions always affect both party organization and voting habits.<sup>11</sup>

The Orissa Hindu Religious Endowments Act, 1939 passed for the better administration and governance of certain religious endowments, imposed on every *math* or temple having an annual income exceeding Rs 250 an annual contribution for meeting the expenses of the commissioner and the officers and servants working under him. It was held by the Supreme Court in *Jagannath Ramanuj Das v. State of Orissa* that the contribution that was levied by

the act had to be regarded as a fee and not a tax.<sup>12</sup>

In the immediate aftermath of the incident of demolition of Babri Mosque, riots claimed more than 2,000 lives in cities throughout India. In Mumbai, Islamic terrorist killed more than 250 people in a series of bomb blasts believed to have been in retaliation for Muslim deaths in the post-Ayodhya riots. Riots flared again in Gujarat in 2002 after Muslims burned alive 59 Hindus, they believed were returning from desecrating the mosque at Ayodhya. More than a thousand people were killed in riots throughout the state.<sup>13</sup>

Hindu nationalists have long been hostile, primarily towards Muslims, but over the last several years, their offensive against Christians has grown intense as well. More recently, their attacks on Christians in the state of Gujarat, commencing towards the end of year 1998,<sup>14</sup> drew much attention, and all of India was shocked when an Australian missionary and his two children were killed on the night of January 22, 1999 in a village in the state of Orissa.<sup>15</sup>

These incidents seem to be the result of fervor for expulsion of minority religious groups deemed to be strangers in the holy land of India, probably inspired by the ideology of *hindutva*. The idea alone, however, cannot fully explain why Christians are targets of Hindu attacks at present. Anger on the part of Hindus over conversions of Indians to Christianity may be one reason, but it cannot be the complete answer. Muslims and Sikhs, who once suffered Hindu assaults, without much resistance, are now fighting back, making the defenseless and weak Christians easier targets of Hindu rage.<sup>16</sup>

As whole of the country was in grip of communal tension and hatred, Babri Masjid-Ramjanambhumi issue was the most complicated and tension provoking in India. It was a matter of grief that Ramjanambhumi which is the birth place of Ram, according to Hindu community, had now become the place of battlefield for both the Hindus and Muslims. The Babri Masjid-Ramjanambhumi dispute, since its emergence,

has been closely linked with the Indian politics. The dispute emerged as a religious matter and later on took the shape of a legal controversy.<sup>17</sup>

On 10 December 1992, the Central government headed by P.V. Narsimha Rao, issued a notification, considering their (fanatic religious organizations) involvement in unlawful activities under the Act 1967 (prevention Act). It banned the VHP, RSS, Bajrang Dal and two Muslim organizations 'Jamaite-e-Islami- Hind' and the 'Islamic Sevak Sangh'.<sup>18</sup> From the events of the day, it was clear that the government of U.P. had not made any effort to stop all this; rather it appeared that it collaborated with Kar Sevaks<sup>19</sup>.

Quite after demolition of Babri Masjid, senior BJP leader, Atal Bihari Vajpayee said that "the Ayodhya action was BJP's worst miscalculation and a misadventure." L.K. Advani also said that "I am unhappy". The Chief Minister Kalyan Singh, pretended that, "I was kept in the dark." The statements of all these leaders were mere pretensions and had no reality. It became quite clear when the Central government announced that it would rebuild the Babri Masjid.

Then, quickly BJP changed its stance and called a Bharat Band on 10 December 1992 and warned that they would not allow anyone to build the Mosque at any cost<sup>20</sup>. Amit Shah, President of the BJP and a close advisor to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, last year called for a national anti-conversion in India, stating: "The government is ready to bring in a law against forced conversions. If you feel the state government's laws are not effective, there is need for an all-India law."

Critics, however, point out that most of the laws define force as "including threat of divine displeasure or social excommunication" and that the laws have been used to falsely charge members of various religious communities who believe their faith requires acts of charity alongside calls to conversion. South Asian affairs analyst Pieter Friedrich remarks that passing a national anti-conversion law in India, or anywhere, is an attempt to democratically

eliminate the most basic human rights of a democratic society.<sup>21</sup>

Religious conversions have become a lightning rod in recent months with the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's rivals demanding that he rein in religious groups affiliated to his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) trying to promote a Hindu-dominant agenda. A massive row over religious 'reconversions' hit work in both houses of the Indian Parliament in the first winter session of Modi government as the Opposition raised slogans demanding a discussion in the Parliament.

Opposition parties shouted slogans in the Lok Sabha (Lower House) demanding the government's explanation on the conversions in Agra, reportedly by groups linked to the ruling BJP's ideological mentor Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). BSP Chief Mayawati said that if the ruling BJP was not involved, then it should at least stop these conversions. All opposition parties should come together against this. Conversions in Aligarh and other places will lead to communal problems all over the country.<sup>22</sup>

The most important window into the religious-political tensions ought to be the news media. Indian media do not always serve the public well in these matters. One issue is that Indian media do not have a religion beat. The media often fail the public with poor reporting and by mislabeling violent events in a way that protects the perpetrators. The media consistently label communal violence as spontaneous riots even when the evidence implies they were pre-meditated.<sup>23</sup>

The passion of communalism is erupting on the oppressive periphery of the modern secular social space dominated by reason. In other words, the place where communalism is occurring can become a place where a homicidal religion is transformed into religion that brings people alive. The realities of human existence now challenge the validity of modernity, under which it has been believed that reason can control even religion.

The phenomenon of communalism can be interpreted as an immature form of challenge. The nature of Indian secularism is neither anti-religion nor it creates a wall of separation between the state and religion. It is not based on total neutrality towards religion. It is based on equal respect for all religions. It embodies the age old Indian concept *sarva-dharama-sambhava*.

Religion teaches us honesty, truthfulness, tolerance, simplicity, kindness and love for all. A religious man is nearer to God, showing no malice to anyone. Thus, religion has a great role in our social life, teaching ideals of serving men. It is the duty of the politicians to remain unbiased and maintain communal harmony.

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# Relevance of Mahatma Gandhi Today

Dr. Monica Chutani\*

*[There is not a single country in the world where the name of Mahatma Gandhi is not known. Why did Gandhi become so famous? It was because of that extraordinary light that shone across the world—a light that illuminated a humble hut and the brightest cities of the world i.e. the light of love, peace and hope.]*

**G**andhi was a true miracle of the 20th century—a century in which more than 70 million people lost their lives in the first 50 years. Winston Churchill had called Gandhi ‘that seditious half naked fakir’. Gandhi saw Churchill’s king as an emperor without clothes. But he didn’t put it that bluntly. Who can forget his famous comment around 1932 when he was visiting London for a round table conference?

A British journalist asked him on the steps of the Buckingham Palace. “Mr. Gandhi, are you going to see the king Emperor of the greatest empire dressed as half-naked fakir?”

Gandhi replied, “Don’t you worry, my friend. The king Emperor will be wearing enough clothes for both of us.”

He was one of the greatest heroes of the 20th century. He was and is still called the Mahatma—the ‘Great Soul’. His disciples called him ‘Bapu’ (father) in Hindi. It is not easy to become the father of the nation. At Gandhi’s death, Einstein declared, “the generations to come will scarcely believe that such a man in flesh and blood really existed.” In its last issue of the 20th century, Time Magazine selected Gandhi as joint runner-up (with Franklin Roosevelt) to Albert Einstein as ‘person of the 20th century’.

It was a great honour for India on the 15th of June, 2007 when the UN General Assembly voted unanimously to celebrate the second of October as the ‘International Day of Non-Violence’. This reflected a collective homage of the world

community to one of the greatest men of all times, a homage that arises above politics and speaks to all humankind.

Mahatma Gandhi was neither a philosopher nor an academic, and despite being a prolific writer, he was not an author; hence, as he himself said, “My life is my message.” He has not written about his philosophy as authors and philosophers would do. Essentially, he was an activist with a deep sense of social justice which consistently led him on the path of transformation. One has to read and reread his autobiography to understand the standards by which he dreamt and acted.

Nothing is hidden—every act, noble and ignoble, was an experiment with truth. To his last breath, he continued to affirm, through his gentle genius and radical action, that we must change ourselves before we can change others, that the laws of family, of truth, of love and charity are applicable to groups and nations and above all, that ‘non-violence is the law of our species, as violence is the law of the brute.’

In our contemporary world, this may seem distant and an unattainable ideal. Yet, in the thermo-nuclear age, if civilization is not to disintegrate into a mass of torn flesh and molten metal, the human philosophy of Gandhi has an immediate and urgent relevance, not only in India but in the entire world. There are many aspects of his thought and message, which are of increasing relevance today.

## **Tolerance**

The first was his belief in tolerance. To Gandhi, Intolerance is itself a form of violence and an

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obstacle to the growth of a true democratic spirit. In fact, Gandhi was firm in his claims for the unity of all life in God's creation. For him unity and homogeneity were not the same things at all. The heterogeneity that the Indian society had like all pluralism to Gandhi, enriched society and society should not be impoverished by its loss.

Anthony Parel points out that like Kant, a word that Gandhi often used to describe a righteous world was 'kingdom'. For Gandhi it was, among other things, a world of far reaching ahimsa and satya. Kant's ideal of a "kingdom of ends" is something with which Gandhi completely agreed- famously having claimed both that the fruits of action were irrelevant to the righteous act, and that no person should be treated as means.

Gandhi's notion of truth, in fact, not only gives theory of non-violence but also why we should practice toleration. To Gandhi human beings are not capable of knowing the absolute truth; they simply do not have the competence to punish other people through their words, deeds, or even thoughts. In other words, Gandhi tells us that we learn toleration the moment we comprehend that none of us is capable of grasping the complete truth, which for him signified both knowledge and self realisation.

He opposed the partition and when India celebrated Independence, Gandhi walked barefooted from village to village in Noakhali to restore peace and harmony in that area. Then he proceeded to Bihar and Calcutta to establish peace and amity. It was his fast for 72 hours that brought about the change in the atmosphere of Calcutta. In the words of Lord Mountbatten, "what fifty thousand well -equipped soldiers could not do, the Mahatma has done alone. He has brought peace. He is a one man boundary force."

Gandhi was sad with the partition of India as it had resulted in thousands of deaths and killings. All his life Gandhi worked for communal unity, peace and harmony. He always practiced what he preached. For instance, in *Hind Swaraj* he said, " Religions are different roads converging to the same point. How does it matter if we take

different roads so long as we reach the same goals? Wherein is the cause of quarrelling?"

Gandhi firmly believed that India was a plural society. Over the centuries Gandhi said, "Indians blended with one another with the utmost freedom and made India a microcosm of the world." "Our civilization is a synthesis of cultures. It is neither Hindu, Muslim, Christian but a fusion of all of them." This is a message of Gandhi which is relevant today.

### **Generating Employment**

Gandhi was of the opinion that technology had caused terrible harm to India as it led to massive unemployment. In *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhi attacked the common view that civilizational progress could be judged in terms of the sophistication of machines, technology and weapons. Gandhi was not against machines *per se* but on its side effects, particularly in throwing people out of employment and dehumanization of attitudes. He once asked with his impeccable logic "How can a country afford to have a machine which will displace the labour of crores of living machines."

Gandhi welcomed machines when they served rather than enslaved workers. Gandhi's praise for the Singer sewing machines as liberating and productivity enhancing suggests that he would have welcomed the computer and IT revolution.

Gandhi was against large scale production as it led to concentration of wealth in a few hands and more importantly it didn't provide much employment to the new entrants to the labour force. In fact, due to the fact that much of it was also capital intensive, large scale industry has become a drain on the capital resources of any country and, in this context; the emphasis on small and rural industry with special emphasis on skill development which Gandhi had laid down seems to be relevant as that will give jobs to the youth and they will be able to use their skills which will make them self-reliant.

### **Reduction of Poverty**

Gandhi held that poverty dehumanises human beings, undermines their sense of dignity and self-respect, wastes their potential and deprives their

lives of all meanings and purposes. It is in fact one of the worst form of violence that human beings can commit against each other. Gandhi in his various speeches and in the plethora of articles that he wrote during freedom struggle spoke highly of democratic decentralisation and rural development. He had once written “the Swaraj of my dreams is the poor man’s Swaraj.”

After returning from South Africa, Gandhi spent a year travelling across India to study the conditions of the poor and the underprivileged. He identified himself with the poor and took the vow of voluntary poverty.

The talisman that Gandhi gave many years back -whether the step we are taking would help the poorest of the poor-is as valid today as was when Gandhi gave. One actually wonders as to how the innumerable schemes and programmes will actually benefit the poor.

### **Peaceful Resolution of Disputes**

Gandhi famously said ‘an eye for an eye will make everyone blind’. He believed in the essential goodness of human nature. In his autobiography Gandhi wrote that a brute by nature knows no self-restraint and a man is a man because he is capable of and only as far as he exercises self-restraint. Gandhi evolved the technique of satyagraha which means truth force. It was not passive resistance but active opposition to any form of injustice.

