

Editorial

Drug Abuse

Drug abuse not only causes immense human distress but also is an important factor leading to crimes and violence all over the globe. Drug abuse and trafficking has become so rampant that almost every part of the globe is seemingly affected it. It is stark reality that a sizeable number of drug addicts throughout the world are in a miserable plight. The world statistics on the drugs/substance abuse present an appalling picture. Broad estimates show that that about 190 million people throughout the globe are involved in the abuse of one substance or other. According to World Health Organization (WHO) estimates, by the year 2020 mental and substance use disorders will surpass all physical diseases as a major cause of disability worldwide. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) World Drug Report, 2013 estimates that between 167 -315 million people aged 15–64 used illicit drugs at least once in the past year. Around 2 lakh people continue to die every single year due to illicit drugs.

Recent surveys and studies present a very grim situation with reference to substance use in India. Some evidence suggests that there is an increasing use of illicit drugs and reported numbers point to over 3 million drug addicts in India. However, the World Health Organization does note that there is significant difficulty in estimating drug usage and addiction rates in the country due to poor bureaucratic processes and census reporting. Cannabis, heroin, opium, hashish and Indian-produced pharmaceutical drugs are the most commonly used drugs in India. According to some experts, cannabis products, often called charas, bhang, or ganja, are abused throughout the country because it has attained some amount of religious sanctity because of its association with some Hindu deities. Drug addiction is a major problem for many families, communities and law enforcement. Massive numbers of addicts are left to be treated by the families as financial costs, available services and lack of appropriate care challenge the country. This is not only the case for drug addicts.

The incidence of drug abuse among children and adolescents is higher than the general population. This is notably because youth is a time for experimentation and identity forming. In developed countries drug abuse among youth is generally associated with particular youth subcultures and lifestyles. This causes an acceptance by members of the subcultures of drugs and their use. In Asia figures of drug abuse are hard to find but after cannabis, Amphetamine-type Stimulants (ATS) are the most commonly uses amongst children and youth. There have been various studies carried out in the region regarding drug abuse. A 1996 study of eight cities in seven provinces of China showed that over a half of heroin abusers are below 25 years of age. A school survey conducted in 1999 among students aged 12 to 21 years, in Vientiane, reported 4.8 per cent lifetime abuse for ATS. The menace of drugs and alcohol has entrenched itself deep into the fabric of our society. As its effects reach towards the youth, India's future generation will have to compete with drugs like cannabis, alcohol and tobacco. More youngsters in India are currently struggling with addiction than ever before. Peer pressure, adolescent immaturity and irresponsible parenting are major factors that are luring children towards addiction and a life of suffering and regret.

The problem of drug addiction in India has assumed serious proportions for want of sensitization programmes about drug abuse in schools or for children out of school. Besides, there is no effective drug abuse policy in the country. There is also a high incidence of charging children under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985. There is absence of adequate health centers that can deal with child drug abuse problems, especially in the rural areas. Apart from calling upon the government to share its part of the responsibility in ridding the country from the growing menace of drug abuse, the people at the community level also need to promote healthy lifestyles, promoting social interaction between old and young, inculcating amongst the youth respect for cultural traditions of the community, encouraging development of positive alternatives with cultural values and cooperating with voluntary organizations engaged in the rehabilitation of drug addicts. Let's make India a drug-free society.

— BK

India-Bangladesh Relations

Dr. Anilkumar B Halu* Dr. Suhasini B**

[Bangladesh is an important neighbour of India and improved relations between the two countries are essential for the overall security, peace and stability of South Asia. New government that has assumed power in New Delhi has done well in according priority to improving relation with the neighbouring countries. The resolution of outstanding bilateral issues in an amicable manner holds key to mutual deepening of friendly relations. Ed.]

The two-day official visit on 25-26 June 2014 to Bangladesh by India's foreign minister Sushma Swaraj comes at a crucial juncture for both countries and it is expected to put forward a series of proposals to reshape the relations. The visit marks the first substantive engagement between the new NDA government in New Delhi and Dhaka. The decision to invite all SAARC leaders for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's swearing-in ceremony at New Delhi sent out positive signals to India's neighbourhood. Foreign Minister Swaraj's Bangladesh visit can prove instrumental in building on this and pave the way for transformed ties with India's vital eastern neighbour.

India's relations with Bangladesh have witnessed significant forward movement since 2007 which registered further momentum after Awami League was voted to power in December 2008 elections in Dhaka. Both the countries have signed MoU containing 51 issues of mutual concerns and commitment of the two neighbours to address them. While the bilateral relations received a setback when the Teesta agreement could not be signed and as a result Dhaka could not provide must anticipated transit to the North Eastern states through Bangladesh.

Any further improvement in India-Bangladesh relationship from the present status quo is closely

* Assistant Professor & H.O.D. Post Graduate Studies Center, Department of Political Science, Government College Gulbarga.

** Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Government College Gulbarga.

linked to the amicable settlement of some core unresolved issues ranging from ratification of land boundary agreement (LBA) to water sharing and introduction of liberal visa regime.

Land Boundary Agreement (LBA)

In view of the prevailing differences between India and Bangladesh over the modus operandi of the land border agreement (LBA), it could be concluded. Initially a census of people staying in these enclaves could not be held due to opposition from Dhaka. Subsequently, in July 2011, the Joint Boundary Working Group held joint census in 4 districts in Bangladesh and 2 districts in India where these 162 enclaves are located. After the Joint Survey on Adversely Possessed Lands and a Joint Headcount in the enclaves strip map was signed, resolving the 6.1 kilometer of disputed border.¹

The land boundary agreement between India and Bangladesh was signed in Dhaka in September 2011, but it could not be implemented for want of its ratification by the Indian Parliament in order to exchange adversely held enclaves occupied by both countries. There are a total of 162 enclaves to be swapped, of which 111 Indian enclaves are located in Bangladesh and 51 Bangladeshi enclaves in India amounting to a combined land area of 24,259 acres, according to a joint study carried out by the India and Bangladesh governments in April, 1997. After the exchange of these enclaves, over 52,000 people will get rights and privileges as citizens with the

improvement of human rights record on the Indian side.²

BJP, which initially was supportive of the Land Boundary Agreement and defended it as being in national interest later refused to back it keeping election in mind. However, now since it is in power it needs to take a pragmatic view keeping India's security need in mind. The BJP-led NDA government should get this LBA ratified by the Indian Parliament and should push Dhaka to open the 4-km Tetulia corridor — which can reduce the distance between India's northeast and the rest of the country by more than 85 km — as a quid pro quo for formalising the boundary accord. A well-defined and regulated border with Bangladesh is in India's interest.

Teesta river water treaty

Water sharing issue has long been a thorn in Indo-Bangla relations with India unilaterally slashing water supply from the upstream or putting a control over 50 out of 54 international rivers flowing through India to Bangladesh. In 2011, during the visit of Manmohan Singh to Bangladesh, the two countries were about to strike a major Teesta water sharing deal, when at the last moment West Bengal Chief Minister Ms. Mamta Bannerjee refused to support the treaty on flimsy grounds, leading to a loss of face for the Indian government, and political setback for Sheikh Hasina and her government.³

The Teesta issue has raised another important question as to how far can states interfere with foreign policy regarding a neighboring country.

Improvement of trade infrastructure

Five Indian states have common borders with Bangladesh, something which can be made into a win-win situation through connectivity and trade. Of course, there will be opposition from different interest groups for different reasons. These must be overcome in due course but two major ones need immediate attention. There's significant room for

improvement of trade infrastructure. The multi-purpose integrated check post, inaugurated in Agartala in 2013, needs to be replicated at several sites along the border to facilitate better movement of goods and people. Meanwhile, road connectivity needs to be boosted by completing pending projects such as the new Dawki bridge in Meghalaya.

Bangladesh is beginning to emerge as the center form where connectivity could spread both towards the west (India, Nepal, Bhutan) and to East (Land route through Myanmar ending in Vietnam's Ports).⁴

Liberalized visa regime

During the 2014 Lok Sabha election campaign, BJP's Prime Ministerial candidate Narendra Modi created a political uproar by saying that all illegal immigrants from Bangladesh will be sent back to their country of origin. Reacting to these remarks, Bangladesh warned that the 'illegal immigrant row' if not handled amicably could affect Dhaka's ties with New Delhi.

Bangladesh Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed said in Dhaka on 5 May 2014 that there were no illegal immigrants from Bangladesh in India and cautioned that any hasty steps taken by the new government would hit bilateral ties. Meanwhile, Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) leader Shamsher M Chowdhury also reacted by saying, "This is nothing but sheer politicking by BJP."⁵

It is worth mentioning here that in the last week of January 2013, India and Bangladesh had signed two extradite criminals and terrorists and liberalise the visa regime. The visa agreement provides for a friendlier visa regime for Bangladeshis. Businessmen will be given a five-year, multiple-entry visa. Those travelling on medical grounds will get a two-year, multiple-entry visa, which can be extended for one more year. Three attendants of a patient will also be entitled to visa. Until now, India has been granting Bangladeshi tourists visas for up to six months and has allowed one person to accompany a patient.⁶

The new NDA government can push for a comprehensive work visa programme, which should address Bangladesh's economic needs and tackle the illegal migration problem affecting India.

Economic Relations

The economic relations between India and Bangladesh have been multifaceted, embracing trade transactions, credit arrangements, joint ventures, transit facilities and transport development. These relations have continued and expanded even in situations of adverse political relations. This is mainly because of the operation of objective factors like geographical proximity, common language, similarity of consumption pattern, common development needs and experience, and commonality of the inherited infrastructure.

Two-way trade between India and Bangladesh stood at USD 6.6 billion in 2013-14 with India's exports at USD 6.1 billion and imports from Bangladesh at USD 462 million. This represents more than double the value of USD 2.7 billion five years ago. However, the trade imbalance in favor of India and decline in Bangladesh exports to India are of concern. Some experts feel that skewed trade could be redressed with greater investment participation of Indian companies in Bangladesh.

Indian investments in Bangladesh stood at a cumulative USD 2.5 billion in 2013 and have been surging in the last three years. According to Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Bangladesh and India offer natural markets for each other's exports and have advantages of reduced transaction costs and quicker delivery due to geographical proximity and common language.

Some potential sectors for investment in Bangladesh are electrical machinery and equipment, vegetable/roots and tubers, agro processing, automobiles, textiles (including home textile), organic chemicals, and light engineering. In the services sector, ICT, pharmaceuticals, hospital and medical equipment, tourism, professional services, etc. offer good

opportunities. Major Indian exports to Bangladesh include Cotton, Sugar, Cereals, Vehicles and accessories etc., and major Indian imports from Bangladesh include textile fibres, paper yarn, fish, apparel, mineral fuels, salt, cement, etc.

In order to provide further boost to economic relations between India and Bangladesh, the CII has made some suggestions, which inter alia include: alleviation of infrastructure bottlenecks related to power, ports, energy, and telecommunication; improving the investment climate by developing single window clearance for new business proposals; repatriation of profits, setting an Industrial Park for India in Bangladesh outside EPZ with all the needed infrastructure facilities; upgrading the tax holiday system and improved transport connectivity.⁷

Conclusion

Bangladesh is a significant neighbor and India's enhanced cooperation with Bangladesh is vital for realizing the aims of New Delhi's Look East policy. In the recent past, a friendly regime in Dhaka allowed the previous UPA government to make some headway in this direction. Now India and Bangladesh relations are needed to be put on the fast track. There is need to establish political, economic and energy connectivity between the two countries to augment their bilateral relations. BJP, which was opposed to some of the issues earlier, may see them on a new perspective given Prime Minister Modi's thrust on consolidating India regional policy and the linkage it provides to India's economic development and security which remains a priority if India is to emerge as a global player.

Closer economic ties benefit both New Delhi and Dhaka and have an overall stabilising effect on the political relations between them. On the other hand, economic relations are influenced by the climate of political relations. Owing to the asymmetric size and strength of the two countries, political relations cast a deeper shadow on economic ties than would be the case other-wise. Nurul Islam, eminent

Bangladeshi economist and the first Deputy Chairman of the Bangladesh Planning Commission, has put it very succinctly: “Indo-Bangladesh relations are, therefore, likely to hold out greater prospects if they are anchored within the broader framework of political and strategic relationship.”⁸

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China's New Maritime Silk Road Strategy

Alok Kumar Gupta*

[China's Maritime Silk Route during Tang Dynasty period was a major channel of communication, through which ancient China made contacts with the outside world. Since then it had often been discussed in history of China and the world as an ancient system of inter-state communication and channels of trade and commerce. This also was suggestive of an open economy and globalization of trade and commerce. However, with the recent moves of reviving the old route for furthering the economic interests of the participant countries has given indications of evolution of a new kind of geo-political strategic game-plan of China in the Indian Ocean and its vicinity.]

Though, China is trying to act smart by advocating only the economic interest and luring the countries on the charted route to join the proposed project as it would add means and value to their economy. This is being evolved on the pretext of exploring the unique values and ideas of the ancient Silk Route and to achieve common development and common prosperity of all countries in the region.

This development has evoked enormous interests among policy makers and scholars alike. Kenya, Germany, Sri Lanka and Malaysia have already advocated the positive side of the effect and have expressed their willingness to join. Is it pure geo-economics or China is trying to redefine and redesign the geo-political chessboard of the region to limit United States as pivot to Asia-Pacific?

The Origin

The idea of the Maritime Silk Road (MSR) was outlined during LI Keqiang's speech at the 16th ASEAN-China summit in Brunei, and President Xi Jinping's speech in the Indonesian Parliament in October 2013. The Chinese leaders underlined the need to re-establish the centuries-old seaway into a 21st century MSR, while celebrating the 10th anniversary of ASEAN-China strategic partnership.

It envisages connectivity with Southeast Asia, South Asia, West Asia and even Africa by building a

network of port-cities along the erstwhile silk route as Maritime Silk Road (MSR). This will link the economic hinterland of China which aspires to improve its geo-strategic position in the world. The main emphasis is being placed on stronger economic cooperation, closer cooperation on joint infrastructure projects, the enhancement of security cooperation, and strengthening maritime economy, environment technical and scientific cooperation.

China Security Journal was quoted as saying that the priority of the initiative was 'port construction' and 'free trade zones' in the Indian Ocean and with this China hopes to coordinate customs, quality supervision, e-commerce and other agencies to facilitate the scheme.

The Proposed Road

The Xinhua News Agency has released the map of the proposed project which runs as follows: It is divided into two parts as "New Silk Road" and "New Maritime Silk Road" also known as Silk Road Economic Belt. According to the map, the land-based "New Silk Road" will begin in Xi'an in central China before stretching west through Lanzhou (Gansu province), Urumqi (Xinjiang), and Khorgas (Xinjiang), which is near the border with Kazakhstan. The Silk Road then runs southwest from Central Asia to northern Iran before swinging west through Iraq, Syria, and Turkey.

From Istanbul, the Silk Road crosses the Bosphorus Strait and heads northwest through Europe,

* Centre for Political Studies, Central University of Bihar Gaya, Bihar.

including Bulgaria, Romania, the Czech Republic, and Germany. Reaching Duisburg in Germany, it swings north to Rotterdam in the Netherlands. From Rotterdam, the path runs south to Venice, Italy—where it meets up with the equally ambitious Maritime Silk Road.

The maritime Silk Road will begin in Quanzhou in Fujian province, and also hit Guangzhou (Guangdong province), Beihai (Guangxi), and Haikou (Hainan) before heading south to the Malacca Strait. From Kuala Lumpur, the Maritime Silk Road heads to Kolkata, India and then crosses the rest of the Indian Ocean to Nairobi, Kenya (the Xinhua map does not include a stop in Sri Lanka, despite indications in February 2014 that the island country would be a part of the Maritime Silk Road).

From Nairobi, the Maritime Silk Road goes north around the Horn of Africa and moves through the Red Sea into the Mediterranean, with a stop in Athens before meeting the land-based Silk Road in Venice. Indeed the proposed project in its totality is an ambitious plan of China with tremendous potentials to alter the balance of power as well as the geo-economics and geo-politics of the region across which it is proposed to traverse.

A New Strategy

The Chinese political leadership has been quite melodious right from its announcement and has advocated that the objective of the MSR is to ensure greater economic cooperation and well-being of all the participant countries. The new leaders put forward the “2+7” formula of cooperation—consensus on two issues: deepening strategic trust and exploring neighbourly friendship, and economic development based on mutual benefits and win-win outcomes.

They also put forward seven proposals—(i) signing the China-ASEAN good neighbour treaty; (ii) more effective use of the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area and intensive Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership negotiations; (iii) acceleration of joint infrastructure projects; (iv) stronger regional financial and risk-prevention cooperation; (v) closer maritime cooperation; (vi) enhanced collaboration on

security; and (vii) more intensive people-to-people contacts along with increased cultural, scientific and environmental protection cooperation.

