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- ❖ **Retreating Construct of International Relations**
- ❖ **Media Literacy & Conflict Resolution**
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Farmers' Plight!

It is saddening for us in India as a nation to claim ourselves as the fifth largest economy in the world when our Anna-data (food-provider) is forced to leave his farm and march frequently in protest in the national capital and state capitals to get his genuine grievances redressed without any fruitful outcome. Bulk of the farming community, especially the small and marginal farmers, is faced with multiple problems like indebtedness, inability to get proper price for the produce and an array of related problems. The apathy of any dispensation at the helm towards farm sector woes is deplorable. Declining trends in farm sector growth from 5.2 percentage point growth during the years of UPA-II to 2.5% under the present dispensation is worrisome. Neglect of key relief measure providers like MGNREGA and Food Security Act coupled with the bleak employment prospects in non-farm sectors in the wake of mounting debt problem has not only made farming in itself an unsuccessful proposition for the majority of farmers, but led many farmers commit suicides. Broad estimates show that between 1995 and 2015, a total of 3, 18, 528 farmers committed suicides. It does not bode well with fast growing economy like India.

Lack of an adequate policy framework especially for marginal and small farmers, is regarded as major factor for the miserable plight of farmers hailing from this category. According to some experts, the erstwhile Planning Commission, now replaced with NITI Aayog, had formulated cooperative self-help groups and farmer-producer organizations (FPOs) to assist the small and marginal farmers particularly; nevertheless, the FPOs are still in its embryonic stage in many states. MGNREGA, widely seen as an excellent short-term solution providing work to distressed farmers, has been reportedly eclipsed in the wake of budgetary cuts and machinations of the rich and influential farmers' role in derailing this programme in some states apparently to procure cheap labour for their farms. Such a scenario entails little options for the small and marginal farmers.

A dismal state of affairs pervading small and marginal farmers can be discerned from a recent survey by Lokniti-CSDS wherein nearly half of the farmers surveyed reported that the overall condition of farmers in the country was bad and only 15 per cent farmers said they were doing well. The worrying trend discernible from this survey is the revelation that in the past one year nearly one in every 10 farmers said that their family had to remain without food on a number of occasions. There is growing feeling among the small and marginal farmers that given an option they would quit farming. Another distressing picture emerges from the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), according to which during the last decade the bloated debt of Indian agricultural households has increased almost 400 percent while their undersized monthly income plummeted by 300 percent. The total number of heavily indebted households steeply increased during this period. It is further revealed that most farmers have fallen a prey to the rampant phenomenon of the cycle of poverty.

Additional shocking revelation is unveiled by a survey according to which bulk of the government subsidies are being usurped by big and medium farmers, leaving the small and marginal farmers sidelined. This survey also unfolds the fact that the subsidies are not being given based on needs, but on political considerations. Small and marginal farmers, owning small tracts of land, still continue to work on their land to eke out a living, despite host of problems, to keep their age-old bond with their land alive; nonetheless, the new generation is seemingly getting disenchanted with farming because they find it unsustainable for their new living style. The resultant impact is increasing influx to cities from the rural areas. While emphasizing on the need for arresting this influx, some experts stress on injecting the rural economy with new skill development programmes and expansion of non-farm activity in rural areas. Undoubtedly these suggestions entail investment and framing of adequate policy; nevertheless, these deserve serious consideration and sincere implementation. The recent demonstration by farmers in the capital has raised the demand for holding a special session of the Parliament dedicated to the agrarian crisis. Keeping in the fact that the farming community, especially the small and marginal farmers, are passing through a critical period, holding such session deserves priority.

— BK

Retreating Construct of the Contemporary IR

Ms. Amel Ouchenane*

[This article deals with the emerging trends in international relations in the post-Cold War period and takes into account the analytical assessments focusing on the interpretations of the contemporary geopolitical developments by the prevalent theories of International relations like liberalism, neo-liberalism, realism and neorealism and the new emerging thinking like Constructivism which has been dealt with appropriate analysis, albeit briefly. Ed.]

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the fall of Berlin Wall in 1989 indicated the end of the Cold War. The surprising end of the Cold War shifted not only the world order but also debates in international relations theories. It was unexpected by current international relations theories. Without any large conflict and war exploded furthermore, without any transformation in the world system (anarchical), for instance, neorealists predicted that the world's bipolar order would persist.

Neorealists also claimed that international institutions did not have any effect to make war away because International Institutions is a matter of material power challenge between states which are not only worried about the unlimited gain, but also relative gain in cooperation and integration.

After the Cold War, international relations discourse provided more diverse approaches to understand and analyze world politics. Constructivism theory is one of the models of the progressing emergence of international relations theory. Rather than diminishing other major theories, according to its holders and proponents, constructivism theory provides wider illumination, a larger explanation for determining the dynamic and the function of world politics.

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While realism and liberalism concentrate on material factors like power or corporation, constructivist theory tends to focus on the influence of ideas. Rather than considering the state for granted and claiming that it totally aims to survive, constructivists consider the identity and interests of states as an extremely flexible output of special historical processes. Moreover, the constructivists' focus is on the predominant discourse in society. This is because discourse shows and changes interests and beliefs, and sets accepted values, norms of behavior. Thus, constructivism is mainly interested in the main sources and roots of alteration and this approach has broadly substituted Marxism.

Constructivism, especially state identity theory explained by Alexander Wendt and Peter Katzenstein, has become far from the almost particularly rationalist mainstream of international relations theory. The constructivist theory, mainly seen as the most significant challenge to rationalist dominance, argues that the theoretical framework focusing on the concept of state identity, can provide an important alternative and option to rational choice theory.

State identity is mainly about the non-material factors such as values, culture, norms, ideas etc., studied by the constructivist scholars. It provides very important causal links to support the basic arguments of constructivist theoretical framework.

The term Constructivism was adopted by Nicholas Onuf in 1989 and introduced as "people

and societies construct or constitute each other”. The main assumption of constructivists is that the fundamental structures of international politics are social and these structures shape actors’ identities and interests. Therefore, the world is structured by both knowledge and material factors, according to constructivists the main important relation is between agents and structures.

Moreover, constructivists adopt a common concern when understanding and explaining how international structures are defined by ideas and how identities and interests of the states and non-state players are influenced by the structures.

The post-Cold War era played a significant role in legitimating constructivist approach because both liberalism and realism were unsuccessful in predicting this event and had difficulties explaining it. On the contrary, constructivists had an explanation based on ideas and norms; for example, the idea of “common security,” adopted by Gorbachev. Furthermore, constructivism theory argues that we live in a period where ancient values and norms are being challenged, limits and boundaries are fading and matters of identity and culture are becoming more prominent and outstanding.

Unexpectedly, researchers have been drawn to theories that put these issues front and center. In the post-Cold War era, constructivism emerged as the focal point of debates in international relations theories. However, some researchers and scholars criticize that constructivism “remains a method than anything else, according to them constructivism does not offer an essential theory of world politics.

Moreover, it provides a research approach that can be employed to understand and explain international political economy. Therefore, Constructivism should operate with other theories from different disciplines and branches like comparative politics, social psychology etc.

On the other hand, constructivism has been demonstrating itself as an effective theory in understanding and explaining world politics, especially after Alexander Wendt published his article, *Anarchy is What States Make of It*, which developed the basis of constructivism approach. It focuses more on the nonmaterial world and considers that material world’s changes are changed by the social world.

Thus, the distribution of power and State’s military power do not automatically construct an international social structure. Even without any central governance, which has authority over all states in the world, the international system does certainly become a “competitive security system”.

From a constructivist approach, the main problem in the post-Cold War world is how various groups visualize their interests and identities. However, power is not unrelated. Constructivism focuses on how ideas, norms, values, and identities are created and constructed, how they develop, and how they change the way states comprehend and react to their situation. Thus, it matters whether the US adopts or denies its identity as “global policeman” and whether Europeans realize themselves mostly in national or continental terms. Constructivist approaches are highly varied and do not provide a unified group of expectations on any of these matters.

Constructivism varies itself from neoliberalism and neorealism by emphasizing and highlighting the ontological reality of intersubjective knowledge. It does not mean that constructivism neglected the material world because intersubjective knowledge and material world interact affect and influence each other. Furthermore, both the material world and intersubjective knowledge are not independent and not separated. They have relative autonomy.

According to Constructivism theory, the material world does not completely define how people, or states, behave. It only limits the chance of interpretation and the intersubjective world that

people can build. Moreover, material body enforcing is restricted to social structure. Thus, constructivists do not mean the unlimited possibilities of social structure. However, people have the capability to interpret, as they cannot easily interpret the social world and their own material world. There is restriction of interpretation of the social world, i.e. the material world changes and is changed by the social world.

Constructivism theory discusses the issue of anarchy in the international system, at a simple conceptual level, Alexander Wendt claimed that the realist conception of anarchy does not explain why conflict occurs between states sufficiently. The main thing is how anarchy is understood, and Wendt argues that "Anarchy is what states make of it." He also argues that transnational communication and shared civic values are weakening traditional national obedience and make an extremely new genre of political alliances.

Furthermore, Constructivist theory focuses more on the role of norms, claiming that international law and other normative principles have decreased mainly the notions of sovereignty and changed the legitimate purposes for which state power may be used.

Constructivism theory recognizes the significance of nonmaterial power (culture, ideas, language, knowledge, and ideology) as well as material power because the two powers connect and interact to build the world order. For instance, nonmaterial power works through creating and recreating intersubjective meaning. It clarifies how the material structure, states' identity, interactions and relations between states, and any other social facts should be realized and comprehended.

The end of the Cold War came as a surprise to the classical dominant theories, which failed to predict or explain the changes in global politics. However, it provided the opportunity for more evolution of critical thoughts, which started since

the mid-1980s. The Realist approach in international relations was criticized largely for its materialistic approaches by constructivism, which speedily boomed and was known as a theory that focuses on the social dimension of international politics.

This improvement towards the chance of change helped the theory to catch significant elements of the world's relations: the many factors of mainstream presumptions and norms in world politics, which were threatened and challenged by constructivism.

Constructivism defied the theory of power politics, especially dominant perception of the threat and conflict in global politics and picked a fully different approach in studying the construction of the threat through their fundamental focus on the social dimensions of international politics; therefore, it recognizes them as socially constructed elements in the process of identity formation under the influence of the norms and shared values of society.

Discussing the Euro-Med theatre in his 'Geopolitics–Energy–Technology' book, for example, prof. Anis H. Bajrektarevic states: "The MENA theatre is situated in one of the most fascinating locations of the world. It actually represents the only existing land corridor that connects 3 continents. Contributing some 6% to the total world population, its demographic weight is almost equal to that of the US (4,5%) and Russia (1,5%) combined. While the US and Russia are single countries, the MENA composite is a puzzle of several dozens of fragile pieces where religious, political, ideological, history-cultural, economic, social and territorial cleavages are entrenched, deep, wide and long."

"However, the MENA territory covers only 3% of the Earth's land surface (in contrast to the US' 6,5%, coverage and Russia's 11,5%). Thus, with its high population density and strong demographic growth, this very young median population (on average 23–27 years old) dominated by juvenile, mainly unemployed or

underemployed, but socially mobilized and often politically radicalized (angry) males, competes over finite and scarce resources, be they arable or settlers land, water and other essentials. Competition in this theatre, that has a lasting history of external domination or interference, is severe, multiple, unpredictable, and therefore it is fluid and unsettled on the existing or alternative socio-economic, ideological, cultural and politico-military models, access, directions and participatory base.”

As we see, the work of constructivists was established around their aim in explaining the changes in world politics in the period towards the end, and after the Cold War, especially when dominant international relations approaches and theories failed to predict the sudden change in the global politics. Moreover, this transformation raised the question about social construction and the methodology of international relations theories and their involvement and effects in the production of international power.

The main dominant international theories were unable to explain the collapse of Soviet Union, especially the theories which focus on material power, and nuclear weapons. This is because, despite being a nuclear power, the Soviet Union collapsed. Neorealists tried to provide a simple explanation by telling the decline of Soviet power; nonetheless, the explanation focused more on domestic politics and economy than on the material structure of world's distribution of power.

Thus, it could not explain enough why the Soviet Union and Gorbachev adopted decisions which could endanger its national security and survival and stop it from increasing its hegemony and power, However, neorealists were still certain about the significance of neorealism.

Another explanation was given by Democratic liberalists who tried to stress the people's aims for freedom and objections to communism. Neoliberalism and the market economy favorably forced their hegemonies to the world

and increased the validity of tyranny and command economy. However, while this evidence could explain the decline of communist ideology in the Soviet Union, it could not explain why such transformation and change happens in the 1980s.

However, Neoliberals provided another explanation. Liberalism and communism interacted across political borders, especially the new way of thinking among top political leaders decreased the hegemony of communism and made the Soviet Union collapse. Therefore, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War presented a significant challenge for constructivists to understand. Wendt said that “material structure can have special impacts.

The distribution of power, anarchy in international relations and military power do not fix states' identities and relations. State military power can be understood as a threatening power as well as protecting power for other states.

In addition, a nuclear weapon is a matter of perception. For instance, nuclear weapons in the hands of United States has a different meaning for Taiwan than a nuclear weapon in the hands of China. Therefore, considering states “like billiard balls of varying size” is not enough to explain and understand reality. Military capabilities of any state and the distribution of power in the international system are interfering elements but they are not able to understand relations between states. For example, two enemy or allied states can be divided by defining the material military structure.

However, the states' identification and social structure are important elements which define relations between states. Constructivism theory (actually rather an ontology) argues that common identities and a long history of alliance and cooperation between two states can be a strong ground of cooperative security system. On the other hand, other identities and a long history of conflict and struggle can build a competitive security system based on conflict and wars.



Media literacy as “conditio sine qua non” of Conflict Resolution

Dr. Sabahudin Hadžialic* Dr. Honoris Causa**

[The Europe and the World has become exactly the same today, in 2018, as it was for the former Yugoslavia back in 1990! How has this happened? First – Unity, Brotherhood, Peace, Huge and Fast Development and Second – Populism, Exclusiveness, Nationalism raising and establishment of Chauvinism which led to the point that the Europe and the World is now on the edge of a new, extreme dangerous crisis (war dangerous one) based on the conflict reposed on the above-mentioned reasons, just as it was for the former Yugoslavia back in 1990.

The basic hypothesis of this presentation is that media literacy is the basic prerequisite for the establishing of a society of developed democratic consciousness and social justice based on critical thinking or without it, vice versa, media illiteracy which is the case as it has happened to the society back in 1990 and happening now, as well, in 2018, although in much broader and wider scale – The Earth itself. At the same time, the second hypothesis appeared as a logical sequence from the title and refers to the political manipulation of a subject of political pluralism - precisely based on insufficient media literacy within the society itself. The third hypothesis also applies to the professionalism (having in mind ethics as well) of the intermediaries themselves, journalists and media professionals, the specific personality that exists between the public and the source of an adequate information. The mesh and mutual conditionality of the given hypothesis has also assumed the realization of scientific paper based on which conclusions were drawn that shapes this paper presentation as well.]

What is the knowledge within the world of developed society? What does it mean for us to be aware that every 11 hours the knowledge in the world is doubled? We are so developed and yet so uncivilized. How it can be? It all depends on how you “read” an understanding of development and civilization.

Especially, if development and civilization mean neo-liberalism, and the “exporting” of “my way of thinking-democracy” as it “should exist all around the world” and let the markets to do everything – to liberalize the liberalism. It is amazing that those who were fighting against Mao Zedong’s “flourishing of thousand flowers” are doing nowadays exactly the same thing, but instead of operating with the system of

“communism” they are doing it now within the guise of “capitalism”.

But first, let us go back and try to answer the two questions from above. We are on the edge of solving medical illnesses, such as cancer, thanks to knowledge. We have astronauts who spend 340 days in space and return home fresh and ready to go further, thanks to knowledge. But the main question is a methodological one: How are we using knowledge around the world, really?