Gandhi’s concept of purity of means, his insistence on conversion of the opponent by persuasion and discussion rather than coercion is recognised as valid methods in conflict resolutions. Gandhi regarded these methods as weapons of the strong man rather than of a weak person. To Gandhi violence only leads to further violence, it is a vicious circle and one should refrain from it. ‘He alone can forgive who is brave’.

### **Ethics in Public Domain**

Gandhi placed great emphasis on character building. ‘The first thing that we have to do is to

improve our national character’ he said. He continually emphasised the importance of ethical values in our public life and always practiced what he preached. A very disturbing feature of contemporary Indian life is wide spread corruption. Gandhi laid the utmost importance to honesty in public life and imposed strict standards on himself and his followers. According to him, a public servant should never accept gifts from the public.

In his biography, he relates the story of how on his departure from South Africa, he was presented with gifts which included gold, silver and even diamond ornaments. There was one gold necklace for Kasturba who wished to keep it, not for herself but to be given to her daughter-in-law in the future. He created a trust and left all the precious gifts to be used for the service of the community.

### **Environmentalism**

Although during the lifetime of Mahatma Gandhi there were no wide ranging debates on the environment *per se*, he was nevertheless much ahead of his time on the ecological concerns that we perceive today. Such was his passion, vision and understanding of the environment – back in the days when nationalism overruled any global thinking – that his writings and thoughts are punch lines for almost all present day environmental organizations and campaigns. We can say that he was far ahead of his times. He once said, “Earth provides enough to satisfy every man’s need, but not every man’s greed”.

His simple and sustainable lifestyle reminds us that we have borrowed this earth from our children and the future of humanity depends to a large extent on how well we manage our ecology. Today his message is critical to the whole world that is finding a challenge in balancing economic growth, social development and economic sustainability. He said there can be no lasting peace without development and no sustainable development without full equity between men and women.

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## Unemployment – A Social Problem

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*[Unemployment is the macroeconomic problem that affects people most directly and severely. For most people, the loss of a job means a reduced living standard and psychological distress. It is no surprise that unemployment is a frequent topic of political debate and that politicians often claim that their proposed policies would help create jobs and more often those claims remain unrealized on the ground.]*

Economists study unemployment to identify its causes and to help improve the public policies that affect the unemployment. Some of these policies, such as job-training programs, assist people in finding employment. Others, such as unemployment insurance, alleviate some of the hardships that the unemployed face.

Still other policies affect the prevalence of unemployment inadvertently. Laws mandating a high minimum wage, for instance, are widely thought to raise unemployment among the least skilled and experienced members of the labour force. By showing the effects of various policies, economists help policy makers evaluate their options.

### **Job loss, Job finding, and Natural Rate of Unemployment**

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Natural rate of unemployment is the average rate of unemployment around which the economy fluctuates. The natural rate can be viewed as the steady-state rate of unemployment because it is the rate toward which the economy gravitates in the long run. Every day some workers lose or quit their jobs, and some unemployed workers are hired. This perpetual ebb and flow determines the fraction of the labor force that is unemployed.

### **Job search and Frictional Unemployment**

Workers have different preference and abilities, and jobs have different attributes. Furthermore, the flow of information about job candidates and job vacancies is imperfect, and the geographic mobility of workers is not instantaneous. For all these reasons, searching for an appropriate job takes time and effort, and this tends to reduce the rate of job findings. Indeed, because different jobs require different skills and pay different wages, unemployed workers may not accept the

first job offer they receive. The unemployment caused by the time it takes workers to search for a job is called frictional unemployment.

### **Public Policy and Frictional Unemployment**

Many public policies seek to decrease the natural rate of unemployment by reducing frictional unemployment. Government employment agencies disseminate information about job vacancies in order to match jobs and workers more efficiently. Publicly funded retraining programs are designed to ease the transition of workers from declining to growing industries. If these programs succeed at increasing the rate of job finding, they decrease the natural rate of unemployment.

Other government programs inadvertently increase the amount of frictional unemployment. One of these is unemployment insurance. Under this program, unemployed workers can collect a fraction of their wages for a certain period after losing their jobs.

### **Real – Wage Rigidity and Wait Unemployment**

A reason for unemployment is wage rigidity – the failure of wages to adjust until labor supply equal labor demand. The real wage adjusts to equilibrate supply and demand. Yet wages are not always flexible. Sometimes the real wage is stuck above the market – clearing level. The unemployment resulting from wage rigidity and job rationing is called wait unemployment.

### **Unions and Collective Bargaining**

A cause of wage rigidity is the monopoly power of unions. The wages of unionized workers are determined not by the equilibrium of supply and demand but by collective bargaining between union leaders and firm management. Often, the final agreement raises the wage above the equilibrium level and allows the firm to decide how many workers to employ. The result is a reduction in the number of workers hired, a lower rate of job finding, and an increase in wait unemployment.

Unions can also influence the wages paid by firms whose work forces are not unionized because the threat of unionization can keep wages above the equilibrium level. Most firms dislike unions. Unions not only raise wages but also increase the bargaining power of labor on many other issues, such as hours of employment and working conditions. A firm may choose to pay its workers high wages to keep them happy in order to discourage them from forming a union.

The unemployment caused by unions and by the threat of unionization is an instance of conflict between different groups of workers – insiders and outsiders. Those workers already employed by a firm, the insiders, typically try to keep their firm's wages high. The unemployed, the outsiders, bear part of the cost of higher wages because at a lower wage they might be hired. Those two groups inevitably have conflicting interests. The effect of any bargaining process on wages and employment depends crucially on the relative influence of each group.

### **The Duration of Unemployment**

When a person becomes unemployed, is the spell of unemployment likely to be short or long? The answer to this question is important because it indicates the reason for the unemployment and what policy response is appropriate. On the one hand, if most unemployment is short-term, one might argue that it is frictional and perhaps unavoidable.

Unemployed workers may need some time to search for the job that is best suited to their skills and tastes. On the other hand, long-term unemployment cannot easily be attributed to the time it takes to match jobs and workers: we would not expect this matching process to take many months. Long-term unemployment is more likely to be wait unemployment.

### **Transitions into and out of the labor force**

Individuals entering and leaving the labor force make unemployment statistics more difficult to interpret. On the one hand, some individuals calling themselves unemployed may not be

seriously looking for a job and perhaps should best be viewed as out of the labor force. Their “unemployment” may not represent a social problem. On the other hand, some individuals may want a job but, after an unsuccessful search, have given up looking. These discouraged workers are counted as being out of the labor force and do not show up in unemployment statistics. Even though their joblessness is unmeasured, it may nonetheless be a social problem.

Unemployment represents wasted resources. Unemployed workers have the potential to contribute to national income but are not doing so. Those searching for jobs to suit their skills are happy when the search is over, and those

waiting for jobs in firms that pay above-equilibrium wages are happy when positions open up. Unfortunately, neither frictional unemployment nor wait unemployment can be easily reduced.

The government cannot make job search instantaneous, nor can it easily bring wages closer to equilibrium levels. Zero unemployment is not a plausible goal for free-market economies. Yet public policy is not powerless in the fight to reduce unemployment. Job-training programs, the unemployment-insurance system, the minimum wage, and the laws governing collective bargaining are often topics of political debate. The policies we choose are likely to have important effects on the economy’s natural rate of unemployment.



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## Article 48A & Environmental Jurisprudence

Ketki T. Kumaiyan\*

*[While dwelling on the evolution of the notion of environmental jurisprudence in India, the author deals with various provisions in the Constitution of India, with specific emphasis on Article 48-A that was envisaged through the 42 Constitutional Amendment Act in 1976 and the case law developed thereafter through various judgments of the Supreme Court and High Courts. Ed.]*

**T**he much controversial 42nd Amendment Act inserted some new and affirmative Directive Principles in Part IV of the Constitution. These new Directives have been warmly welcomed by all the sections of the society and largely viewed as a move towards establishing a progressive polity. The four clauses that were introduced in part IV of the Constitution are as follows:

- a. **ARTICLE 39 (a):** Article 39(a) recommends that “the State shall secure that the operation of the legal system promotes justice on the basis of equal opportunity and shall in particular provide free legal aid by suitable legislation or scheme or in any other way, to
- b. **ARTICLE 39 (f):** Article 39(f) provides that children should be given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity and that children and youth should be protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment.<sup>3</sup>

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- c. ARTICLE 43(a): The participation of workers in the management was a long cherished goal. In all the socialist nations this participation is a must for improving the efficiency of the enterprise. India, being a developing country, requires workers' participation in order to increase production. The inclusion of Article 43 (a) in the constitution is a step in the right direction. Article 43(a) provides that "the state shall take steps by suitable legislation or in any other way, to secure the participation of workers in the management of under-takings, establishment or other organisations in any industry."<sup>4</sup> This would result in a sense of belonging and dedication amongst the workers which will inspire them to achieve maximum results.
- d. ARTICLE 48(a): Another promising Article inserted by way of 42nd Amendment Act is Article 48(a) which provides that "the state shall endeavor to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard the forest and wildlife in the country."<sup>5</sup> This has led to a string of cases involving environmental jurisprudence.

### **Impact of Article 48A**

One of the most welcome additions by the 42nd Amendment act was the inclusion of Article 48 A which has paved the way for environmental jurisprudence. India has made significant progress in its pursuit of environmental protection over the last decade. As an important first step, the government has officially accepted the coexistence of economic development and environmental protection. The Forty-second Amendment Act also added entries to the concurrent list. The Act inserted a new entry, "Population control and family planning", and moved "Forests" and "Protection of wild animals and birds," from the state list to the concurrent list.<sup>6</sup>

Some members of the Indian academic community believe that the Forty-second Amendment gave the Central government new powers to protect the environment, powers that the Center did not previously possess.<sup>7</sup>

Indian Constitution is amongst the few in the world that contains specific provisions of environmental protection. Taking cognizance of right to environment as a human right, many nations have adopted eco-centric approaches. In the context of human rights, right to life and liberty, pollution free air and water is guaranteed by our Constitution under Articles 21, 48-A and 51-A (g).<sup>8</sup>

While classical human rights' problems continue to be a major concern, new types of human rights problems have emerged as a result of rapid economic expansion. They include environmental pollution and exploitation of natural resources by developed countries and multinational corporations. In Japan, as early as 1967, the Basic Law for Environmental Pollution Control was passed. That law made it possible to sue private enterprises on civil grounds and also to take action in criminal law. In Japanese law, as in English Common Law, environmental pollution is called Public nuisance (Ko-gai) to give it a public character even if pollution is caused by private enterprises.<sup>9</sup>

Article 47 of the Indian Constitution provides that improvement of public health is one of the primary duties of the State. As a sequel to the decisions taken at the U.N. Conference on Human Environment held at Stockholm in 1972, 42nd Amendment Act, 1976 added Article 48-A which states, "The State shall endeavor to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard the forests and wildlife of the country."

Besides the Indian Constitution, many other nations have also read environment in their constitutions. Article 26 of the 1982 Constitution of the Chinese Republic<sup>10</sup> mentions:

1. "The State protects and improves the living ecological environment and prevents remedies pollution and other hazards to the public."
2. The State organizes and encourages afforestation and protection of forests."

Likewise Article 15 of the Constitution of Afghanistan states, "the State is obliged to adopt

necessary measures for forests and the environment” and similarly Article 27(14) of the Sri Lankan Constitution mentions “the State shall protect, preserve and improve environment for the benefit of the community.”

In India, the Directive Principles and the Fundamental Duties explicitly enunciate the national commitment to protect and improve the environment. More so environmental protection and improvement were further explicitly incorporated into the Constitution by the Constitution (Forty –Second Amendment) act of 1976. The Act clearly spelt out in the amendment to the Preamble on the concept of socialism. In the socialistic pattern of societies, the State pays more attention to the social problems than on any individual problem and pollution is one of them.

The Constitution of India makes three kinds of provisions for the protection of environment: 1) directing and enjoining the duty on the State and Central Governments to protect and improve the environment 2) imposing a duty on the citizens to protect, improve and abstain from polluting the environment and 3) giving fundamental right to live in a good environment and to move the Courts to enforce this right in case of infringement.

Thus Article 48-A and 51-A (g) have been used by the Courts against various kinds of pollutions. Accordingly whenever a problem of ecology is brought before the Court, the Court is bound to bear in mind Art 48-A. Between 1979 and early 1980s, the Supreme Court of India assumed a new judicial function of redressing common grievances under what it calls “public interest” or “social action” litigation.

Such a new assumed function under the new criterion of justice has been called Judicial Activism and has been resorted to by the High Courts as well. It has created public awareness in environmental matters and to large extent filled the lacuna of law in dealing with environmental issues due to lethargy or lagging behind of the executive or legislative action in the matter. The Judicial Activism and PIL have thus evolved a

potent weapon to develop environmental jurisprudence.