The endeavour, thus, promises to explore the cultural meaning of the Silk Road, and spread awareness of China’s friendly policies towards neighbouring countries.

The enormity of the project is revealed from the maps of two Silk Roads released in May 2014, as briefly explained above. Both the proposed roads will link three continents which exposes the China’s ambitions of reclaiming its place as the “Middle Kingdom”, linked to the world by trade and cultural exchanges.

However, the Chinese leaders want to re-assure their commitment to the path of peaceful development, emphasising that a stronger China will add to the force for world peace and the positive energy for friendship and will present development opportunities to Asia and the world, rather than posing a threat.

China aims to accelerate the establishment of an Asian Infrastructural Investment Bank, which could provide a strong investment and financing platform for multimodal connectivity, like building high-speed rail, ports, airports, within related countries. Meanwhile, in order to get wider support, China may consider establishing the bank headquarters in one of the capitals along the MSR, possibly Jakarta, Bangkok, Singapore, and other countries deemed friendly.

Undoubtedly, China is taking decisive steps to improve its overall geopolitical position by developing extensive transport networks, building roads, railways, ports, and energy corridors through such initiatives. Historically, the MSR was divided into two main sectors: lands ‘above the wind’ (ports in the Indian Ocean) and lands ‘below the wind’ (the straits of Malacca, the South China Sea, the Java Sea, and further east).¹⁶ These terms referred to the season of sailing. Long-distance voyaging along these routes became possible once seafarers discovered the rhythm of wind, which provide reliable power for sailing ships. Shipbuilding and

navigation in China were fairly advanced, and Chinese navigators had some ability to predict monsoons.¹⁷

Therefore, with the dreams of New Silk Road along the land as well as Ocean, China aspires to fulfil many of its long cherished political and strategic dreams. This makes it obvious that China quite subtly is making all efforts to build a strong international personality of its own to challenge the erstwhile powers of the world. It is trying especially to contain United States in its endeavour in Asia and the Pacific. It is also making moves to contain India and limit its role in its own turf.

The Implications

The proposed project has raised many pertinent questions: such as (i) Is it mere geo-economics that China is trying to aim at? (ii) Is it that in the garb of economic interests China is endeavouring to achieve its strategic aspirations? (iii) Is it Chinese attempt at re-designing the geo-political chessboard of South Asian and Asia-Pacific politics? (iv) Is it that China wishes to be the “Middle Kingdom” country in the Asia-Pacific region? (v) Does it really possesses potentials to safeguard Asia’s security and ward-off threats to regional order by building an Asian Community as advocated in the Chinese media? (vi) Is it really going to create business opportunities as advocated by German officials?

The recent commitment from Sri Lanka to join the Maritime Silk Road indicates the proximity of the two states’ strategic aspirations and is a reflection of the assimilation of national interests. Malaysia too has expressed its willingness to support the project. Accordingly, a major project fair for international trade of *halal* products was held in Beijing in early March 2014 where more than 200 companies from China, Malaysia and Indonesia attended the activity and signed strategic cooperation agreements with seven Chinese institutions including China’s Economics Chamber of Commerce.

The MSR is a vital strategic project for China in the Indian Ocean, and will expand up to the western coast of India and further west to Iran, a vital exporter of oil to China. The brand new port of

Hambantota, 85 percent of it paid for with a Chinese loan, is located on the south of the island, historically not a traditional shipping route. However, it is the perfect location to meet the strategic objectives of the MSR and Sri Lanka too has defended Hambantota by advocating that it is purely a commercial port.

China has disputes and acrimonious relations with many countries of South Asia and Southeast Asia due to their stake and maritime disputes. This has presented a kind of complex circumstances for itself towards building a better relation with its neighbours. Through their vision of re-energising the MSR, the Chinese leaders aim to impart a new lease of life to China’s peripheral policy and diffuse the tension. It again seems that MSR could be an attempt to counter the “String of Pearls” argument.

Strategic Objectives

It would support friends and clients thereby neutralising similar activities by other naval powers, or merely by showcasing one’s maritime power. Indeed, naval power has certain advantages as an instrument of diplomacy. Naval forces are more resilient, and they have greater visibility. Thus, the proposed MSR has clear strategic objectives, and India and many other countries are studying implications of this bold policy statement carefully.

It has become a kind of consensus in Asia that without economic development, equality, mutual trust and cooperation frequently linger on the largest and most populous continent. As advocated, China’s two initiatives to build Silk Road economic belt and a 21st-century maritime Silk Road have shown its willingness to explore on how to translate the new concept to concrete common interests and friendship with other Asian countries.

China seemingly respects the traditional influence and interests of big powers in the region by advocating the principle of peaceful co-existence. However, in the garb of advocated objective the intentions seem to be otherwise i.e. to put aside the United States or co-govern the region with US.

The US too has taken number of initiatives in the region to ensure its allies like Japan by instilling

confidence in them that it will be helping them deter threats in any eventualities. The region suffers from both traditional and non-traditional threats to its security.

Accordingly, China is looking forward to build its personality in a manner that it can have a decisive role in dealing with acts such as transnational crime, terrorism, energy crisis, drug trade, Korean crisis, crisis in South China Sea, etc. China thus is projecting itself as the harbinger of common, comprehensive and sustainable security measures to build peace in Asia through build-up of an economic stakes.

The Ambiguity

China's economic vision is equally expansive as its geographic vision. Despite this expansive goal, it's not clear yet what will tie together the disparate countries along the proposed roads. China has discussed building up infrastructure (especially railways and ports) along the route, yet the vision includes more than simply speedy transportation.

China envisions a trade network where "goods are more abundant and trade is more high-ended. China expects the economic contact along the Roads to boost productivity in each country on account of advocated economic compatibility with many of the countries along the planned route and has offered technological assistance to countries in key industries.

China has also envisioned the Road as a region of more capital convergence and currency integration, where currency exchanges are fluid and easy. China's currency, the *renminbi*, is becoming more widely used in Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Vietnam, and Thailand, yet it cannot claim that it will become the Silk Road's primary currency, rather hopes that local currencies will be the dominant means of economic deals.

The proposed road will not only create an economic trade route but an interdependent community with common interests, fate and responsibilities from East Asia to Western Europe. Therefore, it seems an

ambitious talk with a lack of vision as to how it shall be implemented. Will the land-based and sea-based Roads be limited to a string of bilateral agreements between China and individual countries, or between China and regional groups like the European Union and ASEAN? Is there a grander vision, such as a regional free trade zone incorporating all the Silk Road countries? Or will China be the tie that binds it all together, with no special agreements directly linking, say, Kazakhstan and Germany.

Therefore, at this stage it seems it is an ambitious project of China where China will be the pivot in Asia-Pacific, and all other participant countries shall keep looking towards China for guidance to take-off the project at different stages and in different countries. However, the recent release of the map by Xinhua suggests that to mitigate the ambiguity China may propose the blue-print of the entire project and a road-map for its concretization in different phases.

Challenges before India

The Indian strategic community has a cause to worry and they must be wary about Chinese rising naval profile in the Indian Ocean with the construction of port infrastructure in Pakistan (Gwadar), Sri Lanka (Hambantota), Myanmar (Sitwe), and Bangladesh (Chittagong). China has offered at official levels that India too should become a partner in the proposed Roads. However, there are no indications of any sort by the Indian side on the proposal.

China indeed nurses to be the great maritime power of the world. Xi's predecessor, Hu Jintao put the idea of China's maritime destiny at the centre of Chinese grand strategy in the 21st century and oversaw the dramatic expansion of the PLA Navy. Hu's naval assertion, however, has frightened its neighbours from Japan to India through the ASEAN and has increased maritime tensions in Asia's waters.

From a Chinese perspective it was a smart move to invite India to join the maritime Silk Road project. However, the move has posed a kind of dilemma between the two competing ideas: one is working

together with China in the maritime domain and the other is the long-standing goal of limiting China's influence in the Indian Ocean.

Given Indian capability and domestic politics it seems India cannot opt for any of the two courses of actions available before it. India cannot learn to live with China's growing naval profile and cannot work together in a project in which its own personality gets subdued.

On the other hand, India lacks the capability to challenge the Chinese growth on military as well as non-military security fronts. India has been suffering from slackness in the arena of its defence modernization to match the Chinese defence profile. India mostly aims at matching Pakistan even though many defence experts advocate otherwise and say Indian defence build-up has China in its focus.

Conclusion

Undoubtedly, the success of the MSR initiative will be consequential to regional stability and global peace. This thrust on reviving the ancient maritime route is the first global strategy for enhancing the trade and fostering peace, proposed by the new Chinese leaders. This contains the metaphor of friendly philosophy from the old Silk Route to build the new one.

The MSR, being developed into a route for envoys of friendship, entails far greater strategic significance than being a purely mercantile road. The MSR places China in the middle of the "Middle Kingdom" and is an effort in initiating a 'grand strategy' with global implications. The hope is that the erstwhile MSR, which served more for trade and establish friendly relations, would continue to do so in the revived form, rather than create new naval rivalries or power displays thereby disturbing the peace in Asia in general and South Asia in particular.

Therefore, Indian strategic community needs to devise means and mechanism to respond the Chinese initiative in a befitting manner so that it is able to maximize its national interests without jeopardising its economic interests and its strong

presence as a power to be reckoned with in the Indian Ocean region.

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Indo- Bhutan Relations

Sayar Ahmad Dar*

[Bhutan's geo-strategic location in India's immediate neighbourhood, past legacy of close friendly relations and the desire of both countries to nurture their mutual friendly relations more enthusiastically has brought New Delhi and Thimpu closer to each other. The recent visit of Indian Prime Minister to Bhutan is a testimony to it. This article presents geo-strategic and geo-economic aspects of bilateral relations along with focus on challenges confronting both countries as well. Ed.]

The states in South Asia have a varied geography and history so their prospects and performances are not directly comparable. The large state of India (including Pakistan and Bangladesh) formed the core of British imperial power in South-Asia. The smaller states of Sri Lanka and Nepal also existed as separate entities during the colonial period – Sri- Lanka as a crown colony and Nepal was under indirect rule. The micro-states of Bhutan and Maldives acquired modern statehood as a byproduct of the accidents of colonial conquest and strategy of indirect rule.

As a result of independence, India, Sri Lanka and Nepal inherited the core structure, but Pakistan and Bangladesh had to virtually assemble the state structures from the fragments. The success and longevity of the new structures varied in each case. Given their inherited state capacity, India and Sri Lanka worked their democratic parliamentary system with greater success. Pakistan and Bangladesh rapidly lapsed into extended periods of military rule. The remaining three states in South-Asia concentrated on closely managing the transformation of their traditional monarchical systems into more participative ones, a process which has gone farthest.

Yet, despite their differences and the ways in which they articulate their national projects, each state in South Asia has in common a serious attempt to succeed as a state in perpetuating itself as an established entity. Towards these ends, the South Asian states have sought to create new means and

capacities for shaping democratic legitimacy, national identity, economic development and territorial integrity.

The smaller states in South Asia are weaker states both in terms of power and economics but their geo-strategic location make them of great importance to the world in general and India, China and Pakistan in particular. South Asia, in fact is prominent and very important because of its geo-strategic location. Instead of bestowing benefits, its geo-strategic location has become intricacy for the smaller states.

The Kingdom of Bhutan, as a landlocked nation in South Asia located at the eastern end of the Himalayan Mountains, is bordered to the south, east and west by India and to the north by the Tibetan autonomous region of the People's Republic of China. It lies between China and India. A small and a weak nation in terms of population, size, economy, resources and development, a natural question arises as what makes India to have an interest in Bhutan.

India's interests in or relations with Bhutan can be explained through Morgenthau's definition of national interest, who defines it as "the residual meaning of national interest is survival—the protection of physical, political and cultural identity against the encroachments by other nation-states.

It is against this background i.e. "preservation of physical identity" that India extended its relations with Bhutan under the title "Indo-Bhutanese Friendship Treaty of 1949 signed in Darjeeling on August 8, 1949 between Indian government representative Sri Harishwar Dayal and Bhutan

* Lecturer, Govt. Degree College Mendhar, Poonch (J&K).

government representatives Gangzim Sonam Tobgy Dorji, Yangbi Lopan Sonam and Ha Drung Jigme Dorji.

This treaty became basis for the two independent neighboring nations to live in harmony, sharing a mutually beneficial relationship. This treaty calls for peace between the two nations and non-interference in each other's internal affairs. The treaty also established free trade and extradition protocols. It also assures the rights of citizens of each country and the extradition of criminals seeking refuge in either country.

The Treaty of 1949 replaces the 1910 Treaty of Punakha which was signed by First King Ugyen Wangchuck with the British to ensure that the British India would not interfere with Bhutan's internal affairs as long as it maintained peaceful relations with its neighboring countries.

The Treaty of 1949 has 10 articles of peace, security, trade, extradition of criminals, non-interference etc but most importantly it said that Bhutan would have complete control over its internal affairs but would be guided by India in foreign policy. This treaty provides a unique kind of relationship which gives a special and most favored nation status to Bhutan.

Transit routes are a key issue between India and Bhutan. Bhutan got access to eleven more transit routes in addition to existing sixteen to conduct trade with India. The economy is closely aligned with India's through strong trade and monetary links and dependence on India's financial assistance.

Economic relations can strongly influence diplomatic relations. As hydel-power cooperation is an important area in Indo-Bhutan relations, Bhutan utilizes 30% of its hydro-power generation and rest of the power generated is sold to India. With this source, Bhutan has maintained a growth rate exceeding 6% and will see an annual growth rate of 9% from 2011 to 2019 according to National Statistics Bureau of Bhutan. A new trade agreement between India and Bhutan in 1972 provided an exemption from export duties for goods from Bhutan to third countries.

One important reason for close relationship between India and Bhutan is because of common threat perception from China. When a state increases its military power purely for defensive purpose, it becomes a threat to security of other state. The greatest threat for India's security is not from West but from within Asia i.e. China. China is following a planned strategy to encircle India. Fears were not about a threat from Himalayan Kingdom, but that if anybody with inimical interests towards India gained a foothold in the kingdom, India's security interest could be adversely affected.

The Kingdom of Bhutan, sandwiched between two Asian giants, China and India, is increasingly embroiled in other nation's real politic and has been recently subjected to military incursions that are reverberating around the region. Despite the 'Dazzle of democracy', the often-cited "Gross National Happiness" of bucolic Bhutan, is truly at stake.

A famous Kenyan proverb says "when elephants fight, it is grass which has to suffer". Smaller South Asian states have become battlefields between strategic competitors because of their strategic location. Bhutan is between the two rivals, in the event of any conflict between India and China, Bhutan and Nepal have to suffer. Delhi and Beijing are watching the Kingdom intensely, and recent moves suggest that Bhutan may become either a strategic 'pawn' or a malleable 'Buffer' zone between the two expanding powers.

Both China and India have a strategic foothold in the landlocked Himalayan kingdom. Bhutan does not have diplomatic relation with China, USA, UK, Russia or France. This is possibly done, so that Bhutan is not seen as an enemy to China. Informal contact with USA is made through the American Embassy in New Delhi; this is because Bhutan has formal relation only with India, Nepal, Myanmar and Bangladesh.

As Bhutan is close to India's restive North-Eastern states, any sort of negative development in the Himalayan Kingdom is considered critical to India's strategic interests. India's relationship with Bhutan is based on the Perpetual Peace and Friendship Agreement signed in 1949. The pact was tested

when Bhutan under Indian pressure launched “Operation All Clear” to flush out Indian Militants operating inside Bhutan on December 15, 2003. The Bhutanese army aided by Indian forces completed the operation in January 2004.

During the 1962 Sino-Indian war, Bhutanese authorities permitted Indian troop movements through Bhutanese territory. However, India’s defeat in the war raised concern about India’s ability to defend Bhutan. Consequently while building its ties with India; Bhutan officially established a policy of neutrality.

Following the 1962 Sino-India border war, India took control of and began to train the Bhutan army. Over 4000 Indian military advisors have been sent there. India helped, establish and equip the Bhutan Air force, which is deployed along the border with China and has encouraged Russia to provide military helicopters and logistical support.

There is a fear of China in Bhutan. There are unresolved border disputes between the two. According to official statements of Bhutan, there are four disputed areas between the two, starting from “Duklam” in the west; the border goes along the ridges from Gamochen to Batangla, Sinchela, and down to the Amo Chhu. The issue was only addressed in Beijing in 1984. Bhutan has traditional trade relations with Tibet, but Bhutan closed its northern borders with China after an influx of Tibetan refugees in 1960.

With that the age old cross-border trade came to halt and there have been no official trade or business with China ever since. In 1998 Bhutan and China signed an agreement to maintain peace and tranquility on the Bhutan-China border, marking the first and only Sino-Bhutanese peace agreement to this day.