The answer is more than painful, but thoughtful

1. Manipulation – the establishment of bureaucratic societies regardless of ideology and/or race and/or religion, for the benefit of a few, instead of for the benefit of all;
2. Devotion – to the unreality of the money – we all will, at the end be buried in a grave –

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only on the surface, above ground will we be different, but then who gives a peanut about it;

3. Destruction – connected with Item 1. above, by all means, within creating wars around the world and accusing the locals that they have the exclusive guilt for causing the wars (from Ruanda to Bosnia and towards Syria and on, and on...). Yes, the locals bear some guilt, but only we cannot ignore those from Item 1 above, who are the executioners that have misled the people towards Armageddon.

How can we stop this and make the world to become better place? It will be very difficult, but possible, for sure.

Through the creation nothing similar to the mastadonian-like institution named the United Nations, which is *contradictio in adiecto* of its own, being incapable to stop any war anywhere in the World. Ups. Sorry, I made a mistake. The correct answer is being capable to make intermezzo between the wars with the help of blue helmets.

Through the creation of the World Conscience Society (WCS) Association that will be made of:

- a) Media literate scientists of all different kinds of science devoted to mankind's development and sustainability of the World without conflicts;
- b) Media literate Intellectuals who have proved themselves (it is easy – just “Google” anybody, nothing is hidden within the today's virtual World information sources) as devoted to mankind's development and sustainability of the World as the conflict resolution;
- c) Media literate people who think about common good against the conflict, knowing that only through that kind of devotion we will create individual good as well

And, finely, to start to execute the wishes of many of the great world leaders of the past – the

creation of the world of equality, respectability and survival, instead the current World of refugees, death and destruction.

Can we do it? Wrong question. The correct one is: Should we do it? Answer is: We must do it.

Again, why?

For the survival of the mankind and humanity, against those 1% of the people who control the other 99%, and who will not survive either. Are they masochist? They are both: masochist and sadists of the worse kind. So, why sacrifice 99% for 1%? Knowledge has an answer. We just need to use it.¹ Not to abuse it, as usual.

So. can people, and under what conditions, express their opinions, ideas and attitudes freely? The ability to think nature has given us, or how it is interpreted in a different way - God. I think; therefore, I exist.² This right and freedom cannot be taken away from us by any authority, even the most rigid totalitarian order. Simply, everyone can think and to shut up. The problem occurs if the thoughts that he/she thinks about - when he wants to tell that to others.

World as Global Sin: Crippled with populism and “alternative facts”

Although the sentence, “If facts contradict to my theory, the worse for the facts,” has been attributed to the famous German philosopher George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, within the world of 21st Century we can see a lot of examples of that phrase hidden under the two magical words of “populism” and “alternative facts”.

Europe has been united and nowadays, “thanks” to unprecedented ignorance of the Brussels leaders within the European Community we have a huge development, and even worse, extreme development of extreme right populist parties and *ergo ipso and vice versa* leaders of that kind in Europe – this info is from BBC, London, UK - presented on September 10, 2018 what you see on the presented slide.

Although, they haven't included Croatia and Belgium where we have extremist-populists who are knocking on heaven's door of the Government through the right-wing parties led by nationalists Zlatko Hasanbegović in Croatia and Geert Wilders in Belgium. Moreover, at the borders of EU we have Bosnia and Herzegovina (so call "impossible state" with 3 nationalistic parties (Parties with the majority within of: Muslim, Catholic and Orthodox) on power for almost 30 years and more than 240 ministries. 2 entities, 1 district and 10 cantons within the country of 3,3 million population) and Serbia, where former radicals now became centrists' populists, although *LUPUS PILUM MUTAT NON MENTEM*, "A wolf can change his coat but *not* his character" which is shown on daily basis. So, populism is also knocking from the outside on the EU doors as the possible new EU member countries.

While in Europe everything is falling apart due to the rising populism of the neo-right parties that have made the foundation of their political program out of the recent massive immigration wave from the Near and Middle East countries, at the same time, abroad, in the United States of America there has arisen a new sociological attempt of the creation of "alternative facts" with the appearance of the new US president — whose name I do not want to mention for the reason who knows what might happen even to me (after his spokesman confirmed on January 24, 2017 that his boss, the US president, is a "committed conspiracy theorist").

Also, I disagree with my respectable colleague Prof. Dr Slavoj Žižek's (with whom I seated, back in 2013 within the International Advisory board of magazine "New Flame" in Zagreb³, Croatia) statement given to the New Republic magazine 2 years ago that the US president is a "liberal centrist"⁴ because behind, or even more, on the scene we have visible devotions of him being a "neo-liberal populist".

I am really afraid that regardless of having already survived one war (back in '90s of the 20th Century during the dissolution of former

Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia – in Bosnia and Herzegovina) that now the word "truth" has lost its meaning, and is being faced with adaptable and vivid "alternative facts" within the creation of the new recreational political establishment whose goal is to continue making totally "blind" those who are living within the reality of being already slightly-blinded people of the Earth.

The attacks on the mainstream media, coupled with a lack of media literacy within the wider areas of population, along with the information that eight people hold 50% of the world's wealth⁵ as stated by *The Guardian* back in January 2017 and has more money than 3.6 billion people of our planet, all simply shows that we are faced with an abyss that is just one step in front of us, while, in the same time, behind us we just have lost hope.

What is the solution for the World as Global Sin in this moment of living for all of us, and, above all, for the future generation, if there will be any?

Before answering that question, an aside to note that we might be soon faced with the plot of possible election hacking in Europe by Russian hackers, as US intelligence service have warned their allies⁶ in Europe this January 2018. However, having on one side a new president who is really a New World Order leader, a populist and a person devoted to alternative facts (and who does not hide that a "lie" for him is just a tool within his agenda of gaining a new "truth" of the World), and on the other side we have a deeply and destructively divided intellectual power of the World, we can just hope and try to shake up this new status quo by the following:

1. 2019 might be a new light for the World – only if liberal, conscious and open and free-minded people of all ethnicities, race and/or gender and/or age, using, above all, Media literacy rise up and establish a new conscious of the World, respecting the differences among us as our advantages for the benefit of all.

2. The goal is the survival of the World, but not for the benefit of a few.
3. The tool for that is our consciousness in connection with the ultimate objective that we are humans in the first place, and after that everything else.

Although, the loss of consciousness is simply connected with consumerism, neo-liberalism, must have it that everyday society within which the using of new technologies does not exist, as mentioned, for the benefit of all, but for the benefit of the few. The introduction of robots working instead of people creates new unemployed, instead of creating a society within which less work will be more devoted for more inspirational creation of other skills, that is focused on our own social development through knowing more about other cultures and by the creation of more cultural competencies for the benefit of the masses.

Is that a new vision of devil word of “socialism”?

No, and my opinion is that we have to establish a new word that will suck into its meaning the full and devoted respect for others who are different from us, and establish a World of mutual trust and joint work that is devoted to the creation of an education system that will be devoted to skills and critical thinking – through the communicating of hope and trust in our time, as Pope Francis⁷ underlined on January 24, 2017 and we keep forgetting, again and again:

“I wish to address this message to all those who, whether in their professional work or personal relationships, are like that mill, daily “grinding out” information with the aim of providing rich fare for those with whom they communicate. I would like to encourage everyone to engage in constructive forms of communication that reject prejudice towards others and foster a culture of encounter, helping all of us to view the world around us with realism and trust.”

Furthermore, being faced with terrorism we have to stress that when we say “Muslim terrorism”

and/or “Islamic terrorism”⁸ we have to understand that those terrorists are not Muslims at all and they do not belong to the Islamic religion. No, these terrorists are simply the trash of the humanity, because terrorism has no religion, and the same goes for even those who committed extremist acts supposedly on behalf Christianity⁹, hiding behind so-called “white supremacy” and/or defending a faith, even in the USA, or as we have seen recently in Poland just a year ago, having a request for the “White Europe” by 60.000 nationalist demonstrators, as reported by The Guardian¹⁰ on November 12, 2017.

So, is the religion an answer? What is needed is not just a proper, joint and open discussion of the religious leaders of the leading religions of the world, but also an open and fair talk about the real issues for the world’s survival within conflict resolution.

Let us call this new word *SOCIO-ALTERNATIVISM*, because, believe it or not, if do not start talking and talking and talking about the alternative solutions to our problems, we will be faced with the further development of the World as Global Sin – regardless of our race, ethnicity, gender and/or religion. Simply put, the first part of the word is related to society in general, focusing on a hypothesis of a society of developed democratic consciousness and social justice based on critical thinking under the media literacy education, while the second part shows that we have to seek for alternatives, as the current societies in the World cannot show us the light at the end of tunnel.

Having in mind that, as mentioned above, the new US president is a conspiracy theorist ... will the lies of conspiracy theories become the alternative facts of the New World Order?

The answer is within the consciousness of all of us. We have to start working on a Brand-New World Order of socio-alternativism for the conflict resolution as well. For the benefit of all, through the interactions, integrations and innovations of the souls within and around all societies of the World.

Media Literacy: Information blizzard pros political manipulation

Theoreticians¹¹ from different scientific disciplines (politology, sociology, communicology) recently conducted an analytical observation of the different processes exactly within the aspects of political manipulation which are a joint denominator of the fragmented cultural, social and political area of Bosnia and Herzegovina.¹² However, as stated (Lea Tajjæ, 2013) *media literacy still belongs, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to the pioneer category of the research efforts.*

Every day there is a bigger risk that the citizens will, within the time of effusive offer of media contents, be lost in the “information blizzard”. Paradoxically this is, but true, that the possibilities of the manipulation and allurements have increased parallel with number of media and strengthening of their mutual competitions. Being thought with a few bad (mainly manipulation within the preparation of war interventions) examples, the public reacts in decreasing the general trust into the media. Those are, for the science, known reasons with which has been explained the support of the citizens, and which they gave for the establishment of either regulations or self-regulations which has, for the goal, the increase of the media’s responsibility and journalists – for the public word.

Within the field of public politics, the described mood of the citizens did not stay without echo. Many European states have destined to provide their own contribution for the strengthening of the Bodies that will create codex’s of the professional ethics (Belgium, Denmark, Portugal, Cyprus...). They have initiated creation of the Press Council (or Media Council) ensuring for them the premises and funding for the beginning of the work.

After that, they leave to those bodies to take care about the responsibility for public word of the media and journalists without interfering into their work. In other examples, and especially

when in question are codex’s and editorial guidelines of RTV companies like Public broadcasting service – the representative of the state has their word within the bodies which adopt and bring their own documents. Mainly, indirect presence of the representative of the state ensures through the way of choosing/electing of the members of the independent regulation agencies which monitor the work of electronic media.¹⁴

Finally, aside of strengthening of the self-regulations, the state, in case of the need, which is allowed in democratic society, intervene also by its legislative activity. At the same time, the state creates legal norms through which “covers” appearances which have been overlooked by codex’s of professional ethics, or which one has not been overlooked, or which one is not approbates.

Media literacy¹⁵, if it is, in an appropriate way entered the society, through suitable and adequate educational process, can be a help in defining the possibility of the development of society of immediate democratic consciousness, by creating open-minded and critical thinking of the population in general.

However, there is one more thing which we cannot avoid at all, when we are talking about the truth within one society, regardless about which ideological array it is about. Namely, Martin Luther¹⁶ sealed off the end of visual culture of the metaphysical era, in which the people have not been reminded on divine order through the listening of Latin articles but through the watching of the painted biblical messages with the saying: “Christ’s kingdom is the kingdom of listening, and not the kingdom of watching.” But, the speculator of today, who, under the impression of slashing universalism of its culture, proclaimed and founded revisualization of the communication culture as the promise of the future, was the Hungarian artist Bela Balasz.¹⁷

He underlined the visual as the new truth, and it is visible that we have anesthesia of the social order as domination of visual in comparison with

what is in written and/or spoken word. Today, 90 % of information that goes towards our brain is visual¹⁸ and we are getting to the social media that encircles visualization with written and spoken word within virtual reality. Sometimes, we really do need to ask ourselves the question: Is our real world really the real world or is it within a virtual online world?

This study, within the scientific sense, continues and widens possible debate about the role and importance of media literacy within the society, as a basic presumption exactly of the development of the society, and not the creation of the obedient followers who will carry out simple wishes of the principals. Simply, to avoid arbiters/intermediators with the possibility of executing conclusions, on time and based on arguments, for the benefit of the society as the whole¹⁹ within critical observations, thinking and, by all means, through the adequate actions.

Journalists – possible teachers, being a student in the same time of media literacy vs. political manipulation

For the speakers of the public word, primarily for professional journalists, it's a question of what I can and what I cannot, not to know, but to publish. Only by this act the journalist's testimony becomes public, and the author's responsibility for the announced word immediately follows that. Ultimately, in all countries, best journalism would be the one in which all journalists could, and should, publish everything they know. However, such a situation rarely came to fruition.

Every public speaking messenger who has tried to work in journalism has a certain experience of what he/she knew and what he/she was not able to publish. He/she knows, too, and for which he/she has abandoned the public word - whether he/she was prevented by the force of law and some authority (censorship), or was afraid to take responsibility for the consequences of his/her public word (auto-censorship).

The conflict, the desire to speak publicly and the fear of the consequences of this act or the burden

of responsibility derives from the fact that the right to freedom of expression of the thoughts and feelings is the natural human right. It belongs to the corpus of human rights and fundamental freedoms that are aboriginal and fundamental, such as the right for life, for freedom, to have property, to the integrity of a personality ... And, in a healthy sense, such rights have always been considered undeniable.

As no one has ever denied that the sun is coming up and going down, so there has been no doubt about the existence of basic human rights. But many conflicts around this notorious fact (sunrise and sunset) came about when the question arises: Why is this happening? Is it because the Earth is turning around the Sun, or *vice versa*. If you have given this question an answer that has opposed to the valid "truth" or dogma, you could have been, because of the given public opinion, end up at the bonfire.

To trust, or not to...

Thus, the enjoyment of fundamental human rights and freedoms have been discussed, but also opened, a multitude of disputes and dilemmas when asked the question: Under what conditions can they enjoy it and if there are limits beyond which they cannot be practiced? Responses to these questions were of importance to the journalistic profession because, their work, it was focused on public insight, i.e., public opinion.

The audience in most cases blindly trust media, i.e., journalists, and many "reporters" report on what they heard from others and publish untruthful information. Journalists always must ask: are the facts presented true and how can they interpret them (why something happened, what are the causes and what will be the consequences of it)? The basic rule of journalistic profession requires that the publicly announced facts be objective but permits their interpretation to be different. In the professional jargon of journalism, this is the rule to differently creates presumptions of the creations for the information that are presented, but also differently be responsible for the news

and opinion, commentary. And again, as in the past, due to some interpretation of the facts, journalists will be “rewarded” and because of different facts, criticized and even punished.

The media have tremendous power. What it’s suppressed or overlooked, as if it did not happen. What they emphasize or repeat, as if it were the most important in our lives. Hence, it is socially and democratically justified to have journalists, due to the proportionately high power they possess, journalists and the media simultaneously undergo greater responsibility.

The Doctrine of Social Responsibility of Media and Journalists starts from the good faith that abuse through public words will not come. It also confirms that the boundaries of media freedom must exist. However, this was not the most important issue regarding the responsibility of journalists in practice, which is: who and how it makes the boundaries of the press freedom, that is, all the media *sui generis*?

When we talk about freedom of criticism, Winston S. Churchill, a British state governor, in an interview with *New Statesman*, the British magazine for Social and Political Issues, issued on January 7, 1939. Said²⁰: “*Criticism may not be agreeable, but it is necessary. It fulfils the same function as pain in the human body; it calls attention to the development of an unhealthy state of things. If it is heeded in time, danger may be averted; if it is suppressed, a fatal distemper may develop.*”

Above all, moral respect of the laws

Journalistic independence is not, as stated in the book *Elements of Journalism*²¹ of the authors: Bill Kovach and Tom Rosentiel, a neutrality. While the words of editors and commentators are not neutral, the source of their credibility is their accuracy, intellectual justice, and the ability to inform them of their attachment to a group or result of the very consequences of their work.

However, professional journalists, those who respect professional ethical standards, must avoid wandering into arrogance, elitism,

isolation or nihilism when implementing their own form of independence. At the same time, without integrity, journalism is suspicious and unreliable, and cannot be trusted within its appearance. Integrity gives the reporter the authority to investigate questions, “cast light” on “dark places” and to dig up where others will not. As mentioned earlier, information aimed for the development of a democratic society of different subjects of political pluralism, it is of the utmost importance that a concrete public debate on matters of importance to society is settled based on reliable solid professional journalism.