As a result the floodgate of environment related litigations have been unleashed since then. A new and radically different kind of cases altered the litigation landscape. Instead of being asked to resolve private dispute, Supreme Court and High Court Judges are now asked to deal with public grievances over flagrant human right violation by State or to vindicate the public policies embodied in statutes or constitutional provisions. This new type of judicial dispensation is called Public Interest Litigation.

In *Animal and Environment Legal Defence Fund v. Union of India*<sup>11</sup>, the Supreme Court directed the State government to take urgent steps to prevent destruction of damage to the environment, the flora and fauna and wild life in and around the sanctuaries of the National Park.

In *Sitaram Chhaparia v. State of Bihar*<sup>12</sup> where a tyre retarding plant set up in a residential area was emitting carbon dioxide gas and other obnoxious gases from its furnace, the Court observed the protection of the environment was a fundamental duty under Article 51-A of the Constitution and directed the respondents to wind up the industry.

Where large scale illegal ,unauthorized, unscientific and unsystematic mining activities were undertaken in violation of the provisions of various enactments, rules framed and notifications issued there under and orders of the Supreme Court and High Court, the High Court issued further directions to the State Government to discharge the Constitutional obligations and duties for protection of environment and to implement provisions of various enactments in this regard and to ensure that no further environmental degradation<sup>13</sup> took place.

Judicial activism in this sphere has greatly contributed towards moulding of the law in the right direction of balancing sustainable development and right to environment. To achieve this, judiciary has developed some

principles by gathering support from international environment law.

The Public Trust Doctrine enunciated in the *Spawn Motel Case*<sup>14</sup> as part of the Indian jurisprudence envisages, “the State is the trustee of all natural resources which are by nature meant for public use and enjoyment. Public at large is the beneficiary of the seashore, running waters, airs, forests and ecologically fragile lands. The State as a trustee is under a legal duty to protect the natural resources. These resources meant for public use cannot be converted into private use.”<sup>15</sup>

Precautionary Principle’s contribution is also substantial in this regard. By taking recourse to Article 48A and Article 51 A (g) in *M.V. Naidu’s* case the Supreme Court has observed, “The principle of precaution involves the anticipation of environmental harm and taking measures to avoid it or to choose the least environmentally harmful activity. It is based on scientific uncertainty. Environmental protection should not only aim at protecting health, property and economic interest but also protect the environment for its own sake...”<sup>16</sup>

In *Research Foundation Case*, it is observed by the Court, “it is part of principle of sustainable development, it provides for taking protection against specific environmental hazards by avoiding or reducing environmental risks before specific harms are experienced.”<sup>17</sup>

A logical consequence of this principle is the Polluter pay principle. This principle was upheld in *Vellore Citizen’s Welfare Forum versus Union of India*<sup>18</sup> and has been accepted as part of the land of India. Thus, in order to protect the two lakes, namely, Badkhal Lakes and Surajkund Lake in the State of Haryana from environmental degradation, it became necessary to limit the construction activity in the close vicinity of the lakes.<sup>19</sup>

Similarly in *Animal and Environment Legal Defence Fund v. Union of India*<sup>20</sup> it had been emulating the case of *Pradeep Krishen v Union*

*of India*, that the total forest cover in India is far less than the ideal minimum of one-third of total land. Thus no further shrinkage of forest cover can be allowed in India. Further it also ensured that if the reason of shrinkage is the entry of villagers and tribals living in and around the sanctuaries and the National Park in Madhya Pradesh, there can be no doubt that urgent steps must be taken to prevent the destruction of environment and the flora and fauna in those areas.

A similar effort of balancing was achieved by invoking the principles of Inter-generation equity in the matter of mining of stones that threatened survival of archaeological site in Kerala. The Kerala High Court upheld the petition for stoppage of the project and observed, “It is the duty of every citizen to protect and preserve the ancient and historic monuments for future generations. It is a basic source of study for the archaeologists and is of national importance which cannot be permitted in any way to be interfered with or affected.”<sup>21</sup>

The cases given below illustrate how the new scope of the judicial action has helped protection of environment and people from pollution.

In *Shri Sachidanand Pandey v. State of West Bengal*,<sup>22</sup> too, the Supreme Court said, “Whenever a problem of ecology was brought before the Court, the Court was bound to bear in mind Articles 48-A and 51 –A(g) of the Constitution...” Moreover, in *T. Damodhar Rao v. S.O. Municipal Corporation*, Hyderabad the Andhra Pradesh High Court pointed out that in view of Articles 48-A and 51-A (g), it is evident that the protection of environment is not only the duty of citizens, but it is also the obligation of the State and all other State organs including Courts.<sup>23</sup>

Similarly in *Ratlam Municipality v. Vardhichand*,<sup>24</sup> the residents of Ratlam Municipal area, suffering for a long time from the pungent smell from open drains approached the Magistrate for a remedy. The Magistrate ordered the Municipality to remove the drains whereupon

the Articles 48-A and 51-a (g) and Article 21, issued the directions under Section 113 of the Cr. P.C. to the Municipal council to provide proper drainage system.

Likewise in *S. Jagannath v. Union of India*<sup>25</sup> Supreme Court directed shrimp culture industry to stop operation in the ecological fragile coastal area as they were affecting environment and coastal ecology. It has been held that owing to commercial aquaculture farming, there is degradation of the mangrove ecosystems, depletion of casuarinas plantation, pollution of potable waters, reduction in fish catch and blockage of direct approach to the seashore.<sup>26</sup> The groundwater is contaminated due to seepage of impounded water from the aquaculture farms. Thus, aquaculture industry operating within coastal regulation shall be liable to compensate the affected persons on the basis of "Polluter Pays principle."

In *T.N. Godavarman Thirumalpad v. Union of India*<sup>27</sup>, a three-judge bench of the Supreme Court read Article 48-A and Article 51-A together as laying down the foundation for a jurisprudence of environmental protection and held that "Today, the State and the citizens are under a fundamental obligation to protect and improve the environment, including forests, lakes, rivers, wildlife and to have compassion for living creatures."

Reading Article 48 A with Articles 51-A (g), 14 and 21 of the Constitution<sup>28</sup>, the Supreme court had deduced the following conclusions<sup>29</sup>:

- a. It is a constitutional duty not only of the State but also of every citizen to protect and improve the environment and natural resources of the country.
- b. Though neither Article 48-A and 51-A is judicially enforceable by itself it becomes enforceable by expanding the compass of Article 21, so that in case of a failure of the forgoing duties, the Supreme Court or a High Court would entertain a petition under Articles 32 or 226, as a PIL brought by an individual

or institutions in the locality or any social action group, even by a letter addressed to the Court.

- c. In order to realise it, the Supreme Court directed establishment of primary treatment plans for resumption of their functioning, measures to ensure cleaning of city, protection of wildlife in sanctuaries and national parks, preservation and improvement of lakes, prohibition of commercial aquaculture farming, preservation of the Taj, restrictions on fishing within the National Park Area, directions to Central Government to indicate measures taken under the Environment Protection Act, 1986, directions on utilization of the Taj for a concert, directions to tackle chaotic traffic directions and vehicular pollution in Delhi. Compensation to workmen, segregation of chemical industries.
- d. The Supreme Court directed the Central Government to state all the steps taken since the insertion of this Article 48A for the protection and improvement of environment and also place before the Court its national policy to restore the quality of environment.<sup>30</sup> It has now become the duty of the Central government to direct all the educational institutions throughout India to teach at least for one hour in a week lessons relates to the protection and the improvement of the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wildlife in the first ten classes.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion it can be said that though the 42nd Amendment Act marred and scarred the Indian polity but one cannot also deny the fact that it added some progressive articles like Article 48A which brings the environment and ecology under its aegis and makes it mandatory for every citizen to protect, preserve and safeguard it unflinchingly. Undoubtedly it serves as a crucial bulwark against the large scale illegal, unauthorized, unscientific and unsystematic exploitation of both flora and fauna.

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### PERSPECTIVES ON WOMEN

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# MNREGA and Empowerment of Women

Channanarasimhappa\* & Dr G Sreeramulu\*\*

*[As regards the status of the women in tribal society, anthropologists have expressed different and opposite views. They are divided into two groups with opposite views. Some of them say that women in these societies enjoy a very high status. Others express the view that women are generally a depressed group. This divergence in views is due to the organizations of Indian tribes. One of the important determinants has been the type of society, matriarchal or patriarchal ones. The status of women is expected to be higher in matriarchal societies, than the patriarchal societies.]*

**M**ahatma Gandhi NREGA seeks to enhance the livelihood security of the households in rural areas of the country by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in every financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do un-skilled manual work.

Employment is fundamental pre-requisite to raise per capita income and eradicate household poverty. Poor employment opportunity is one of the key reasons for the endurance of poverty in India. After independence and particularly from the Fifth Five Year Plan onwards, Government of India has initiated several rural development programmes for raising rural employment for the alleviation of rural poverty. National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) is one amongst them.

The wage-employment programmes generate employment, infrastructure and social capital. Evaluation of these programmes is another very significant component to achieve the laid down objectives. Further, these wage employment programmes must be need-based and cost-effective to improve the life of rural people, especially poor families.

A few important wage employment programmes launched by the Government of India are: Food

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for Work Programme (FWP); National Rural Employment Programme (NREP); Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP); Jawahar Rojgar Yojana (JRY), and Sampurna Gramin Rojgar Yojana (SGRY) and recently launched National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) and lately renamed as Mahatma Gandhi NREGS.

The Government of India launched the Food for Work Programme in 1977. The programme aimed at providing gainful employment to the rural poor to improve their income and nutritional level. Side by side it also aimed at creation of durable community assets and strengthening rural infrastructure for higher production and ensuring better standard of living to the rural poor.

In October 1980, the FWP was replaced with National Rural Employment Programme (NREP). The NREP sought to generate additional employment, create durable assets and raise the quality of living of the rural poor. The NREP was a centrally-sponsored programme with 50:50 sharing basis between the Central and the state Government. One of the important features of the NREP was that it was implemented through Panchayati Raj Institutions.

The RLEGP which was launched in 1983, aimed at providing employment to the landless families in rural areas, who are hard pressed with poverty and hunger particularly during the lean season. It was a 100 percent centrally-sponsored scheme

funded by the Government of India. The Jawahar Rojgar Yojana (JRY) Programme was launched in 1989-90 in place of NREP.

### **Empowerment of Women**

The concept of empowerment traces its history in the mid-17th century with the legalistic meaning; to invest with authority'. Thereafter it began to be used with an infinitive in a more general way meaning "to enable or permit." Its modern use originated in the civil rights movement, which sought political empowerment for its followers. This idea of empowerment is an offshoot of the discourse on human development and it came into prominence after 1980s. Its linkage with feminist discourse went a long way in shaping the idea of women's empowerment. However, these concepts are still not clearly defined and demarcated from closely related concepts.

Empowerment has been defined as to infuse people with power (Narayana, 2002, World Development Report, 2002/2000) i.e. access to resources, as expansion in individual's agency (Kishore, 2002), as power of decision making i.e. autonomy (Jojeebboy, 1995). However, the dictionary meaning of empowerment is that "the empowerment of a person or group of people is the process of giving them power and status in a particular situation" (Collins Dictionary).

Feminist movement has extensively used this concept with hardly establishing its particular definition and parameters. A distinct vagueness and subjectivity is in-built into this concept as it goes beyond the material well-being of women, latter being only as one of the outcomes of the lengthy process of empowerment.

### **MNREGA and Women Empowerment**

In a major push for women's rights, activists called for the greater participation of women in the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), the world's largest pay-for-work programme. National Advisory Council Member Ms Aruna Roy urged policymakers to safeguard the Act. "While the

national average for women's share in MNREGA is 55 per cent, in Uttar Pradesh it remains 18 per cent, which is one of the poorest levels of participation. Unless the impact of MGNREGA is analyzed from women's standpoint their participation will continue to remain low," she said during her keynote address at the National Consultation on Women and MGNREGA organized by Gender at Work and UN Women at Yojna Bhawan.

The implementation of the Act has been mixed. Some states like Kerala and Andhra Pradesh have made considerable gains for women. Others like Uttar Pradesh are still lagging far behind, especially in the participation of Dalit women. "Seven years after the introduction of the Act, many states are still neglecting economic roles for women by failing to ensure that women get one-third of MGNREGA jobs," said Arundhati Dhuru, Consultant for Gender at Work and Uttar Pradesh Advisor to the Supreme Court Commissioner's on the Right to Food.

### **The National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme**

It is pertinent to note here that three Articles of the Constitution of India have bearing on the right to work and these are listed in the Directive Principles of State Policy. These three Articles are: (i) Article 39 calls upon the State to direct its policy towards securing for all its citizens, men and women, the right to an adequate means of livelihood. (ii) Article 41 enjoins the state to make effective provision for securing the right to work, to education and to public assistance in case of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement and in any other case of undeserved want, all within the economic capacity of the state. (iii) Article 43 directs the State to secure to all its citizens, work, living wage conditions of work ensuring a decent standard of life and full enjoyment of leisure and social and cultural opportunities.