India’s influence over Bhutan would be a decisive factor in resolving border dispute between Beijing and Thimpu, a Chinese expert has said. India has tremendous influence over Bhutan, if Bhutan can settle border issues with China, the result will certainly create norms that will likely be followed in the border talks between China and India. This shows the close ties between the two oldest friends.

In recent years Bhutan’s relation with its powerful neighbors have had a twist. Chinese forces are alleged to have intruded several times in Bhutanese territory at the tri-junction with India. Over the years, the Chinese have increasingly made inroads in the strategically important areas. The incursions into Bhutan are precariously close to India’s Chicken’s Neck-the vulnerable Siliguri corridor which links the north-east passage.

At the moment India’s military strength is depilated in its eastern region as one of the division normally based in the hills of West Bengal is currently deployed in Kashmir .The other division located at Binaguri would be ineffective if the Chinese sliced through Bhutan to save the Siliguri Neck. Although the past UPA government in India publically dismissed these intrusions as “nothing serious”, experts view these aggressive Chinese moves as deliberate strategy to put pressure on India along the Actual Line of Control.

The Indian army has been alarmed at the increasing Chinese forays into Bhutan, which are also close to the strategic Chumbi valley another vital junction between India- Bhutan and China. Trouble is mounting on China’s border with Bhutan. The intrusions of Chinese forces, analysts say, have more to do with India than Bhutan. The Indian Army recently moved six thousand troops to the Sino-Indian –Bhutanese junction from the troubled state of Jammu and Kashmir.

In November 2007 Chinese forces demolished several un-manned Indian forward posts near to military bunker in the border region of Bhutan’s Dolman Valley. There is a strong feeling in Thimpu that Bhutan is becoming a buffer state. It is believed that Chinese strategy is to drag India more into a Bhutanese gambit and benefit by pinning more Indian troops into border areas. Bhutan stands a great chance of becoming a “Tinny Pawn” or a “Buffer State” in a big game between the two Asian giants. Actually both the states, India and China are prone to pursue relative gains instead of absolute gains and are playing a zero-sum-game at the cost of Bhutan.

India claims that it follows the so-called Wilsonian diplomacy but actually it has to some extent, in its foreign policy the interest of relative gains on the basis of zero-sum game. As the Chinese threat grew, India became increasingly involved in the build-up of Bhutan's indigenous defensive capability. The headquarters of the Indian Military Training Team (IMTRAT) in Bhutan is located in Ha District.

The *Wall Street Journal* wrote that king Jigme Singye Wangchuck at the age of 16, deserves to go down in history as his country's George Washington or Thomas Jefferson. In 1998, Wangchuck voluntarily reduced his powers and declared that Bhutan would become a constitutional monarchy. He ordered legal experts to study constitutions of all the world's great democracies and the final version, which was mailed to every home in the country, begins with "we the people".

Bhutan made a departure from absolute monarchy to constitutional monarchy on July 18, 2008 on the line of the constitutional framework which was drafted in 2003. Bhutan's transition to democracy is probably unfolding in the most unique way where a sovereign has willed his people to make the transition to a democratic constitutional monarchy.

You cannot think of many other instances in history where people, because of their love and respect for the monarchy, have to be persuaded almost against their will to embrace democracy. It is a great tribute to the vision of their majesties. The secret to this special nature of Indo-Bhutan relationship is the exceptional amount of goodwill that underlies it. This is a relationship which is historic and time-tested. Therefore, this relationship will only be further strengthened with the advent of democracy in Bhutan.

India is the world's largest democracy and no doubt that it will grow even stronger in bonds of friendship with the world's smallest democracy. An important political development in Bhutan was the successful completion of two rounds of local government elections in 2011. An important pattern which emerged was the conspicuous visibility of vacant positions, an issue attributed to the casting of negative vote.

Priorities for Bhutan include attaining peace, security and prosperity, achievement of the goals of Gross National Happiness and to build and prosper a vibrant democracy for the country. Indo-Bhutan relationship is special because of the commitment at the highest level cutting across the entire political spectrum in India to strengthen, reinforce and make it even stronger.

From the historic day of 25 September, 1958 when J.L. Nehru visited Bhutan onwards this special relationship has grown from strength to strength. Bhutanese are happy to say that their bilateral interactions with India cover almost every vital aspect of cooperation. People see great strength in Bhutan.

Bhutan is a remarkable state in terms of human resources. Bhutan is a beautiful land which is sufficient for it to be a tourist spot and can increase economic development. In addition, Bhutan has a great gift of one of the world's most sagacious monarchs. Bhutan has a democratically elected government which has a great number of experienced ministers at the helm of important areas. There is a great deal of patriotism and commitment to the nation.

Keeping in view the growing threat of foreign races near and around Bhutan and Bangladesh's interest in Bhutan for electricity, Pakistan's interest to keep its enemy under check by connecting Bhutan through Gilgit and Aksai Chin and growing Chinese influence near Bhutan's borders makes it an important state in recent times.

Bhutan has huge hydropower potential. As India's electricity demands are expected to double over the next decade, Bhutan becomes very important for India. India will speed up its assistance to Bhutan. Bhutan has benefitted by becoming a hydropower exporter to India, by 2020, India wants Bhutan to be able to export 10000MW of power to India. Other economic aid programmes are likely to be speeded up.

Bhutan by developing its hydro-power capacity can increase its export to other South Asian countries and can support a strong regional energy alliance

but Bhutan needs land for import and export purpose. Bhutan's geo-strategic location is also important for Bangladesh because Bangladesh's energy security strategy lies on import of hydro-based electricity from Bhutan, so Bangladesh needs route access to Bhutan through India.

Recent changes in Indo-Bhutan treaty of 1949 conferred a significant amount of autonomy on Bhutan in conducting its defense and foreign policy. Against this background, India and Bhutan signed a treaty on 8 February, 2007 at New Delhi to further strengthen the relationship of peace and friendship between the two. On November 24, 2011, a MoU between the National Assembly and Lok Sabha was signed by Meira Kumar and Jigme Tshultim. The purpose was to provide a framework for enhanced partnership, cooperation and continuous interaction between National Assembly of Bhutan and Lok-Sabha of India.

Bhutan is becoming an important state to its neighbors. In October 2012, Bhutan made a bid as a candidate for a non-permanent seat in the UN Security Council for 2013-2014, but failed to garner sufficient support given the fact that it has diplomatic relations with just about 30 countries.

India is adjusting to a new reality as Bhutan mulls opening diplomatic relations with China which was discussed in a meeting held between Bhutan PM Jigme Thinley and the Chinese premier Wen Jiabao on the sidelines of the Rio+20 summit held in August 2012. As the only country in India's immediate neighborhood which does not have official ties with China, Bhutan is in a special spot where India is concerned but Bhutan wants to fly the nest. And India will have to make room for Bhutan's ambitions.

While India is happy to help Bhutan's ambitions, New Delhi remains wary about talks of a Bhutan-China relationship, particularly if it involves a boundary settlement. A Bhutan-China settlement would involve a decision on the strategic Chumbi valley tri-junction which is of great importance to India. That is why Bhutan is of immense importance to India.

Conclusion

The relations between India and Bhutan are growing and are expected to grow even stronger in the future. Together with China's interests in Bhutan, the relationship between the same is going to be tested time and again. It is against this backdrop that it is significant to ascertain as to how the two – India and Bhutan – redefine their relationship in the changing geo-strategic regional environment. It is equally important to take into consideration the concerns of China *vis-à-vis* the Indo-Bhutan relationship.

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Democracy and Federalism in India

Md. Khaliqur Rahman*

[Democracy in India is reported to be extremely flawed, and its poor design ensured the eventual break-down. The preamble, the fundamental rights and most of the directive principles, as enshrined in Indian Constitution, reflect universal human democratic values of modern civilisation. However, the antiquated instruments of governance are largely unsuited to the challenges of today in a vast developing nation like India with a high proportion of population oppressed under the weight of poverty, drudgery and illiteracy.]

In the early years after independence, the conflict between constitutional values and colonial instruments of governance was camouflaged. The euphoria accompanying the transfer of power led to a general belief that the moment Indian leaders acquired power, things would automatically improve even with the old instruments of governance.

However, the subsequent events belied these hopes. In the two decades after independence, the aura of freedom struggle, the towering stature of the early leaders associated with that struggle, the hope of better things to come, and the inadequate understanding of the loopholes in the mechanics of governance ensured certain measure of stability, hope and harmony.

As all such hopes are dashed with the passage of time, and as persistent rejection of the parties in power does not seem to result in any significantly

tangible improvement, people are increasingly becoming sullen and resentful.

This paper is an attempt to do a review of the causes and results of shaping a federal democratic system in India.

At the very outset, it is worth mentioning that after independence, India encountered a number of problems and encumbrances. A challenging task before India's leaders was the choice of the form of government that should cater to the widely, diverse races, castes, religions, creeds and classes of society and at the same time provide them a feeling of oneness and unity. The members of India's Constituent Assembly were burdened with the responsibility of introducing a form of government that should be conducive to efficient governance and effective development.¹

In respect to implementing developmental projects, the then leaders of India had before them a

* Ph.D. in Pol. Sc., B.R.A. Bihar University, Muzaffarpur,

formidable challenge of nation-building considering India's continental size and highly heterogeneous, pluralist, traditional, and economically backward predominantly rural society.²

Therefore, Nehru who is popularly known as the architect of Modern India, tried to color the liberal ideology with socialist vision to overcome the impending crises in Indian society. The liberal instruments of democracy and federalism became handy to design the future socio-economic structure of India.³

The complexity of India gave our Constitution a federal appearance, though with a pronounced unitary character. India being a multi-religious, multi-caste, multi-lingual, multi-regional and multi-cultural society could be integrated only through federal design. Secondly, the integration of princely states on which sovereignty of the British Empire had ended at the time of Indian independence in 1947, too could be integrated more smoothly through federal structure.

Thirdly, in a continental sized country with huge area and population and with multiple identities, nation building could not be possible through a unitary state. Hence, federalism was the only option with the future makers of India. And, therefore, ultimately they resolved the problem by adopting the twin strategy of democracy and federalism.

They were of the opinion that democracy is a political necessity but it was required to be adopted along with federal principles and mechanism keeping in mind that the vast size of the country with huge socio-cultural diversities. Federalism was considered a booster to democracy.⁴

It is worth noting that the then leaders of India at that time presumed that democracy would provide a responsible system of governance and political management whereas federalism makes mechanism for institutions for its smooth growth. Perhaps it was also thought that a country practicing federal democracy could deal with problems in comparison to those which are not democratic and federal. It was sought through the establishment of guidelines and operational realities of institutions.

Federalism is constituent element of such guidelines and democratic polity provides the infrastructure-institutional mechanisms. Therefore, federalism and democracy further the cause of each other.⁵

As is well known to the socio-political scientists, irrespective of their ideological orientations, the evolution of federalism and implementation of democratic system owes a lot to the colonial experience of the then 'middle class' which at a later historical phase was to take over as the decisive and important factor in Indian federal democracy.

Though the social and cultural complexity of this nation generates a highly complex political experience yet there are possibilities of making specific observations significant for research in the field of political science in general and Indian federal democracy in particular. The colonial legacy and political experience of limited democracy were the guiding elements for the future formation of India.⁶

It is perhaps fair to argue that Indian leaders and makers of the constitution opted for democracy not only because of their liberal orientation imbibed from the Western education on one hand and the consensus developed during the national movement on the other, but also because they believed no other form of government could work and gain legitimacy in this multi-regional, multi-religious, multi-lingual, multi-caste, and multi-ethnic society.

The assertive elites of our constitution dominated the decision-making process and provided for the nation a federal democracy but quite tactfully brought out a system with a strong and authoritative Centre capable of imposing its decisions on the states.

Quite clearly, under the apparent cover of democratic federalism, they made provisions which are undemocratic in nature. Therefore, this kind of political set up is not a pure, unadulterated form of federal democracy; it leans towards the supremacy of the Centre. The constitution makers and leaders of the initial phase of independence were suspicious and had serious doubts regarding the *success of democracy* as the Indians had a very limited experience of working of democratic institutions under the colonial regime.⁷

The democratic institution could not institutionalize nor could democratic ethos evolve due to ignorance and lack of political consciousness on account of illiteracy, unemployment and appalling poverty.

Notwithstanding these serious limitations, the builders of the nation were not in a position to opt for the opposite version of democracy, i.e., dictatorship its antithesis. A novel formula of strong Centre with federal structure was the synthesis of their approach. To maintain the power strength of the Centre, it was given some special powers.

The Centre was empowered to use emergency powers in case of external war and severe internal crisis. Many other provisions also enabled the central government to use authoritative devices a feature proper to unitary form of government. Thus, the Constitution of India is a unique constitution as it blends and synthesizes the features of constitutions of various countries.

Although, it is a federal parliamentary government, but into this federal form the nation builders have incorporated traits of the unitary form of democracy. The makers of the constitution invested both the Centre and the states with authority and powers, but at the same time endowed greater authority on the Centre as a disciplinary measure to check the misuse of authority by state governments. And the Centre itself has, from time to time, misused this greater authority.

The provision of emergency powers and allocation of some powers exclusively for the Centre leaves room for domination of Centre over the states. Moreover, space between the lines may lead to misinterpretation and misrepresentation of provisions. But democratic governance was the only means of making the masses as partners and stakeholders in the sustenance of the political system.

Despite the fact that we were having an undemocratic, in-egalitarian, semi-feudal, conservative and parochial society having deep roots in primordial loyalties, the above mentioned factors compelled and emboldened the national leaders at the helm of affairs on the eve of

independence to take the calculated risk of introducing democracy in India. They were not even discouraged by the facts that India was having at that juncture a predominantly rural and agrarian society having a population of which two thirds were illiterates.

They ignored the wisdom of the Western scholars who had been holding that democracy could not be introduced in a traditional society. It could work only in a modernized society having high level of urbanization, industrialization and literacy on the one hand and highly developed media and means of communication on the other hand. They did not mind introducing democracy in a society where democratic traditions were conspicuous by their absence.⁸

As Austin has pointed out, the Constitution of India had been made on the basis of consensus. The consensual approach was adopted because of its powerful presence in the Indian tradition.⁹ Distaste for conflict and commitment to harmony are fundamental to the epic literature of India from which the masses draw every day inspiration. They are fundamental also to the philosophical intellectual and historical norms of the Indian culture.

According to Rajni Kothari, the Congress party was indeed the 'party of consensus'.¹⁰ And under Nehru's leadership, the strategy of consensus was carried on. These values are even now shared by the political leadership and the masses of Indian society. They have an important effect on both the form and content of decisions and behavior of groups in the society.

However, dysfunctional features emerged in democracy and federalism in 1971 after Indira Gandhi was voted to power in the 1970 parliamentary election. She *de-democratized* and *de-federalized* the Indian polity. At the central level, she undermined the authority of the President of India, the Union Council of Ministers, the Union Parliament and the Supreme Court of India.

At the state level, she undermined the authority of Chief Ministers, Council of Ministers, State Legislatures and the High Courts. The Chief

Ministers were no longer elected by the Congress legislative party. They were nominated by her and could continue in office till she wanted; so much so that it began to be said that Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had become the Empress of India (In those days, the cult of personality was at its peak and India is Indira and Indira is India was very popular) and the Chief Ministers had been reduced to the status of 'subedars' of the states.¹¹

She not only undermined the state autonomy through various amendments in the constitution but also tried to change the spirit of the constitution. The inner-party democracy too was given up.

The de-democratization and de-federalization reached its climax when emergency was imposed in 1975. India virtually became an authoritarian and Unitarian state. The 42nd Constitutional Amendment gave a fatal blow to both democracy and federalism. In this context, it needs mentioning that the Chief Ministers of non-Congress states have successfully propagated the view that the ruling party at the Centre runs riots with its power, abuses emergency provisions, ignores the state governments and stifles the federal spirit of the Constitution while itself indulging in a spree of spending, it demands a military-like discipline from the states.

It is also their contention that the Centre has curtailed and impaired the financial position, authority and responsibility of the state governments. And this deliberate diminution of the powers of the states has all along been justified on the pretext of making and retaining the Centre as a strong entity. Critics of the state governments argue that the states have been financially irresponsible, that they have used too many of their resources for non-productive purposes and that they have failed to mobilize enough resources of their own.¹²

It may be kept in view that the ushering in of the Janata Phase in 1977 restored democracy and federalism. However, the restoration of Congress to power in 1980 once again started the process of de-democratization and de-federalization. This is evident from the dismissal of Non-Congress

Governments in the states in 1980, deployment of army in Assam, Operation Blue Star in Punjab in 1984 and the toppling of the National Conference government in Jammu & Kashmir.

It was this de-democratization and de-federalization which not only led to her assassination but also gave birth to militancy and secessionism in Punjab, Assam and Jammu & Kashmir.

