❖ **NAM Summit**

❖ **Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojna**

❖ **Bal Gangadhar Tilak**

❖ **Violence Against Dalits**

❖ **Foreign Banks in India**

❖ **Gaon Sabha**

THIRD CONCEPT

An International Journal of Ideas

Third Concept aims at providing a platform where a meaningful exchange of ideas can take place among the people of the Third World. The attempt will be to communicate, debate and disseminate information, ideas and alternatives for the resolution of the common problems facing humankind. We welcome contributions from academics, journalists and even from those who may never have published anything before. The only requirement is a concern for and desire to understand and take the issue of our time. Contributions may be descriptive, analytical or theoretical. They may be in the form of original articles, reactions to previous contributions, or even a comment on a prevailing situation. All contributions, neatly typed in double space, may be addressed to:

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INSIDE

Editorial

Paris Agreement!

The signing of the historic agreement on climate change on 22 April at Paris is being hailed as a milestone, with a record 175 countries along with European Union, including India, having signed it. The agreement will come into force once 55 countries representing at least 55 per cent of global emissions formally join it, a process initially expected to take until 2020.

Nevertheless, in the wake of a host of announcements at the signing event, some observers now think it could happen later this year. China, the world's top carbon emitter, announced it would "finalise domestic procedures" to ratify the agreement before the G20 summit in September this year. Similar intentions to ratify the agreement this year have been reiterated by the United States, Canada Mexico and Australia. The Paris Agreement is touted as a major breakthrough in U.N. climate negotiations, which for years were slowed by disputes between rich and poor countries over who should do what. Signatory-countries are expected to set their own targets for reducing emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases under this agreement. The targets are not legally binding, but countries must update them every five years.

Interestingly, the emphasis of the debate on climate change shifted after the climate summit in Paris in December 2015 from whether scientific evidence is strong enough to warrant making aggressive cuts in greenhouse gas emissions, to how this should be achieved without hurting economic growth in developing countries such as India. The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) accepts differentiated responsibility for developing nations, which are not responsible for the accumulated stock of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, as opposed to rich countries that historically had the benefit of the unfettered use of fossil fuels. According to some experts, what makes carbon emissions particularly problematic, however, is that polluting local flows have a global effect over relatively short periods, and far-flung countries, such as small island nations, suffer the impact.

India's estimate of its share of global greenhouse gas emissions submitted to the UN for the Paris treaty is 4.10 per cent, but it faces a double jeopardy: of having to emit large volumes of carbon dioxide to achieve growth, while preparing to adapt to the destructive effects of intense weather events, such as droughts and floods, linked to climate change. In the aftermath of the Paris agreement, India is confronted with the challenge of implementing its pledge to sharply cut emissions intensity of GDP by 2020. A small reduction was achieved between 2005 and 2010, and the effort now should be to maintain the trend. Energy, transport and infrastructure are key areas where sound national policies are needed.

Undoubtedly, the doubling of the cess on coal in the Budget, and the general policy to keep fuel prices high using taxation are welcome moves; nonetheless, these must be translated into funding for green alternatives. It should be possible to unlock middle class investments in renewable energy. State governments should encourage this sector by providing subsidies. New buildings should also be required to conform to energy efficiency codes in all States. Funding for green energy initiatives should come from the rich countries, which are required to raise at least $100 billion a year, once the Paris Agreement is ratified. The pact requires them to provide even higher levels of assistance. The success of the climate compact will ultimately depend on whether rich countries, including the U.S., fund innovation and open-source their green technologies to developing nations.

Protagonists of Paris pact claim that the treaty will do a lot more. While disagreeing with this claim, critics point out that governments do little now and then embark on incredibly ambitious and climate change reduction policies after 2030. Failure of the Kyoto Protocol — the only global treaty to cut carbon — is famously cited in this regard. It also stated that in view of the UN's own reckoning that Paris treaty will only achieve less than 1 per cent of the emission cuts needed to meet target temperatures, it means that ninety-nine per cent of the problem is left for tomorrow's leaders to deal with.

Only a pragmatic approach can help in transforming this once-in-history opportunity to create a new, shared, inspiring and sustainable world.

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Sixteenth NAM Summit: Tehran Declaration

Dr. Yog Raj*

[Non-Aligned Movement is a product of Cold War politics, when the world was divided into two rival blocs-Western and Communist, which threatened not only the independence of newly independent countries but also posed problems for international peace and security. The entire world was facing a volatile situation in the aftermath of the Second World War. In the backdrop of this, the newly independent countries devised a novel path of non-alignment by adopting a policy of equidistant approach from the entire one or other power and military blocks. It appears to develop as a negative idea but it is far ahead of negative approach as it is aimed at building up of a peaceful, secure and egalitarian world order based upon peaceful co-existence and mutual self-respect.]