Unemployment is a cause of poverty and generation of employment is central to eradicate poverty from rural India. The NREGS was

launched in 2004 in 200 backward districts and later on extended to all the districts in the country in 2008. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGS) (herein after referred as NREGS) which was enacted in 2005 aims to provide a minimum guaranteed wage employment of 100 days in every financial year to rural households with unemployed adult members prepared to do unskilled manual work.

The scheme is a strategic attempt to fight the conundrums of poverty and unemployment, which are intrinsically interlinked; The NREGS indirectly aims at making employment as a human right. The NREGS is now called as Mahatma Gandhi NREGS.

#### **Salient Features of the MGNREGS:**

- i) At least 100 days of employment for at least one able-bodied person in every rural household.
- ii) Minimum wages on rate prevailing in states as per Minimum Wage Act- 1948 and Centre to step in if wages go up beyond minimum or less than rupees 60.
- iii) Panchayats to finalize, approve, implement and monitor the projects. The scheme shall not permit engaging any contractor for implementation of the projects
- iv) The task under the scheme shall be performed by using manual labour and not machines.
- v) A minimum of 33 per cent reservation to be made for women, where the number of applicant is very large.
- vi) The scheme will ensure transparency and accountability at all levels of implementation; and
- vii) All accounts and records relating to the scheme shall be made available for public scrutiny.

#### **Social Audits**

- i) Gram Sabha will conduct social audits of all work done within the Panchayat.

- ii) All relevant documents of the NREGS will be provided by the Panchayat to the Gram Sabha such as work register, muster roll etc.

#### **MGNREGS in Karnataka**

The States of Karnataka and Puduchery have witnessed considerable achievements during the implementation of National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA). These achievements are linked with Ministry of Rural Development's advice to all States for ensuring wage payment to NREGA workers through Bank and Post Office accounts. So far 1.6 crore accounts have been opened across the country.

In Karnataka, considerable achievements have been made in the financial inclusion of NREGA workers. Total number of households registered under NREGA in Karnataka are 15, 65,679, the total number of Job Cards issued are 14, 79,744. The number of bank accounts opened are 11, 36,844, the total number of Post Office accounts opened are 2, 11,952.

Action has also been initiated to sign the MOU with Department of Posts and it has been decided to consider complete adoption of the post office network in Koppal from northern region and Chamarajanagar from the southern region of Karnataka.

It is to be noted that a Job Card is the basic legal document that enables the registered household to demand guaranteed employment. It has a provision for mentioning bank accounts details in the job card too. The household Job card has the name and photograph of each registered member. The Job Card and photograph are free for the applicant which will also include two photographs to be made for opening of bank account as part of NREGA programme, if required. Thus, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee act has become an instrument in empowering Tribal Women.

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# Role of Assamese Women in India's Freedom Struggle

Raja Doley\*

*[An attempt has been made in this paper to focus on the role of the women of Assam in the freedom struggle of India. In Assam women have earned the status of symbol of strength. They played vital role in the freedom movement of the country. Here we can mention the names like Chanraprova Saikiani, Pusphalata Das, Kanaklata Barua, Bhogeswari Phukanani etc., who played an exemplary role in the history of Assam.]*

The women of Assam responded to each and every phase of the freedom movement launched by Gandhiji namely, the Non-Cooperation movement (1920), the Civil Disobedience movement 1930 and the Quit India movement 1942. They propagated the message of the movement to every corner of the state. They whole heartedly undertook Gandhiji's construction programme like spinning and weaving in large scale, removal of untouchability, welfare of the women etc.

During the period of Quit India Movement in 1942, the Assamese women participated in the movement both in non-violent and revolutionary way. Gandhiji's message encouraged the womenfolk of Assam to come out of the four-walls of their houses and participate in social and political activities.

## Objectives

This paper emphasizes on the role played by Assamese Women during the freedom struggle of India. The Main objective of the paper is to bring to focus on the role of the Assamese Women in the field of revolutionary activities.

## Methodology

The methodology used in this paper is descriptive cum analytical. The study is based on secondary sources of materials and data has been collected from books, journals newspaper, articles and the Internet etc.

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## PART-II

During ancient period, the women of India played a vital role in Indian politics. In the Vedic period, women like the Lupa mudra and Gargi played an active role in the field of education and polity. During the Sultanate and Mughal periods, women like Sultana Rajiya, Maham Anaga, and Nurjahan looked after the administration of the empire. But up to the 19th Century the participation of women of the country in state policy was restricted only to the members of the Royal and Noble families.

After the battle of Plassey in 1757, the British began to explore local resources and started the expansion of private business. At the same time, the people of India tried to resist it and the first big resistance came out in the form of a revolt in 1857. But due to various factors and organizational weakness the people of India did not get success.

In 1920, Mahatma Gandhi started The Non-Cooperation Movement in the form of "Satyagraha" as an instrument to expel the British from India. The two major elements of satyagraha were truth and non-violence. At the end, The British were compelled to leave the country in 1947 and India got Independence on 15 August 1947.

During this period, like the women of other provinces in India, a large section of Assamese women participated in the movement through the Assam Chattra Sanmilon (Assam Student Association) and Assam Sahitya Sabha till the formation of the Assam Mohila Samiti (Assam

women Association) in 1926 which was a provincial women Association.

Motivated by the ideas and programmes of Gandhian Movement, large number of women joined the movement by participating in meetings, organizing processions and boycotting schools, courts, and offices under the leadership of brave patriots like Nabin Chandra Bordoloi, Kamalakanta Bhattacharya, Chandra Kumar Agarwala and Tarunram Phukan.

Some women mostly from the urban areas and belonging to the families of Congress leaders and workers came forward to take up organizational and publicity work among rural women. They were namely Chandraprova Saikiani, Nalinibala Devi, Hemanta Kumari Devi, Guneswari Devi, Girija Devi, etc. During this time, some Assamese women like Chandraprova Saikiani, Amalprova Das and Rajbala Das played leading role in the activities of such organizations as Assam Association, Rayat Sabha, Chattra Sanmilan. In fact, Gandhian non-cooperation movement brought about a revolutionary change in the life of Assamese women in making the beginning of political awakening among them.

The promotion of spinning and weaving was one of the major constructive programmes of the Non-Cooperation movement. In this regard, the achievement of the Assamese women was remarkable. Almost all the women of Assam, irrespective of their caste, creed, and status, were efficient in spinning and weaving. The Assamese women actively participated in fund collection for the Congress and in campaign of Harijan welfare scheme, introduction of khadi, and in removal of untouchability.

The Assamese women made notable contribution to India's freedom struggle after the formation of the Assam Mahila Samiti (AMS-a provincial women Association) in 1926. Durgaprova Bora was the first president and Chandraprova Saikiani was the first secretary of the Assam Mahila Samiti. The first session of the AMS was held at Goalpara.

The important programmes of the AMS were to prevent opium consumption, removal of untouchability, following Gandhi's constructive programme, work for the development of women education, setting up of cottage industry, welfare of mother and children. The AMS also played a leading role in popularising Hindi in Assam. The 5th convention of AMS was held in 1945 at Guwahati and at this convention the existing name of the samiti was changed to Asom Pradeshik Mahila Samiti.

Gandhiji started the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1930. In March 1930, along with 78 followers, he walked 240 miles, starting from Sabarmati Ashram and reached Dandi, a place on the western sea coast. He violated the salt laws by picking up salt lying on the beach. Like in other parts of the country, women in Assam organized picketing in front of the shops dealing in liquor, opium and foreign goods. A large number of women under the AMS came out to participate in the movement.

The movement created great enthusiasm in Assam and in support of this movement public meetings, observation of bandh, boycott of foreign goods and violation of forest Act were held in different parts of Assam. The women of Kaliabor came out in a procession under the leadership of Guneswari Devi and Mohini Gohain. The participants were lathi-charged by the police on their arrival at Nowgong. Women volunteers participating in a picketing in front of the Cotton College at Guwahati were not arrested by the police for the fear that situation might go beyond their control.

In May 1930, in protest against the Cunningham circular, the AMS secretary Chandraprova Saikiani called upon the student community to start a united fight against the British rule. In protest against the first Round Table Conference, public meetings and picketing were organized by the AMS under the leadership of Guneswari Devi, Darika Kachari and Chandraprova Saikiani in Nowgong.

The Rayat Sabhas were very important organizations in Assam. The members of these sabhas were greatly successful in instilling the spirit of nationalism among the masses. Significantly, women in large numbers also participated in these Rayat Sabhas. On 8 April 1930, a Rayat Sabha was held in Noduar under the leadership of Guneswari Devi in which more than five hundred women participated and another on 14 July 1931, under the leadership of Chandraprova saikiani.

Similar meetings were held at Goalpara Mangaldoi, Dibrugarh, Lakhimpur, Jorhat, Sibsagar, Golaghat with a view to strengthen women's power in the ongoing freedom struggle. The leaders of the AMS appealed to the people of Assam to engage themselves in spinning and weaving and explained to them that by such simple works important contribution could be made to the movement.

During the Quit India Movement in 1942, the women of Assam acknowledged Gandhiji's concept of 'Do or Die' in their way. The Assamese women fighters of Nowgong were Guneswari Devi, Joymoti Saikia, Maisena Saikia, Kamaleswari Bhuyan. On 18 September 1942, at Brahampur area, Bhogeswari Phukanani was shot dead by a British police officer. In North Lakhimpur, Hemeswari Phukan, Sumala Handique Buddeswari Hazarika played important role during this period. Leea Neogoni succumbed to injuries sustained during the police lathi-charge when she joined a procession on 7 October 1942.

Most of the Assamese women generally participated in the movement on Gandhian non-violent line. But some of them being disappointed with the Gandhian methods became involved in underground and extremist activities.

In Nowgong, underground worker Mahendra Hazarika organized an Mrittu Bahini and a large number of women became members of the Mrittu Bahini. Under this Mrittu Bahini, Damayanti

Bora engaged herself in the destruction of bridges and in setting government building on fire. Women like Anamai Bora, Punimai Saikia and Dagali Bora served at night for the security of underground male counterparts.

In the Sibsagar district, Aikan Bhuyan of Mudoijan near Teok led in setting fire to the Anguri High School. Ratnabala Phukan, a female member of death squad, not only took part in the destruction of bridge and the burning down of Government buildings but also allowed her house to be used as a centre of underground activities. Another woman, Budheswari Hazarika took an active part in sinking cargo boats carrying military supplies through the Brahmaputra River.

The members of Mrittu Bahini hoisted the National Flag at police station following non-violent means. The police opened fire on the peaceful processions at Gohpur and Dhekiajuli. Kanaklata Barua, Khahuli Devi and Kamuli Devi died of bullet injuries on the spot and many others were badly injured.

The role played by Assamese women in the freedom struggle is a story of devotion and patriotism. Assamese women participated in all activities associated with the freedom struggle. A large number of female activists were seriously injured while facing the police and military bullets.

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# Interface between Agriculture & Globalization in Theni (Tamil Nadu)

Mrs. S. Velanganni\* Dr.D.J Selvi Anitha\*\* & Mrs M. Akins Barween\*\*\*

*[As Mahatma Gandhi stated, Indian agriculture is carried out by rural farming communities. Farming community includes owner cultivator, based-land cultivator and workers. Their role in agriculture is not merely meeting their requirements or carrying out agricultural activities for their livelihood, they provide food for ever growing population and support the government through supplying raw materials to the industries. Thus, agriculture-based industries have increased manifold. Agriculture sector contributes to the nation in the form of GDP. It provides employment opportunity to the rural poor.]*

India is one of the major agricultural countries with more than 67 per cent of the population depending on it. Indian agriculture is depended on monsoon which is not uniform throughout the years. Nearly three-fourth of the cultivable land in India is dependent on monsoon, which contributes nearly 42 per cent of the total production of agriculture.

The production of agriculture is determined by number of variables like fertility of the soil, quality of the seed, size of level holding, amount of fertilizers and pesticides used and proper irrigation. Indian agriculture sector has its own historical background. Green revolution has changed the pattern of cropping and method of cultivation through modern applications and introducing HYV seeds and chemicals fertilizers. It has a land mark in the history of Indian agriculture.

Here comes difference of opinions about Green Revolution that it is highly capital-oriented and has eroded many agriculturalists from the field. It is also mentioned by many experts that it has been the favor for few states and few crops in India. Small and marginal farmers have also been affected severely.

The liberalized economic policy of India promoted global and capital farming system through economic integration popularly known as globalization. As a process of it, WTO has brought agriculture sector into WTO agreement in 1995. This liberalized trade policy promoted agriculture trade than production. It reflected in the growth of agriculture sector of all areas, especially the rural farming community. In no way agriculture in Theni district of Tamil Nadu could escape from the impact of globalization.