At the same time, it may also be pointed out that the restoration of the processes of democratization and federalization since the era of Rajiv Gandhi has, however, checked the drift from federalism to strong Centre. The regionalization of Indian politics/federalization of party system since 1989 and more particularly during NDA regime (1999-2004) has also been functional for democracy and federalism.

The installation of UPA government and strengthening of the forces of secularism in 2004 and 2009 parliamentary elections further reinforced democracy and federalism by weakening the forces of communalism which has been threatening these twin processes. Actually, the coming of BJP-led NDA to power in 2014 only strengthens Indians conviction that the future of democracy and federalism are safe in India.

It may not be out of context to infer that it was the spirit of federalism and democracy which paved the way for the evolution of coalition politics in India. The coalition politics itself is conducive to the promotion of democracy and strengthening of federal structure. It promotes consensus, politics of accommodation, facilitates decentralization and creates healthy conditions for state autonomy.

Moreover, it has specific implications for federal polity and evolution of democratic institutions. State governments can no more be treated like municipalities. Under the present NDA coalition government, the state governments have acquired a new sense of importance and independent identity. The weaker sections and minorities too have drawn the attention of this government. It has ensured the wider participation involving people living at periphery of the political system.

Conclusion

To conclude, the complexity and magnitude of the crisis that the Indian polity is going through since last one decade demands a truly creative, democratic and effective response; failing which increasing anarchy and the spectre of balkanization may engulf the nation. Already the middle classes are losing faith in democracy and are yearning for an authoritarian alternative. Such authoritarianism is the very negation of the fundamental values we cherish.

The crisis of democracy has to be resolved by more and better democracy, and not by its negation. The real question today is not whether there should be democratic reforms; but how to achieve them.

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Future of Aam Admi Party

P.K. Mohan Reddy*

[The entry of the Aam Admi Party (AAP) in the Delhi assembly elections itself was symbolic. AAP's leaders have made it clear that winning or losing does not matter to them since they are trying for honest politics and clean governance for the first time in India. AAP has boldly experimented whether a political party which is based on ethics and principles, its main aim being rooting out corruption can at least win some seats in the national capital. It has also sent a message to the established political parties that AAP does not play by their rules. Instead, AAP has created its own rules that it does not bother to be Left or Right. It did not articulate any coherent economic or social policy including social justice.]

For AAP, Aam Admi is the one, rich or poor, urban or rural, Muslim or Dalit, man or woman, who believes in honest politics and attempts sincerely for a corrupt-free accountable governance. Indians, in the last 60 years have seen all the political parties including the Communists and none of the parties attempted for a change in the polity and governance with such sincerity as AAP did.

To a common man, for whom politics is nothing but cynicism, AAP has promised different and altogether new politics which is guided by honesty and idealism and not money, caste, religion or class. AAP has put that experiment into practice in choosing the candidates for the Delhi assembly elections. The stunning results of the 2014 Delhi assembly elections did convince AAP's critics (who included major political parties) that an experiment of this nature, indeed worked in India.

AAP's reluctance to claim power and preferring to sit in opposition has increased its credibility with the common man. After seeking the referendum of the people in Delhi, Arvind Kejriwal assumed the position of the Chief Minister. Most of us seem to forget that the BJP tried its best to prevent the formation of AAP's government in Delhi. People have also not forgotten the manner in which Arvind Kejriwal has resigned after 49 days.

The Delhites could not understand the ethical dilemma of Arvind Kejriwal whether to continue or resign when there was a rape when he was the Chief Minister of Delhi. Since the Delhi Police Commissioner is under the control of the National Capital Region of Delhi under the Central Home Ministry, Kejriwal sat in protests and ultimately resigned.

AAP could not convince people on the ethical principle on which Arvind Kejriwal had resigned owing to the communication gap. He felt that the mistake they made was to assume that the people will celebrate their decision to quit on principle, which did not happen. He also agreed that they should have sought public opinion on quitting. However, AAP's intention in resigning was that eventually the assembly will be dissolved, and AAP can expect a clear mandate in the bye-elections.

The Lieutenant Governor's office in Delhi could not take an immediate decision. The critics as well as some sections of the society felt that if Arvind Kejriwal assumed office by a referendum he should have sought the same on whether he should resign or not. As a result, Arvind Kejriwal did lose support and people began to question whether AAP wanted to govern at all.

The Present and the Future

Despite these setbacks, it is significant that many thinkers felt that there is still the 'AAP effect' in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. The participation of

* Assistant Prof., Dept. of History, Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati.

thousands of students, retired professionals, journalists, housewives to register as AAP's members and volunteers in several cities in the North as well as South bears testimony to the faith common man has exhibited in AAP's 'experimental politics' not guided by any 'ism', class, religion or class, or even victory or loss.

AAP's daring decision to field candidates against Narendra Modi (a Prime Ministerial candidate of the BJP) and Rahul Gandhi (an unofficial Prime Ministerial candidate of the Congress) symbolized a political fight against both the national parties on an ethical front. During his election campaign in Varanasi, Arvind Kejriwal contesting against Narendra Modi had said the AAP had nothing but truth to offer. He said that AAP had won in Delhi assembly elections because of this power of truth.

AAP's message was clear that it would not change its approach to politics either by winning or losing. AAP's Delhi debacle did have an impact as from the earlier predictions of 50 Parliament seats, the surveys came down to just 5 seats. The blunder that AAP did, according to many analysts is, rather than contesting a moderate 100 seats, AAP contested in 424 seats compared to Congress (414 seats) and BJP (415 seats).

The surveys came true as AAP won 4 Parliament seats in Punjab with huge margins. The critics as well as the skeptics, including the Congress and the BJP had no defense on how Arvind Kejriwal secured 2 lakh votes in Varanasi against established national parties. Even other colleagues of his like Yogendra Yadav polled over 80,000 votes. Even in Amethi AAP could make its presence felt.

Although AAP did not score any victory in Delhi in these elections, the vote percentage of AAP since the Delhi assembly elections has increased from 28% to 33%. Its voter base from Punjab and Delhi to Varanasi comprised all sections such as the middle class, the slum dwellers, the Muslims and so on.

AAP phenomenon is beyond the simple calculations of electoral defeats and losses. The party is born from the street agitations and public meetings. Its leaders are agitators. Therefore, they can serve

democracy even from the street agitations. The main difference between the agitations by the other political parties and AAP is simply that the AAP is honest and committed in its approach rather than the numbers it attracts.

The 2014 Lok Sabha election results have opened up some new vistas of polity and governance. For the first time after 1984, the people have given a clear mandate for the BJP, which seems to be moving from Right to Centre-Right. The present mandate has given the much needed stability to the government to pursue its promised policies.

The Indian polity has shown a perceptible bipolarity. The two major national parties viz. BJP and the Congress have evolved into two clear poles of Center-Right and Center-Left respectively. In the near future, Indian polity is likely to be multipolar if the other political parties influence the voters.

The Samajwadi Party, the Rashtriya Janata Dal, the Janata Dal, or the regional parties in south India are bound by their region-specific ideologies and programmes. The Communists, even in future, are expected to be confined to West Bengal and Kerala. As a consequence, the AAP has an opportunity to fill this gap, provided it develops the party organization and structure from grassroots in major centers in India. The AAP has the potential to play an interesting role in the multipolarity in the Indian polity and it has ample time of 5 years to consolidate itself.

In the meanwhile, as declared by its own leaders, AAP is not guided by victory or loss but its principles. It is likely to continue its street agitations and *dharnas* for strengthening democracy. It is difficult for AAP to play an effective role in the Lok Sabha as it has only 4 members. But, in the national capital with a supportive media, it can certainly influence in bringing about clean governance.

Firstly, the AAP can raise its pitch about the Lok Pal Bill. If AAP, with the help of the intellectuals and the media, can achieve Lok Pal, the nature of governance in India itself will change drastically. The AAP's attempt at the supply of water and electricity at cheaper rates has created huge awareness among

the public about the lack of transparency in their production, distribution and regulation.

Initially, AAP may be able to play the role of watchdog in its pursuance of clean and honest governance; in the coming 5 years when AAP expands from Punjab, Haryana, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh to the south, there will be certainly a pressure for clean governance. The analysts and the AAP itself are aware that this is not easy in 5 years.

The AAP may not have any coherent policy on social inclusion, economic policy etc. But, has it not already

enunciated its social policy when it selected candidates for Delhi assembly elections beyond caste or religion? Has AAP not indicated its economic policy when it tried its best to implement its election promises of providing water and electricity at cheaper rates to Delhites?

The common man is not bothered about any ideology now. He has seen patiently the conventional political parties for years. Now AAP has provided him with a fresh, unexpected and untested choice. He hopes that the AAP sustains and delivers through reinventing politics which itself has initiated. Thus AAP is the hope of the future and hope for the future.



Perspectives on Urban Poverty in India

Khyal Chand*

[The rapid pace of urbanization is a global phenomenon and its occurrence in India is not just a co-incident but natural. With the mushroom growth of people flooding urban areas from the rural areas in search of greener pastures and lack of adequate employment opportunities in commensurate with the rising urban influx, a large segment of the migrant population is forced to lead a life of poverty in urban areas. This situation needs to be transformed through scientific planning and implementation of programmes to alleviate the urban poverty. Ed.]

Urban poverty and urbanization are inter-linked phenomenon. Urbanization is global phenomenon experienced by economically advanced as well as developing countries. It is estimated that up to 60% of the urban population in some developing countries is poor (UNCHS 1996) the figure for India is around 40% (NIUA 1998). Most of the world's population now lives in urban areas and in developing regions the proportion living in cities and towns has risen from 35 percent in 1990 to 45 percent in 2010 from 1.4 billion to 2.5 billion people (Jacobsen et al. 2012).

According to World Bank Report, it is estimated that a third of people living on less than US\$2 per day reside in urban areas, and UN-Habitat estimates that just under 40 percent of urban dwellers live in slums, a number that is growing by more than 20

million per year (Baker 2008). Current thinking is moving away from 'urban bias' thesis towards a conception of urban areas as central to national economic transformation, as 'engines of growth'.

However, urban centres are not just sites of economic activity and opportunity but also reflect important socio-political dynamics that can exclude and exploit, and are shaped historically. Urban poverty is, therefore, invariably associated with over-crowded, insanitary living conditions within large slum settlements, with limited or no access to basic utilities or services such as water, sanitation, affordable transportation, healthcare, education, energy and law and order.

Urban Poor in India

While urbanization is the future of this world and much of it is to happen in Central and South Asia and Africa, wherein informality and slum formation

* Sr. Research Fellow, Dept of Geography, Himachal Pradesh University Shimla.

is the paradigm of urbanization. There is global evidence that indicates rising urban poverty in developing countries, alongside rapidly rising urban populations, urban inequality and India is no exception.

The poverty line in India represents people who are unable to meet the minimum calorie requirement. It is lower than the World Bank's poverty line of US\$1.25 per capita per day. In urban India, 20.8 per cent or 78.4 million people lived below the poverty line in 2009-10, according to the Planning Commission (Planning Commission 2012). This group is represented as a Head Count Ratio (HCR), which indicates the proportion of the population living below the poverty line.

In India, of the total urban population of 377 million in 2011-2012, 93 million people lived in slums (National Building Organization 2010: 22), which was 24.7 per cent of the total urban population or 19.8 million households. But, with increase in level of urbanization, the challenge of slums will only increase. But urbanization has not come without its share of problems. This level of growth is creating heavy fault lines beneath the urban surface, most of which citizens have little control over.

As a young democracy, India has had little experience in managing urban issues. Our urban political and administrative leadership is unprepared to provide adequate governance even in the current situation, let alone in the chaotic future. Poverty in India has been a part of the policy debate right from the First Plan Period with the primary focus being on agriculture and rural development.

Urban development was tackled through a focus on industry. While social services such as health and education provided for the urban population, there remained a concerted focus on rural India in the Five Year Plans; urban poverty was not recognized as a concern in the initial plan periods. It is expected to touch the mark of more than 40% in 2021. Most urban poor are working and incentivized to improve their lives by any reasonable means offered to them.

Indian cities are reflective of a multitude of urban problems like unemployment, dependency burden

and inadequacy of basic services and infrastructure. In our country urban migration has led to an influx of semi-skilled and unskilled labourers to the cities.

Major Challenges

Rapid and uncontrolled growth of urban agglomerations in India generates a series of negative environmental and social effects. These include issues of illegality, lack of basic household amenities, infrastructural facilities and horizontal and vertical inequality in terms of urban poverty.

Issues of Illegality

The attitude of governments to illegal settlements or slum dwellers varies from hostility to suppression through degrees of tolerance to occasional support. Much depends on how the inhabitants acquired the land, with most governments being more tolerant of illegal subdivisions than of squatter settlements (Pacione, 2005).

Most of the urban poor live illegally in the urban areas of India because of which they are facing many problems. Even they are not able to get the basic facilities like houses, electricity and drinking water connection. Issue of illegality also creates many hindrances to take the benefits of governmental welfare policies like PDS and Rajeev Awas Yojana.

Lack of Basic Household Amenities

In urban India one of the most important challenges to urban poor is lack of basic household amenities like shelters, drinking water and sanitation facilities. Tenure insecurity among urban communities is a key factor contributing to acute poverty in India. Cities and towns in India are growing at an alarming rate compared to many other cities in the world.

The inflow of rural poor to urban areas is rising. Populations in existing slums are growing. The value of land in urban areas has sky rocketed. The majority of slums are privately owned by people who do not provide basic services to their tenants though rents are increased annually.

Children living in urban slum areas and in particular children belonging to minorities and marginalized groups are at risk of being excluded from the formal

education system. The crucial barriers to mainstreaming marginalized children are the lack of government schools in slum areas, higher cost of education, social exclusion, and difficulties in setting up schools in slum areas.

Lack of special targeted strategies to achieve equitable enrolment, school attendance and completion of the study, poor equity, lack of knowledge, and understanding on the inclusive and child-centered approach are the major causes for persistent challenges in education sector of urban poor.

Lack of Infrastructural Facilities

Infrastructure is basic requirement for the socio-economic uplift of human beings. But in the urban area the poor people have very low accessibility of infrastructural facilities like educational infrastructure, medical infrastructure etc. Infrastructures and facilities are inadequate in slum areas and public health is often at risk, especially during the rainy season.

Common challenges related to environmental situation, infrastructures and service providers are: water contamination and diseases. Water supply in most of the Indian cities is available for a few hours per day, pressure is irregular and the water is of a questionable quality (Mackenzie, 2009). About 85% of India's urban population has access to drinking water but only 20% of the available drinking water meets the health and quality standards set by the WHO (Singh, 2000).

The national housing policy (1988) could not achieve much though it aimed at creating conditions for enabling the urban poor to own the squatted land and improve /develop a structure on it (Chand and Chaudhary,2014). Serious distortions in the land market, low affordability red-tapism, over-congestion in slum settlements and multiple ownership entitlements of the squatted lands have been some of the important problems in finding realistic solution to the housing poverty of urban poor (Sharma and Sita,2000).

Solid Waste Management

In the present-day scenario, cities are becoming a hub of almost all human activities (Rajeshwari, 2013). These human activities have put tremendous pressure on the quality of environment of urban life. The residents of urban area generate various kinds of waste of biodegradable and non-biodegradable categories. Poor collection efficiency and inappropriate disposal of solid wastes is a source of water, land and air pollution and pose risks to human health and the environment.

Majority of poor people are engaged in the collection of waste of the cities which is very harmful for their health. Over the next several decades rapid urbanization and economic growth in the developing world tend to further deteriorate this situation. The management of solid waste is a complex and expensive activity (Siddique et al, 2009). Unscientific disposal causes an adverse impact on all the components of the environmental and human health (Rathi, 2006).

Horizontal and Vertical Inequality

Urban poor comprises heterogeneous groups, with varied characteristics and there are equally varied causal factors at play. Some urban households remain poor because they do not have access to employment and some others fall below the poverty line when urban economy is restructured. Urban economy restructuring is very strongly tied to the global economy whose fluctuations, many a times unforeseen, affect the urban populations.

However, the most vulnerable segments – scheduled castes, minorities, women and children – need direct assistance for survival. The number of urban poor is increasing although the head count ratio is declining. Analysis shows that there is no robust evidence of poverty urbanizing itself. However, urban inequalities have risen and urban poverty is deepening. The percentage of marginal workers among the urban poor is marginally different from that among the non-poor.

The social groups more affected by urban poverty are scheduled castes and minorities. In urban areas, SCs have HCR of 34.1% followed by STs (30.4%)

and OBC (24.3%) against 20.9% for all classes. In urban areas poverty ratio at all India level is highest for Muslims (33.9%). Similarly, for urban areas the poverty ratio is high for Muslims in states such as Rajasthan (29.5%), Uttar Pradesh (49.5%), Gujarat (42.4%), Bihar (56.5%) and West Bengal (34.9%).