The idea of non-alignment has currently crystallized into a concrete movement encompassing nearly more than half of the world, presently 120 countries as its members. The movement which started with 25 countries from Belgrade, Yugoslavia in 1961 has acquired strength both in members and effectiveness at international scene. In the previous NAM Conference at Tehran there were 120 members' countries.

The latest i.e. sixteenth non-aligned nation's Summit was held in Tehran (Iran) from 26 to 31 August 2012. This Summit was held in three phases: preparatory senior officials meeting on 26-27 August followed by ministerial level meeting on 28-29 August and the Summit was held on 30-31 August 2012.

Two new countries namely Azerbaijan Republic and Fiji were accepted as the new members of the organization. 120 countries participated in this conference while 27 countries acted as observers along with national and international organization. The theme of the summit was "Lasting Peace through Joint Global Governance".

The then Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was elected Chairman of the

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conference. Speaking on the behalf of NAM Chairman, Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in his opening speech said that Iran was never seeking nuclear weapons and will not give up its right to develop nuclear energy. He called the use of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction "a major and unforgiveable sin" and exhorted that 'we will never give up the right to peaceful nuclear energy', underlining Iran's determination to push ahead with its atomic programme[1].

He pointed out that "disarmament is an urgent necessity" in today's world and the Islamic Republic calls for a Middle East free from nuclear weapons. In addition to this he expressed that the UN Security Council has an illogical, unjust, completely undemocratic structure and mechanism. To him it is a flagrant form of dictatorship, which is antiquated and obsolete and whose expiry date has passed. It is through this abusing improper mechanism that America and its accomplices have managed to disguise their bullying as noble concepts that are imposed by it on the whole world.

He charged that the US and its allies protecting the interest of the West in the name of 'Human Rights'; they interfere militarily in other countries in the name of 'democracy'; they target defenceless people in villages and cities with their bombs and weapons in the name of

"combating terrorism". From United States perspective, humanity is divided into first, second and third class citizens.

He added that human life is considered cheap in Asia, Africa and Latin America and expensive in America and West Europe. He asserted that the security of America and Europe is considered important, while the security of the rest of humanity is considered unimportant. Torture and assassination are permissible and completely ignored if they are carried out by America, the Zionists and their puppets[2].

Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi, whose country chaired NAM for the past three years, in his opening speech said NAM had stuck to its principles and direction, and it must actively work to achieve the theme of peace through joint global governance. In a just world order, developing countries would escape from marginality and be part of power sharing. He added that democracy had to be implemented at a global level, that multilateralism without these principles was unacceptable.

Further he said that the revolution in Egypt is the cornerstone for the Arab spring, which started days after Tunisia and then it was followed by Libya, Yemen and now the revolution in Syria against its oppressive regime. He emphasized that "Our solidarity with the struggle of Syrians against an oppressive regime that has lost its legitimacy is an ethical duty, and a political and strategic necessity"[3].

Like that of all previous Summits, this conference was represented by the Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh. In his opening speech he said as the world's largest democracy, India supports popular aspirations for a democratic and pluralistic order. Nevertheless, such transformations cannot be prompted by external intervention, which exacerbate the suffering of ordinary citizens. He expressed hope for a stable and peaceful West Asia.

He added that "Nearly two decades ago, India embarked on a 'looks East policy' in an

endeavour to learn and benefit from and contribute to the evolution of a new Asian economic community to our East. However, the progress, prosperity, well-being, political stability and plurality of the Asia to our West always have been of equal historical and civilizational significance for us"[4].

On Palestine, he felt the NAM, which he described as "Our Movement", should renew its pledge to support its early resolution so that the "long suffering people" lived in peace and dignity in their own State. Apart from these hard political topics he touched upon the Summit's theme of "Lasting Peace through Joint Global Governance" and the areas where the NAM should reorient itself.

The structure of global governance remained driven by the power equations of the past and then inadequacy in dealing with the ongoing economic and political crises was" not surprising"[5]. He urged the non-aligned countries to take a strong stand on issues ranging from the political crisis in Syria to collaborating on issues of mutual concern. The Prime Minister rued the lack of global governance when it came to restoring fair economic mechanisms.

Further he said that the Syrian situation was a matter of concern and the non-aligned movement should take a stand on the issue in keeping with universally accepted principles. A major part of his speech was devoted to the need for a new international economic order and reform of the UN and other world bodies. He further emphasized that the world was facing many challenges, such as terrorism, nuclear weapons, piracy and threats to cyber security, and he added "we need new instruments of global governance".