## Agriculture in Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu is the southernmost state in the Indian sub-continent. The nearest states of Tamil Nadu are Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka on the North and Kerala on the West. Tamil Nadu with an estimated area of 1,20,058 sq.km ranks eleventh among the states of India in size and constitutes 4 percent of the land area of the country. The state can be divided into two broad natural regions- the coastal plains and hilly western area. The major rivers flowing through Tamil Nadu are the Cauvery, Vaigai and the Tamaraparani.

## Density of population in Tamil Nadu and in India 1991-2001(in Sq.km)

State	Year 1991	Year 2001
Tamil Nadu	429	478
India	267	324

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Source : Census of India 2001(paper 1 of 201)

### Cropping Pattern

Paddy is the dominant crop accounting for 33 percent gross cropped area. Groundnut, sugarcane and cotton are important commercial crops. Jowar, Bajra and Pulses are important food grain crops. These seven crops account for about 73 per cent of gross cropped area, while 42% other crops are each cultivated in small areas. Rice being the staple food of the people of Tamil Nadu and its dominant share in the crop mix had remained steady when supply of water in Cauvery was delayed.

Area of Jowar (cholan) cultivation has come down from 7.74 lakh hectares in 1960-61 to less than 4 lakh hectares in 1999-2000. Area under Bajra (cumbu) has fallen from 4.89 lakh hectare to 1.58 lakh hectare during the same period. Area under pulses expanded from 4.27 lakh hectares to 6.93 lakh hectares between 1960-61 and 1999-2000. Area under sugarcane increased from just 0.82 lakh before in 1960-61 to 3.116 lakh hectare in 1999-2000.

Gross cropped area has been reduced to 10 percent (73.20 lakh hectare to 65.17 lakh hectare). This has to be paid more attention because the population, depending upon agriculture, has increased from 95 lakh in 1971 to 144 lakh in 1991.

### Agriculture and women labor force in India

The following table shows that globalization has created migration among rural communities, including farming groups. Rural to rural migration and feminization in agriculture is high in India. According to 2001 census, the women agriculture laborers in India were 46.9 of the total workforce. The same is given for four states which are having high women labor rate even today.

States	Percentage
Andhra Pradesh	53.5
Karnataka	58.2

Maharashtra	56.3
Tamil Nadu	50.1

The important reasons for feminization in agriculture are: responsibility of household provision, general attitude towards them, they are low paid workers and gender inequality. Today, most of the plantation works are carried out with the help of machines. Large farmers have been using agriculture machineries and implements in production activities which eroded laborers to some extent.

Since the traditional crops like paddy, wheat are water intensive, they changed their cropping pattern from traditional crop to cash crops. Marketing cash crops becomes much easier than traditional crops. So the cropping pattern has also been changed in Theni district.

### Profile of the study area- Theni district

Theni is one of the southern districts in Tamil Nadu. It was separated from its parent district Madurai in July 1996. There were three taluks namely Uthamapalayam, Periyakulam and Andipatti in Madurai before the bifurcation of Theni district. Theni municipal town was upgraded as new taluk and one more taluk was created called Bodinayakannur after bifurcation. Now there are five taluks, eight blocks and two revenue divisions in Theni.

Theni district is situated in between latitude 9030 and 10030 and longitude 77000 and 78000 with an area of 3242.30 Sq. Km. It is an inland district. It is encompassed on the west by Kerala state, on the east by Madurai District, on the north by Dindugal District, and on the South partly by Kerala and Viruthunagar.

Theni is an agrarian area and accounts for 67 per cent of its population depending on it. Vaigaidam, Manjalarudam, sothuparai dam, kumbakkarai falls and Suruli falls are all important tourist places in the district. It is a commercial town. There is a famous Hindu temple called Gowmariamman, which is situated in Veerapandi, a village of Theni District. This

district celebrates interstate festival on chithra pournami day every year. Saneeswara Bhagavanb temple at kuchanur is also another famous Hindu temple of this district.

#### Demographic profile of Theni district

Period	Region	Population	Percentage variation with the Pre-vious census
1981-1991	Total	1049323	
	Rural	703748	
	Urban	345575	
1991-2001	Total	1093950	+4.25
	Rural	502109	-28.66
	Urban	591841	+71.76
2001-2011	Total	1245899	
	Rural	575418	
	Urban	670481	

Source: *Statistical handbook of Theni district* (2008-2009)

#### Agriculture Population of Theni District

Year	Cultivators	Agriculture laborers
2001	50,436	245989
2011	36,371	2,75,585

This table shows that, there was a movement from the cultivators between 2001 census to 2011 census. Cultivators' number has started declining from 50,436 to 36,371. At the same time, the number of agriculture laborers has increased from 2,45989 to 2,75,585. High capital intensive farming system has made the small and marginal farmers to shift their work from agriculture and sell their land too.

#### Rank of Theni, Distinct in terms of agriculture development of Tamil Nadu during 1990-1991 to 2006-2007

Component of composite index	Crop area variables	Irrigation	Live stock	Fisheries	Fertilizer	Cultivators laborers	Over all rank
1990-1991	2	9	28	-	-	17	6
1995-1996	10	14	20	17	2	18	8
2000-2001	13	19	17	17	3	5	15
2005-2006	18	18	27	15	5	15	17

Source: *State Agricultural Plan* (2005-2006)

It has been observed from the above table that, except livestock and fisheries, all other variables have shown negative development and the overall development also mixed from 6th to 17th rank over the 15 years.

#### Consumption of chemical fertilizers & pesticides

One of the important yield determinants is fertilizer. Since from the mid-1967, the usage of chemical fertilizers has increased in India which helped the farmers to take more yield. It reduced the consumption of organic manure. Fertilizers are subsidized and supplied through regulated markets, dealers and private traders (agriculture traders).

Year	Nitro gen (N)	Phosphate (p2 65)	Pottasic K2O)	Total (NPK)	Dust (tonsmt)	Liquid (lt)	Area in tonns
2006-2007	9982.0	5928.4	591108	218232	1206.0	56997.0	13770.0
2008-2009	10477	6767	5943	23187	215	18190	1496
2012-2013	6230	2696	1652	10578	13	23500	

Source: *Statistical handbook of Theni* (2006-2007), (2008-2009), (2012-2013)

### Production In Million Tonns

Year	Total food crops	Total Non food crops
1996-1997	84999	42610
1997-1998	89335	42020
1998-1999	87022	40205
1999-2000	85797	39164
2000-2001	85672	37590
2001-2002	81807	37253
2002-2003	83658	32734
2003-2004	82589	32225
2004-2005	86614	34244
2005-2006	87570	32501
2006-2007	87553	27159
2007-2008	87491	32436

Source: *Compendium Agricultural Statistics 1950-51 to 2007-2008*

### Farm Mechanization/Farm Equipments

Particulars	1994 census (Nos.)
1) Plough	
a) Woodenb)	79750
b) Iron	75835
Total	1,55,585

2) Water Pumps for Irrigation purpose 48732

3) Tractors

a) Government	131
b) Private	2001
Total	2132

### 4) Sugarcane Crushers

a) Worked by Power	23
b) Worked by Bullocks	30
Total	53

### 5) Oil Ghanis

a) 5 Kg and above	65
b) Less than 5Kg	135
Total	200

Source: *Statistical Hand Book* (2005-2006)

### Farm Mechanization/Farm Equipments

Particulars	2004 census (Nos.)
1) Plough	
a) Wooden	2378
b) Iron	1811
Total	4189

### 2) Water Pumps for Irrigation purpose

a) Worked by Oil Engine	1403
b) Worked by Electric Power	6244
Total	7647

### 3) Tractors

a) Government	
b) Private	980
Total	980

#### 4) Sugarcane Crushers

a) Worked by Power	27
b) Worked by Bullocks	197
Total	224

#### 5) Oil Ghanis

a) 5 Kg and above	
b) Less than 5Kg	64
Total	64

As far as an agriculture implement is concerned, there is a shift from traditional wooden equipments to modern equipments. Number of sugarcane crushes increased. Farmers are aware of agricultural implements and they are given subsidy for the implements. Demonstration classes are also conducted by the agriculture department. During the informal discussion with the farmers toward the agriculture activities, it has been observed that for the past ten years applications of agriculture technology and implements have been popularized among the farmers and even small and marginal farmers are jointly hiring machine for their operations and the amount has been shared by them.

#### Land Utilization Pattern (in hectares)

Year	Total Geographical	Net Areas Sown
1996-97	2,88,923	1,17,276
1997-98	2,88,923	1,19,946
1998-99	2,88,923	1,17,194
1999-2000	5,88,923	1,13,238
2000-01	2,88,923	1,12,142
2001-02	2,88,923	1,08,626
2002-03	2,88,923	1,07,613
2003-04	3,24,230	1,08,142
2004-05	3,24,230	1,12,053
2005-06	3,24,230	1,11,599

2006-07	3,24,230	1,12,895
2007-08	3,24,230	1,12,405
2008-09	3,24,230	1,15,403
2012-13	3,24,230	1,06,77,500

Source: *Compendium Agricultural Statistics, 1950-51 to 2007-2008*

#### Conclusion

Though agriculture is the primary sector in India, globalization has changed its method of cultivation, production and sales. The foundation of agriculture has totally changed today. Foundation includes seed saving on their own, self-sowing and autonomy in planting. At the same time, it depends on the government for crop loan, insurance, seeds, fertilizers, power, irrigation and marketing. State support to agriculture has been reduced.

Arun Jaitley, Union Finance Minister has said recently that agriculture sector needs higher investments in rural infrastructure and agriculture. He said that this sector was plagued by a series of handicaps like inadequate irrigation, high indebtedness and climate change.

Natural calamities, climate change and inevitable mechanization and globalization are closely associated with the farmer community. Large farmers can save themselves in the process of globalization. But small and marginal farmers and agricultural laborers cannot survive unless government extends its support to them and labor-centric approach on all farming activities is not adopted soon.

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# Dairy and Livestock Growth in Theni (Tamil Nadu)

A.Kalaivani\*

[Livestock sector plays a vital role in the food and economic security of India's rural population. Livestock provides employment to many people and nearly 70% of them are women. There is wide variation in agro-climatic condition, biodiversity, and socio-economic and cultural background of the people. Some of other problems confronting the rural people, inter alia, include: high cost of feed, low procurement cost, increasing day-to-day expenses, low medical facility, insufficient income, marketing and technology and environmental situation.]

Animal husbandry and agriculture are synergistically involved and are the important source of income and employment in rural areas. Among them, dairying provides security to farmers, especially when agriculture fails. Dairy farming is essential to millions of poor households across the country not only as a source of income but also as a major source of protein, supplementary nutrition, fertilizer, fuel and a store of wealth.

During early days, farmers reared indigenous or native breeds of cattle which had low production capacity. To improve the milk production and productivity of dairy animals, Central and State Government took initiatives through implementation of various dairy development programmes over the years. Hence in this paper an attempt has been made to analyse the strength, weakness, opportunities and threats of the dairy and livestock sector to develop a strategic plan.

## Data and Methodology

The data for the study was collected from primary and secondary sources like *Economic Survey of India* (various issues), Policy note on Animal Husbandry in Tamil Nadu (various issues) and the *Statistical Hand Book of Tamil Nadu*. The collected data were subjected to conventional analysis in the form of percentages.

## Characteristic Life Cycle of Cow

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There are many success stories experienced in the field by farmers and many development agencies in providing efficient breeding services, organizing healthcare, organizing milk collection and processing, reaching with efficient services in remote areas, organizing livestock owners in small groups for self-help to rear dairy cattle, small ruminants, poultry and developing community pasture lands, which can be easily replicated by incorporating in various government schemes and by farmers organizations.

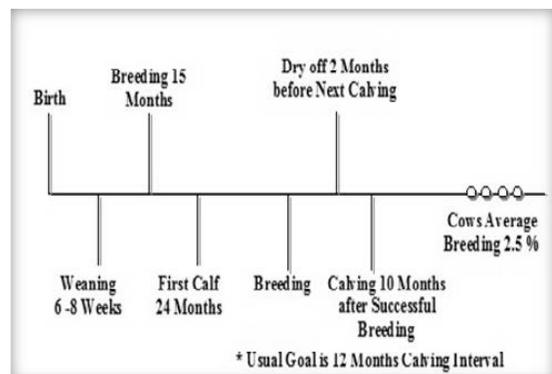


Fig. 1: Diagrammatical View of Life Cycle of Cow

## Diseases Made for Livestock

Table 1 shows the disease incidence in calves in these dairy farms which reveals that the most common and frequent occurring disease in calves was diarrhea which was reported by 70% of the dairy farms. Followed by Ectoparasite (66.67%), Endoparasite (63.33%), Navel ill (50%) and pneumonia in calves (20%).