In urban areas, households headed by minors have poverty ratio of 15.7% and households headed by female and senior citizen have poverty ratio of 22.1% and 20.0% respectively against overall poverty ratio of 20.9% (Planning commission of India, 2012).

In a plural society like India, with people of different castes and religions, it is equally important to focus on 'horizontal inequalities' i.e. disparities between certain identifiable groups in the economy. In India, there are historically marginalized 'social groups' such as the scheduled castes (SC) and scheduled tribes (ST), who comprise a quarter of India's urban poor population.

Some Options

This is very important question as to how to reduce urban poverty and create an enabling environment in which urbanization and economic growth flourish and in which rural-urban linkages are supported, and where the needs and priorities of the urban poor are both recognized and addressed.

There is need to provide the basic facilities and employment in rural India in order to discourage the rural-urban migration. Because rural-urban migration is main cause for the urbanization and which leads to urban poverty. Policy makers have learnt that the provision of basic infrastructure and services, within specifically defined slum settlements, while necessary is not sufficient for reducing poverty in urban areas.

Once these needs are met, the urban poor will get spurred in improving their quality of life. They may want to participate in local politics, and participate in decisions about their local area.

There is also need to redefine the relationship between the states and municipal bodies and lay

the foundations of a new approach to urban management and governance that could fulfill the needs and aspirations of urban poor for their socio-economic development.

Capacity building is required for developing communication and inter-personal skills among the people responsible for providing for the needs of the urban poor, for improving the level of services and satisfaction of the beneficiaries, and for providing coordinated services from a number of line agencies. Last but not least all the development programmes for urban poor should be implemented in the very effective way and there should be proper evolution of these policies and beneficiaries.

Urban Poor – Parasite or Generator

Most of the previous studies regarding poverty consider urban poor as parasites i.e. they are continuously hampering the socio-economic and environmental conditions of the cities. In other words, we can say that urban poor are negatively the carrying capacity of the cities. However, the attitudes of urban analysts towards the residents of informal settlements have shifted over recent decades from essentially negative interpretations (Lerner, 1967).

But in the recent studies some researchers consider urban poor as economy-generator for the city. More positive view sees the urban poor as making a major contribution to the city by adding to its labour resources, contributing individual enterprise, including that engaged in recuperative production and consuming some of the city's production. Therefore, we can say that there is need to treat urban poor as economic generators for the cities.

Conclusion

An attempt has been made in this article to convey the situations of urban poor in the India. Every year many people migrate to urban areas in search of a better life, however, lack of income generating opportunities leaves them vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, with little or no means to combat extreme

poverty. They have limited skills, little or no literacy, and usually, no social network.

The poverty situation in larger urban areas is often highly visible and difficult to ignore, but public policy responses are complicated by issues of illegality. The kinds of issues faced by the urban chronically poor include unemployment and underemployment, high food prices, population explosions, homelessness, lack of sanitation, and migration.

Finally we can conclude it in the words of Perlman (1974) that the urban poor are not economically marginal but exploited, not socially marginal but rejected, not culturally marginal but stigmatized and not politically marginal but manipulated and repressed.

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My Childhood

Eddie J. Girdner

(A chapter from my autobiography)

It was an isolated and sheltered life on the old farm in North Missouri. Before going to school, my only companion for play was my sister. Living in the countryside and off the main road, hardly any people came to visit us and we hardly ever visited others. This was in the 1950s.

My grandmother and grandfather lived in Princeton, which was five miles away, and we sometimes visited them. My mother was over-protective, not allowing us to do anything rough and tumble as most kids do. That is perhaps why I turned my activity to work on the farm. It was an outlet that provided some sense of accomplishment and enjoyment that I missed through recreation.

I begged for a bicycle but was never allowed to have one. This was to take its toll later in India when I arrived and was required to ride a bicycle on a tour of villages. Also I was not taken to the pool and taught how to swim nor given the opportunity to learn as our mother was afraid that we would drown.

All of this is quite ironic when one considers that my parents were very religious. According to their faith, it seems that they should have trusted that God would protect us. The summers could be quite hot, but sometimes there were cool and very wet years when it rained far too much for the crops. The river would overflow and the entire crop would be lost. If an overflow was coming, my father would get the watermelons out of the field in a wagon and bring them to the yard.

The wheat was threshed with a big old-fashioned threshing machine. This was a community operation as it took a whole crew of men to collect the wheat and put it through the machine. The wheat had to be cut and bound with a binder pulled by horses. Then the bundles would be collected and brought

* Fethiye, Turkey.

to the threshing machine and put through the machine to get the grain.

Farmers from the whole neighborhood would come along with their wives, who did the cooking for the entire crew. It meant going to the garden and getting vegetables, washing, cooking and preparing them. It meant going to the chicken house, catching chickens and killing and plucking them and cooking fried chicken. All of this had to be done in time for dinner. In those days, it was done on a wood stove. So it was a hot job in the summertime.

Before we had electricity, we had the old filament lamps that were lit with kerosene. When the filament burned out, they would catch fire and go up in flames and smoke. My father hired Clarence Henley, a local farmer and member of our church, to help him wire the house for electricity when I was about seven years old. The electric company ran the wires through the countryside for rural electrification which was a government program.

My mother did the ironing with the old irons that were heated on the top of a wood-burning cook stove. She also heated water on top of the cook stove for bathing. Even after the family had electricity, we would heat water on the stove for taking a bath. On Saturday evening in the winter, each kid would take a bath in a large metal wash tub behind the big "Warm Morning" heating stove in the living room. It was the warmest place in the house. Later, we got an electric hot water heater which made things easier with hot water in the bathroom.

One time my uncle Dave Sparks came to stay for a few days. He was somewhat mysterious to me. He would chop wood for the cook stove. He liked to sit in the easy chair in the living room and read an old novel that he found on our shelves. He had walked from Princeton to the farm which was almost

five miles.

Before electricity, the family had an old radio that was powered by a large rectangular dry cell battery. I remember listening to the radio with my mother in the afternoon when I was a small child. Around four o'clock we would walk up the hill to meet the school bus and bring my sister Freddie home. I liked to listen to "Buttons and Bows" and "The Wabash Cannon Ball." When the "Bohemian Band" came on, it was time to start up the hill. We did not know much about what was going on in the outside world. We lived in isolation in the small green valley in North Missouri.

One day I went with my father to a neighboring farm, the Delameters. He needed to get a piece of farm equipment welded. I was told not to watch the welding as it would put my eyes out. I was very frightened from it and I tried to hide my eyes on the back of the seat of the car, but was afraid. I ran down the road toward the Delameter house. They took me inside where there was a piano and I was feeling very foreign and strange.

Our farm, where we grew up, was a fun place for kids but the bad side of it was that we didn't have any friends to play with. Summer days in July and August were sometimes sweltering but the mornings were cool with heavy dews. Late in the evenings, the lingering sun slowly settled beneath the western hill. In the dusk, I sometimes sat on the porch by the old well curb with my sisters and brother. The air was saturated with moisture creating a blue haze over the long rows of golden tasseled corn in the bottom.

We had an old dog, named "Blackie," who would nuzzle up to us. As the darkness fell, whippoorwills would begin to call from the trees on the hill. One could often hear the put-put-put of an old John Deere tractor somewhere in the bottom as a farmer worked late.

The evenings would be filled with a sort of foreboding, a lingering sadness. I would linger in the cool of the evening listening to the whippoorwills, the rising cadence of the crickets and honey locusts and watch the fireflies drifting through the air.

Sometimes the big mosquitoes would come out and drive one from the cool air into the house.

Another day of a childhood was coming to a close, a childhood in which there was little joy and a heavy burden of guilt. A conviction of sin and the inescapable load of guilt weighed upon everyone, upon heads and hearts. We sank under its burden as evening fell and darkness once again enveloped us. Unmoved by the prayers and silent cries for mercy we breathed under the sheets, it dissipated only with the morning, the brilliant sunshine and the promise of honest hard work. I prayed that I would not go to hell if Jesus came before morning.

About dusk we had to get the chickens inside the chicken house and shut the door for the night. Sometimes it was an almost impossible task if the chickens took a notion to roost in the trees. We were afraid they would be caught before morning by an owl, a hawk or a fox.

The old hand-driven corn-sheller sat in the crib of the rickety old barn. We used it to shell corn for fattening calves and feeding the chickens. I worried a lot about my mother. She said she had "pains around her heart" and I was terribly afraid that she was going to die momentarily. I felt all the guilt for this falling upon myself. I was afraid she would die if I did anything wrong but I also felt like I could never do anything right. I felt guilty as hell. But I tried hard. I did as much work on the farm as I could.

In the mornings, I sometimes went to the garden to pick green beans. We would have bush beans in early summer and pole beans or Kentucky Wonder beans in August. The rich soil produced green beans by the bushel basket full. One day a man named Trilby Mulvania, who lived somewhere around Princeton, came down the road to our place in an old pickup truck. We saw him and could tell that he was drunk.

When he left from our gate on the hill, he missed the turn and ran his truck through Hugh King's barbed wire fence and went down into the pasture. It seems that he wandered around there for quite some time, drunk as a skunk, and incoherent. He took out the

fence and several fence posts but eventually found his way back out onto the road and back to town.

The next day my father went up the hill to the mailbox. He saw a gaping hole in the fence and wondered if it had been Trilby that had taken the fence out. Our neighbor, Gerald King, asked my father a few days later if he knew anything about it, thinking that perhaps it had been one of us. Then his father figured out that it must have been Trilby who did it.

Sometimes there would be a grasshopper year when most of the crops would be eaten up by the voracious insects.

We always had big gardens and grew a lot of garden produce. I had to do a lot of work in the gardens. I was fascinated by all things agricultural. I loved the smell inside the barn. And was fascinated being around animals. When I was small, we had sheep. I liked them and the way they smelled.

I liked the woods and liked building things. I had all of the normal childhood sicknesses, such as mumps, measles and chicken pox. I had some out of my head experiences that frightened my mother. One summer I was sick in bed with whooping cough. I would read books but imagined at the same time that I was eating peanuts, those small Spanish peanuts that are round and salted.

They were so delicious. They were the kind I used to buy in the five and ten cent store in Trenton. I imagined that there was a huge hopper above me somewhere near the ceiling of the room and a curvy pipe that led down to my mouth where they ran out to keep me supplied with the salty nuts.

I read a lot of books that summer. The bookmobile would come about once a week around to the houses in the countryside. We would check out about ten books. I would read them in bed while trying to get over the whooping cough. I started liking academic books, such as geology. I liked to understand such things.

We were taken to Sunday school every week. We did not go to town very often for shopping. But we went to church a lot, the Assembly of God Church

in Princeton. There was an all-pervading influence of religion on poor white farmers and some of the townsfolk. It greatly restricted our activities. This fundamentalist sect was very strict in those days, only beginning to liberalize in the 1960s and 70s. It was forbidden to go to the movies and, of course, there was no TV in those days. Dancing was prohibited.

Also one could not drink anything intoxicating. They were "teetotalers" and the women were not supposed to wear any kind of makeup, powder or paint, or to fix themselves up in stylish clothes. Use of tobacco was also prohibited. Cursing was considered a sin.

Many activities that ordinary children enjoy were forbidden to me and my sisters and brother. We lived a very isolated and sheltered life on the farm. The children who grew up in the towns had much greater opportunities. But the tragedy was that with the pervasive religious atmosphere, we could not take advantage of even the slim opportunities that existed. There was a movie theater at Princeton and one at Trenton, twenty miles away, but we were never allowed to go to the shows. On the other hand, we had to spend hours and hours at church. The effect was to cut us off from the culture and a normal socialization.

My parents also thought it was an imposition to go to school events. We were taught that it was a sin to participate in school sports or to go to ball games. We were never really encouraged to participate in anything except religion. So we always took a back seat. At least this was true for me.

On the other hand, my mother wanted me to learn to play the piano but there was no role model in the family who I could emulate. Of course, my sister was learning to play the piano, but I didn't particularly want to be like her. There was really nothing in the cultural milieu to make me like music. The only music we knew was church music. I remember that when chamber orchestra music would come on the radio, my mother would rush to turn it off, saying that it was just like being in a room where "they were filing saws."

But there were rather folksy songs that stick in my mind from my early childhood such as “The Wabash Cannon Ball.” I remember hearing this song on our old radio, run by a large battery that was bigger than the radio itself. Religion was the major shaping force in our lives. It enforced a sense of shame and guilt.

This was driven home weekly, if not daily, especially during times of revivals. But along with the guilt, there was often a bitter feud going on in the churches. The biggest and longest lasting feud began with the arrival of a new preacher. Right away, the little flock began to line up, pro and con, and peck each other to pieces.

When I was in grade school, I started a project to make maple syrup from the big sugar maples that grew on the hill. I found an old iron tap in the wood house that was used for that purpose. It had a hook for hanging a bucket for catching the sap. I bored a hole to put it into the tree. I collected the syrup from the tin pail in the early Spring (April) once a day. It was then boiled down to make maple syrup.

Another time when I was in the eighth grade, I made a bow from a hickory tree. It was a class project. I didn't have any money to buy the type of wood recommended to make a bow, so I just cut down a small hickory tree and sawed out a piece from the trunk and cut it down to the proper shape to make the bow. It was quite successful. I then used round dowels to make the arrows.

Before I went to school, I would go with my father to Princeton to the local sale barn where they auctioned livestock. Traders brought truck-loads of apples in the Fall. My father would generally buy a bushel to take home as they were cheap. One time I remember my father buying a truck load of sheep.

When I was about twelve, I ordered a small box camera from the Sears Roebuck catalog. I went around the farm making pictures and collected them in an album. They were from black and white film and helped me to learn something about photography. Our relative deprivation included not having access to magazine or newspaper

subscriptions, except for a very few.

We would get the Princeton Post Telegraph which carried local news and came once a week. My mother also took the “Cappers Weekly” that was published in Kansas. It was a tabloid that carried some news as well as stories and other features mostly for country people. Most magazines came to us second hand. My Uncle William would give us their old Life Magazines and Look Magazines. They had nice pictures, so it was nice to look through them. But we were quite isolated from the outside world.

Because of this, it was difficult for us to develop any depth of self-esteem. We would suffer from the system of class repression which is prevalent in a small community like Princeton. Being poor and rural, we were looked down upon in the eyes of the kids from Princeton. It was only the kids from the well-off business families in Princeton who were really “in.” These kids enjoyed popularity in school and got most of the honors mainly because of who they were.

The radio was a small outlet to the world. My father liked to listen to the world news on the radio in the evenings when I was small. Sometimes I would listen to programs such as “Dragnet,” about the FBI. I had no idea about what it was about or what it meant. During the day, my mother would listen to “homemaker” programs from a station in Shenandoah, Iowa. In the mornings, we would hear the “Don McNeal Breakfast Hour.” There was also farm news about crops and markets. This was all before television.

The family had an old fashioned hand-ring telephone but it was not always in working order, as the line would sometimes fall down on the ground and stop working. It was a party line and every house on the line had a particular signal which was their “ring.” It would be a “long” and “two shorts” or “two longs” and a “short” and so on.

To get a long distance call was practically unknown, and a big event. There were only a few times when my father or mother talked to anyone long distance. Usually this was when there was a death in the

family. Of course the party line allowed the women of the neighborhood to listen in and catch up on all the neighborhood gossip.

When I was growing up, the family would sometimes go to Trenton on Saturdays, especially after my father started working at the Electric Plant in Princeton. My father had little money to spend, but at least he was working and getting paid regularly. His income was not so tightly linked to farming as before. Uncle Ray, Daddy's brother, was doing most of the farming. Sometimes he hired Harlan Drago, a relative, to do some of the farm work. It enabled my father to get away from the farm to some extent.

Going to Trenton on Saturday became almost a routine although my father hated to go. At "Five Points" in the town, the main barber shop was on the corner. My father almost always took me and my brother, Mike, there to get a hair-cut. When I was in High School, the style was a 1950s crew cut. One would have quite long waits on Saturday even though there were three barbers working. My father called it "paying his dog taxes."

Before we started going to Trenton, I sometimes got my haircut at the barber shop on the south side of the square in Princeton, run by "Moon" Mullins. I hated going there for a haircut and preferred going to Trenton. It was embarrassing for me to go there with my father for a haircut. I was afraid some of my school friends might see me there.

There was one incident where my mother had a fight with the barber because she thought he cut my hair too short. After the haircut I would go around in the stores in downtown Trenton along the main street. There was an old Woolworth "five and ten-cent store" across the street from a Mattingly's. Both stores sold the same type of cheap things. For me, it was fun to wander through the stores and look at all the trinkets for sale.

At the old Woolworth five and ten cent store there was a candy and peanut counter along the south side of the store. I loved the smell of the roasting peanuts under a bright light bulb. When I had a couple of dimes or a quarter, I would buy a bag of Spanish peanuts, the small roasted peanuts that

tasted so good.