Professional ethical standards must stimulate moral imagination, recognize behavioral rules in ethical issues, and direct the subjects of political pluralism to work on the development of analytic abilities, as well as work on acquiring the sense of moral obligation and personal responsibility with the expressed tolerance on disagreement, that is, with a simple vocabulary said - it must work on acquiring an ethical condition. Most of all because ethics is the branch of philosophy that deals with moral behavior issues. Lawyers and judges tell us that the laws are within the foundation of our civilization. They are not right and that is not true, and here I emphasize that - *The foundations of our culture(s) lie in moral respect for the laws and that is one of the best tools for the conflict resolution which is gained through media literacy.*

What is the function of the media in the system of professional ethical standards? Mass media are among the most influential companies in a democratic society (especially social networks in XXI century), at the crossroads between citizens and their political, economic and social institutions.

How can we overcome the problems faced by journalism when faced with a situation of overwhelming social networks? Rumor problems, manipulation of disinformation, lies, deception and hypocrisy of politicians who are even ready to change the laws if it suits them personally or in other words - to adapt legislation

to their own interests and thus directly or indirectly usurp all the possibilities for forming a deliberative society democracy which may be the only outlet not only for the local areas of South East Europe, but also for the wider, global meaning of that word.²²

This is something that, when social networks are concerned, also pointed out by the founder of Facebook, Mark Zuckerberg in his status on November 19, 2016²³: “Bearing in mind that the problem of disinformation and false (fake) news is a technical and philosophical complex, the most important is the discovery of a specific area to handle. In that sense, Facebook is working on a better detection system. “

At the same time, how to be ethical in society, where no matter what political option they belong to, the principle exists “in a society where everybody steals, nobody steals”²⁴?

Today, the truth is an integral part of professional ethical standards, honesty (objectivity), impartiality, appropriate relationships with sources of information, respect for persons who are subject to information, elimination of any discrimination and journalist’s responsibility.

Conclusion - Media literacy as “*conditio sine qua non*” of Conflict resolution

So, we come to the main issue of today’s presentation – what links media literacy and conflict resolution.

Answer is very simple

First, the knowledge based on fostering critical thinking as another key component of media literacy (Buckingham 1998²⁵) which will lead towards conflict resolution. However, like media literacy, neither critical thinking, nor its cousin critical autonomy (independent critical thinking) are clear-cut concepts (Ruminski and Hanks 1995²⁶; Wright 2002²⁷). According to Kurfiss (1988²⁸), critical thinking is the result of an approach to teaching and learning that raises questions for class discussion, as opposed to a strict presentation of material.

Ediger (2001²⁹) defines critical thinking as a learning process that centralizes questioning truth, accuracy, and honesty, which is best achieved through a teacher-centered introduction followed by a student-centered discussion and questioning everything what we see and hear from any of media on one side and on other side, an establishment of the schooling system (from primary and secondary school) which will encircle all positive understandings of other and different one – outcome is conflict resolution.

Second, that will create a positive awareness for the future adults that it might be no truth that everything what we hear from our national and/or political and/or social and/or religious leaders. Sometimes, for the need of so-called “daily politics” the above-mentioned might use semi-truth and/or even lies to support their presumptions and conclusions.

Third, media literate person will not be conflictive person and will not play “on the first ball” received from his/her above-mentioned leader(s). He/She will first analyses it and then makes a conclusion.

Fourth, in the second half of the 20th Century, UNESCO (Media Studies in Education, 1977) had raised the issue of education about the way of reading the media. Basing on the idea of the importance that media has within the lives of individuals, families, and the wider community, UNESCO had called for the meeting of international scientists to explore ways of involving media education in the education systems of all developed but also of the less developed countries.

Since the signing of the Declaration on Media Education (1982) to-date, the concept of media literacy or media education has changed, but remained based on the basic idea – communication rights that come out from the basic human rights that are guaranteed through the documents of the international community, and above all by the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UN, 1948) and by the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950).

The essence and significance of media literacy is, primarily, reflected in the influence of the media on the major democratic processes. In order for the citizens to participate, in a democratic way, in democratic processes that directly affect their life as well as the life of their family and the wider community, media literacy or knowledge within the above mentioned enables a complete population, and especially younger categories of population to future citizens – to make decisions on understanding of the wider social discourse – political choices, as well as direct participation in the stated, for the benefit of society as a whole.

However, adolescents, young people and adults, but also the oldest citizens often need to be media literate, especially due to the fact that in the age of new media and new technologies, the knowledge that we possess becomes obsolete very quickly and it is certainly necessary to participate in lifelong learning and within the media literacy of all generations of citizens.

The media today influences the shaping of opinions, beliefs and attitudes. Although there are differences in the level of media influence, all researchers involved in the analysis of the media of the *sui generis* agree that the media have a tremendous impact on the society, and thus *ergo ipso* on each individual and person's narrow circle. That is why media literacy is so important for conflict resolution.

In the moment when we understand the influence of the media, with the help of media literacy, we are on the right path to prevent dependence on the media – *apropos*, to use them as a tool for making judgments and attitudes within the creation of a healthy, educated society of direct democratic consciousness and not the main dish of manipulation on the table of bad individual, or narrow group ones, intentions and interests.³⁰

Fifth, Media literacy in itself carries two meanings: as the term is defined as the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and transmit messages through the media while the essential focus of media literacy is in acquiring complete

knowledge of critical and creative skills, knowledge that helps to connect complex ideas, constantly questioning the appearances, trying to identify responses that will satisfy the congenial curiosity of each of us, but it also identifies the individual, and also wider, social misconceptions and delusions that might appear as the outcome of the media literacy and lead towards a conflict.

Of course, in the aforementioned case, we focus on the media literacy concept that starts as a positive source of information – the one we are getting from the teachers at schools – directed towards positive manipulation of the formation, maintenance and development of a society of good intentions and interests intertwined for all purposes, not the negative manipulation of the formation, maintenance and development of society (we mainly get from the media channels of all kinds, and especially through social media) the intended orientation of satisfying individual and / or particular minor group and/or party intentions and interests all for one and / or one for all. I am presenting scientific relationship diagram in regards “critical vs. creative thinking about the media and vice versa” and methodology focused on media education and/or education of the media and how to upgrade digital literacy with media literacy by the author in 2018, based on the model of Venkatesh & Devis³¹ (2000):

Sixth, having media literacy as presumption “*conditio sine qua non*” for the conflict resolution is the main precondition for the overcoming of all possible obstacles within any kind of conflict, from verbal, over writing and, finally, to physical one. How?

1. Media literate person is capable to understand a position of other and different one and will do anything to find compromise for the benefit of both sides within the conflict.
2. Media literate person will not put on pedestal his truth as the only truth, but as a truth worth questioning and, by doing that, improving for the benefit of himself and the one with which is in any kind of conflict.

3. Media literate person understands his/her own ignorance of other and different one and he/she will do everything to find more about others from independent sources to be able to understand differences and common connections.

Seventh, Media literate education inspires the people of all ages by providing opportunities such as communication activities, role plays, empathy building, mediation skills and understanding compassionate action. Those mentioned facts are the specific cures for the conflict resolution as well.

Eighth, the constant exposure of populations to different information blizzard presents an educational challenge, which has increased in the electronic and digital age. Evaluating information sources requires skills and critical thinking... Separating fact from opinion, evaluating text and image for bias, and constructing and deconstructing a text based on principles of logic are teachable skills for the conflict resolution. Media literacy instruction is not widely recognized for its importance as an aspect of civic and peace education and therefore few instructional programs have been developed as part of basic modern education.³² And by that, avoiding political manipulation as well within the all levels of appearance.

Ninth - Why media literacy vs. political manipulation? Because, media literate person will not be easily manipulated by the side of any politician and led towards any kind of conflict. Media literate person will be a clear example how difficult to be manipulated by any kind of spin from politicians and media literate person will help wider population to understand the way how politician manipulate through all different kind of spinning of the information.

And, finally, the tenth, the process of solving five steps to conflict resolution.³³

Step 1: Identify the source of the conflict;

Step 2: Look beyond the incident;

Step 3: Request solutions;

Step 4: Identify solutions both disputants can support; and

Step 5: Agreement cannot be done among media illiterate persons / people / nation(s). We might be able to “swim” down to the Step 3, as mentioned above, although at that step we will be faced with exclusivity and disrespect towards other and different one.

Media literacy empowers people not only to be a focus on being critical observers, but also to be creative producers of the unprecedented number of messages using image, language and sound. Communication technologies transform society, they affect the understanding of ourselves, our community, environment (immediate and extended) and our different cultures, making exactly media literacy very important life skills of XXI century (Hadžialic & Murinska-Gaile, 2017).³⁴ Within the conflict resolution as well, above all, using media literacy vs. political manipulation.

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SUPERVISES the application of the BH Press Code; IMPROVES professional standards in print and online media of Bosnia-Herzegovina; PROTECTS THE PUBLIC from unprofessional and manipulative journalistic reporting; PROTECTS THE MEDIA from political, economic or any other pressures that jeopardize freedom of informing and freedom of media;

Vision (- To be recognized by the BH public as an expression of good will of the media industry to apply self-regulatory system in the print and online media, adhering to the Press Code in everyday work of the print and online media journalists (- To be recognized by the public as an expression of readiness of the print and online media industry to fully protect citizens from the irresponsible print and online media and unethical and unprofessional journalistic reporting

Mission (- Improvement of ethical and professional standards in the print and online media, by supervising the application of the Press Code, and by permanent education of journalists and the public about necessities to respect freedom of expression and responsible, professional reporting (- Sustainable Press Council in Bosnia-Herzegovina as self-regulatory body for print and online media, recognized by the media industry and the public as a tool for protection of media freedom and professional journalism from political, economic or any other pressures that jeopardize freedom of informing

Values (- First self-regulatory body for the print and online media in the Region of Western Balkan and SEE, whose establishment is supported by the BH print and online media industry and journalists’ community (- Genuine in Bosnia-Herzegovina, registered at the state level (- Has representatives of the media industry, public and journalists in its bodies (- Has multiethnic structure (- Decisions on the public complaints on unprofessional print and online media reporting, are adopted in

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Viability of ‘One Nation-One Election’!

Alok Kumar Gupta*

[Elections are the means to consolidate and entrench representative democracy. Periodical elections ensure that the voters are allowed to change their rulers according to their assessment of the performance of their law-makers. The performance of the policies and laws made by representatives are assessed on the basis of development of the country in all walks of its life and in accordance with the expectations of the voters. It also judges how different policies and laws have contributed towards peace, prosperity and liberty of citizens for which they entered into state and continue to be there in the state. However, the very instrument which is the backbone of democracy could turn out to be nuisance and detrimental to the development of the country if used indiscriminately and without much rhyme and reason. Frequent elections could lead to undermining of the very democracy for which it has been brought into existence.]

It is in this context that simultaneous elections for State Assemblies and Parliament are being debated nation-wide. Simultaneous elections do have several political, legal and social dimensions involved into it.

Firstly, it may impinge on the political autonomy of the States. This is because in separate elections system, State governments do have autonomy to choose to dissolve its Assembly and call for fresh elections in accordance with law and political will. In case of simultaneous elections, States will have to give up this power and wait for a national election schedule. The States in such a system will be beholden to the Union Government for elections to its Assembly, which goes against the very grain of political autonomy under Indian federal structure.¹

Secondly, Indian government and for that matter all governments in a democracy are such that they are run by politicians, and elections are contested by politicians to win their seats of authority in Parliament as well as in Assemblies. Under such a system frequent election drain out their energy which gets divided under the rubric of separate

elections of Parliament and State Assemblies. Ever since elections to Parliament and State Assemblies stand desynchronized, almost every year there are elections to some State Assemblies in the country and central leadership remains busy throughout the year alongside the local leadership of the State.

Thus, most often the subjects of the Union List of the Constitution on which Central Government need to remain pro-active, formulate, implement and monitor the policies remain busy most of the time with elections in one or the other States. This severely compromises upon the efficiency of the State and government.

Thirdly, in an era of interdependent world and globalization India needs to craft its foreign relations in manner and might that it could lead to maximization of national interests. The worst is the case of foreign policy where government needs to be more responsive given its dynamism; but on account of frequent elections most of government’s energy gets channelized towards elections with consequent negative impact upon foreign policy. There are several other pitfalls of decoupling national and sub-national elections. Therefore, it makes it imperative to examine thoroughly the likely impact of the adoption of non-concurrent national and sub-national

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electoral cycles and its impact on Indian democracy and citizenry.

Initiative at Leadership Level

Prime Minister Narendra Modi beguiled to the nation in his address on National Law Day 2017 for simultaneous elections to Parliament and all State Assemblies, under the banner of 'One Nation One Election' (ONOE). He gave four reasons for the same: massive expenditure; diversion of security and civil staff from primary duties; impact on governance due to the model code of conduct; and disruption to normal public life. Most analysts sounded in media that the case of PM Modi is weak and the reasons are a mere alibi.²

Nevertheless, it led to a nation-wide debate and arguments were raised both in favour and against it. This is a part of electoral reforms to strengthen the democracy and democratic governance in the country. There are several other electoral reforms which are pending since long and some are proposed by the Election Commission of India itself, whereas others have been debated in media by scholars, journalists, political scientists, and policy analysts. It thus requires to be put in proper perspective by exploring the pros and cons of the scheme of ONOE. This paper endeavours to put together all the arguments on both sides of the spectrum to develop proper perspective about the scheme, whether it is in the interest of democracy and the people or not.

One Nation, One Election: The Concept

This concept or idea is not new in India. After independence and enforcement of the Constitution, the first election which was conducted in the year of 1952 was conducted simultaneously and this system remained in practice from 1952 to 1970 i.e. 1952, 1957, 1962, and 1967. This concept came to an end when fourth Lok Sabha was dissolved before it could complete its due term.³ Initially the Prime Minister had mentioned that there should be simultaneous elections at all three levels.

Somewhere down the line, the third tier has disappeared from the debate. Therefore, the

electoral reform already stands compromised on one-third of reforms that was initially proposed. Of the remaining two-thirds, half has been sacrificed by the suggestion of the Parliamentary Standing Committee and NITI Aayog that if it is not feasible to hold elections once in five years, let there be two in five years.⁴

Therefore, the concept of synchronized elections to national and sub-national elections for all the tiers of the government are not an innovative idea, rather it was being practiced in India earlier and now also it is being practiced in many countries of the world. The most recent example is India's neighbour Nepal where elections to national and provincial legislatures were conducted simultaneously in November-December 2017 under the newly promulgated Constitution of September 2015. Many other countries of the world also follow the similar kind of practices.

Political Ramifications of ONOE

The idea of simultaneous elections was a part of the BJP's election manifesto in 2014. Accordingly, when Prime Minister was being interviewed by Arnab Goswami on *Times Now*, News Channel, he brought-up the idea once again and there ensued a nation-wide debate. This happened in 2016, with an eye on 2019 Lok Sabha elections, even though there was considerable gap, Prime Minister threw it as a political gambit before the nation, so that they may not do it but they may use it to convince the voters that it is in the larger interest of the country and opposition is not in favour of it and they are criticizing the same.

The debate has started gathering momentum in the media and public, with BJP supporters and workers getting increasingly busy generating public opinion in favour of the concept. Therefore, once ONOE is adopted the scheme certainly will have several political ramifications.

Arguments related to 'One Nation, One Election'

1. **Constitutional Challenges:** Constitution of India is the fundamental law of the land and

all other laws are to be in consonance with the provisions of the Constitution. No law could be made in contravention to any of the provisions of the Constitution. Article 83(2) of the Constitution deals with the tenure of Lok Sabha that the tenure will be for five years unless dissolved earlier and the same provision is repeated for the State Assemblies under Article 172.

Parliamentary Standing Committee in its 79th Report on December 17, 2015 has suggested that if ONOE is to be adopted then numbers of institutional changes are to be initiated with foremost being the Amendment of Articles 83, 172, 85, 174 of the Constitution. State governments are also empowered that they can dissolve the assemblies before the tenure ends but the problem is that if it is dissolved for the simultaneous elections, it will amount to violation of both the Articles of the Constitution cited above.