Table – I

**Diseases Caused By Livestock**

Sl. No.	Disease	Small n=20	Medium n=20	Large n=20	Total n=60	Rank
1.	Diarrhea	12 (60%)	20 (100.0)	10 (50)	42 (70)	I
2.	Endoparasite Infestation	16 (60%)	10 (50.0)	12 (60)	38 (63.33)	III
3.	Ectoparasite Infestation	14 (70%)	16 (80.0)	10 (50)	40 (66.67)	II
4.	Navel ill	11 (55%)	9 (45)	10 (50)	30 (50)	IV
5	Pneumonia	-	4 (20)	8 (40)	12 (20)	V

Source: Primary Data

Besides these diseases, calves were also suffering with other disease like skin diseases eye infection, lameness, wounds, fever, hygroma, and weak and debilitated.

**Treatment of Calves**

The calf healthcare practices in the commercial dairy farms are very poor, especially after birth, which includes various aspects, naval cave and colostrums feeding timely de-worming, proper milk feeding, proper and timely treatment and appropriate housing. To minimize the avoidable loss due to the mastitis, planners, should take suitable step to remove the constraints identified, conducting more number of awareness programmes through mass media in prime time, conducting more number of livestock rearing and disease control training programmes at the village level and organizing more intensive veterinary camps may save the animals from mastitis thereby helping poor farmers.

**Clinical Bovine Mastitis Control Constraints**

High treatment costs, storage of labour, difficulty in funding, prevalence of poor environmental sanitation, difficulty in accessing veterinary services, low productivity of animals, low household income, lack of medicine, chemicals and equipments to control mastitis etc are the major constraints in controlling clinical bovine mastitis. The first mobile veterinary dispensary was flagged off by late Dr. Rajendra Prasad, then

the President of India way back in 1950 and since then Amul has come a long way in the management of animal husbandry by introducing the best mast practices and the services are provided 24-hours all the days.

Experiencing the best medical service provided to the cattle, a women in a village of Anand made a remark that it was better to take birth here as buffalo rather than human as they are looked after better than human.

**Livestock Sub-Centers**

Sub-centers, manned by livestock inspectors, provide first-aid to ailing animals; besides, carrying out artificial services, which are also utilized for vaccination and de-worming under the technical guidance of veterinary assistant surgeons. With the establishment of 50 new sub-centers during 2012-2013, a total of 950 sub-centers are functioning throughout the state. During 2012-2013, a total of 5 lakh livestock have been provided first aid by these sub-centers.

**Infrastructure Facilities in the Theni District**

Divisions	-2
Polyclinics	-Nil
Clinician's centers	-Nil
Veterinary Hospital	-3
Veterinary Dispensaries	-43
Mobile Unit	-1
Sub-Centers	-54

**Farmers' Training Centre in Theni**

Farmers' Trainings Centre in Theni has been functioning at No: 37, Sriram Nagar, Allinagaram, Theni - 625 531, since 2003 to disseminate modern innovations and technologies in the field of animal husbandry to the farmers, field veterinarians and officers of line departments in Theni district.

The Centre caters to the needs of the livestock and poultry farmers like training, free

consultancy, setting up new farms, offering project reports, etc.

### **Livestock in Rural Economy**

In an agro-based developing country like India, natural resources provide basic livelihood support to rural people. Our rural families are dependent on land, water, livestock and forests for generating employment and for earning their livelihood. Among the livestock, cattle and buffaloes play a significant role, because of their contribution to human nutrition (milk and butter fat), plant nutrition (farmyard manure) and energy (bullock power).

Cattle and buffaloes are maintained by all sections of the community and unlike other natural resources, they are well distributed among small and large land holders. Unfortunately, a majority of them are low productive, nondescript and lack adequate feed resources and health cover to enhance the milk yield.

India possesses a good number of recognized breeds of cattle, which represent less than 15% of the total cattle population. These are classified into milch breeds, draft and dual purpose breeds. Our milch breeds such as Gir, Tharparkar, Red Sindhi and Sahiwal were also popular in other countries, but their major drawback was reproductive inefficiency. Moreover, the bullocks of these breeds were very heavy and slow. Similarly, the cows of draft breed could not produce adequate milk to even feed their calves. Hence, these elite breeds were also neglected by the farmers. There was no scope for selection by culling due to sentimental values attached to cattle.

Over the last few decades, Indian farmers have been letting their animals out in the forests and community pastures for free grazing. Most of these animals maintained by both rich and poor farmers have been receiving vaccinations and veterinary services free of cost from the Government. Thus, the farmers have an incentive to expand their herd size without any financial burden, while seriously threatening the

environment and ecosystem. An analysis of dairy farming sector in Tamil Nadu has the following criterion:

#### **A. Strengths**

- Urbanization, burgeoning population and change in food habits which leads to increased consumption of milk
- Good network of A.H. Department
- Change in the Government thinking and policies which favour livestock sector
- Proven technologies
- Regular source of income

#### **B. Weakness**

- Lower productivity of Animals
- Administered price
- Frequent disease outbreaks
- Weak Extension network
- Unscientific practices
- Small and scattered herds

#### **C. Opportunities**

- Higher population of poor breeding, anestrus, unproductive cows and buffaloes
- Existing scenario of prolonged inter-calving and dry period for cows and buffaloes in field conditions
- Missed heat in cows and buffaloes
- Increased demand for milk
- Dairy food processing
- Rich animal bio-diversity

#### **D. Threats**

- Negative consequences in cross breeding programme
- Socio-cultural and psychological inhibitions
- Dwindling fodder resources

- Employment shift from farming to non-farming sector
- Labour shortage and high wage rate in dairy farming

### **E. Security**

- It is eco-friendly and does not cause environmental pollution as compared to other industries.
- Requirement of skilled labour is relatively less.
- Dairy product market is active round the year.
- Minimum investment on inventory.
- Entire establishment can be shifted to a new location
- One can insure animals.
- Less energy requirement.
- Decomposed slurry of such plant can also be effectively used as organic manure.

### **Problems of Technology Adaptation**

**Poor Rate of Conception:** Chilled semen sent from the collection centres in the morning reached the AI Centres late due to poor transport facilities, while a majority of the farmers brought their cows for AI in the morning. Unsatisfactory transportation and storage facilities resulted in deterioration of semen quality thereby causing poor rate of conception.

**Poor Quality Germplasm:** The technique of using liquid semen demanded a large number of bulls for semen collection thereby compromising on their genetic merits. In the absence of performance recording of cows, it was impossible to select the bulls of desired merit in large numbers.

**Inadequate Feed Resources and Healthcare:** Most of the farmers owning livestock do not have adequate fodder and feed resources to nurture their animals. As a result, the animals are not able to exhibit their genetic potentials.

Inadequate healthcare further affected the production capabilities.

**Lack of Motivation:** For a long time, most of the rural people were unaware of the merits of AI technology and the advantages of crossbreeding, while others who were aware about this programme had lost trust in the technology due to repeated failures. Even today, there is skepticism about crossbreeding, in spite of its proven benefits.

**Poor Marketing Outlet:** In the absence of effective marketing network, farmers had no opportunity to sell the surplus milk. Hence, farmers had no interest in availing the breeding services. In interior areas, where milk collection was not possible, farmers stopped feeding their animals.

### **Strategy for Future Development**

**Wider Replication:** With significant success of cattle development over the last 35 years, BAIF is planning to expand the cattle development programme both in terms of volume and quality. The expansion of cattle development programme can be ensured through promotion of para-vets and self-employed youth to provide livestock breeding services, at cost. Establishment of Dairy Farmer's Associations at the block level covering the farmers under a centre is also in progress. Collection of service fees from the farmers can ensure the sustainability of the programme, without any subsidy from outside donors or the Government, after an initial support for 5-7 years.

**Reducing the cost of Production:** Farmers in India need to bring down the cost of milk production in order to compete with other countries in milk sector under the WTO agreement. Naturally, this can increase their profit margins as well. Thus, the future challenge needs to be addressed through enhancement of milk yield, production of clean milk and reduction in the cost of milk production. Hence, supplementary extension services have been introduced to improve the feeding, healthcare and

management practice. Regular health monitoring through disease investigation, timely vaccinations and supplementary feeding of minerals and vitamins can reduce the age at calving, calving intervals and enhance the milk yield.

**Clean Milk Production:** With the free international trade agreement, Indian dairy industry will be subjected to severe competition from the developed countries, while providing new opportunities for export. However, to avail of these opportunities, clean milk production has to be ensured. Presently, the milk collected by most of the dairies does not meet the international quality tests due to high bacteria count. This can be avoided by orienting the dairy farmers to adopt simple hygienic practices. Clean washing of udder before milking, disinfestations of teats after milking, use of clean containers for storing milk and immediate delivery of milk to the chilling center minimize the bacterial count in milk. Intensive awareness and extension campaigns are needed to promote clean milk production.

**Decentralised Milk Processing:** Presently, the milk is collected at the village level cooperatives and sent to large size dairies located in cities through Taluka and district level federations. Most of the dairies, which are engaged in distribution of pasteurized milk, are not able to handle the surplus milk, particularly during the winter season. As a result, milk collection in many regions is suspended once or twice a week during the peak season causing huge losses to dairy farmers. Hence, there is a need to develop an alternate system to process milk on small scale as well as to produce a wide range of traditional Indian dairy products. Development of low fat, low calorie dairy products may develop a new market, which can afford to pay a premium for healthy food.

**Research for Sustainability:** For competing with the developing world and to enhance the profit margins of dairy farmers, there is a need to improve the milk yields and cost of production

through advanced research studies. Among them, genetic improvement deserves priority. This can provide an opportunity for introducing germplasm of superior quality and higher milk yields, and also conserve precious native Zebu breeds.

While the elite farmers are keen to enhance the milk yields through import of elite germplasm, the resource-poor farmers may prefer native breeds, if serious efforts are made to select superior sires for breeding. Advanced techniques of embryo sexing and freezing are essential to conserve the native breeds as well.

Marking of genes for disease resistance, heat tolerance and other positive traits such as high protein and fat in milk, udder characters, body confirmation and strength for draft power is another important field of research, proposed to be pursued in due course. Genetic improvement in this direction can further promote economic and eco-friendly dairy husbandry.

### **Conclusion**

Conducting more number of awareness programmers through mass media in prime time, conducting more number of livestock rearing and disease-control training programmes at the village level and organizing more intensive veterinary campus may save the animals from mastitis thereby helping poor farmers. Price policy model should be developed and procurement price of milk should provide the dairy farmers remunerative price. Supplementation of mineral mixture and fodder development would help the dairy animals to utilize their genetic potential to their optimum level and thereby increase the milk production and hence dairy farmers should be made aware about various dairy development programmes.

Mineral Mixture and Feed Unit may be established by the Government for improving the supply of good quality feed and mineral mixture on optimum price. Fodder seed bank has to be established at regional and village level for uninterrupted supply of fodder seeds /seedlings. Drought resistant and high yielding fodder may

be popularized. Grazing land may be improved and protected to help landless livestock farmers.

Balanced feeding alone could bring about an increase of 30 per cent in milk production. Provision of necessary infra structural facilities would provide the necessary impetus for the dairy farmers to pursue value addition and dairy processing activities and thereby increase their income by several times.

Creation of manpower is the necessary vital link for the success of any development programme and hence revamping the veterinary delivery system in the state is highly essential. Incentives may be given for progressive dairy farmers. Alternative techniques are also useful for processing milk in remote areas, which are located far away from the consumers. Hygienic and energy efficient methods of producing local dairy products may prove attractive and economically viable in such areas.

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# Representation of Dalit Women in Local Rural Bodies

Dr. Jayanta Kumar Dab\*

[Democracy has come to acquire an unquestionable value premise in modern times. The growth of modern means of communication has given new vent to the operation of democracy. People's aspirations have more avenues to reach the floor of public sphere. However, the success of democracy lies not only in its horizontal spread across different sections of society at the same level but also in its vertical spread across the lower levels of society. That is why the democratic decentralization is viewed as the major element in strengthening the democracy at the grassroots level.]

The notion of democratic decentralization involves an effective devolution of political powers at the lower rung of political structures through democratic process. The democratic decentralization is also known as grassroots level democracy or local self-government. It may assume different forms in different democratic political systems but its basic purpose remains the same e.g. strengthening democracy at grassroots level.

The institutions of democratic decentralization or local self-government are the most viable mechanism to ensure the participation of people particularly marginalized sections of society who are called 'Dalit' in the democratic process.

We all know that India has two distinct sets of rural bodies—one for rural areas known as *panchayats* or *panchayati* Raj Institutions (PRIs); and other for urban areas known as *Nagarpalikas* or Municipalities. The local bodies in both urban and rural areas have been invested with more financial and administrative powers under the new Constitutional and legal measures enunciated since 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> amendment (1992) to the Indian Constitution.