There was a round container that rotated inside the counter under a bright lamp. This made the salty peanuts look irresistible. In the old Mattingly's store there was a toy loft in the back on the second floor. This store later burned down, or perhaps was burned down as often happened in small town stores when demand was down.

I liked to buy small rolls of caps (gunpowder) that could be exploded in a little toy gun, or by pounding them on a cement surface. I also loved the packages of black licorice candy that was rubbery and had a delicious anise flavor. Another favorite of mine was licorice flavored gum called "Black Jack." Another flavor was called "Beach Nut."

When I had enough money, I would buy Almond Joy and Mounds candy bars. They were the most delicious and practically melted in one's mouth. We shifted to Trenton for most of our shopping once my father was working. Many others in Mercer County were doing the same, as the stores in Princeton slowly died. Better automobiles and roads cut down the travel time and made the trip easier. This accelerated the economic decline of Princeton and Mercer County. There were not enough people in the county to provide a viable market.

One day when father was driving in Trenton, a policeman spotted him driving the wrong way on a one-way street. The policeman came up and told him: "You are going the wrong way. This is a one way street." My father replied: "Well that's what I thought." In 1961 when John Kennedy began to have live TV broadcasts of his news conferences, we could see a little of what went on in Washington, DC.

John Kennedy's open style in press conferences, while deceptive, made us feel like we were more a part of what was happening there in government. It was quite educational for us. It was an important change from the Eisenhower years, when we didn't have any information about what the Government was doing. The trust in the government was high in the fifties.

One cannot, of course, ever go back home again. Only in memory can one recapture fragments of a past one has struggled to escape and seeks to understand. The love, emotion, fear, uncertainty, hopes of childhood, and rural poverty, amidst natural wealth, and the moral rigors of Protestant fundamentalism filled our lives. We trudged through knee-deep snow in sub-zero winter mornings to do the chores and catch the school bus at the top of the hill. Sometimes the crops were lost by overflows in the River Bottom.

Generally there were good harvests. In the winter, we lived around the big round heating stove in the living room that would turn red on cold nights. We filled it with green hickory wood and watched fearfully in case the house might catch on fire. It would sometimes belch black smoke into the room when too much damp coal had been poured in. The floor of the house would shake when my father dropped a big stick of green hickory wood into its belly to hold the fire till morning.

In the opposite end of the house the old cook stove would turn white hot in the morning and the stove pipe would turn red up to the wall when overheated. One night Mama fell in the living room in front of the big stove, flat on her back and we rushed into the room to see if she was ok.

There was melting snow in the Spring time and deep mud. We walked out in the cold mornings and rode across frozen ruts in the wagon. There was much variation in the rainfall from year to year. Sometimes it would rain very often and other years would be very dry. Sometimes we would have a big heavy rain.

Usually these rains came in the afternoon after a hot and humid day and often with hail. It was fun because we could stand on the porch and watch water pour off the roof by the bucket-full. Sometimes we would put out tubs and buckets under the eaves to catch part of it. The water would rush off the hill behind the house and flood the backyard.

The small branch which ran in front of our house would swell larger and larger, sometimes out to the road that ran next to the yard fence. Sometimes big

logs would come floating down the branch which ran down into the fields through a channel and swampy area covered with willow and cottonwood trees. The old lake had some fish in it and sometimes neighbors would come down and catch fish out of that swamp.

Sometimes the storms would come with a lot of wind and limbs would blow out of the trees in the yard. We never had a tornado but often there were funnel clouds that passed over and small tornadoes in the area. When we thought a bad storm was about to hit, Mama would grab the lantern. We would light it and head for the cave below the smokehouse. The storm clouds always came in from the West, that is, almost always, and since we had a hill on the west side, the storm would be very close before we realized that it was dangerous. There wasn't very much time.

Often we would stand on the porch by the old well curb watching the clouds coming in from the North-east. We could tell if it was going to be a bad cloud, we thought, if the cloud looked green, and we could see the turbulence, the swirling wind in it. Sometimes when such a storm cloud would come up, it would get very dark. One would hear the wind catch the Elm trees around the house, and we would take refuge in the old cave.

Often these clouds would produce big pieces of hail. The temperature on a hot, muggy day could drop very rapidly as the ice came down and covered the ground. It was quite a scary thing and usually there would be some limbs off the trees to play under and carry out of the yard after the storm was over. After we got electricity it was not unusual for the power to go out during a storm. One storm took the top out of the big Walnut tree in the front yard. A sizable portion of the tree was gone after that.

Sometimes the weather would set a pattern and rain would continue, generally in the late afternoons, or during the nights, until the ground was completely saturated. The streams and river were filled and this could easily produce overflows and crop losses. The most dangerous months were July and August.

The old Princeton Grade School and Gymnasium, the classrooms, and my first years in school remain deep in my memory.

There were school carnivals where toy trinkets were fished out of a glass tank. In the summers we watched old black and white films shown outside in the small town of Spickard. They would be old films about the Little Rascals or the Three Stooges. These images of memory pass before one's eyes as in a kaleidoscope. They are fragments which fit together into the whole of childhood memories.

The Fall was a nice part of the year on the farm. By the middle of August one began to feel the Fall season in the air. The leaves on the trees grew thinner and the leaves began to turn yellow. Some flutter to the ground. The walnuts on the tree are fully grown but still wrapped in a thick green hull. The tassels on the corn have turned brown and the weeds have overtaken the garden, winning the battle against the hoe in the end. The second cutting of fine-sweet-smelling alfalfa hay has been baled and stacked for the bitter cold days and nights of winter.

The Mullen stalks have grown tall around the hillsides, covered with small yellow flowers crowded around the tough stalk. The seeds have long ago fallen off the dark red sour-dock weeds. Iron weeds sport purple upright braids and the Bull Nettles with yellow blossoms line the dusty roads. The Wild Oats have ripened and the seeds cling to one's socks.

By August, the "Stick-tights" have ripened along the woods and stick to one's clothes when one chances to brush against them. The Pokeberry stalks are tall and thick, laden with their purple fruit. The

Milk Weed pods are full and will burst and release their wind-blown seeds on delicate parachutes. At frost, the Ragweed sends out its pungent scent. The Cottonwood trees with glossy leaves are starting to scatter their leaves on the ground.

In late August, the ripened weeds begin to give off their fall fragrances. They fill the air with natural pungent aromas. The soybean fields turn from August green to September yellow to October brown, amber, and dry in the lingering Indian summer sun. The corn fields turn brown, dry leaves rustling in the wind. The stalks are well-hung with long ears flopped out drying in the autumn sun and breeze. The pumpkins have grown large and orange on the vine. In August, the watermelons are large, ripe and sweet. The Okra plants were prickly and the pods had to be picked while still small and tender.

In the sky, one begins to hear the honking geese. Overhead they form a vee flying south. The trees on the hillsides shelter chirping blackbirds as they muster for the long trip to the southland. The short summer growing season comes to a close all too quickly. The fall is tinged with an aura of sadness, and stock taking. One season passes but there is also the promise of change and the continuing cycle. It is a time for a change of pace and a change of tempo, a dying and renewal. The seasons are quite sharply marked off.

This is a dimension clearly missing in warmer climates. The winter is a sort of night through which one passes and the spring is a promise and renewal. There is no summertime Santa Claus as in California. This tends to make life a little more rigid and perhaps a little more disciplined.



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Financing Food Security Bill

Dr. C. Raja*

[The National Food Security Act (NFSA), passed by both houses of Parliament, was given assent by the President on September 12, 2013, and it has now become an Act. This landmark legislation is perhaps the largest food security program in the world. The Act is indeed an important effort to ensure that the majority of population in India has access to adequate quantity of food at affordable prices.]

The Food Security Act (FSA) proposes to cover 75 percent of the rural population, and 50 percent of the urban population with an entitlement of 5 kg per person per month of food grains at issue prices of Rs. 2 and 3 per kg for wheat and rice respectively. The poorest households will receive an additional 10 kilograms of food grains per household to protect their existing allocations. The state-wise inclusion ratios are determined by the Planning Commission based on a national-level cut-off for per capita consumption to cover 75 percent and 67 percent of rural and urban populations respectively.

The FSA is a first step in ensuring the universal right to food. While I have reservations about the Act, and specifically about targeting and the exclusion of a substantial section of the population from the right to food, I shall focus first on the pressing issue of implementation of the Act. In implementing the FSA, there are some important lessons we can learn from the Brazilian experience. Brazil was in fact the first country in the world to legislate a right to food.

This was part of the now-famous Fome Zero or Zero Hunger Programme of the Brazilian government that has become known worldwide as a major successful intervention in the sphere of food security. In 2010, by means of a Constitutional Amendment, the right to food was added to the list of social rights in the Brazilian Constitution, thus providing a permanent legal basis for interventions such as the Zero Hunger Programme.

* Faculty of Commerce, Madurai Kamaraj University College, Madurai.

The core of the Zero Hunger Project was an appropriate combination of structural policies and compensatory policies. The need for such a combination came from the understanding that hunger in Brazil stemmed from three main factors: the specific pattern of growth resulting in low aggregate demand on account of high income inequalities and unemployment; low purchasing power on account of the relation between food prices and wages; and the exclusion of the poorest sections of society from the market.

Objectives of the Study

The following are the objectives of the study

1. To study the financial implication of food security act.
2. To study the cost of implementing the national food security act.
3. To analyse the budget expenditure on food subsidy.

Need for the Food Security Bill (FSB)

In view of the fact that the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), which provides food grains, sugar and oil at highly subsidized prices to the poor, being already in place; one can raise the question as to what is the need for the FSB. The main problem with the TPDS is that it does not effectively reach the poor. The effectiveness of PDS in reaching the poor consumers is based on household level NSS data for the year 1986-87. Besides, the PDS mechanism entailed following shortcomings:

- In most states more than half the poor did not get any cereals from PDS. Among those who got any cereals from PDS, the average among the poor was less than 3 Kg per person per month.
- The value difference between PDS price and the price at which the households in the five percentile groups bought from the market came to around Rs.3 per person per month for all five percentiles groups constituting the poor.
- For reaching Re.1 of income support to the poor, the government spent more than Rs. 5 for PDS operations.

This scenario has not changed much since then. As per the 2004-05 NSS survey, households in the bottom quintile obtained 17 per cent of their food grains consumption from PDS for the country as a whole. The percentage varied from 2 percent for Bihar, 6 percent for UP to 50 percent for Tamil Nadu and 68 percent for Karnataka. In 2009-10, 58 percent of the bottom 40 percent of the rural households accessed cereals from PDS. It still excluded about 40 percent of the poor.

Cost of Implementing FSA

Undoubtedly, the FSA has been passed; nevertheless, there are a number of grey areas that have to be resolved for smooth functioning of the schemes. The focus should now shift to implementation of these issues, rather than the discussion being stuck in what the total cost of implementation might be.

Although the bill expands coverage to 67 percentage of the population, it does not provide any identification criteria based on which beneficiaries will be chosen. The Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC) data can give some

direction on how this can be done, but it has not yet been verified and made public.

Some of the poorer states will see a massive expansion in PDS. Assam, Bihar and Jharkhand will have coverage of about 85 percentage of the population in rural areas under the FSA and in UP, Odisha and Madhya Pradesh around 80-82 percentage. Some of these states happen to be those where reform of the PDS has not yet taken off.

Systems of storage, distribution, accountability and monitoring have to be put in place to ensure that there is minimal leakage and people get their entitlements. The expansion in PDS under the NFSA especially in these states has the potential to revive the PDS and alleviate hunger. State governments must be pressurized to ensure that this opportunity is not missed.

Many state governments have already been spending a lot of additional funds from their own budget to expand the PDS budget. Since they will not get more support from the Centre, states can consider adding to this universalizing the PDS in at least the most backward districts, including other commodities such as pulses and oils, giving a larger quantity of cereals, introducing community kitchens serving low-cost nutritious meals and so on.

Until recently, India spent about 4 per cent of GDP on infrastructure investments (today that fraction is close to 7 per cent). Spending half per cent of GDP would have been a small amount of investment *per se*, but a large amount of investment for the poor. This investment would have borne benefits in terms of better nutrition, higher productivity, lower costs of healthcare, higher incomes and lower poverty; and with very little leakage and no more than the normal quota of corruption for public sector contracts.

Table- 1

Production and Procurement of Cereals (million tons)

Year	Production (Rice+What)	Production (Rice, Wheat and Coarse Cereals)	Procurement of Cereals (including Coarse	Procurement as % of Total Cereal Production (including Coarse Cerels)

2000-01	154.7	185.7	35.9	19.3
2001-02	166.1	199.5	43.0	21.6
2002-03	137.6	163.7	35.5	21.7
2003-04	160.7	198.3	39.3	19.8
2004-05	151.8	185.2	42.3	22.8
2005-06	161.1	195.2	43.5	22.3
2006-07	169.2	203.1	34.3	16.9
2007-08	175.3	216.0	40.1	18.5
2008-09	179.9	219.9	58.2	26.5
2009-10	169.9	203.4	57.8	28.4
2010-11	182.9	226.3	56.9	25.1
2011-12	200.2	242.2	63.4	26.2
2012-13	197.8	237.4	70.6	29.8

Source: Agriculture Statistics, Ministry of Agriculture.

Apart from the cost projections of the NFSA, there are also some other fears being propagated that this bill can actually harm the economy. One is in relation to the amount of food grains required and its impact on farmers, production and procurement. Table 1 shows that production and procurement of cereals has overall been increasing since 2000-01 (coarse cereals are also supposed to be provided under NFSA and have been included here although currently very low quantities are procured). The current procurement at about 30 percent of production is sufficient for the implementation of the NFSA. Even without including coarse cereals, the required procurement will not be higher than about 32 percent of production.

Financial Implications of the NFSB 2011

The NFBS 2011, in its financial memorandum talks about the items for which financial requirements are to be borne by various levels of governments. However, there is considerable ambiguity as regards the quantum of resources to be required for

implementation of the proposed legislation. The memorandum itself states that it is very difficult to arrive at a concrete estimation of the costs required for implementing the proposed legislation; however, there are a couple of estimates available in the public domain as to how much resources would be required for implementing the NFSB 2013, including the one from the Government of India.

The cost is estimated to increase to Rs. 1,40,192 crore and Rs. 1, 57, 701 crore in 2014-15 and 2015-16, respectively. This is assuming a 10 per cent increase in MSPs and economic costs, and a 1.7 per cent annual increase in total population 2.8 per cent increase in urban, and 1.16 per cent increase in rural, based on the average annual increase over 2001-2011.

The incremental food subsidy over and above the existing TPDS is estimated at Rs.23,951 crore. This is equivalent to 0.2 per cent of the gross domestic product. The incremental subsidy is the difference between the estimated cost of the NFSB and the cost of the existing TPDS at Rs.1,00,551 crore.

Table -2**Combined Budgetary Expenditure on Food Subsidy**

Year	Expenditure on Food Subsidy by Centre	Expenditure on Food Subsidy by States	Total Expenditure on Food Subsidy	Expenditure on Food Subsidy as % of Total Combined Budgetary Expenditure (in %)	Expenditure on Food Subsidy as % GDP (in %)
1990-91	2450	42.4	2492.4	1.6	0.4
2000-01	12060	492.7	12552.7	2.3	0.6
2004-05	23280	1199.1	24479.1	3.0	0.8
2005-06	23077	1163.2	24240.2	2.6	0.7
2006-07	24014	1119.6	25133.6	2.3	0.6
2007-08	31327.9	1380.3	32708.2	2.6	0.7
2008-09	43751.1	2542.9	46294.0	3.0	0.8
2009-10	58442.7	3677.6	62120.3	3.4	1.0
2010-11	63843.8	3782.6	67626.4	3.2	0.9
2011-12	72823	4270.1	77093.1	3.1	0.9
2012-13	75000	4628.6	79628.6	2.8	0.8

Source: *Yojana* December, 2013

Total combined budgetary expenditure towards food subsidy by the Union and state governments, which stood at Rs. 2492 crore in 1990-91, increased to Rs. 12553 crore in 2000-01 and further to Rs. 79629 crore in 2012-13 (as in table-2). Even though, in absolute terms, the increase may seem impressive, it is important to emphasise that either as a share of combined budgetary expenditure, or of GDP, there is hardly any increase in food subsidy, as shown in column 5 and 6 of table-2.

Conclusion

The National food security Act 2013 guarantees subsidized food grains to two-third of 1.2 billion plus population. It has also provision of providing 5 kgs of food grain (cereals) per person per month at prices Rs.3, Rs.2 and Rs.1 per kg of rice, wheat, and millets respectively for a period of three years from the date of commencement of the Act. The

Act claims to provide citizens to access to adequate quantity of quality food at affordable prices to “live a life with dignity,” and to provide for food and nutritional security in human life cycle approach.