Article 356 empowers the President of India to dissolve on the aid and advice of Council of Ministers in case of emergency. It means the President is also bound by the Constitution. Therefore, it may not be possible without amending the Constitution to make way for the same. A political consensus among all the ruling political parties is thus of utmost importance to switch over to ONOE, only then it could be made possible to amend the Constitution.

2. **Similar Political Parties may be facilitated both at Centre as well as State:** Many of the experts are of the opinion that once the scheme is adopted and executed it may enhance the possibility of similar party government at the State and Centre level because at one point of time in the country it has been felt that owing to anti-incumbency factor the mood of the nation happens to be in favour of a particular party. Therefore, in case of simultaneous elections the party will sweep the election at both levels.

Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely; in case of such development the

party that comes to power may assume dictatorial power undermining the democracy and other institutions of the state. It will also create a problem for voters who want to elect a candidate in the state belonging to a political party which does not have any say and presence at the Centre. Therefore, voter will automatically get biased towards the party whose possibility is more of coming at the Centre.

Accordingly, the apprehensions are that there would not be fair voting and it will harm the democracy and the situation will be just like one party rule in the whole of nation and there will be no opposition to any action. This argument may have some sense in it yet there are umpteen numbers of examples where once a political party assumes power at the Centre, then it practices all the means to form government in subsequent elections to State Assemblies by fair or foul means and gains success in capturing the seat of authority.

3. **Regional Parties May Not Consent:** Another biggest hurdle could be to generate a consensus among regional parties in favour of simultaneous elections. Main reason is that there is always a tendency for voters to vote the same party in State and at the Centre in case the Lok Sabha polls and the State elections are held together and without the coordination of state political parties' simultaneous election are not possible. One must not forget that India is a federal country.

Regional parties have an increasingly important role to play. If they feel threatened by the proposal, they are bound to oppose it, making consensus impossible.⁵ Undoubtedly, this is going to be a big hurdle and how the ruling party is going to overcome this will be interesting to watch. This argument may sound valid as simultaneous elections are contrary to the interests of regional parties. However, if it is in the interests of the country and democracy, they may be made to sacrifice their interests for the sake of the country and its people.

4. **Lack of Paramilitary Force:** It is often said that elections in India could not have been made possible but for Home-Guard Police, teachers and above all Paramilitary Forces. Generally State police is avoided for use in State election owing to possibility of biasness. It therefore, may not be possible to employ force in every state for the election because there are only 700 to 800 companies of paramilitary force available as of now. The total requirement in case of simultaneous elections could be to the tune of 3500 companies. However, this argument does not carry much of weight as elections are organised in different phases. Therefore, the paramilitary forces could be made to move from one place of election to other place of election, which otherwise also is made to move when only Lok Sabha elections are organised in different phases. The same kind of practice may be continued.

5. **National and Local Issues don't get Mixed-Up:** There is the fear that simultaneous elections would lead to mix-up of national and sub-national issues. The sub-national issues would get unaddressed by the national parties on a continuous basis is another major apprehension. It is on this issue that the regional and state political parties are opposing the ONOE. Their fear is that they might disappear from the voters' memory if national and state elections were held together. It is only when national parties fail to address regional issues that state parties spring up. Till the time national parties fail to address regional issues, state parties need not worry.

Therefore, it will also create pressure upon the national parties to be balanced while distributing policy benefits to different states and would not be in a position to ignore any of the states. Therefore, even if same party government comes to power at both the Centre and the State level there must not be any problem. Which party rules hardly matters what matters is the good governance and development of the state.

6. **State Governments may have to pay the Premium for Centre's Politics:** There could also be a scenario where 29 State governments have come to power with absolute majority. If at the Centre the government falls, why should the States suffer? There is Anti-defection law to discourage this to a considerable extent, but in an era of coalition governments, there is always the possibility of governments falling, when a partner chooses to leave.⁶ Moreover, the 'No-confidence Motion' could be made more constructive to address the pre-mature dissolution of legislative Assemblies or Parliament.

One could be a German Model where a no-confidence motion could be constructed in a manner that those who are opposed to the government in seat of authority should seek a 'Vote of Confidence' on the floor of the House. If the motion of 'Vote of Confidence' is accepted by the House, then automatically the existing government falls as it amounts to automatic 'Vote of No-confidence' in the erstwhile government.

7. **Code of Conduct:** There is a Model Code of Conduct (MCC) for elections and agreed to by all political parties in 1979. The Code prohibits the ruling political party from incurring capital expenditure for certain projects after elections are announced. This has been adopted so that the Central Government should not be allowed to resort to such means of influencing voters in a particular state. India is a federal state, where time and again our political leaders have reiterated that Indian federalism has been moving on a path of 'cooperative federalism'. Therefore, it would be against the spirit of federalism that elections should become hindrance to governance in the rest of the states just because there is an election in one or two states. Simultaneous elections will mitigate all such problems.

Still, there could be an argument that it may be resolved through reforming the Code

rather than the electoral cycle. However, reforming the Code would dilute the sanctity of the Code itself and may create loopholes left to be exploited by the governing political parties for their vested interests to this effect. Therefore, ONOE is a better solution to mitigate any such discrepancies that hampers the interests of states one way or the other. According to NITI Aayog estimates with various elections, the model code of conduct would be in place for almost four months every year till 2021. The report concludes that it means, going forward, development projects and programmes of state governments going to polls and of Union government in those states may potentially get hit every year and that too for about one-third of the entire time available for implementing such projects and programmes.

Such a situation is completely undesirable and needs serious deliberations and appropriate corrective measures.⁷ It makes it quite obvious that given the loss of total time for developmental work, simultaneous elections will help towards reducing the engagement of ruling parties in electoral politics and would increasingly involve them in developmental politics.

8. **Frequent Elections kills Efficiency:** Governance stands paralysed whether elections are for the Lok Sabha or for some or any of the state Assemblies. Fact remains that throughout the year country is witness to elections in one or more of Indian states. Both the national parties in Indian context are excessively and sometimes exclusively dependent upon their national leaders for campaigning in the State elections. This certainly drains the Prime Minister's and Council of Minister's time and energy which distracts them from governance.

Therefore, depending upon their national leaders is the problem and prerogative of the national parties. This certainly affects the governance and developmental works of the government of the day with consequent

impact on citizens. ONOE would provide ample time to governing elites of the country to concentrate more on their work, rather than remain busy with the elections.

9. **Slackness of Administration:** Frequent elections also divert the civil staff and their orientation with consequence of disruption of public life. There is no doubt that voters in ONOE will get to vote only once otherwise they get to vote twice if elections are held separately. Separate elections will disturb the administration twice in five years with consequences of paralysis of the entire state administration. During elections even, those who could attend the works of common men alongside contributing their bit in electoral preparation are not motivated at all to help and make some extra efforts to address the work and problems of common people.

Whether the voters are made to exercise their right to vote once or twice hardly matters. What matters most is that their problems are addressed and they are able to enjoy free, fair, prosperous and peaceful life. Availability of basic necessities of life is more important than the number of times that they can exercise their right to vote.

10. **Patterns of Voters' Behaviour:** It is often claimed that Indian voters tend to choose the same party when elections are held simultaneously to both Centre and State, with the relationship diminishing as elections are held farther away. There is empirical evidence to this effect as according to one study, when simultaneous elections to some State Assemblies and Parliament were held during 1999 to 2014; 77% of the voters in these constituencies chose the same political party for both State and the Centre. When elections were held six months apart, only 61% chose the same political party.⁸

This may have some sense, but it cannot be of universal application. There are enough examples in Indian context that voters have chosen same parties at both the levels even

when elections have been held wide apart in terms of years. Therefore, this is not a valid argument as it is evident from the present scenario, where the political party ruling at the Centre has been on the winning spree in most subsequent elections to State Assemblies in the aftermath of the Lok Sabha elections.

11. **Elections will be Cost-effective:** Elections involve cost in several ways: first the Election Commission has to spend on organizing the elections; second the political parties spend to contest elections mainly in their campaigning. Simultaneous elections will involve less expenditure for both the Election Commission and the political parties. Political parties' expenditure will get reduced as they will spend less on campaigning as they will have to do it only once in five years throughout the country. Election Commission on the other hand will have to incur the entire cost of organizing elections only once.

Even the movement of paramilitary forces and Home-Guard police from one area to another involves tremendous cost which shall be minimised as it will be done only once in five years. According to some estimates, Election Commission incurs a total cost of roughly Rs. 8000 crore to conduct all state and Federal elections in a span of five years, or roughly Rs. 1,500 crore every year. Nearly 600 million Indians vote in India's elections, which means, it costs Rs. 27 per voter per year to keep India an electoral democracy. This is not a massive expenditure, yet it could be lessened on account of simultaneous elections.

All the states and the Centre combined incurred an expenditure of nearly 30 lakh crore in FY 2014. Surely, 0.05% of India's total annual expenditure is not a large price to pay for the pride of being world's largest and most vibrant electoral democracy.⁹ The Election Commission of India, while making its submissions before the Parliamentary

Standing Committee, examining the issue of simultaneous elections said that it would cost Rs.45 billion (Rs. 4500 crores) to hold a single cycle of elections to the Lok Sabha and all State Assemblies in India.

The 2014 Lok Sabha elections alone cost Rs. 39 billion (Rs. 3900 crores). Reports suggest that the recently held Gujarat elections cost Rs.3 billion.¹⁰ These statistical figures could be suggestive only to help understand that simultaneous elections would reduce the cost of conducting elections by almost half. This precious money could be channelized towards developmental works as well as poverty eradication.

12. **Problems of Funding by Business and Consequent Corruption:** Election funding has always been a black spot on electoral democracies of not only India but in other parts of the world as well. Money in elections is the fountainhead of all corruption. The more the country is in election mode, the more the corruption in the country. Different political parties draw or receive funds in millions from different companies and businesses. Transparency in election funding of parties and in donations made by companies have always been an issue during and after the elections, when it is debated most.

This year i.e. in 2018 in his Budget speech, Finance Minister said without transparency in political funding, free and fair election are not possible. So far, all donations above Rs. 20,000/- were disclosed to the Election Commission. It is, of course, a different matter that political parties accept donations in crores and convert them into cheques of Rs.20,000/-. This is more than 75% of all collection of political parties where sources are unknown. The government has decided to give precedence to the donors' wish to be anonymous.

There was a CII (Confederation of Indian Industry) report of 2015 which said that

donors want anonymity for two reasons: one, other political parties would make a beeline for their donations, and two, fear of political reprisal from those not getting the donation. The real reason probably was that they don't want the *quid pro quo* to get known.

Finally, the donors' desire for transparency has got preference over citizens' desire for transparency and the people's right to know, which is more important in a democracy and critical for the fairness of elections.¹¹ Simultaneous elections would also reduce the burden on industry and businesses as well as it would make it easier to improve transparency in funding in elections.

13. Communalism and Casteism would also be contained: Communalism and Casteism are at its peak during the elections. Hateful and divisive politics is the consequence of frequent elections. Therefore, simultaneous elections would minimise such opportunities for the party to polarise the society on the pretext of caste, religion, region, and many other primordial loyalties with vested interests to garner their votes. Vote-bank politics will be grossly discouraged under ONOE.

14. It brings seasonal employment to many: Staggered elections are often praised as it was once done by a Biju Janata Dal MP that people love elections as the vote is the only power, they have. Secondly, election time provides work opportunities to lakhs of youth. Thus, frequent elections are good for the economy as the money goes from the rich to the poor. Wasting huge amount for providing seasonal employment is not good for a democracy in the long run. Moreover, the money which they receive is mainly corruption money. Therefore, it is always advisable that the same money could be used for development work and the party workers get proper employment rather than they make a beeline before the party office for petty gains by doing the work of the party at the time of elections.

15. Education System is the Worst Casualty on account of Frequent Elections:

Education system of the country at all levels plays a vital role in the conduct of elections. Teachers are the ones who are used for electoral roll preparation, including as Trainers, Presiding Officers, Patrolling Agents, Zonal Officers, for most purposes during the time of elections. School and college buildings are the places which are used as: electoral booths; counting centres, as lodging for paramilitary forces, as place for stay of the polling party and a host of other activities related to elections.

Elementary and middle level schools are disturbed for almost one and half month as teachers are engaged in elections so teaching is not done. Teachers in higher education are used in polling party; therefore, the teaching of higher education suffers at least for half a month. Accordingly, the education system of the country is almost paralysed on account of elections with no sensitivity of administration towards them.

16. Contain Donkey Voting: Simultaneous elections may help towards containing the problem of voter's fatigue. It has been observed number of times that in all those elections where the National and State elections were held simultaneously the voter percentage was more. One needs to appreciate that to strengthen democracy what is needed is to increase the voter's turnout in elections. According to one study while the number of registered voters has increased four times since 1967, the Election Commission of India has managed to enhance voter turnouts by around 5 percent only.

This means that of almost 600 million additional voters added over the years, just about 30 million have turned up to cast their vote, which is abysmal by standards of certain democracies like the UK and Canada.¹² Moreover, even when they are made to cast votes quite frequently, they may resort to donkey-voting. Therefore, simultaneous

elections may lead to containment to donkey-voting which would further add value to Indian democracy.

Conclusion

No policy or rule could be without pitfalls. If it is beneficial in some way it may also be harmful in some other way. What needs to be taken into account is the profit and loss of the scheme in the final balance sheet. ONOE's balance sheet has number of benefits in its keg, which by all means would be healthy for Indian democracy. According to many the constant elections were deepening the divide in the country. ONOE was also suggested by Law Commission in its 107th report (Electoral Law, 1999), which they must have found in the interest of Indian democracy.

India will have to amend its Constitution to adopt ONOE. This certainly will not be an easy task. It would require a special majority of two-thirds of the House, along with the support of half of the state legislatures. Present political dispensation at the Centre is having government in 21 out of 29 States of India and substantial majority in the Parliament requires only political will to amend the Constitution and move ahead. This will have tremendous potentials to take Indian federalism on the path of cooperative federalism. This is an opportune moment for country's present leadership as it has majority both in Lok Sabha as well as in requisite number of State Assemblies. Moreover, this is a promise made by the ruling party to the nation in its election manifesto, which requires to be fulfilled.

A political party which comes to power at the Centre wishes to have full majority of its own in both the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha so that it can rule the country by its own whims and fancies as it empowers such governments to pass all the Bills in both the Houses. However, it generally becomes an Achilles heel if it does not have majority in the Rajya Sabha as it depends upon the number of States in which it is in power as members of the Rajya Sabha are elected by the State Assemblies. A ruling party which lacks majority on the floor of the Rajya

Sabha faces major problem as it cannot get all its Bills through the Rajya Sabha. It is a situation which is win-win situation for both the ruling and the opposition parties.

Such a situation at times turns out to be check on the ruling party and thus provides a balance in terms of limited government; otherwise the government may end-up in exercising dictatorial powers. This kind of situation could exist even when elections are held simultaneously as members of the Rajya Sabha are elected differently with one-third of its members retiring every second year. Therefore, there is hardly any guarantee that the ruling party will also have complete control over Rajya Sabha. A responsible opposition and a reliable judiciary will always be a check on dictatorial powers of the government.

It will help political parties in so many ways. Many regions see some work happening few months before the elections so there will be decrease in region/religion/caste-based work. Most politicians are prevented from implementing policies that require immediate attention and prevent taking some strict actions because they are afraid of losing voters. Therefore, this would encourage them to make policies, which are neutral and free from any attempt at appeasement on account of caste, religion, gender, creed and regional considerations. Simultaneous elections thus have more advantages than disadvantages and are in the larger and long-term interests of Indian democracy and its citizenry.

Notes

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Decline of Federalism in India

Punam Bhardwaj*

[India is wedded to a federal set up, Federalism has been introduced in India not by design or choice but the way or continuation of a system which was given under the Government of India Act 1935 and subsequently incorporated into the new Constitution of independent India. Keeping in view working of the federal system in the country over the past seven decades, which has been characterized by various ups and downs, this system has come under strain as demonstrated in this brief article. Ed.]