PRIs are considered as the third tier of democratic structure in India. They are also referred to as the institutions of grassroots level democracy or the mechanism of democratic decentralization. It can be said that the PRIs

cannot achieve their goals, if nearly half of the rural population particularly women is deprived of an effective and meaningful participation in the functioning of these institutions.

Accordingly, the 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitution Amendment, 1992, *inter alia*, provided reservation of one-third seats in favour of women in *panchayats* at all levels. The women belonging to marginalized sections such as Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) communities (Marginalized Women) who are called 'Dalit', have been given parallel reservation within this category in proportion to their population in respective Indian states.

This Constitutional measure has been viewed as an important step towards women empowerment as well as social transformation in rural India. The announcement of National Policy on Women Empowerment by the Government of India in 2001 is also a general step in that direction.

Statistically speaking, under the new provisions, there are 585 District *Panchayats*, 6612 middle level *Panchayats* and 240335 village level *Panchayats* functioning in rural areas in India. Out of 28.1 million elected *Panchayats* representatives in India, women representatives are 10.3 million. Out of these women representatives, about 22.5 per cent members belong to marginalized sections. However, their number is not evenly distributed across different provinces.

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In fact, the number of marginalized women representatives depends on the proportion of marginalized population in different states. In last 20 years some states in India have increased the representation to 50 per cent of total members. The present paper is concerned with the representation of marginalized women in local bodies in rural areas in India.

## SECTION -1

### **Socio – Cultural Constraints and Marginalized Sections of Women Representatives in Local Bodies**

It has come to light that the powers and roles assigned to the marginalized sections of women in these bodies have not been effective due to a number of factors. In fact, marginalized women suffer from the double jeopardy: *first* being women as such and *second* being women belonging to marginalized sections of society. This not only denies them the benefits of Constitutional measures but goes against the basic tenets of social equity.

The empowerment of women through PRIs in India is a gradual and complicated process. It takes place within a given political, economic and socio-cultural environment. The legal and Constitutional provisions are merely enabling measures, whose success or failure is contingent upon the nature of prevailing environment. This is more so because the process of empowerment involves substantial changes in the persisting social structure as well as underlying value patterns.

Our experience of women representation in local bodies in last 20 years in rural areas displays diverse patterns across different states of the country within the same Constitutional framework. In this context a few studies conducted across different states in India about the impact of operation of PRIs on women suggests mixed outcomes.

A study by Nirmala Buch of three Indian States (U P, Madhya Pradesh & Rajasthan) suggests that the level of participation of women in *Panchayati*

Raj bodies is quite high. They have responded to mobilization and have taken keen interest in issues such as food, water, work, violence etc.

Another study by B. K. Chandrasekhar found that the empowerment process in U. P. has certainly brought about a marked change in the knowledge, attitude, status, style of life, and self- identity of elected women. It has given them chance to understand and talk about politics and power.

The study of Karnataka state carried out by Vijaylakshmi reveals that the elected women representatives often face considerable opposition in discharging their duties from their male relatives as well as from other vested and dominant interests. There are numerous examples where elected women faced abuse and violence and in some cases have been murdered.

However, the process of marginalization of women has been historically embedded in a socio-cultural context. There are strong institutional, ideological and normative bases, stemming out of the primordial interpretation of different social arrangements like caste, ethnicity, race, gender, patriarchy, religion and so on. This interpretation provides legitimacy to the process of marginalization.

Again, the ongoing processes of socialization, education, politicization etc. contribute to the marginalization of women in society. The notion of empowerment essentially involves the idea of marginalization. As there are various areas of marginalization of women, so are the various dimensions of empowerment of women in a society. In conventional parlance, the marginalization of women is a complex and long process of relegating them to the lower or outer edge of the society. It effectively pushes them to the margin of society following the parameters of exclusion and inclusion – economically, politically, culturally and socially which are discussed as follows:

***Economic Marginalization:*** The process of economic marginalization of women means denying them equal access to productive resources, avenues for the realization of their

productive human potential, and opportunities for their full capacity utilization. The economic marginalization pushes them to the state of rampant poverty, misery, devaluation or no evaluation of their work, low wage or wage discrimination, casualisation in the workforce and livelihood insecurity.

**Political Marginalization:** The process of political marginalization denies them equal access to formal power structure and participation in decision making process leading to their subordination to and dependency on dominant groups. Politically women are either under-represented or disempowered.

**Cultural Marginalization:** Cultural marginalization means the exclusion of women from the mainstream of the society, becoming the 'part society or part culture', 'outsider for within', alienated and disintegrated. Thus, women get a stigmatized cultural existence, an ascribed low status and become the victim of cultural segregation.

**Social Marginalization:** It means ignorance, illiteracy, lack of education and health facilities and low status in family and society.

## SECTION - II

### **Hampering the Empowerment and Effective Role of Marginalized Women in PRIs: Major Factors**

The socio – cultural context hampering the empowerment of marginalized women in general and their effective role in PRIs consists of a few broad sets of factors such as follows :

**Gender Syndrome:** It consists of all those social, cultural and religious beliefs, structures and institutions which militate against the effective role of women representatives in the PRIs. Gender issues generally pertain to the qualitative and interdependent character of the position of men and women in society. Gender division is rooted in the condition of production and reproduction and is reinforced by the cultural, religious and ideological bases prevailing in the

society. The concept of gender distinguishes the biological – sexual differences between men and women from the culturally determined differences between them or the roles assigned to or undertaken by them in the society.

**Caste Syndrome:** The Indian society is socially divided into four broad social groups called caste groups which are organized in to a social hierarchy. The four social groups in terms of descending social hierarchy are: *Brahmins*, *Kahatriyas*, *Vaishyas* and *Shudras*. The lower caste groups face many social discriminations and disabilities, though not sanctioned by law but sustained and upheld by old customs and traditions.

The marginalized women belong to the last caste group. The women of marginalized sections (those belonging to lower social hierarchy) face double jeopardy : *first* as women placed at the secondary position in comparison to men as elaborated above; and *second* as persons belonging to the lower strata or caste group in society. The caste position of marginalized women acts as a barrier in effective performance of their responsibilities in local bodies. Men and women of these marginalized communities have suffered many deprivations and discriminations for ages.

Though new Constitutional and legal measures based on justice and equality, spread of education and better economic opportunities and mobility have made dent on their marginalization, bringing them into the mainstream remains a challenging task. Dalit women face a triple burden of caste, class and gender in which they sum up the plight of Dalit women, highlighting the fact that they are a distinct social group and cannot be masked under the general categories of women or Dalit. Dalit women suffered unimaginable oppression, not only through caste, but gender too, from which there was no escape.

**Other Factors:** Besides these two sets of factors inherent in the socio-cultural context, there are some other factors also which impede the effective role of marginalized women in PRIs.

These factors are: a) elitist and non-cooperative attitude of local bureaucracy; b) political apathy and lack of will among political leadership; c) undue political interference by state leaders and ministers; d) lack of financial and administrative autonomy in local bodies; e) lack of awareness and training among women representatives of local bodies; and f) lack of organization and collective action by women representatives.

A Study about the problems of marginalized *Panchayat* members in Tamil Nadu and Gujarat states notes that the government officials were often complicit in reinforcing dominant caste male power by adopting the role of neutral facilitator regarding Dalit women's political participations; that is, they failed to intervene when witnessing proxy representation and discrimination, or pleaded lack of power to take action.

It is in this socio-cultural context that the radical measure of giving representation of women of marginalized communities was initiated and implemented. However, due to the above factors, these measures have produced mixed gradual improvement amidst notable impediments.

The mixed results of the interaction between the process of empowerment and the prevailing socio-cultural context indicate a pattern where both confront, change, adapt and yet continue to persist in the changing environment. In this interaction the cultural tradition is more enduring because of its deep roots and religious sanctions, the attributes which the process of empowerment is deprived of.

### SECTION – III

#### The way Out

The representation of marginalized women in local bodies is essentially a potential measure for their political empowerment. The notion of empowerment is a holistic idea, which has political, social and economic dimensions, which reinforce each other. The theoretical aspects of the process of empowerment of marginalized sections of women may be understood with the

help of 'Women Empowerment Framework', which was first propounded by Sara Longwe (1995) and later adopted and popularized by various scholars and institutions including UNESCO.

This framework involves five levels of women empowerment process in succeeding order like welfare measures, access to resources, conscientisation, mobilization and control. Each successive stage engages with the core elements of the prevailing socio-cultural patterns and emerges out in hybrid shape. The nature of the rural social structure, cultural orientations, family values and norms come in close and sharp interaction with the process of women empowerment.

The two core components of the empowerment-capacity building and control have the potential to transform women from the '*object of development*' to the '*decisive agents of development*'. Now the need is to perceive empowerment not as a means of development but an end in itself as it has the potential to deepen the democracy by transforming the prevailing power structure. As we de-hyphenate empowerment and development and move towards new paradigm of empowerment and democracy, the socio-cultural context is bound to emerge in transformative mode.

The Human Development Report (2003) of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has devised the Gender Empowerment Measure, which is a composite measure of women inequality. It identifies three core elements of women empowerment like political participation and decision-making; economic participation and decision-making; and power over economic resources. The empowerment is the most radical component of the Gender and Development approach which was inspired and highlighted by the feminists of Third World or Global South like Bina Agrawal, Srilatha Batliwala, Vandana Shiva, Maria Mies etc.

About the significance of the idea of the women empowerment for the developing countries,

Srilatha Batliwala (2011) writes: “It is a more political and transformatory idea for struggles that challenged not only patriarchy, but the mediating structures of class, race, ethnicity and, in India, caste and religion, which determine the nature of women’s position and condition in developing society.”

The empowerment is a socio -political process and its critical operating element is power. It has the potential to closely engage and confront the prevailing socio-cultural context as it entails shifts in political, social, and economic power between and across both individuals and groups.

On the basis of the above analysis, the five core elements involved in the process of empowerment of marginalized women may be identified are as follows :

- i. The right, ability and opportunity to women to access the information and knowledge affecting their interests and position in society. This also involves appropriate training and awareness among women of marginalized section, which is relevant to their role in PRIs.
- ii. The opportunities and abilities of marginalized women for inclusion and participation in the social, economic and political process of the community.
- iii. Strengthening administrative and legal mechanisms to ensure that the legal and constitutional protections and rights granted to marginalized women are effectively implemented at various levels. The National Commission for Women needs to be given more powers as well as Constitutional status.
- iv. A sound system of accountability inherent in the public and social institutions towards the rights and opportunities of women representatives.
- v. Development of local organized capacity of women and subsequent networking with wider social movement to create a climate of pressure on power.

## Conclusion

The above core elements need to be embedded into a coherent and comprehensive strategy to strengthen the position of marginalized women representatives in local bodies. The women stakeholders also need to be involved in the effective implementation of this strategy. Though, the position of local bodies has been substantially improved with the passing of new constitutional measures in 1992, these bodies still need to be given more powers and autonomy in terms of three Fs-Functions, Functionaries and Funds. The strength of local bodies will be gradually transferred to its representatives particularly its women representatives.

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## Assam-Nagaland Border Dispute: Need for a New Framework

Ms. N. Nyejat Konyak\*

*[History is a contested space for political narrations, and no single country can lay undisputed claims over the narratives of past happening. Assam-Nagaland border dispute falls under a similar realm of contested history. Despite the 16-point talks between Assam and Nagaland on the 'contentious boundary issue', both states have till date failed to come to agreeing terms on the issue of resolving border dispute. In fact, it has become vexed and seemingly insoluble.]*

In consequence violent clashes between the border villagers of Jorhat, Golaghat, Sivasagar districts on the one hand and Nagaland on the other has become a frequent phenomenon. It is true that sporadic clashes had occurred since 1945 when Naga Hills was a district of composite Assam, but the first major clash took place on January 5, 1979 at Chungajan in Golaghat district that continues to retain significance to the tumultuous relationship between Assam and Nagaland.

The 'uncertain' or 'ambiguous' reasons that led to the 1979 conflict have hitherto troubled policymakers of both States accused the other of aggression guided by imperialistic ambitions.

While Assam accused Nagaland of unwarranted incursion and of illegally occupying their 'Land', Nagaland claimed to have acted in hereditary right and counter charge Assam itself originally belong to Nagas "Ancestral Land".

The common refrain of the argument from the Naga side has been that large tracts of forest which were the "ancestral land" of the Nagas was transferred to different districts of Assam where the reserved forest and tea estates were set up by the British. This major incident was followed by infamous Merapani full blown war, the unique quixotic distinction of the states' police forces fighting each other in 1985, involving both civilians and state police on both sides following

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which the Centre had intervened and deployed BSF personnel to maintain peace.