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Crimes against Women and Law

Mrs. Suman Gupta*

[The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2013 was enacted by the Parliament of India to make the laws related to crime against women more stringent and deterrent. In the backdrop of Delhi gang-rape case in December 2012, every individual of this country was forced to debate about this barbarous act and growing acts of crime against women. We have witnessed the revival of deterrent theory of punishment in the era of reformatory phase. This legislation can also be termed as a true reflection of the will of the people especially women of this country.]

Following are the salient features of the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2013¹ promulgated on 3rd of February, 2013:

A. Law relating to Rape² [Section 375, 376, etc.]

The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2013 has substituted sections 375, 376, 376A, 376B, 376C and 376D of the Indian Penal Code by new provisions making the law more clear and strict. First of all, newly inserted section 375 defines the offence of rape in express terms. It is pertinent to mention here that the age of consent has been raised from 16 years to 18 years. Section 375 is reproduced as under

Rape [Section 375]: A man is said to commit "rape" if he-

- a. Penetrates his penis, to any extent, into the vagina, mouth, urethra or anus of a woman or

makes her to do so with him or any other person; or

- b. Inserts, to any extent, any object or a part of the body, not being the penis, into the vagina, the urethra or anus of a woman or makes her to do so with him or any other person; or
- c. Manipulates any part of the body of a woman so as to cause penetration into the vagina, urethra, anus or any part of body of such woman or makes her to do so with him or any other person; or
- d. Applies his mouth to the vagina, anus, urethra of a woman or makes her to do so with him or any other person, under the circumstances falling under any of the following seven descriptions:

First – Against her will.

Secondly – Without her consent.

Thirdly – When her consent has been obtained by putting her in fear of death or of hurt.

* Associate Prof., Dept of Pol. Sc., Government College for Girls, Chandigarh.

- Fourthly – With her consent, when the man knows that he is not her husband.
- Fifthly – When her consent has been obtained by reason of unsoundness of mind or intoxication.
- Sixthly – When she is under eighteen years of age.
- Seventhly – When she is unable to communicate consent³.

Here, consent means an unequivocal voluntary agreement when the woman by words, gestures or any form of verbal or non-verbal communication, communicates willingness to participate in the specific sexual act. However, a medical procedure or intervention shall not constitute rape.

Punishment for rape

According to Section 376(1), “Whoever, except in the cases provided for in sub-section (2), commits rape shall be punished with rigorous imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than seven years, but which may extend to imprisonment for life, and shall also be liable to fine”.

According to Section 376(2), enhanced punishment has been provided for rape in certain circumstances like custodial rape, repeated rape with a woman, rape by relatives, teachers etc., rape with pregnant woman, causing grievous bodily harm while committing rape, etc. The punishment prescribed under this head is rigorous imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than ten years, but which may extend to imprisonment for life and shall also be liable to fine.

The offenders of the following category shall be liable under this section for enhanced punishment:

- a. When a police officer commits rape.
- b. Whoever, being a public servant, commits rape on a woman in such public servant’s custody or

- in the custody of a public servant subordinate to such public servant⁴.
- c. If a member of the armed forces deployed in an area by the Central or a State Government commits rape in such area.
- d. Whoever, being on the management or on the staff of a jail, remand home or other place of custody established by or under any law for the time being in force or of a women’s or children’s institution, commits rape on any inmate of such jail, remand home, place or institution.
- e. Whoever, being on the management or on the staff of a hospital, commits rape on a woman in that hospital.
- f. If a relative, guardian or teacher of, or a person in a position of trust or authority towards the woman, commits rape on such woman.
- g. Rape during communal or sectarian violence.
- h. Rape on a woman knowing her to be pregnant.
- i. Rape on a woman when she is under sixteen years of age.
- j. Rape on a woman incapable of giving consent.
- k. Whoever, being in a position of control or dominance over a woman, commits rape on such woman.
- l. Rape on a woman suffering from mental or physical disability.
- m. If the offender causes grievous bodily harm or maims or disfigures or endangers the life of a woman while committing rape;
- n. Committing rape repeatedly on the same woman.

Punishment for causing death or resulting in persistent vegetative state of victim [Section 376A]

This section deals with rape and murder. Thus, it is not required to add section 302 with 376 for the offence of rape and murder. This section is applicable when the offender while committing rape

inflicts an injury which causes the death of the woman or causes the woman to be in a persistent vegetative state⁵. The offender is liable for any of the following three types of punishments when he is found guilty:

- a. Death sentence;
- b. Imprisonment for life, which shall mean imprisonment for the remainder of that person's natural life;
- c. Rigorous imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than twenty years.

Sexual Intercourse not amounting to rape [Section 376C]:

This section is applicable where the act of sexual intercourse does not come under the definition of rape as defined under section 375. This may happen in the cases of consensual sexual intercourse where consent has been given because of the position of authority or fiduciary relationship of the offender. This section reads as under:-

Sexual intercourse by a person in authority [Section 376C]

Whoever, being –

- a. In a position of authority or in a fiduciary relationship; or
- b. A public servant; or
- c. Superintendent or manager of a jail, remand home or other place of custody established by or under any law for the time being in force, or a women's or children's institution; or
- d. On the management of a hospital or being on the staff of a hospital, abuses such position or fiduciary relationship to induce or seduce any woman either in his custody or under his charge or present in the premises to have sexual intercourse with him.

Such sexual intercourse not amounting to the offence of rape, shall be punished with rigorous imprisonment of either description for a term which shall not be less than five years, but which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine.

Gang Rape [Section 376D]

It is pertinent to mention here that section 376D is sufficient to deal with the cases of gang rape and it is not required to add section 34 along with section 376. According to section 376D, where a woman is raped by one or more persons constituting a group or acting in furtherance of a common intention, each of those persons are deemed to have committed the offence of rape⁶.

The punishment for gang rape is rigorous imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than twenty years, but which may extend to imprisonment for life. It is mandatory to impose fine in such cases which shall be paid to the victim which shall be just and reasonable to meet the medical expenses and rehabilitation of the victim.

Punishment for repeat offenders [Section 376E]

This section is applicable for repeat offenders who have been previously convicted under section 376 or section 376A or Section 376D. The punishment provided for such offenders is imprisonment for life or death.

Marital Rape

There are some provisions which deal exclusively with marital rape. According to Exception 2 of section 375, sexual intercourse or sexual acts by a man with his own wife, the wife not being under fifteen years of age, is not rape. It simply means that sexual intercourse or sexual acts by a man with his own wife will amount to rape when the age of the wife is less than 15 years⁷. It is punishable under section 376(1) of the IPC. The case of sexual intercourse by husband with his wife during period of separation is dealt with under Section 376B of the IPC.

Cases related to Molestation

Under the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2013, section 354 has been made non-bailable and punishment has been increased up to imprisonment for five years. Some new provisions have been made under sections 354A, 354B, 354C and 354D to deal with various types of cases related to molestation⁸.

Assault or use of criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty [Section 354]

This section deals with the cases related to assault or use of criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty. According to this section, whoever assaults or uses criminal force to any woman, intending to outrage or knowing it to be likely that he will thereby outrage her modesty, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which shall not be less than one year but which may extend to five years, and shall also be liable to fine.

Sexual harassment and punishment for sexual harassment [Section 354A]

Section 354A defines the offence of sexual harassment which does not come in the purview of section 354. According to section 354A(1), a man shall be held guilty of the offence of sexual harassment, if he commits any of the following acts:

- a. Physical contact and advances involving unwelcome and explicit sexual overtures; or
- b. Demand or request for sexual favours; or
- c. Showing pornography against the will of a woman;

or

- d. Making sexually-coloured remarks.

Assault or use of criminal force to woman with intent to disrobe [Section 354B]

According to this section, any man who assaults or uses criminal force to any woman or abets such act with the intention of disrobing or compelling her to be naked shall be held guilty for this offence. The punishment prescribed for this offence is imprisonment of either description for a term which shall not be less than three years but which may extend to seven years, and the offender shall also be liable to fine.

Voyeurism [section 354C]

This section defines and makes provision for the offence of voyeurism. A man shall be held guilty of the offence of voyeurism if he watches, or captures the image of a woman engaging in a private act in circumstances where she would usually have the expectation of not being observed either by the perpetrator or by any other person at the behest of the perpetrator or disseminates such image.

Stalking [Section 354D]

Section 354D deals with the offence of stalking. According to section 354D (1), a man shall be held liable for the offence of stalking if –

- i. He follows a woman and contacts, or attempts to contact such woman to foster personal interaction repeatedly despite a clear indication of disinterest by such woman; or
- ii. He monitors the use by a woman of the internet, email or any other form of electronic communication.

Section 354D (2) provides punishment for stalking. Whoever commits the offence of stalking shall be punished on first conviction with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three years, and shall also be liable to fine. However, on a second or subsequent conviction, the offender shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to five years, and shall also be liable to fine.

However, the following conduct shall not amount to stalking if the man who pursued it proves that

- i. It was pursued for the purpose of preventing or detecting crime and the man accused of stalking had been entrusted with the responsibility of prevention and detection of crime by the State; or
- ii. It was pursued under any law or to comply with any condition or requirement imposed by any person under any law; or
- iii. In the particular circumstances such conduct was reasonable and justified.

Eve-Teasing [Section 509]

Section 509 of the Penal Code deals word, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman. Under this section the punishment has been increased upto three years.

Cases related to Acid Attack

The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2013 makes express provisions for the cases related to acid attack. Section 326A and 326B have been inserted under the IPC to deal with such cases. Section 326A will be applicable when grievous hurt is caused by throwing acid whereas section 326B is applicable for throwing acid or attempt to throw acid⁹. Both the sections are non-bailable and triable by the Court of Session. The provisions are as follows

Voluntarily causing grievous hurt by use of acid, etc [326A]

Whoever causes permanent or partial damage or deformity to, or burns or maims or disfigures or disables, any part or parts of the body of a person or causes grievous hurt by throwing acid on or by administering acid to that person, or by using any other means with the intention of causing or with the knowledge that he is likely to cause such injury or hurt, shall be punished with imprisonment of either

description for a term which shall not be less than ten years but which may extend to imprisonment for life, and with fine

Such fine shall be just and reasonable to meet the medical expenses of the treatment of the victim. Any fine imposed under this section shall be paid to the victim.

Voluntarily throwing or attempting to throw acid [Section 326B]

Whoever throws or attempts to throw acid on any person or attempts to administer acid to any person, or attempts to use any other means, with the intention of causing permanent or partial damage or deformity or burns or maiming or disfigurement or disability or grievous hurt to that person, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which shall not be less than five years but which may extend to seven years, and shall also be liable to fine.

Public servant disobeying direction under law [166A]

Section 166A has been inserted in the IPC which provides punishment to the public servants for disobeying the directions under law.

The punishment prescribed under this section is rigorous imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than six months but which may extend to two years, and the offender shall also be liable to fine. This section is cognizable and bailable.

Section 166B provides punishment for non-treatment of victim. This section is non-cognizable and bailable. It reads as under:

“Whoever, being in charge of a hospital, public or private, whether run by the Central Government, the State Government, local bodies or any other person, contravenes the provisions of section 357C of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year or with fine or with both.”

Amendments to the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973

A number of amendments have been made under the Code of Criminal Procedure. The main provisions are as follows¹⁰:

Statement of the victim to be recorded by a woman officer

In section 154 of the Cr.P.C., a proviso has been added which says that the statement of the victim of an offence under section 326A, section 326B, section 354, section 354A, section 354B, section 354C, section 354D, section 376, section 376A, section 376B, section 376C, section 376D, section 376E or section 509 of the Indian Penal Code shall be recorded by a woman officer. If a woman police officer is not available, a woman officer of any other department shall record the statement of the victim. If the victim is temporarily or permanently mentally or physically disabled, then such statement shall be recorded, at the residence of the person or at a convenient place of such person's choice.

Women, children, senior citizens or physically handicapped persons not to be called in the police station:

Section 160 of the Code of Criminal Procedure¹¹ has been amended and it has been provided that the following persons shall not be called in the Police Station for the purpose of recording of statement under section 161:

- a. A woman
- b. A person under the age of fifteen years or
- c. A person above the age of sixty-five years or
- d. A person mentally or physically disabled

Statement under section 164 is mandatory under certain circumstances

A new sub-section 164(5A) has been inserted under section 164 of the Cr.P.C. which says that it is mandatory to record the statement of the victim under section 164 by the judicial magistrate, if an

offence punishable under section 354, section 354A, section 354B, section 354C, section 354D, section 376, section 376A, section 376B, section 376C, section 376D, section 376E or section 509 of the Indian Penal Code has been committed on the victim.

It has also been provided that if the person making the statement is temporarily or permanently mentally or physically disabled, the Magistrate shall take the assistance of an interpreter or a special educator in recording the statement and the same shall be video-graphed.

Prosecution sanction under section 197 is not required in certain cases

It has been clarified that no sanction shall be required under section 197 of the Code of Criminal Procedure in case of a public servant accused of any offence alleged to have been committed under above sections.

Day-to-day proceedings and trial to be concluded in two months

Section 309 of the Code of Criminal Procedure has been amended which provides that in every inquiry or trial the proceedings shall be continued from day-to-day until all the witnesses in attendance have been examined, unless the Court finds the adjournment of the same beyond the following day to be necessary for reasons to be recorded.

It has been further provided that when the inquiry or trial relates to an offence under section 376, section 376A, section 376B, section 376C or section 376D of the Indian Penal Code, the inquiry or trial shall, as far as possible be completed within a period of two months from the date of filing of the charge sheet.

Amendment to the Indian Evidence Act 1872

Various provisions of the Indian Evidence Act¹² have been amended in the interest of the victim of offences related to rape, molestation etc. The salient amended provisions are as follows:

Evidence of character or previous sexual experience not relevant to certain cases [Section 53A]

In a prosecution for an offence under section 354, section 354A, section 354B, section 354C, section 354D, section 376, section 376A, section 376B, section 376C, section 376D or section 376E of the Indian Penal Code or for attempt to commit any such offence, where the question of consent is in issue, evidence of the character of the victim or of such person's previous sexual experience with any person shall not be relevant on the issue of such consent or the quality of consent.

Presumption as to absence of consent in certain prosecution for rape [Section 114A]

Amendment to the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012

Section 42 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 has been amended which says that whenever a person is liable under the provisions of this Act as well as relevant provisions of the Indian Penal code, the offender shall be liable for punishment which is greater in degree. The amended section 42 is as follows:

Alternate Punishment [Section 42]

Where an act or omission constitutes an offence punishable under this Act and also under sections 166A, 354A, 354B, 354C, 354D, 370, 370A, 375, 376, 36A, 376C, 376D, 376E or section 509 of the Indian Penal Code, then, notwithstanding anything contained in any law for the time being in force, the offender found guilty of such offence shall be liable to punishment under this Act or under the Indian Penal Code as provides for punishment which is greater in degree¹³.

Conclusion

On the basis of the above it can be concluded that the law of crime against women has been made considerably stringent. Even death sentence has been provided in certain cases. In most of the cases,

imprisonment for life has been treated as imprisonment for the remainder of the offender's natural life. Moreover, judicial discretion has been minimized by providing minimum punishment for the offences under various heads as mentioned above.

We can say that the legislature has performed its role by making strict provisions related to substantial as well as procedural law dealing with crime against women. Now, it is the turn of the police as well as judiciary to implement and adjudicate these provisions. At the same time, it is essential to prevent the misuse of such stringent provisions.

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Community-based Organizations and Women Empowerment

Ajay Kumar*

[Women's empowerment has multiple meanings and is associated with a diversity of strategies. For example, within mainstream development discourse of the 1990s, it was often used by organizations focused on enlarging the choices and productivity levels of individual women, for the most part, in isolation from a feminist agenda; and in the context of a withdrawal of state responsibility for broad-based economic and social support. However, in the 1970s, when the concept was first invoked by women's organizations, it was explicitly used to frame and facilitate the struggle for social justice and women's equality through a transformation of economic, social and political structures at the national and international levels. In addition, it recognized the importance of women's agency and self-transformation].

Women's empowerment¹ is assumed to be attainable through different points of departure, including political mobilization, consciousness raising and education. In addition, changes where and when necessary, in laws, civil codes, systems of property rights, and the social and legal institutions that underwrite male control and privilege, are assumed to be essential for the achievement of women's equality.

According to Batliwala (1994), empowerment is both a process and a goal. She states: "... the goals of women's empowerment are to challenge patriarchal ideology (male domination and women's subordination); transform the structures and institutions that reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and social inequality (the family, caste, class, religion, educational processes and institutions, the media, health practices and systems, laws and civil codes, political processes, development models, and government institutions); and enable women to gain access to, and control of, both material and informational resources."

Successful empowerment strategies also require the direct involvement of women in the planning and implementation of projects. The process of empowerment evolves like a spiral, involving

changes in consciousness, the identification of target areas for change, and analyses of actions and outcomes, "which leads in turn to higher levels of consciousness and more finely honed and better executed strategies" (Batliwala, 1994). As a result, empowerment cannot be a "top down or one-way process", nor can there be a fixed formula for its achievement.