A federation becomes a necessity in a vast country for the sake of administrative convenience. It becomes almost humanly impossible on the part of a single government to take into consideration the need of each and every corner of a vast nation. The need for better administration and public welfare necessitates territorial decentralization of authority. According to Dicey, federalism suffers from inherent disadvantages, that is, rigidity and legalism. It has been suggested that Indian federalism does not suffer from rigidity and legalism because the procedures for the amendment of the Constitution enshrined are in themselves flexible. Moreover, certain institutions such as the National Development Council (NDC) have enabled the Indian federalism to function in flexible and cooperative manner.

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Decline of Federalism

The Sarkaria Commission report 1988 on center-state relations has mentioned that article 356 should be used very sparingly in extreme cases as a measure of last resort. When all available alternatives fail to prevent or rectify a breakdown of constitutional machinery in the state, all attempts should be made to resolve the crisis at the state level before taking recourse to the provision of article 356. Raja Mannar committee report (1971) had recommended that the Article 356 should be totally omitted.

Although the states have the exclusive power of legislation over every item in the State List, there are two exceptions to this general rule. As per Article 249, when the Council of States declares by a resolution supported by two-third of the members present and voting, that it is necessary or expedient in the national interest that Parliament should make laws with respect to any

matter enumerated in the State List, then Parliament is competent to make laws on the matter for the whole or any part of India. According to article 256, the executive power of every state is to be exercised in such a way as to ensure compliance with laws made by the Parliament, and under Article 257, the Constitution calls upon every state not to impede or prejudice the executive power of the Union in the state.

The Constitution has certain special provisions to ensure the uniformity of the administrative system and maintain minimum common administrative standard without impairing the federal principle. These include: the creation of all India services such as the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and the Indian Police Service (IPS) and the members of these services are in key administrative positions in the states. Appointments to the High Courts are made by the President and the judges of the High Courts can be transferred by the President. Although every bill passed by the state legislature normally becomes a law with the assent of the governor, certain bills have to be reserved for the assent of the President.

Such distribution of powers between the Centre and states gives rise to two opposite views. To some, the Centre in India is a leviathan – the instrument of oppression of states; and for others, it lacks adequate power. During the pre-1967 phase, India's Central government effectively dominated the constituent states. Two unique factors were responsible for Centre's dominance and these were: Nehru's leadership and the dominance of single party both at the Centre and in states.

Relations between the Centre and states were strained, especially in the non-Congress ruled states. The tendency among non-Congress state governments was to blame the Centre for their ills often it was said that the Centre was adopting a step-motherly attitude towards the non-Congress states. The Union-state relation took a new turn after fourth general elections, with coming into power of non-Congress governments

in several states and with Congress government at the Centre being reduced to thin majority. Thus, elections gave dramatic shake to the two decades old Congress dominance. The federal system had to operate within a multi-party framework.

Factors Affecting Federal relationship

Numerous factors like religion, linguistic multiplicity, fiscal issues, Planning Commission, external danger and governor's role etc., entail the potential of affecting relations between the Centre and States and these are briefly analyzed as under.

Religion

Religion may be one of the causes of imbalances in federal set-up. Sometimes religious differences are combined with political and cultural differences. Physical environment may create imbalances by effecting communication. If good communication cannot be ensured, the poor units tend to develop a complex of neglect and feel that they are receiving less than their fair share of resources for development. The minorities are spread over all states but have such large concentration in some than in other. Muslim large population are in Jammu & Kashmir, Assam, West Bengal, Kerala UP Bihar and Karnataka.

Christians have a large percentage in Kerala and a significantly large proportion in some of the smaller states and areas in the north-eastern states of Nagaland, Meghalaya and Mizoram. From time to time communal riots have frequently occurred based on religious differences despite the proclamation of policy of socialism. In order to contain these forces, the Union has to implement unitary provision frequently and this leads to decline of federalism.

The Linguistic Multiplicity

The linguistic multiplicity is another element of social infrastructures which has partly contributed to the decline of federalism. The language issue became a subject of great controversy in the debates in the Constituent Assembly. The framers of the Constitution recognized the linguistic multiplicity, while according legal status to

twenty-two languages listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. Hindi was recognized as a national official language. This could not satisfy all states and all leaders. The continuation of religious and linguistic minorities within the states has been an important issue all the time. The problem has caused some strain on the government, especially in areas where the people belonging to other states, after being regarded as outsiders, occupy strategic administrative or industrial positions. These people are often perceived as exploiters.

Financial relations

Financial relations at the Center-state level have assumed crucial role in terms of smooth functioning of day-to-day transactions between governments at the Centre and states in India. For all practical purposes, financial interactions at national, state and the local levels have important bearing on inter-governmental relations of every stage of decision-making. In a country like India that is so large and varied in different aspects, it is necessary to vest the Centre with ample powers so that the financial resource dispensation is controlled to make it strong to keep the country united. The taxes allotted to the states are less lucrative and less elastic, besides this, the Centre has foreign and deficit financing at its disposal. All this enables it to command large resources while the states are not in such a position.

The pattern of financial adjustment, in which almost all states rely on discretionary central grants and loans for meeting their budgetary needs and financing their development plans, is certainly not helpful for building up a healthy relationship between the state and the Centre; and under such conditions, the Union Government is likely to assume the role of dispenser of bounties while the states may feel themselves subordinated. As an Indian economist has put it “the increasing dependence of the state on the Center makes the latter a financial leviathan.”

The Planning Commission

Undoubtedly, the erstwhile institution of Planning Commission has been replaced by the NDA-II

government by NITI Aayog; nevertheless, the role played by this erstwhile institution and its impact on different aspects of federalism continues to an important aspect of academic narrative. The Planning Commission, which had been entrusted with the work of formulating plans for the socio-economic development, as a body was entirely under the control of the Centre. It is true that in shaping the plans at different stages and giving them a final form, National Development Council, in which the chief ministers of all states were represented, was consulted and its approval taken. But, as pointed out by many observers, the role of the NDC had all along been a formal one.

External Danger

External dangers and probability of foreign aggression also impact relations between the federation and its constituent units. Apprehensions of presence of disruptive forces from outside are always there and these forces portend an ominous threat to the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the country. For example, there are tensions in the North-Eastern states, of India due to the involvement of the neighboring countries. The Tamil issue in Sri Lanka had proved instrumental in creating disruption in India.

However, the past events show that whenever the one-party-dominance system is replaced by a competitive multiparty system, there arises a certain resistance to the indiscriminate use of para-military forces by the Centre. It is further seen that the ruling class at the Centre has in the past sought to meet the challenge by opting for greater authoritative perceptions.

Role of the Governor

Governor has a dual role to play. The Constitution vests the Governor with the exercise of discretionary authority and in the discharge of which he may override the decisions of his responsible ministers. It is often stated that neither the governors themselves nor the public leaders are sure as to the exact role of the governor, a role that often leads to the conflict between the Union and the states; in spite of the assurance

given by Dr. Ambedkar that the article 356 would be used most sparingly and that too in exceptional cases; however, it has been used quite frequently.

The President's Rule in Kerala was imposed on June 3, 1959 to February 22nd 1960, under unusual circumstances by creating a constitutional precedent. The Desai Government's dismissal of Devraj Urs' government on the eve of Karnataka assembly election in 1978 was an unusual act. Dev Raj Urs had agreed to face the assembly summoned to meet on January 3, 1978 and yet the ministry was thrown out on December 31st, 1977. It was a clear case of manipulation of the governor from Delhi.

The role of the then Andhra Governor in the dismissal of the state government led by N.T Rama Rao in 1987 was a blot on the Congress party, which had to pay heavy price for its abuse of governor's power of dismissal of the state government. This and all other such cases are examples of undiluted abuse of governor's power under 356. Therefore, historical survey shows that any improvement in the Centre-State relations would necessitate a reconsideration of Governor's power of dismissal of elected governments in the states.

Conclusion

A sound federal system in India can ill-afford a dominant Centre with states serving merely as its agents. What is needed at this juncture is operational cooperative federalism in which the issues of governance between the Centre and the states is carried through partnership, discussion, dialogues and consensus. On the matters of common interest, there needs to be mutual agreement without diluting either states' or Union's responsibility in matters which fall within their respective exclusive domains. The Union and states are mutually interdependent. It is necessary; therefore, that the Center and the states should manifest the spirit of mutual cooperation. There are many occasions when the question of "decline in federalism" is being raised, especially when a state or states assert their claim of autonomy with unusual force.

Centralization has become an unavoidable universal phenomenon because of political, social, economic and international pressures. At a time when divisive trends like religious revivalism and separatism, are on the rise and taking violet turn, the involvement of different elements of the system in the nation-building efforts in a genuine cooperative federal spirit needs to be accorded top priority.

In terms of administrative, political, economic and financial relations, the Centre and States are not independent of each other, but are interdependent. The sound working of federal structures of the government enjoins upon the duty to maintain smooth efficient and harmonious relations which are mutually beneficial to both sides and the country at large. The area of discretionary fiscal transfer should be reduced and states should be given sufficient independent non-discretionary financial resources.

The residuary powers of legislation and taxation should be given to the state legislature. Along with this, working of national institutions having bearing on the states should be reassessed. The Center-state relationship must be based on consensus and not on confrontation in order to ensure unity and national integrity under our federal framework.

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Remembering Mahatma Gandhi through Champaran Satyagraha

Dr. Sudhanshu Tripathi*

[Indeed, Champaran Satyagraha marked the emergence of Mahatma from M. K. Gandhi wherefrom began a new era in India's freedom struggle. During those days when popular protests were repressed by brute force unleashed by the British government, the strategy of peace and non-violent persuasion in Champaran proved to be highly useful as it discouraged the English rulers from resorting to barbarity against the agitators.]

With Mahatma Gandhi's martyrdom day observed on January 30th, everyone is reminded of his immense contribution towards selfless service of humanity suffering the agony and trauma of utter ignorance, poverty and wretchedness and also violence, injustice or inequality of all kinds all over the world. And that moved Gandhi's inner core which motivated his pious self to jump into fulfilling his lifelong mission for alleviation and uplift of these millions as he could feel the inner throes of their hearts.

While he was working in South Africa towards this end, his deep passion for service of own motherland brought him back to India where he began with this utter desire to serve the hapless millions. And the farmers' agitation in Champaran against various forms of prevailing injustice provided him the required opportunity to practice his noble ideas into action wherein he proved to be very successful. In fact, the Champaran peasant movement was a part of the wider struggle prefixed for independence. When Gandhi returned from South Africa, he wanted to experiment with his first-ever non-cooperation satyagraha, as a limited endeavour, by providing leadership to the infant peasant agitations at Champaran in Bihar and later at Kheda in Gujarat.

Although these struggles were taken up as reformist movements, yet the underlying rationale was to mobilise the peasants towards their

genuine demands meant for their survival. Indeed, Champaran Satyagraha was based on insistence on 'truth and non-violence', along-with persuasive strategy. It was organized as a peaceful movement in total contradiction with the violent peasant uprisings in the past. Fortunately, the movement received massive support from some of the prominent leaders of the country like Rajendra Prasad, Brij Kishore Prasad and Muzharul Haq, who constituted the progressive intelligentsia of the then India. This provided strength and a constructive direction to the movement. Can't it become again a role model in today's world fraught with never-ending macabre violence and global terrorism?

In the early 19th century, European planters had set up indigo farms and factories at Champaran, in North Bihar. Thereafter, they forced the local cultivators to enter into the tinkathia system, which stipulated that out of 20 khatas which make an acre, they had to dedicate 3 khatas exclusively for indigo plantation. Though the peasants (bhumihars) of Champaran and other adjoining areas of Bihar were growing the Indigo under the tinkathia system, they had to lease this part in return to the advance at the beginning of each farming season and adding further to their woes, they were compelled to sell their crops at a throwaway price which was fixed on the area cultivated by them rather than the crop produced.

When the demand for indigo in the international market began to fall with the arrival of German synthetic dyes, the European planters passed the burden of losses over these cultivators,

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besides raising rents and extracting other illegal dues from them lest they close producing indigo. As Indigo plantation had been destroying the fertility of their soil, they had nothing but to protest against such unjust farming. Consequently, the planters used illegal and inhuman methods of indigo cultivation upon the poor peasants while forcefully subjecting them to an extremely inadequate remuneration.

Further, these planters demanded heavy price from the peasants in lieu of relieving them from the lease contracts. Thus, as a whole, they were being bitterly cheated by the planters and the overall situation had become very horrible as well as pathetic which compelled a noted writer and documentary-maker D.G. Tendulkar to write: 'The tale of woes of Indian ryots, forced to plant indigo by the British planters, forms one of the blackest in the annals of colonial exploitation. Not a chest of Indigo reached England without being stained with human blood.'

Against this backdrop, an enlightened peasant in Champaran, Raj Kumar Shukla who was also suffering this highhandedness, managed to persuade Gandhi to survey the area to stand up for the cause of the exploited peasants. Hence Gandhi and his supporters visited extensively through villages, while listening to their grievances, and recording their horror tales of repression. Thus, Gandhi could understand the inhuman misery and brutal savagery which these peasants had been suffering from in the Champaran. Hence their miseries were discussed thread-bare at the annual conference of the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee on 10th April, 1914, which concluded that the Champaran peasants were really suffering their worst.

And that again motivated the Provincial Congress Committee in 1915 to recommend for constitution of an inquiry committee to assess the woes of the Champaran peasantry. As the issue had drawn countrywide attention by then, the Indian National Congress, in its Lucknow session in 1916, also discussed the Champaran case to decide for immediate remedial measures for them.

Hence, Gandhi chose to represent the peasants' cause and initiated the Champaran peasant

movement which was launched in 1917-18. Its objective was to create awakening among the peasants against the prevailing exploitation of the European planters. On 14th May, 1917 Gandhi wrote a letter to the District Magistrate of Champaran, W.B. Heycock, wherein he showed his deep concerns about the sufferings of peasants at the hands of landlords and also the government of the day. The peasants opposed not only the planters but also zamindars, as they were equally brute and oppressive for the peasants; though Gandhi wanted to normalize their mutual relations.

Meanwhile, a Champaran Agrarian Committee had already been constituted by the government, with Gandhi as one of its members. As pressure mounted against such exploitation and the recorded statements of about 8,000 peasants testified the inhuman exploitation and barbarity, the government had to accept Gandhi's suggestion of abolishing the tinkathia system. The European planters had to sign an agreement granting more compensation and control over farming to these poor farmers and cancellation of revenue hikes and collection until the famine ended. Furthermore, the planters were asked to refund 25 percent of the amount they had illegally collected from the peasants as enhancement of dues.

Thus, the Champaran satyagraha became a grand success and turned to be a powerful tool of civil resistance in the ensuing India's freedom struggle. The psychological impact of this Satyagraha was outstanding as it aroused firm belief in truth and non-violence among the suffering peasants of Champaran and also among the countrymen as well. Indeed, the satyagraha proved to be a great morale booster to not only Gandhi - which made him a global symbol forever - and the Champaran peasantry but became an icon of peaceful and non-violent struggle for the whole nation and also the whole world. In fact, this icon is the only option even today for survival of innocent humanity bearing the brunt of ever-recurring gruesome violence and various forms of terror, besides innumerable temporal pains and physical difficulties in every nook and corner of the world. ◆◆

Women Representation in 14th Lok Sabha

Dr. Gangadhara P S*

[The Constitution of India provides equal political participation of men and women both. There is need to amend the Constitution to make special provisions for women. Women need to be independent to make their own decisions. To have strong democratic governance, women's equal participation is must and therefore their contribution to this process needs to be analyzed in the appropriate context by the media. There cannot be a real democracy if the voices and issues of women that constitute half the population of the country are ignored or sidelined]

Women comprise somewhat about half of the world's population. Contribution of women to the society is also more than half in equivalence to that of men in terms of moral excellence of women and the varied roles they play in different spheres. Yet women's participation in formal political structures and processes, where decisions by both men and women are made, still continues to be minimal. Today, women's representation in legislatures around the world is 15 % only, despite the marked commitment of the international community to gender equality and to the spanning gender gap in the formal political sphere.