In view of the serious boundary dispute between the two States, the Centre even set up a committee under the chairmanship of Sri. KV Sundaram, former Adviser to the Union Home Ministry, and it was hoped that the committee's recommendations would receive acceptance of both Dispur and Kohima and the dispute resolved, but the latter did not accept the Sundaram findings as these went against the Nagaland Government's claim. However, periodical discussions at the Chief Minister level were expected to bring the dispute to a satisfactory settlement, but that expectation has failed.

The night of 12 August 2014 witnessed the clash between Assam-Nagaland border over questions of intrusion into each other's territory by tea tribes and Tai Ahoms from Assam, and the Lotha Nagas and armed militia from Nagaland. The next day, All Adivasi Students Association of Assam (AASAA) blocked the crucial National Highway 39 connecting Nagaland to Assam and shut down Golaghat.

Both sides attacked each other, burning down homes in villages. These border conflicts got amplified due to the fact that the Assam-Nagaland border is disputed since 1963 after Nagaland was formed as a separate state, and has been declared a Disturbed Area Belt (DAB).

Within this framework, scholars writings on Assam-Nagaland border conflicts can be categorized into two schools of thought-one that blames Assam for the conflict, and the other blames Nagaland, Scholars supporting Nagaland's claim characteristics 1979 conflicts, primarily, as a result of Assam aggression. Others factor on the failure of political leadership to strengthen the conflicts.

On the other hand, scholars supporting Assam's claims reject all of Nagaland's allegations and accuse Nagas of behaving in a violent manner. Underlying both states' claims was the assertion of legitimacy on the border issue. As an alternative and more appropriated paradigm to analyse the issue of boundary dispute by Hollis

and Smith, 'Holistic approach' that takes various systematic and external forces into consideration; for instance, inter-state alliances, balance of power and threats from States other than involved in a direct disputes.

The present Assam-Naga border dispute which has already claimed hundreds of lives appears as yet another vexed and contentious leftover of colonial rule, which for its own administrative convenience, drew and redrew boundaries which in most cases were inherited by the administration when the British left.

According to Nagaland, the boundary between the two states should be fixed according to the notification of 1867, while the Assam maintains that the Notification of 1925 (on the basis of which the bills for the creation of the State of Nagaland was moved in parliament) should be the final basis of settlement. Both the chief ministers have in their latest statements reiterated this position. Later on both the states had rejected recommendations of all previous panels.

Such boundary disputes can never be solved by murder and mayhem. With both the state governments lacking the political leader will need to work out a solution of the vexed issue, it is quite possible that certain elements may try to push their confrontationist agenda by exploiting the strong feeling that have been evoked by the border violence.

In the absence of serious attempts by the two state governments to resolve the issue, it is for civil society organization to try to work out a solution by doing mutual give-and-take in the interest of inter-state peace and good neighbours. For, as neighbours, Assam and Nagaland cannot live without each other and the entire future economic progress of the region depends on their common effort and cooperation.

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# Malnutrition among children in Kerala

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**N**utrition may be defined as the science of food and its relationship to health. It is concerned primarily with the part played by nutrients in body growth, development and maintenance (WHO, 1971). Therefore, it is quite evident that a balanced nutritious diet is required for proper functioning of the body. Protein Energy Malnutrition (PEM) and growth retardation are probably the most widespread health and nutritional problems of the developing countries including India (Mehta, 2000).

Malnutrition contributes to between 3.5-5.0 million annual deaths of children under-five years of age. UNICEF estimates that there are nearly 195 million children suffering from malnutrition across the globe. Malnutrition, therefore, is technically a category of disease that includes under-nutrition, obesity and micronutrient deficiency due to improper and inadequate dietary habits.

Agencies like WHO, UNICEF and United Nations World Food Programme have recommended community management of severe acute malnutrition with ready-to-use therapeutic foods. Severe PEM often associated with

infection contributes to high incidences of child morbidity among underprivileged communities in West Bengal. The state shows a striking contrast between rural and urban health infrastructure.

The initiatives of the Government to improve health conditions in various aspects have proved to be inadequate. In 1975, the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) was first implemented. It is a major programme to tackle malnutrition and the ill-health of mothers and children which followed the adoption of a National Policy for Children.

## Kerala – the level of expectation

A comparison between Indian states of Kerala and Punjab on the one hand and Senegal and Mauritania on the other hand, can be analyzed to get depiction of the real picture. Kerala has vital statistics approaching those in the developed countries and Punjab is the country's breadbasket and dairy. Senegal and Mauritania are among the better off countries in SSA with per-capita income in Senegal being close to the average of India.

## Comparing the States of Kerala and Punjab to Senegal

Indicator	Kerala	Punjab	Senegal	Mauritania
Life Expectancy	74	69	62	58
Infant Mortality per 1,000 live births	12	38	51	74
Under-five mortality per 1,000 live births*	16	52	93	117
Maternal Mortality per 100,000 live births (2009)	95	192	410	550
Percent children below 5 stunted (2000-09)	25.0	37.0	20.0	24.2
Percent children below 5 underweight (2000-09)	23.0	25.0	15.0	16.7

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\* From NFHS-3 for Kerala and Punjab. All other data from WHO, World Health Statistics (2011).

## **Convention on Rights of the Child, 1990**

The legal framework concerning the rights of children is embodied in the Convention on Rights of the Child, 1990, which is the most heavily ratified treaty in the world. Needless to say the CRC has also been ratified by the Government of India and thereby binds the Government of India. It would be important to understand the issue of childhood malnutrition from the point of view of the basic principles underlying the Convention, as the issue of malnutrition centrally involves the very core of the CRC.

The Committee on Rights of the Child has identified four general principles, which are referred to as the 'soul of the treaty'. These four articles are essential to understanding the spirit of the Convention as they set out the overarching principles that guide the interpretation of all other provisions. These are in Article 2, (non discrimination), Article 3 (best interest), Article 12 (right to participate) and Article 6 (right to life)

### **Article 6 (Right to life)**

Article 6 mandates that *every child has the inherent right to life*. Article 6(2) mandates that *States Parties shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child*. It is submitted that the question of survival and development of children are seriously impacted by childhood malnutrition.

The effects of chronic malnutrition on children below the age of five are irreversible. The lifelong implications are in terms of physical development as well as mental development, measured by a child's intellectual quotient (IQ).

As such, the seriousness of childhood malnutrition as an issue of child rights is that it affects the very right to survival of the child as well as the physiological and psychological development of the child.

### **Article 2 (non-discrimination)**

Article 2 mandates that *State parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic*

*or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status*

### **Article 12 (right to participation)**

Under Article 12, the child has the right to *express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child*.

### **Article 3 (Best Interest Principle)**

This is seen by the Committee on the Rights of the Child and various other commentators as a key provision, which guides the interpretation of the other articles in the Convention itself. The principle reads, *in all actions concerning children...the best interest of the child shall be a primary consideration*.

### **Constitution of India**

These international commitments of the Indian state are reflected in the Indian Constitution itself. The Constitution of India shows great solicitude towards the rights of children below the age of six years. There is constitutional cognizance taken of the vital importance of early childhood care.

Article 45 – provides for early childhood care and education to children below the age of six years and mandates that the State shall endeavour to provide early childhood care and education for all such children.

Article 39(f) provides that children are given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity and that childhood and youth are protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment.

The fact that the right to life under Article 21 has been read widely has now been established in a plethora of Supreme Court decisions. The Supreme Court has read the Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles in a complementary manner, reading in the Principles into the Rights.<sup>1</sup> Chandrachud C.J. in *Minerva Mills v. Union of India*<sup>2</sup>, observed that, "*fundamental rights are not an end in themselves but are the means to an end*". It was further observed that the Fundamental Rights and the Directive Principles "*constitute the core of commitment to social revolution and they together are the conscience of the Constitution*."

## Malnutrition in Kerala

According to the National Family Health Survey India - 3 (NFHS – 3), in regard to Kerala:

- 56.1% children aged between 6-35 months are anemic
- 32.7 % ever-married women aged between 15-49 are anemic
- 33.8% pregnant women aged between 15-49 are anemic.
- Infant mortality is estimated at 15 deaths before the age of one year per 1,000 live births
- Under-five mortality is 16 deaths per 1,000.
- Prenatal mortality, which includes stillbirths and very early infant deaths (in the first week of life), is estimated at 11 deaths per 1,000 pregnancies that lasted 7 months or more.
- Prenatal mortality in rural areas, at 15, is much higher than the rate in urban areas.

As per the Audit Report (General and Social Sector) for the year ending 21 March 2013, the percentage of malnourished children below the age of six years in the State ranged between 27 and 39. Test check of records in Idukki, Malappuram, Palakkad and Thiruvananthapuram districts indicated that 110 out of 1180 children who died during 2011-12, were severely malnourished. Further, at the end of March 2012, the number of severely malnourished children in Palakkad was 4,633 (where only 3% of 1.37 lakh children were weighed).

### Prevalence of malnutrition at national level

In India, as in most of Africa, where no notable decline in child stunting took place over the 1990s, the rate of decline over the 2001-15 period must be very high in view of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to be realized. For this to occur, large reductions in poverty through equitable and high income growth are necessary (Svedberg, 2006). India has a higher level of PEM than most parts of the world, including sub-Saharan Africa. Over 75 percent of pre-school children suffer from iron deficiency anemia, and 57 percent have subclinical Vitamin A deficiency (ICDS Report, 2006).

Iodine deficiency is endemic in India. The prevalence of different micronutrient deficiencies varies widely

across states. According to National Family Health Survey-III (NFHS-III, 2005-06) conducted by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, India has 48 per cent stunted, 20 per cent wasted and 43 per cent underweight children below five years of age. The size of child population in the age group (0-6 year age group) is declining with decline in the share of children to total population; the share of girls in 0-6 years is declining faster than that of boys of 0-6 years.

### Importance of mother's milk to a child

Breast milk is vital to a child in the early years of life, but it is insufficient. During the first six months of life an infant requires only the mother's milk for survival and to fight against diseases. After 4-6 months, it must be supplemented by solid foods rich in high quality protein, essential fats and carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals are introduced in the diet of the infant. Mother's milk is, therefore, extremely important for the baby as it helps to develop the immune system in the infant. It has a profound impact on the physical development of the child. It creates a psychological and emotional attachment between the mother and the baby.

### Causes of malnutrition

Malnutrition has been known to be a major health and nutrition problem in India with a high prevalence among the pre-school children. It accounts for 46 per cent death among children below five years of age. The causes of malnutrition can be briefly stated below:

**Poverty:** People from low-income groups cannot afford to procure proper quality and quantity of food to meet their nutritional requirements. This deprivation adversely affects their capacity for physical work resulting in low earning and poverty. Malnutrition is thus related to the vicious cycle of poverty.

**Early pregnancy:** Early teenage pregnancies are dangerous not only for the health of the mother but also for the neonate. Chances of maternal and neonatal mortality and pregnancy related complications are high in case a girl conceives before her body attains physical maturity.

**Low birth weight:** Malnourishment during pregnancy culminates into high incidences of low

weight (<2.5 kg) during birth. Such infants are vulnerable to face growth retardation due to poor body nutritional reserve. The mothers may also show poor lactation performance.

**Infection and diseases:** Diseases such as diarrhoea, pneumonia, measles, malaria and tuberculosis precipitate into acute malnutrition and aggravate the existing nutritional deficit. Metabolic demands for protein are higher during infections.

**Poor breast-feeding practices:** In absence of breast-feeding a child becomes susceptible to malnutrition. Artificial feeding often proves to be disastrous for the baby because of the poor quality of the substitute milk, excessive dilution and use of unhygienic feeding bottles and nipples.

**Other causes:** Repeated pregnancies, improper birth spacing, social taboos and separation of a child from parents often results into malnutrition among children. Malnutrition is the result of a complex interplay of interacting and related factors in the individual, family and community. Improper and unbalanced dietary intake and diseases are the immediate determinants of various signs and symptoms of malnutrition. It increases the susceptibility and severity of infections among children.

A number of other factors such as environmental, agricultural, and cultural including various other factors have contributive effects resulting in malnutrition. Therefore it is widely recognized that a multi-sectoral approach is necessary to tackle the problem of malnutrition.

### Conclusion

Malnourished and undernourished children have lower chances of survival than well-nourished ones. These children have more susceptibility to childhood illnesses such as diarrhoea, measles, malaria, pneumonia etc. Proper and balanced nutrition is important to ensure proper brain formation and development which starts when a child is in the mother's womb. Nutritional deficiencies can adversely affect a child's Intelligence Quotient (IQ). It results in increased risk of chronic diseases, low weight and height at later stages. It makes a child prone to a number of chronic cardiovascular and diabetic diseases.

PEM and iron deficiency anaemia are the common causes of nutritional dwarfism. In gross nutritional deficit, the weight gain is slow and the muscles are wasted. Children are the most innocent members of the society. It has been aptly observed: "The child is a soul with a being, a nature and capacities of its own, who must be helped to find them, to grow in their maturity, into fullness of physical and vital energy and the utmost breadth and height".

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