In India self-help-group approach is currently being promoted as a key strategy for simultaneously addressing both poverty alleviation and women's empowerment. In this research paper role of community-based organizations especially self-help groups in women empowerment is examined.

Community-based Organization and Self-Help-Group

It is necessary to understand the concept of community-based organizations and self-help-group before to go further.

A community-based organization is an organization that provides social services at the local level. It is a non-profit institution whose activities are based primarily on volunteer efforts. This means that community-based organizations depend heavily on voluntary contributions for labour, material and financial support. (Silverman, 2004)

* Ph. D., Sociology, Kumaun University Nainital, Uttarakhand.

Nobel laureate Elinor Ostrom in her study on *Self-Governance and Natural Resources* appreciated community-based mechanisms of management of irrigation systems and forest resources in Himalayan region and defined community-based organization as an organization who self governs their resources on a sustainable and equitable basis at local level (Elinor, 1995).

Her experience of research in Nepal is briefly described in her 2002 article, "How Farmer-Managed Irrigation System builds Social Capital". She explained in this paper that farmers in Nepal are managing their resources through their community-based organizations which further strengthen social capital.

At present in Uttarakhand self-help groups are emerging as important community-based organizations that are providing space to the women for their upliftment (IFAD Report, 2010). A self-help-group (SHG) is a group of about 10 to 20 people, usually women, from a similar class and region, who come together to form savings and credit organization. They pool financial resources to make small interest bearing loans to their members. This process creates an ethic that focuses on savings first.

The setting of terms and conditions and accounting of the loan are done in the group by the members. SHGs exhibit certain distinct characteristics. They are participative in character and embody cooperative principles of collective endeavor for individual and community development by overcoming the deeply entrenched social bottlenecks and economic hurdles (Krishnaiah, 2003).

Data and Methodology

Data

The data used in this research are collected from the members of twenty five self-help groups, formed by the women of Falenda, Saraun, Akhori and Mundeti villages in Bhilangana valley of district Tehri Garhwal, Uttarakhand.

Stratified random sampling (lottery) method was used for selecting the SHGs and the respondents for the study. To select the respondent all the 25 SHGs were divided according to their date of formation in five strata, in that way the total universe was classified in five groups. At the next stage one SHG was selected randomly (lottery method) from each group.

Thus total 5 SHGs were selected for the study. At the last stage 9 members (because minimum numbers in each SHGs was 9) from each SHG were selected randomly (lottery method) for interview. In that way a sample of 45 members representing all the 5 SHGs were selected for the study.

Leaders of SHGs and representatives of MVDA² were selected by purposive sampling method for focused group discussion, so that the authentic information pertaining to the objectives of the study in particular may be achieved to draw the scientific conclusions out of the study.

Methods

Research design is a plan of investigation outlined before the commencement of the scientific research. According to Kerlinger (2005) "Research design is the plan, structure and strategy of investigation conceived so as to obtain answers to research questions and to control variance. Young (1982: 12-13) has aptly stated that 'the consideration which enters into making the decision regarding the what, where, when, how much, by what means constitute a plan of study or a study design'.

The research as such is a scientific undertaking that goes with some assumptions, deliberations and presumptions. What will be the problem of the study, where it is located, how much time does it take for its completion, by what means, methods, tools and techniques this study will be conducted etc altogether form the plan of the research, which we call design of the research.

The design of the research goes with some components. As Young (1982: 13) has said, 'A study design includes at least the following component parts which are interdependent and not

exclusive; 1- Source of information to be tapped, 2- Nature of study, 3- Objectives of study, 4- Socio- cultural context of the study, 5- Geographical area to be covered by the study, 6- Period of time to be encompassed, 7- Dimensions of the study, 8- The bases for selecting the dates, 9- techniques to be used in gathering the data’.

The component parts as suggested by Young are relevant enough. While working out the plan of the present research work those component parts have seriously been taken into consideration. Viewing the nature of the study problem, objectives of the study, type of information needed, the geographical area to be covered, the time duration, tools and techniques of the data collection and the nature of the universe, the impact evaluation research design have been used in this study.

While applying the research design, some essentials which are supposed to be followed for the success of the study were considered. The review of the pertinent literature, experience survey and analysis of insight stimulating cases were essential which were consciously taken for granted for the planned scientific study of the problem in hand.

For the collection of the reliable first hand information structured interview schedule is used. Focus group discussions with the leaders of SHGs were organized. Necessary secondary information has been collected through relevant secondary sources. The relevant books, research journals, public

document etc. were the main sources of the secondary information. Lastly the data, thus collected were classified, tabulated and analyzed as to reach to some conclusion.

Analysis

Social Empowerment of Women in Bhilangana Valley

In line with most theorists on empowerment the one has to view empowerment as taking place on different levels and that change on all levels is necessary if the empowerment of women is really to occur. In this study indicators like participation of women in developmental programmes and process of local self governance, decision making power of women in household and on social issues, drudgery on women and their mobility are taking into consideration. Analyses of this section are as follows.

Participation

The last decade of 20th century witnessed shift in the development paradigm and it put people’s participation at the center of all developmental processes (Neela Mukharjee, 2002). It was observed during field study that members of self-help groups consider people’s participation as a key to success of any developmental programme. Members of SHGs told that they became confident at social front after joining self-help groups and their participation in gram sabha, social ceremonies and development programmes has increased.

Table- 1: Participation

Indicators	Decreased %	Same %	Increased %	Highly Increased %
Participation in Gram Sabha	-	43.11	42.67	14.22
Participation in social ceremonies	-	5.78	94.22	-
Participation in developmental Programmes	-	13.33	49.78	36.89

Source: interview of SHG members

Above table reveals that participation of women in Gram Sabha, had increased. 94.22 percent members said that their participation in social ceremony increased after joining SHG. Most of the

members mentioned World Women Day, celebrated on 8th March as a big social ceremony in the valley. 29.77 percent members of the total were found members of newly form vigilance committees under

MGNREGA in the valley and took part in the process of social audit.

Women took part very actively in watershed development programme, fodder development programme and MGNREGA. Women are members in watershed committees, village development committees and user groups etc.

Decision-Making

In patriarchal society decision-making on any issue is inbuilt with males. Situation has found a little change in Bhilangana valley. Women told that after self-help-group movement this trend is undergoing change. However, migration of male member of family has also forced women to take decision on day-to-day family matters. But women feel that their decision-making power is improved after joining self-help-group.

Table- 2: Decision-Making Power

Indicators	Decreased	Same	Increased	Highly Increased	Can'tSay
On children's education	-	-	74.22	25.78	-
On purchasing of new assets	-	43.56	28.44	-	28.0
On crop selection for sowing	-	11.11	26.67	62.22	

Source: interview of SHG members

Above table shows that women's decision-making power on children's education is increasing. Members said that they discussed this issue in group meeting on a regular basis. They said that earlier they did not take part in teacher-parent meetings in school but after joining self-help groups their interaction with teachers is increased. Even they decide monthly menu for mid- day meal with teachers and students.

It was observed that farmers are doing agriculture by using System of Crop Intensification method in the valley. All the respondents informed that they were practicing System of Rice Intensification (SRI) and System of Wheat Intensification (SWI) for last three years. Even they are implementing this method in *pulses* and *Madwa* (course millet) also. They said that Mount Valley Development Association provided training and instruments in group to them.

62.22 percent members told that they took decision of implementing this method in the field. However, earlier other family members were not in fever but after seeing three continuous years' results everybody in the valley knows that production is increased by implementing this method. They further stressed that they could implement it only due to trust among the group members. Their decision-making power is increased on agriculture by this movement in the valley.

Drudgery

It was observed that most of the works like home-making, taking care of children, agriculture, collecting fuel wood and fodder and fetching water is done by the women in the valley. It was also observed that women were still over burdened. Reducing drudgery of women was also among the main objectives of many developmental programmes run through self-help groups in Bhilangana valley.

Table- 3: Status of Drudgery

Indicators	Highly Decreased %	Decreased %	Same %	Increased %
Distance covered in collecting fodder	54.67	42.67	2.66	-
Distance covered and time in fetching water	27.56	72.44	-	-

Source: interview of SHG members

Availability of fodder and water is increased in the *Sam Gadhera* watershed in Bhilangana valley after implementing watershed management programme, reported by the members. Many measures (engineering and vegetative both) were observed in the area. Roof rain water harvesting structures³ were also observed. All the respondents said that now distance and time is reduced in collecting fodder and fetching water. Pipe line supply of water was

also observed. Representative of Mount Valley Development Association said that whole credit of success of watershed development programme⁴ goes to self help groups.

Mobility

Social mobility is understood by any transition of an individual or social object or value—anything that has been created or modified by human activity—from one social position to another (Pitirim Sorokin, 1959).

Table- 4: Mobility Status

Indicators	Highly Decreased %	Decreased %	Same %	Increased %
Inclusion with upper caste (in case of Schedule Caste)	-	-	-	100

Source: interview of SHG members

Interestingly, groups having members of different casts (Rajput and SCs) were formed in the valley on an experimental basis. All the members belong to SC community told that their inclusion with upper cast is increased after joining self help group. Untouchability is reduced. Social relationship among the members is improved. They further told that earlier it was not possible for us to sit together with Rajputs. But now after joining SHGs they meet every month on a particular date, sit together and perform saving and inter- loaning activities. However, it all is in starting phase. But now they take tea together.

Empowering women politically through self-help-group movement in Bhilangana valley is the agenda. Various initiatives were told by Mount Valley Development Association representatives like awareness campaign on the issue of local self governance to empower women politically. Respondents said that earlier they did not participate in political activities in the area. But after long presence in self-help-group in 2008 many members of self-help groups contested Panchayat election for the post of pradhan, BDC members and ward members and won the election. Secretary of SAKHI sangathan⁵ Mrs. Beera Devi was elected Panchayat Pradhan from an unreserved seat.

Political Empowerment of Women through Self-Help Groups

Table- 5: Political Empowerment

Indicators	Decreased %	Same %	Increased %	Highly Increased %
Ability to speak in public	-	-	89.33	10.66
Understanding on Panchayati Raj system	-	5.78	94.22	-
Participate in public protests and political campaign	-	16	84	-

Source: interview of SHG members

Data in the above table show that 89.33 percent members said that their ability to speak in public

was increased after joining self-help-group. 94.22 percent respondents said that their awareness level was increased about Panchayati Raj Institutions and

systems. It is only due to series of awareness programmes organized in the valley for the members of self-help groups.

Many members accept that at present they are not in position to control the system but they are improving their access and control on it. Mrs. Beera Devi, Secretary Sakhi Sangathan and Panchayat Pradhan of Mundeti Gram Panchayat said, “I want to develop my Panchayat as Hiware Bazar, one of the model villages in the Ahmad Nagar district of Maharashtra”.

84 percent members said that their participation in public protests for their rights is increased. Members told that they fought for many issues like rehabilitation of villagers of Falenda village due to construction of hydro-electric project at Falenda village and unemployment allowance under MGNREGA etc.

Mrs. Beera Devi - Sakhis Made her Gram Pradhan

Mrs. Beera Devi is the member of Bala Sundari self-help-group started in 2000. She lives in the Mundeti Gram Panchayat of Bhilangana valley. She said that they started their group in the year 2000. She recalls that in early days it was difficult to initiate the ideas of social and political change despite

running several awareness campaigns on different issues in the Bhilangana valley then they soon realized that the answer to their problem lies in the strength within.

Mrs. Beera Devi had no doubt that in democracy what matter is the organization of people, therefore, she decided to unite all SHGs in Bhilangana valley to form the federation of self-help groups named as Bhilangana Sakhi Sangathan; a community-based organization with the support of MVDA. Since then their strength has gone to 1215 Sakhis from initial 205 members. They have been able to raise the funds up to 4.5 lakh.

During 2008 Uttarakhand Panchayat elections, Sakhi sangthan decided to contest after realizing the strength of their organization in Mudeti Gram Panchayat. Mrs. Beera Devi was nominated by the Sakhis to contest the post of Gram Pradhan and subsequently got elected despite being an unreserved seat. Mrs. Beera Devi credits her victory to the strength of the Sakhi Sangathan.

Economic Empowerment of Women through Self Help Group

Apart from social and political empowerment economic empowerment was also measured in the study.

Table- 6: Economic Empowerment

Indicators	Highy Decreased %	Decreased %	Increased%	Can't Say%
Regularity in Household Income	-	-	66.22	33.78
Decision Making Power on Fixing Price for their Produces	-	-	89.78	10.22
Decision Making on Borrowing Loan	-	-	100	-

Source: interview of SHG members

Above table reveals that regular income of the households has increased. 66.22 percent respondents replied that after joining self-help groups they were getting regular income. UMANG dairy⁶ is a big source of monthly regular income for the members. In *Grameen Mart*⁷, members sell their agriculture surplus and get seasonal regular income.

Both of above sources are also providing opportunity to its members to fix cost of their produce. However, price of any produce is fixed according to the market but 89.78 percent members said that their capability of fixing fair price of their produce is increased.

All the members accepted that their capability of borrowing loan has increased after joining self-help

groups. Mrs. Pushpa Devi of Sarun village and Mrs. Vijaya Devi from Falenda village told that they took loan in need from their group and members itself decide rate of interest for inter-lending in the group. It can be said that women are empowering themselves economically with a good strategy.

Findings

Impact of Self Help Groups on Women Empowerment

Social Empowerment

It is found from the analysis that the frequency of female participation in Gram Sabha after joining self-help groups has increased. It is also found that drudgery on women has been reduced. Due to watershed and fodder development programme in the valley, availability of water and fodder has increased. The time used and distance covered in water fetching and fodder collection has also been reduced. Credit of the efforts goes to self-help groups and their federations in the valley.

However, it is somewhat little early to say but it was felt during focus group discussions that inclusion and acceptance of SHG members belonging to SC category with other castes has increased. SHG members of SC community said that they now sit with the members of other castes in meetings and training programmes together. Earlier it was not possible. Even in big programmes and ceremonies they eat together. "It is a big change", members of SC community said. It can be said that in Bhilangana valley self-help-group movement is empowering women socially to a great extent.

Political Empowerment

It is found that members' ability of speaking among the people has increased. Women take part in Gram Sabha meeting and express their views. Their participation in the democratic process has increased. In the past, women exercised their right of voting for panchayat election but their vote was decided by the male members of the family. Now members decide it in groups and federation meeting.

This fact can also be seen in the light that males are absent from the family due to distant jobs. Women decide about their vote in group as per the interests and benefits of the group members. It may be seen as empowerment of women politically in the valley.

Economic Empowerment

Consistency in household income is increased. Respondents see it as an indicator of economic empowerment. Enterprise activities are one of the most important regular income sources, now it is part of the economy for members' families. They are now more capable to take economic decisions due to regular income.

Another indicator of empowerment is improved decision-making power. It was found that members' decision-making power on different issues has increased. One of the examples of it is decision-making power in fixing price for their produce. Women accepted that market forces are there in place and their role in fixing price is important, but now capability of getting fair price for their produce through UMANG dairy and Grameen Mart is increased. Apart from it, the decision making power on borrowing loan has increased. Groups have their own funds. Through inter-lending, members are free to take loan for a genuine reason.

Therefore, it is seen that the SHGs are providing opportunities for the upliftment of the rural poor women in the study area. Although, it is a long journey and many targets still remain to achieve. but SHGs are providing motivating environment to its members for development.

Conclusion

The findings from the analysis provide evidential support to conclude that the community-based organizations, especially self-help groups are playing great role in women empowerment in Bhilangana valley of district Tehri Garhwal in Uttarakhand. Women are now more empowered.

The entire observation and analysis indicates that SHGs are functioning well to organize the poor

women into a self-serviced forum. The SHG movement in Bhilangana valley is creating opportunities for the women to participate in the various developmental programs and political process. It has come out from the study that self-help groups are empowering women strongly in Bhilangana valley. In the valley, Self-help-group movement is now more than 12-years old. Above study also reveals that any movement of empowerment can only be successful when it is organized in a mission mode.

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Endnotes

1. This discussion of women's empowerment draws from a paper written by Diane Elson – Bisnath and Elson, 2000.
2. MVDA – Mount Valley Development Association is a voluntary organization that is closely associated with the self help group movement in Bhilangana Valley
3. Roof Rain Water Harvesting - The activity of collecting rainwater from the roof top
4. Watershed Development Programme- A programme for soil and water conservation
5. Sakhi Sangathan – A community based organization formed by self help groups in Bhliangana valley
6. Umang Dairy – A milk dairy run by the federation of self help groups in Bhilangana valley
7. Grameen Mart - A shop run by the federation of self help groups in Bhilangana valley to sell agriculture surplus of the members