Review of Literature

- Oduol (2008) found that access to education and lack of quality education still remains a barrier for many women. It shows that education equips women for leadership.
- Paxton and Hughes (2007) explained that cultural ideas about women can affect women's levels of representation throughout the political process, from an individual woman's decision to enter politics, to party selection of candidates, to the decisions made by voters on Election Day.
- Bari, (2005) has narrated some important factors which hinder women's political participation. Ideological, political, socio-

cultural and economic factors are very crucial in this regard.

- MoWA (2006) explained that the number of women leaders and decision makers at the various level of the decentralized government structure is still very low.
- Rule, (1981) explores various factors hindering women participation in politics, such as lack of time for politics due to their domestic obligations, their lack of socialization for politics, their inability to overcome male and incumbent bias in certain types of electoral systems.

Objectives of the Study

- To know the status of female political participation.
- To assess the awareness of women regarding their political participation in India.
- To identify the factors and problems impacting female political participation in the 2014 Lok Sabha Elections.

Research Methodology

This paper is basically descriptive and analytical in nature. In this paper an attempt has been made to analyze the women's political participation in India. The data used in it is purely from secondary sources in accordance with the requirements of this study.

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2014 Lok Saba Elections

Women's representation in the Parliament and in the elections is far lower. Will the 2014 Lok Sabha Elections go down in history as the biggest bosh of the decade? It's no secret that we Indians love a good show, but our seasoned showmen have negotiated to surpass themselves this time. What get handily unmarked are the real issues such as health, education, equality and safety. Women make up almost 50 % of India's population, but scarcely get any attention during the elections - from interviews to live coverage – it's men who occupy central stage.

Things were a little different in 2014 – apprehensive admen were quick to point out the women political masters, who in turn had assured that there was a slug point on women & welfare on the last page of political parties' manifestos. So, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) had promised to address women's safety, BJP & Congress had sworn to hasten a legislation that guarantees 33% reservation for women in the Lok Sabha.

The number of women contesting the General Elections was less than the magic number of 100 just 37 years ago – but 70 women were in the fray in the 1977 General Elections. 1/3 of the 402 women candidates in this 2014 elections were Independents. Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) appeared to be serious about the reason of women participation. In direct contrast, the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) had fielded 20 women candidates. How about regional political parties light-emitting diode by women leadership, such as the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) light-emitting diode by Mayawati, AIADMK led by Jayalalitha and Trinamool Congress led by Mamata Banerjee. In direct contrast, Trinamool Congress had 12 women campaigner and BSP had 16 Candidates.

Fortunately, didactics is more than of import for our female contestants – 53% of the women candidates had Graduation and above literacy level, compared to 48% for male contestants, of the overall contestants.

Representation of Women in Lok Saba 1952-2014

Lok Saba Elections	Total no. of seats	No. of women seats	Total %
First (1952)	489	22	4.4
Second (1957)	494	27	5.4
Third (1962)	494	34	6.7
Fourth (1967)	523	31	5.9
Fifth (1971)	521	22	4.2
Sixth (1977)	544	19	3.4
Seventh (1980)	544	28	5.1
Eighth (1984)	544	44	8.1
Ninth (1989)	529	28	5.3
Tenth (1991)	509	36	7.0
Eleventh (1996)	541	40	7.4
Twelfth (1998)	545	44	8.0
Thirteenth (1999)	543	48	8.8
Fourteenth (2004)	543	45	8.1
Fifteenth (2009)	543	59	10.9
Sixteenth (2014)	543	61	11.2

Source: Election Commission of India

Conclusion

Greater political engagement of women in electoral process alone is one facet of a wider concern for democratic inclusion of women. There is also no warranty that women Lok Sabha members will facilitate 'enactment for women' once elected to Parliament, so issues of answerability will rest, as with all Lok Sabha Members. But India's low proportion of women as Lok Sabha members is spectacular in direct contrast to the increasing presence of women in local urban and rural political bodies, made possible by guaranteed gender reservation. This may be well for the 'word of mouth' of possible parliamentary contestants, but in the absence of a lawfully authorization women reservation in Parliament is meaningless.

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Female Participation in Decentralized Governance in UP

Dr. Garima Mishra*

[Decentralization of government authority, functions and finances to local governing bodies provided direct entry to women in politics at grassroots level. Various amendments in the Constitution, government scheme of capacity building, training programs, civil society among other actors had been identified, analysed, assessed and encountered factors hindering women's political participation. This paper focuses on women's participation in decentralised government in Uttar Pradesh. This paper is divided into three parts; first part introduces spatial, regional and demographic details of Uttar Pradesh; second part explains the status of women in different tiers of political structure and work force in general; and third part deals with training programs for capacity building of women in the state.]

Uttar Pradesh (UP) is the most populous state in India. With an area of 236,286 sq. kms., it is the fourth largest state of the country. Uttar Pradesh has a total population of 19,95,81,477 as per the latest Census data (2011). It is the second largest state-economy in India, which contributed 8.17 per cent to the country's total GDP between 2004 and 2009. UP has the highest Scheduled Caste population in the country.

Physical and demographic Distribution of Uttar Pradesh

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Uttar Pradesh has one of the most fertile land masses for agriculture with the Ganges, Yamuna, and Gomati rivers flowing through the state. It is the largest producer of food grains (particularly wheat), sugarcane, pulses and potatoes in the country. Some of the major areas of concern in the state are high poverty levels which is nearly 10 million people living below the poverty line, a low female literacy rate as compared to the national average and as compared to the male literacy rate, low sex ratio of 908, against the national sex ratio of 933, shortfall in Human Resource and infrastructure in the health delivery system, highest under-5 mortality rate (141), the second highest crude death rate, and the third lowest life expectancy showing serious health

concerns etc., are some major concerns which have become part of state's features.

Almost all social indicators are among the lowest in UP, with only Bihar and Odisha lagging behind. There is high rate of emigration from eastern UP and Bundelkhand due to poverty and poor living conditions, also 27 lakh hectares are affected annually due to floods, famine, and droughts. These facts show a raw and real picture of the state but it is not the one which narrates its story, to give its complete introduction, another side of the coin ought to be mentioned here.

Uttar Pradesh, the most populous state of the country, has maximum number of districts. The demographic advantage requires special attention to utilise human resource to its fullest. The state has 75 Zila Panchayats, 821 intermediate Panchayats and 51914 village Panchayats. In India, there are a total 598 District Panchayats, 6568 Intermediate Panchayats and 239974 Village Panchayats¹ and 630 Urban Local Bodies.

Regional Imbalance

In terms of economic indicators like agricultural productivity, infrastructural facilities, and industrial growth, UP's economy can be categorized into four regions: Western, Eastern, Central, and Bundelkhand. Western Uttar Pradesh is agriculturally prosperous. It is relatively industrialized and has seen a greater degree of urbanization due to its proximity to Delhi and other industrialized/ developed areas. Western UP also has Khap Panchayats. At the other end, Bundelkhand and eastern part are chronically backward in almost every critical area. Low agricultural growth, lesser number of industrial units, and lesser gross value of industrial products mark this region as the least developed in the state.

There are several reasons for this backwardness, but the most significant among them are deficiency in natural resources or exposure to natural calamities. Bundelkhand carries some influences of its neighbouring state Madhya Pradesh. Eastern UP is characterized by high poverty, higher migration rates, lower industrialization, and a

weak law and order situation. However, Eastern UP has higher natural resources as compared to Bundelkhand. Demographic division indicates that eastern part of the state is on the top of the list, followed by western Uttar Pradesh. Following figure shows population in percentage and geographical area covered by each part of the state.

Table 1.1 Region wise population in Uttar Pradesh

Regions	Population (%)	Geographical area (%)
Eastern	39.98	35.63
Western	37.17	33.13
Central	18	19.03
Bundelkhand	4.85	12.21

During the decade (2001-2011), the Western region of the State had highest population growth (21.37 percent) followed by Eastern region (19.93 percent) and Central region (19.28 percent) against the State average of 20.23 percent. The Bundelkhand region registered somewhat lowest population growth (17.60 percent) during this period.

In general, government treats the state as a homogenous unit while framing the regional development policy, which it is not. At the district level, situations are at variance. Measurement of disparity at the district level would help to frame area-specific plans and policies in a better manner and adopt policies suitable to tackle different regions within a state. To get the district level data, the erstwhile Planning Commission had considered 36 development indicators. It is called as Composite Index of Development.

These indicators include 10 indicators of agriculture and allied activities, 6 indicators of industrial infrastructure, 10 indicators of economic infrastructure and 10 indicators of social infrastructure. In Uttar Pradesh, inter-district disparity shows that 14 districts viz. Sant

Kabir Nagar, Kushi Nagar, Maharajganj, Azamgarh, Deoria, Balrampur, Bahraich, Jaunpur, Gonda, Raebareli, Shrawasti, Pratapgarh, Siddharth Nagar and Mau have very low Composite Index of Development as compared to other districts in the State. Block-wise calculation indicates that out of 821 development blocks of the State, 399 blocks are backward with respect to their districts. To overcome such regional disparity, state government and the Central government has launched various schemes. These are:

Poorvanchal Vikas Nidhi and Bundelkhand Vikas Nidhi (1990-91) is the fund which provides infrastructural facilities to local people. Bundelkhand Package (2009-10) is another fund with multi-sectoral approach giving primary focus for water resource sector and livelihood improvement. Third is Border Area Development Programme (BADP) which is a hundred percent centrally funded programme. Main objective of BADP is to meet the special needs of the people living in remote and inaccessible areas situated near the border.

Fourth is Backward Region Grant Fund (BRGF), designed to redress regional imbalances in development. The fund provides resources to bridge critical gaps in local infrastructure, to strengthen Panchayat and Municipality level governance with more appropriate capacity to facilitate participatory planning, decision-making, implementation and monitoring; and provide efficiency and equity at local level.

Being the populous state, place of the state in political domain is very important. The state has maximum human resource which decides the fate of its socio- economic and political life. Uttar Pradesh is one of the states which has devolved and delegated rights and responsibilities to the lower level of the government immediate after the enactment of 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment acts. To assess the extent of devolution to PRIs by States/UTs, every year, Ministry of Panchayati Raj conducts a study

through an independent agency. The assessment is carried out in two stages as indicated below:

In the first stage, States/UTs were evaluated against the four mandatory constitutional requirements as mentioned below:

1. Establishing the State Election Commission
2. Holding PRIs elections every five years
3. Establishing State Finance Commissions
4. Setting up of District Planning Committees.

States that fulfilled each of the above-mentioned fundamental requirements qualified for second stage assessment, i.e., assessment in terms of various indicators of Devolution Index, aimed at assessing the status of devolution of 3Fs (Functions, Finances and Functionaries). There were 34 indicators (five related to functions, fifteen to finance and fourteen to functionaries)². In 2009, Uttar Pradesh stood on 13th ranking and in 2013 it came down to 15th ranking in devolution index.

On the basis of functions, finance and functionaries, Panchayats and Municipalities can be empowered to perform assigned jobs in these bodies. After the enactment of the amendment act with mandatory at least 33% reservation for women, women as a community are new entry in this man's domain, politics. Women's presence is promised since last two decades along with other communities such as Scheduled Castes and Schedule Tribes in the provisions of the act.

Status of Women

In Uttar Pradesh, as per Census 2011 female population is 47.7% of the total population of the state. Half of the population of the state is represented marginally in every sphere except unorganised and unpaid sectors. Sex ratio of urban region is worse than rural region of state and sex ratio of state stands at 912 per 1000 males.

Table 1.2 Women Population in Uttar Pradesh (Census 2011)

	Women	%	Total
Population	95331831	47.7	199812341
Rural population	74324283	47.8	155317278
Urban population	21007548	47.2	44495063
Population (0-6)	14605750	47.4	30791331
Rural population (0-6)	11904988	47.5	25040583
Urban population (0-6)	2700762	46.9	5750748
Sex ratio	912	91.2	1000
Sex ratio rural	918	91.8	1000
Sex ratio urban	894	89.4	1000

A million women have been elected in both rural and urban local bodies, following the landmark 73rd and 74th Amendment Acts to the Constitution of India (1992), reserving 33 percent of the seats in Panchayati Raj Institutions and

50% in Municipalities for women. In Vidhan Sabha, women share 42 seats out of total seats of 403 while there are only 5 women in Vidhan Parishad. Almost all the political parties do not have elected women representative in the Council.

1.3 Party wise women representation in Vidhan Sabha Uttar Pradesh

Party	No. of women MLA(16th Vidhan Sabha)	No. of women MLA (17th Vidhan Sabha)
SP	22	1
BSP	3	2
BJP	5	36
INC	4	2
Rashtriya Lok Dal	0	0
Peace Party	0	0
Kaumi Ekta Dal	0	0
Nationalist Congress Party	0	0
Apna Dal	0	1
Independent	1	0
Total	35	42

Source: uplegisassembly.gov.in/ENGLISH/memberlistFemale.htm

*there are two other parties having zero women representation in house and one member (male) nominated by the Governor.

Numbers of women in Local Bodies have been increasing since the enactment of 73rd and 74th Acts, 1992. There are around 40% women representatives in both the local bodies. Details

about women leaders in all three tiers of Panchayats and Municipalities in Uttar Pradesh are given below in the following tables.

1.4 Women Representatives in Panchayats and Urban Local Bodies in Uttar Pradesh

	Men	Women	Total
Panchayat *	464469	3,09,511	7,73,980
Gram Panchayat	396010	266629	662639
Block/ Kshetra Panchayat	46011	32336	78347
Zila/District Panchayat	1732	1454	3186
Municipality#	7215	4649	11864
Municipal Corporation	627	365	992
Municipal Council	3232	2059	5291
Town Area/ Nagar Panchayat	3356	2225	5581

*Data of Panchayat election, 2015

Data of Municipal election, 2015

Women's participation in politics assures their participation in decision-making and governance. There are women in other arena making their presence noticeable. As per Census 2011, females' workforce participation rate is 25.51% against 53.26% for males. In rural sector, female workforce participation rate is better than males with 30.02% in comparison to 53.03% for males whereas in urban sector the participation rate of females trails at 15.44% against 53.76% for

males. 41.1% female main and marginal workers are agricultural labourers whereas 24.0% are cultivators and 5.7% are households.

The 68th Round National Sample Survey results indicate that the worker population ratio for females in rural sector was 24.8 in 2011-12 and 54.3 for males. In urban sector, the ratio is 14.7 for females and 54.6 for males. Among the States/UTs, highest worker population ratio for females in the rural sector was in Himachal Pradesh at 52.4% and in the urban sector in Sikkim at 27.3%.

1.5 Women participation in workforce in Uttar Pradesh

Category	Female		Male	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
Worker population ratio#	17.7	10.2	49.1	51.1
Workforce participation	18.3	11.3	47.4	48.94
Cultivators*	28.2	3.1	35.2	2.73
Agricultural labour	48.5	9.0	34.4	4.48
Household industry worker	5.0	8.8	2.6	3.72
Self-employed#	80.7	67.5	62.4	52.1
Salaried employed #	3.8	21.7	6.7	29.9

National Sample Survey Office, 68th Round, July 2011- June 2012.

*Census 2011 data, Office of the Registrar General, India.

Women employed in organized sector accounted for 20.5% in 2011 with 18.1% working in the public sector and 24.3% in the private. According to NSS 68th Unemployment Rate Round, the labour force participation rate for women across all age groups was 25.3 in rural sector and 15.5 in urban sector compared with 55.3 and 56.3 for men in the rural and urban sectors respectively in 2011-12. The unemployment rate for women in rural areas was 2.9% against 2.1% for men whereas it was 6.6 % and 3.2% for women and men in urban areas during 2011-12.

As per data provided by Directorate General of Employment and Training, Ministry of Labour and Employment, there was increase in the number of women in public sector in 2011. There were 199.2 million women as compared to 193.5 million in 2010 while there was increase of four thousand female work-force in private sector. It reached to 68.8 million in 2011 from 64.6 in the previous year.

Training programs for Women in the State

Universal Declaration on Democracy states: *“The achievement of democracy presupposes a genuine partnership between men and women in the conduct of the affairs of society in which they work in equality and complementarily, drawing mutual enrichment from their differences”*. Uttar Pradesh stands highest in number with 2,97,235 female representatives in Panchayat and with 28 female representatives, Daman and Diu was the lowest.

In Urban Local Bodies, UP has provided 50% reservation and women share stands around 40% in urban bodies. Status of women has not changed much in respect of their participation in local politics at the local level. They are ‘proxies’ representing their family and this situation is similar in both areas. There are some successful experiences but the numbers are very low and

majority of women representatives are just ceremonial heads. Patriarchy, illiteracy, social and cultural constraints pull back women to their private space.

Government has taken many initiatives to empower women and EWRs to enhance their participation in meetings, and make the performance of their duties effectively. Capacity development is one of those required factors for sustainable development of women’s status in political domain at the local level.

Capacity Building and Training (CB&T) Programmes in the State

States are provided funds and other support for CB&T related interventions under various schemes of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj and Rural Development. There are various training institutions such as State Institutions of Rural Development (SIRDs), Panchayati Raj Training Institutions (PRTIs), Extension Training Centers (ETCs), Panchayat Training Centers (PTCs) etc. They are involved in delivering scheme-specific training programmes, focusing on capacity building of elected representatives and officials of PRIs. Rajiv Gandhi Panchayat Sashaktikaran Abhiyan (RGPSA) is one of these programmes to strengthen the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). A number of NGOs have also been working in this area either directly or in partnership with the training institutions.

However, three types are there to build capacity of local bodies; first, to reform the management (more devolution of power and authority, technical assistance, increase in transparency); second is financial support (more grants for developmental work, fiscal reforms) and third is to focus on constituents, providing the personnel information, enhance governance capacity, efficiency in service delivery, training and awareness programmes for elected representatives and special focus on the disadvantaged groups among them like SC, ST and women representatives.

Capacity Building and Training (CB&T) is critical for enhancing the effectiveness of the

elected representatives and functionaries of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs). The training institutions in Uttar Pradesh undertake a number of capacity building & training related interventions; and this section focuses on capacity building and training regarding women representatives in both the local bodies.

In the Seventh Round Table Conference on training & capacity development in December 2004, it was recognised that capacity development of elected women representatives and support functionaries is one of the most transformational tools executed by government to achieve the aims of the 73rd and 74th Amendments to strengthen democratic governance in local bodies. Subsequently, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) launched a National Capacity Building Framework (NCBF) in July 2006 as a guiding document for capacity building & training of PRI functionaries.

The NCBF provided for the first time a comprehensive guide to planning and implementing capacity development investments for local governments. National Capacity Building Framework is being supported by the Backward Region Grant Fund. It also provides a potential framework for capacity building components of other programs of the Panchayati Raj and rural development³.

Ministry of Panchayati Raj provides assistance to state for training and capacity building for elected representatives. These include capacity building under Backward Region Grant Fund, training & capacity building component of Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Yojana and Panchayat Mahila Evam Yuva Shakti Abhiyan (PMEYSA).

Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Yojana (RGSY) is a centrally-sponsored programme focusing on training & capacity building of elected representatives in non- Backward Region Grant Fund districts. In order to realise the aim of empowering elected representatives and to train them to perform the devolved functions efficiently, RGSY contains two components –

training & capacity building and infrastructure development. Under this component, assistance is given for construction of Panchayat Ghars mainly at Gram Panchayat level. The scheme is demand-driven in nature and provides for funding on 75:25 sharing basis between the Central and State Governments.

Backward Regions Grant Fund (Capacity Building component)

The Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF) programme was launched by the Prime Minister at Barpeta in Assam on 19th February 2007, and signifies a new approach to addressing persistent regional imbalances in development⁴. BRGF covers 250 districts in 27 states except Goa, of which 232 districts fall under the purview of Part IX and Part IX-A of the Constitution dealing with the Panchayats and the Municipalities respectively⁵. In Uttar Pradesh 36 districts are covered under BRGF.

Each state is required to prepare six-year perspective capacity building plan under state institution for rural development or any other institution to the capacity building of elected Panchayat representatives, officials and other stakeholders in BRGF districts.

Panchayat Mahila Evam Yuva Shakti Abhiyan (PMEYSA)

This programme tries to bridge gap in accessing opportunities between male and female representatives. State Institutes of Rural Development (SIRDs) have been identified as nodal agencies in most of the States for this demand-driven scheme. In Uttar Pradesh, there are 51 state training institutes including one SIRD.

A comprehensive module for capacity building & training programme for elected women representatives (EWRs) of Panchayats was launched at Ranchi by ministry of Women and Child Development in collaboration with Ministry of Panchayati Raj in 2017. There are various departments working for capacity building and training for women to enhance their participation in governance. Departments like

Uttar Pradesh Mahila Kalyan Nigam Ltd., Lucknow, Project Management Unit- Backward Region Grant Fund, Department of Panchayati Raj, Uttar Pradesh Diversified Agriculture Support Project, Lucknow, District Industry Center, Azamgarh under Rashtriya Sam Vikas Yojna, Ministry of Rural Development, Government Of India, New Delhi, District Rural Development Agency, Integrated Child Development Services- District Program Officer etc. are working as an agency for capacity building and training in the state. These cover all the possible areas like awareness programmes, training of elected women representatives in Panchayats, Mahila Rojgar Training Programmes, etc⁷.

A large number of training programmes for elected members are handled by All India Institute of Local Self Government which is a premier training institution in local government field (established in 1926) in India⁸. Ministry of Urban Development (MUD) supports several such kinds of training programmes through Regional Centre for Urban and Environmental Studies (RCUES) which are functioning in all the regions of India.

Conclusion

In Uttar Pradesh, the networks acted as pressure groups and enabled women to raise their issues at various forums. Though less in numbers, changes are visible in some spheres like education, violence against women, institutional delivery, the work of Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) and *anganwadi* workers, and so on in the working pattern of EWRs. Women are active in area of education, health, apart from politics. Number of ASHA workers had reached to 859,331 by 2014 and 1.8 million mostly female

anganwadi workers. These positive changes indicate towards enhanced awareness among women in Panchayats and ULBs.

Women have started taking on their responsibility but it is not the case in majority of places. Some states are coming with greater success in women's active participation in local bodies on the other hand some states are just dealing with numbers. The role of women in decision making is still under question. Women are instrumental in ensuring good governance for society by involving them in mainstream and decision-making. The overall picture has remained same for women of these states.

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Food Adulteration and Consumer Awareness

Dr. P.V. Narasaiah* & G.S. Veena Kumari**

[Consumers constitute the largest segment of the society. However, they are unorganized. Therefore, protection of their interests and rights is more significant to the general welfare of the state. In India, the consumer eats food that is adulterated, drinks water that is contaminated and breaths air that is polluted. He breaths air which is highly harmful to his lungs or uses the drugs which are totally banned in developed countries. Food adulteration can lead to slow poisoning and various kinds of diseases, which can even result in death. Adulteration makes the food items used in our daily life unsafe and unhygienic for use. The traders use it for their own economic benefit without thinking about its effect on the common population of our country, which consumes it. The business men often put the consumer in distress and agony with their gimmicks and tactics. Hence, creation of awareness and knowledge among consumers would solve the problems considerably. Consumer associations have to be built on strong foundations to motivate and educate the consumers. Unless the consumer becomes aware of his rights, prices, taxes, advertisements, adulterants in the products and quality of the products, he will be ever looser and always be in the octopus grip of the unethical business men.]

Consumers constitute the largest segment of the society. However, they are unorganized. Therefore, protection of their interests and rights is more significant to the general welfare of the state. In India, the consumer eats food that is adulterated, drinks water that is contaminated and breaths air that is polluted. He breaths air which is highly harmful to his lungs or uses the drugs which are totally banned in developed countries. Lack of consumer education on the part of consumer making him to eat foods with different artificial colours which have wider impact on his health.

Likewise, the payment of high fee by the student for the substandard educational facilities that are provided by various educational institutions, payment of telephone charges by the telephone owner for the telephone which is out of order are the best examples for the unawareness of the consumer as to his rights against the poor services offered by the unscrupulous businessmen. With

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a vast number of goods and services that are now in offer, it is essential for a consumer to know as to his rights.

Need for Awareness about Food Adulteration

Food is one of the basic necessities for sustenance of life. Pure, fresh and healthy diet is most essential for the health of the people of the nation. It is no wonder to say that community health is national wealth. Adulteration of food-stuffs was so rampant, widespread and persistent that nothing short of a somewhat drastic remedy in the form of a comprehensive legislation became the need of the hour.

In our daily life, there are so many unhygienic and contaminated things for our health. Most of our things are contaminated. Even the food, which we eat, is adulterated. Most of our things are contaminated. The *deliberate contamination of food material with low quality, cheap and non-edible or toxic substances is called food adulteration*. The substance, which lowers or degrades the quality of food material, is called an adulterant. Adulteration brings a lot of easy money for the traders, but it may ruin many lives.

Food adulteration can lead to slow poisoning and various kinds of diseases, which can even result in death. Adulteration makes the food items used in our daily life unsafe and unhygienic for use. The traders use it for their own economic benefit without thinking about its effect on the common population of our country, which consumes it. For preventing it, the government has made some certain commissions and laws. Still it prevails in our country on large scale. To check this kind of anti-social evil a concerted and determined onslaught was launched by the Government by introduction of the Prevention of Food Adulteration Bill in the Parliament to herald an era of much needed hope and relief for the consumers at large.

Adulteration - Historical Perspective

Adulterant usage was first explored in 1820 by the German chemist Frederick Accum, who identified many toxic metal colorings in foods and drinks. The physician Arthur Hill Hassall later conducted extensive studies in the early 1850s, which were published in the LANCET and led to the 1860 Food Adulteration Act and subsequent further legislations.

Consumption of adulterated food causes diseases like cancer, asthma, ulcer etc. Majority of the adulterants used by the shopkeepers are cheap substitutes which are easily available. In order to prevent the adulteration of food products by dishonest traders, the government has introduced "The Prevention of Food Adulteration Act". The Bureau of Indian Standards is the agency in India that provides the certificate of reliability to food manufacturers in the country.

Exploitation of Consumers

Consumers in India are very heterogeneous in composition, following different religions, speaking different languages, using different products and services and adhering closely to their varied traditions. Though they constitute the largest segment of the society, they are unorganized. Further, they are largely poor, illiterate ignorant, apathetic and therefore remain at the receiving end.

Consumers in fact are not aware of their rights. They are exploited by a large number of restrictive and unfair trade practices. The involvement of large number of middlemen in the channels of distribution, misleading, false or deceptive advertisements, misrepresentation about the quality of a commodity and market imperfections are the main causes responsible for exploitation of consumers.

Of late, the flow of advertisements is in a big way. The deluding advertisements deliberately disclose only half-truths so as to make a different impression than the actual facts. The business community has also been guilty of resorting to many unfair and unethical trade practices like hoarding of essential commodities, indulging in black marketing, adulterating and supplying sub-standard goods, resorting to false weights and measures and unreasonable pricing. Consequently, the average consumer is confronted with a large number of problems and has become a helpless victim of exploitation at every stage.

The Present Paper

Against this background, the present paper is a modest attempt to enlighten the consumers about the adulteration usually made by the businessmen in food stuffs. Some of the common tests to discern such adulteration have also been presented so as to make the consumer to be well aware of adulteration.

Common Adulterants in the Foods

Food adulteration has become very common, the adulterants are added in such a way that it is difficult for a common consumer to detect or even suspect them. These adulterants look so much like the original products that a common consumer accepts them generally without any hesitation. Some of the common adulterants found in foods are clearly indicated in Table -1.

From the table it is obvious that a large number of adulterants are added to all kinds of foods of daily use. These adulterants affect the consumer by not getting his money's worth but may cause health hazards, resulting in some cases irrecoverable damage to his health. These

adulterants must therefore, be viewed very seriously.

Tests for Detecting Adulteration in Foods

Detection of adulteration is not a herculean task. Simple tests can be carried out at home to identify the common adulterants. Table – 2 is presented

to display some simple common tests for detecting adulteration in foods.

Types of Food Adulteration

In India, the most common *food adulterations* found are presented in Table – 1

Table -1 : Common Adulterants found in India

Sl.No.	Food Stuffs	Common Adulterants
1.	Milk	Water, starch, skim milk powder, removal of cream
2.	Ghee	Vanaspathi, animal fats like pig's fat
3.	Cereals	Mixed with stones, sand grit and mud
4.	Flour	Mixed with soapstone and Bengal gram flour is adulterated with Kesari dal or lathyrus flour.
5.	Honey	Sugar and jiggery, corn syrup
6.	Spices	Metanilic acid and diphenylamine
7.	Ice Cream	Pepper oil, ethylacetate, butraldehyde, emil acetate, nitrate, washing powder
8.	Tur dal, Turmeric powder, Mixed spices, Saffron	Metanil Yellow, non-permitted colours
9.	Sugar, Salt	Chalk powder, white sand
10.	Tea powder	Dye or artificial colour, iron fillings
11.	Chilli Powder	Sudan red, Red brick powder, grit, sand, dirt, non-permitted colours and saw dust.
12.	Sweets	Metanil Yellow
13.	Mustard seeds and vegetable oil	Agremone seeds and agremone oil
14.	Cumin seeds	Charcoal dust
15.	Asafoetida Tasting salt	Soap stone
16.	Coriander powder	Dund powder
17.	Fruits	Arsenic sprayed
18.	Turmeric	Lead chromate
19.	Coffee	Mogdad coffee/senna occidentalis
20.	Chicory	Roasted ground peas, beans or wheat
21.	Sweet wines	Diethylene glycol
22.	Butter	Oleaomargarine or lard
23.	Flour	Alum
24.	Sauces	Starch
25.	Cinnamon	Powdered beechnut husk with cinnamic aldehyde
26.	Rice Noodles	Industrial dyes, tinopal bleach, Formal dehyde
27.	Chicken, Pork or other meats	Water or brine

Table – 2: Simple Tests for detecting Adulteration in Foods

Sl.No.	Food Material	Test for Adulteration	Observation	Adulterant present
1.	Ghee and Oil	Heat small amount of vegetable ghee with acetic anhydride	Droplets of oil floating on the surface of unused acetic anhydride	Wax or Hydrocarbons
2.	Sugar	Take small amount of sugar in a test tube and add few drops of HCL	Brist effervescence of Co ₂ is observed	Chalk Powder or Washing soda
3.	Kesari Dal in Besan	Boil the Besan sample in a test tube and 10 ml of 70 per cent HCL is added to it	Pink colour is developed	Alanine amine (BOAA) in Besan powder
4.	Milk	5 ml of milk sample is boiled for 3-4 minutes and then it is cooled and 1-2 drops of iodine solution is added	Appearance of blue colour	Starch
5.	Chilli Powder	Add small amount of red chilli powder in a beaker containing water	Brick powder settles at the bottom while pure chilli powder floats over water	Brick powder
6.	Pepper	Add small amount of sample of pepper to a beaker containing water and stir with a glass rod	Dried papaya seeds being lighter float over water while pure pepper settles at the bottom	Dried papaya seeds
7.	Turmeric powder	Take one gram of the Turmeric powder in a test tube and add 1 ml of diluted HCL	Evolution of Co ₂ gas is observed	Yellow chalk
8.	Coffee powder	Two teaspoons of coffee powder is added to water	Coffee powder floats and the adulterants sink	Powder of scorched persimmon stones
9.	Jaggery	Take a little amount of the sample in a test tube and 3 ml of alcohol and shake the tube vigorously to mix up the contents and then pour 10 drops of hydrochloric acid in it	Pink colour is observed	Metanil Yellow is found

10.	Butter	A tea spoonful of butter is taken in a test tube concentrated hydrochloric acid and a pinch of sugar is added to it and stirred well and allowed to settle for 5 minutes	Crimson red colour appears in the lower layer	Vanaspathi
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Concluding Remarks

To conclude, selection of wholesome and non-adulterated food is essential for daily life to make sure that such foods do not cause any health hazard. It is not possible to ensure wholesome food only on visual examination when the toxic contaminants are present in PPM (parts per million) level. However, visual examination of the food before purchase makes sure to ensure absence of insects, visual fungus, foreign matters etc. Therefore, due care taken by the consumer at the time of purchase of food after thoroughly examining can be of great help. Secondly, label declaration on packed food is very important for knowing the ingredients and nutritional value. It also helps in checking the freshness of the food and the period of best before use.

The consumer should avoid taking food from an unhygienic place and food being prepared under unhygienic conditions. Such types of food may lead to various diseases. Consumption of cut fruits may cause various diseases. Consumption of cut fruits being sold in unhygienic conditions should be avoided. It is always better to buy certified food stuffs from reputed shops.

It is observed that consumers in India are frequently cheated, fleeced and exploited by unscrupulous businessmen instead of getting fair value for their money's worth in the exchange process. In pursuit of profit making, business failed to discharge social responsibilities of maintaining and charging fair prices, supplying standard goods and providing qualitative services to the consumer. The business men often put the consumer in distress and agony with their

gimmicks and tactics. Hence, creation of awareness and knowledge among consumers would solve the problems considerably.

There is a need to keep constant vigil on the advertisements. The Consumer Protection Councils should be given autonomous power to provide optimum protection to the consumers against exploitation. Consumer associations have to be built on strong foundations to motivate and educate the consumers. Unless the consumer becomes aware of his rights, prices, taxes, advertisements, adulterants in the products and quality of the products, he will be ever looser and always be in the octopus grip of the unethical business men.

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Welfare of Girl Child in India

Dr. Kalinga Ketaki*

[The world is transforming itself fast and along with that there is also a visible change in the attitude of the people towards girls. Girls, on their part, have been struggling through various organizations and movements, to liberate themselves from the bondage they find themselves in, thanks to the values and attitudes of the male-dominated social order. As a result of such efforts and also because of the changing environment there are signs of hope for the establishment of justice for the feminine gender. But we have miles to go before we can claim that there is gender justice in India and that Indian girls are liberated.]

In spite of all the efforts to promote the welfare of girl child, we have to admit that even now Indian girl child are not treated with dignity and they are neither allowed nor encouraged to enjoy their basic rights. In short, the Indian society today is totally male dominated and biased against the female gender, resulting in all kinds of exploitations and discriminatory practices. Obviously, therefore, the status of Indian girl child is unjust and inhuman. For instance, female feticide and female infanticide are widespread. What is really important is to find the right social order where there will be justice for the feminine gender.

According to the documents of the United Nations, women constitute almost one half of the total population of the world. But their social, economic and political status is lower than that of man in all the member countries like the United States of America, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, China and India.

This paper makes a survey of the condition of girls and the steps taken for their welfare, all over the world in general and in India in particular. Wherever possible a comparison is made between the condition of women in India and those in other countries. As it is a general survey, it covers the major areas that affect

seriously the life of the rights of girl child but without attempting any detailed analysis.

Discrimination of Girl Child

The girl child discrimination begins even before birth in the form of female feticide. Sex selection has been argued as the consequence of technology. But simply because it is a consequence it does not excuse the fact that between the years 1981-1991 a whopping 11 million girls joined India's missing-girl group of 35 and 40 million. According to Amartya Sen, there are more than a hundred million girls missing in the world of which India had 37 million missing girls by 1986.

According to United Nations Cyberschoolbus paper on the girl child, out of 130 million children not in school, almost 60% of them are girls. By the age of 18 girl children have received on average 4.4 years less education than boys. According to a special report on the girl child 'and labour by International Organization (I.L.O), more than millions of girl child between the age of 5 and 17, are engaged in child labour, out of them over 50% of them are in hazardous industry and 20% of those are below twelve years old. It is hard to get correct statistical information about girl child labour since the kind of the girl undertaken is more invisible than that of boys.

Female-Male Ratio

According to the Indian Census Report of 1981, the sex ratio in the country is in favour of the

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male: there are 935 females per 1000 males, where as in U.S.A. and Russia, there are 1054 and 1170 females respectively per 1000 males. In India, the expectations of life for males are 47.1 years while for females it is only 45.6 years. Similarly, the rate of infant mortality is considerably high among females than among males. Provisional data from the 2011 Census reveals that the child sex ratio in Haryana and Punjab is lowest among the states. According to the Census 2011, there are 940 females per 1000 males.

Female Literacy

According to the 2011 Census, there is a great gap between males and females in the level of literacy. There is 74.04% percent literacy rate for males, as against only 65.46% percent for females. This situation was highlighted much earlier by National Committee on Women's Education, appointed by Government of India in 1959. Moreover, it may be mentioned that higher education among girls is mostly confined, over more than secondary education, according to the committee on the status of women in India, which has started that the image of the Indian women is created by a few women holding high position or academic qualification, rather than reflecting the low status and educational level of the average woman of India.

What Sports Illustrate?

Competitive sports have become, for boys and men, as players as spectators, a way of constructing a masculine identity, a legitimated outlet for violence and aggression, and an avenue for upward mobility. For men in Western societies, physical competence is an important marker of the masculinity. In professional and collegiate sports, physiological, differences are invoked to justify women's secondary status, despite the clear evidence that gender status overrides physiological capabilities.

Both boys and girls can, however, in their best moments forget their differences of sex, but it reappears at the least provocation, the girl feels she is girl and boy know he is boy, and the quarrel

starts again indefinitely, in one form or another, open or veiled and all the more bitter the less it is a vowed. One may ask if it will not be so till the day when there will be no longer girl and boy, but living souls expressing their identical origin in sexless bodies.

Demographic Situation

Children constitute principle asserts of any country. Children's development is an important as the development of material resources and the best way to develop national human resources as to take care of children. India has the largest child population in the world lot more has to be done for the health, nutrition and education for children. It is unfortunate that girls in particular face debilitating discrimination at all stages. Therefore, special attention is being given to improve the life and unfold opportunities for the girls.

Campaigning and promoting the girl child is found both nationally and internationally. The Government of India has started a "SAVE THE GIRL CHILD" campaign with the slogan 'a happy girl is the future of our country'. The U.N. Girls' education initiative was launched in April 2000, at the World Education forum in Dakar, by United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan. Plan U.K. has launched a campaign called "BECAUSE I AM A GIRL". The two major objectives of the campaign are to create a forum in the UN for complaints against governments of countries and accord equal treatment to boys and girls.

Population First started a girl campaign called "LADLI" which addresses the issue of the falling sex ration in Mumbai. The aim of the campaign is to create a positive public image for girls in society and hence change the perceptions and values of families that opt for boy children. In 2004, the Nike Foundation was founded with the aim of addressing developmental issue of the adolescent girl. They released a series of videos and created a web page for the campaign: "THE GIRL EFFECT". The Nike Foundation works with other organization such as CARE and UN

Foundation to create opportunities for adolescent girls.

Ministry of Women and Child Development (India)

It is a branch of Government of India, is the apex body for formulation and administration of the rules and regulations and laws relating to women and children's development in India. The current minister for the ministry of women and child development is Maneka Gandhi, having held the portfolio since May, 2014. The department of women and child development was set up in the year 1985 as a part of ministry of Human Resources Development to give the much-needed impetus to the holistic development of women and children. With effect from January 30, 2006, the department has been upgraded to a ministry.

Mandate

The broad mandate of the ministry is to have holistic development of women and children. As a nodal Ministry for advancement of women and children, the ministry formulates plans, policies and programmes; enacts / amends legislation, guides and coordinates the effort of both governmental organizations working in the field of women and child development. Besides, playing a nodal role, the ministry implements certain innovative programmes for women and children. These programmes play supplementary and complementary roles to the other general developmental programmes in the sector of health, education, rural development etc.

Policy

For holistic development of the child, the Ministry has been implementing the world's largest and most unique and outreach programmes of Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS) providing a package of service comprising supplementary nutrition, immunization, health check-up and referral service, pre-school non-formal education. There is effective coordination and monitoring of various sectoral programmes.

Most of the programmes of the Ministry are run through non-governmental organizations.

Girl Child

Save girl child, is a campaign in India to end the gender selective abortion of female fetuses, which have screwed the population towards a significant under-representation of girls in some Indian states. "THE BETI BACHAO" campaign was supported by Human Right groups, non-governmental organizations and state and local governments in India.

Female Feticide

Sex-selective abortion or female feticide has led to a sharp drop in the ratio of girls born in contrast to boy infants in some states in India. Ultrasound technology has made it possible for pregnant women and their families to learn the gender of the foetus early at a pregnancy stage. Discrimination against girl infants, for several reasons, has combined with the technology to result in a rise in abortions and fetuses identified as female during ultrasound testing.

Rates of female feticide in Madhya Pradesh are increasing; the rate of births was 932 girls per 1000 boys in 2001, which dropped to 912 by 2011. It was expected that if this trend continued, by 2012 the number of girls would drop below 900 per 1000 boys.

Beti-Bachao Awareness Campaign

Beti Bachao activities include large rallies, po-campaign, wall paintings, billboards, and television commercials and short animations and video films. Celebrities and short animations and video films. Celebrities such as video director Jagmeet Bal, and Bollywood actress Priyanka Chopra, have become involved in "save the girl child initiatives".

Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao

Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao is a flagship campaign of the Government of India that aims to generate awareness and improve the efficiency of welfare services intended for girls. The scheme was launched with an initial funding of Rs.100 crore It

mainly targets the clusters in Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Bihar and Delhi.

According to census data, the child gender ratio (0–6 years) in India was 927 girls per 1,000 boys in 2001, which dropped to 918 girls for every 1,000 boys in 2011. A 2012 UNICEF report ranked India 41st among 195 countries. In the population Census of 2011, it was revealed that the population ratio is 943 females per 1000 of males. The Sex Ratio 2011 shows an upward trend from the census 2001 data.

The Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (BBBP) scheme was launched on 22 January 2015 by Prime Minister Modi. It aims to address the issue of the declining child sex ratio image (CSR) and is a national initiative jointly run by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Ministry of Human Resource Development. It initially focused on multi-sector action in 100 districts throughout the country where there was a low CSR.

Strategies employed to successfully carry out the scheme are:

- Implement a sustained social mobilization and communication campaign to create equal value for the girl child and promote her education.
- Place the issue of decline in child sex ratio/sex ratio at birth in public discourse, improvement of which would be an indicator for good governance.
- Focus on gender critical districts and cities.

National Support

The Beti Bachao Campaign is supported by numerous medical associations. Government support at the state level has provided funding for Beti Bachao publicity activities in particular. The expenditure related to the campaign has been a source of political controversy in Madhya Pradesh, which launched its official Beti Bachao Abhiyan campaign in 2012.

Effectiveness

The campaign has reported some success in parts of India. In 2009, it was reported that in Gujarat, rates of female births increased from 802 to 882 for every 1000 male births. Beti Bachao activities were credited with this improvement.

Because I am a Girl

Because I am a girl is an international campaign by the aid organization Plan. The campaign is made to address the issue of gender discrimination around the world. The goal of the campaign is to promote rights of girls and bring millions of girls out of poverty around the world.

It is a part of the organisation's broader international development work. The campaign focuses on inequality faced by girls in developing countries, and promotes project to improve opportunities for girls in education, medical care, family planning, legal rights, and other areas.

Campaign Goals

Plan International states that the campaign has several current goals, which in 2012 included:

- Girls competition of a quality secondary education to be a major focus of international action.
- Funding for girl's education to be increased.
- An end to child marriage
- An end to gender-based violence in and around schools
- Girls and boys to participate in decision-making and inspire those with power to take action.

Plan has targeted 4 million girls through direct programs and projects, and also has the goal of reaching 40 million girls and boys indirectly through gender programs. Plan has a further goal of positively impacting 400 million girls through lobbying for governmental policy changes.

Annual Report

Each year, “Because I am a girl” report is released by Plan, an update on the state of the world’s girls. The report has been produced annually since 2007. Researchers for the report visit girls throughout the world and summarize their findings in the report. Some notable reports in this regard are listed below.

- 2007: The state of world’s girls.
- 2008: In the shadow of war.
- 2009: Girls in the global economy; adding it all up.
- 2010: Digital and urban frontiers.
- 2011: Because I Am a Girl: So What About the Boys?
- 2012: Because I am a girl; learning for life.
- 2013: In doubt jeopardy; Adolescent Girls and disasters.
- 2014: Pathways to Power: Creating Sustainable Change for Adolescent Girls
- 2015: The Unfinished Business of Girls’ Rights

International Day of Child Development

International Day of the Girl child is an international observance day declared by the United Nations, it is also called the day of the girl or the international day of the girl. October 11, 2012 was the international day of the girl. The observance supports more opportunity for girls and increase awareness of gender inequality faced by girls worldwide based upon their gender. This inequality includes areas such as right to education; access to education, nutrition, legal rights, medical care and protection from discrimination, violence against women and unfree child marriage.

The International day of the Girl child initiative began as a project of Plan International, a non-governmental organization that operates worldwide. The idea for an international day of observance and celebration grew out of Plan

International’s “Because I am a Girl” campaign, which raises awareness of the importance of nurturing girls globally and in developing countries in particular. Plan international representatives in Canada approached the Canadian Federal Government to seek support for the initiative of raising awareness of the initiative internationally.

International Day of the Girl child was formally proposed as a resolution by Canada in the United Nations General Assembly, Rona Ambrose, Canada’s Minister for the status of women, sponsored the resolution; a delegation of women and girls made presentation in support of the initiative at the 55th United Nations Commission on the status of women. On December 19, 2011, the United Nations General Assembly voted to pass a resolution adopting October 11, 2012 as the inaugural International Day of girl child. The resolution states that the day of the girls recognizes:

“The empowerment of and investment in girls, which are critical for economic growth, the achievement of all millennium development goal, including the eradication of poverty and extreme power, as well as the meaningful participation of girls in decisions that affect them are key in breaking the cycle of discrimination and Violence and in promoting and protecting the full and effective enjoyment of their Human Rights and recognizing also that Empowering girls require their active participation in decision-making process and the active support and engagement of their parents, legal guardians, families and care provider, as well as boys and Men and the wide community.”

Each year’s day of the girl has a theme; the first was “ending child marriage, the second in 2013, was innovating for girl’s education and the third in 2014 was empowering adolescent girls: Ending the cycle of violence.”

Various events to promote the day of the girl are planned in several countries. Some are sponsored

by the United Nations, such as a concert in Mumbai, India. Non-Governmental organizations, such as the Girls Guides Australia, are supporting events and activities for international day of the girl child.

Steps taken by the Govt. of India for the development of Girl Child

Taking into account the apathy towards the girl child, Government of India has introduced a new scheme called “BETI BACHAO, BETI PADHAO” and allocated Rs.100 crore for this in the Union budget. Presenting the Union budget 2014-15 in the Parliament, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said that it is a “shame that while the country has emerged as a major player among the emerging market economies, the apathy towards girl child is still quite rampant in many parts of the country.

The scheme, he said will help in generating awareness and improve the efficiency of delivery of welfare services meant for women. “Government would focus on campaigns to sensitize people of this country towards the concerns of the girl child and women. The process of sensitization must begin early and therefore the school curriculum must have a separate chapter on gender mainstreaming”, Jaitley said in his budget speech. At the time when the country is confronted with women safety issues, government proposed Rs.150 crore to be spent by Ministry of Home Affairs on a scheme to increase the safety of women in large cities.

The budget also proposed that the Ministry of Road Transportation and Highways will spend 50 crore on pilot testing a scheme for safety of women in public road transport. Further, government proposed setting up “Crisis Management Centres” in all the districts of Delhi this year in all government and private hospitals, funding for which will be provided from the Nirbhaya fund, the minister added.

Conclusion

The hand that rocks the cradle, the procreator, the mother of tomorrow, a woman shapes the destiny of civilization. Such is the tragic irony of fate, that a beautiful creation such as the girl child is today one of the gravest concerns facing humanity, with a volley of summits, conferences and events held for the cause, with top most world leaders at the helm.

Traditions and rituals outline the existence of the India girl child. Amidst uproars of gender equality and law enforcement, female infants are still found dumped in trash, by the dozens, while unborn fetuses continue to be sniffed in the womb. Wrought with discrimination and prejudiced by rituals, our society has dealt the girl child a rough hand starting even before birth, till the dark of life. Save girl child is a social endeavour under the auspices of The Organization of Eradication of Illiteracy and Poverty.

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