He said pursuing economically sustainable development and securing food and energy security was of paramount importance. On the need for unanimity on reforms in institutions like the UNSC (United Nations Security Council), World Bank and International Monetary Fund, he emphasized, "It is my sincere hope that the movement can agree on action to reform

institutions. Existing problems cannot be solved effectively without a greater voice for developing countries on issues such as global trade, finance and investment".

Noting that developing countries could be 'drivers of global growth', he said that international financial institutions should be encouraged to find infrastructure development in the developing world "in innovative ways". He urged that NAM should also ensure that the current economic crisis does not lead to a dilution of development assistance flows from the development world. He also urged that NAM countries to collaborate on tackling problems and developing solutions that are best suited to NAM countries own circumstances.

In his concluding speech he said "the developing world is rich in renewable sources of energy like solar power, we should use our financial and intellectual resources to develop renewable energy technologies that get less attention in the industrialized world where the resource base is different. Adoption of these technologies will also enable us to contribute to preservation of the environment"[6].

UN Secretary General Ban-ki-Moon in his speech urged NAM member countries to help strengthen democratic institutions and to not arm either side in the conflict. He emphasized, "Ultimately it is the responsibility of the Syrian government to listen to the aspirations of its people and find a resolution"[7]. He also emphasized that if NAM has to remain relevant it must "keep pace with the changing time."

He added, "I see two paths rising from this challenge; prevention to help deal with a society's political grievances; and sustainability to help address society's development challenges"[8]. Finally he regretted that Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) have yet to reach agreement on Solving Iran's nuclear issue[9].

The Summit was concluded with the eleven-point Tehran Declaration that reflected upon the major concerns of the developing countries in the contemporary global context. The Declaration contains eleven points which are briefly mentioned below:

1. NAM members should coordinate their positions to build a fair, inclusive, transparent and effective system of joint global governance based on justice and equitable participation of all countries and to address the present global challenges and risks stemming from global security threats, environmental hazards, climate change, migration, contagious diseases, extreme poverty etc. among others, the NAM member States should coordinate their positions and join force in pressing on the interests of the developing world. For this purpose a number of priorities are as follows:

a) Global governance is broad in scope and encompasses many issues of global interest and concerns than merely economic issues. The world faces challenges in security, social and environmental fields. International peace and security still continue to be high on the priority scale of many countries. The current international decision-making architecture in the fields of peace and security is outdated and much more resistant to any change.

b) The United Nations as the universal and inclusive multilateral body should play a fundamental role in the institutional and legal framework of global governance. Thus, the United Nations could and should have a major role in efforts undertaken to find common solutions to common problems, including a coordinating role among all regional and international agencies.

Nonetheless, for the UN to remain at the forefront of any discussion on global governance, focus should further be on its strengthening and modernizing. Towards this end, it is especially essential to revitalize the United Nations General Assembly, including in the area of international peace and security, and reform the UN Security Council to reflect the realities of today's world.

c) The growing importance of developing countries is yet to be sufficiently reflected in the governance structures of existing international key decision-making bodies. Key decisions concerning the issues of global governance can no longer be the preserve of a small group of countries. Policies are being made across a broadening range of issues, which affect all in world politics. Thus, it is imperative that developing countries could have a greater voice and participation in the major institutions, which coordinate policies at the international level.

d) Crises in the past several years have exposed the shortcomings and failures of international financial institutions, which adversely affect their ability to address crises and achieve adequate macroeconomic policy coordination. As they were established following World War II, they fail to address appropriately current World challenges and, therefore, adversely affect developing countries.

e) In the international community not every nation shares similar values and opinions. To live in peace and harmony the diversity within the global society should be acknowledged and respected. Thus, the attempts to impose values on other members of the international community should be thwarted.

2. Occupation of Palestine lies at the heart of the protracted crisis situation in the Middle East. Any solution to this crisis requires the termination of the occupation, crimes and violations committed by Israel, the occupying power, restoration of the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the establishment of their independent and viable State of Palestine with Al- Quds al-Sharif as its capital. The restoration of the national rights of the Palestinian people is a basic prerequisite for the establishment of an equitable, comprehensive and lasting peace in the area.

3. Racism and racial discrimination are affronts to human dignity and equality, and the resurgence of contemporary and new forms of such abhorrent crimes in various parts of the world is a matter for grave concern. Thus, it is imperative to address with greater resolve and political will all forms and manifestation of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance including new forms of slavery and trafficking in persons, wherever they occur.

4. All human rights are indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, and human rights issues must be addressed through a constructive, non- confrontational, non-politicized, non- selective and dialogue-based as well as cooperative approach, in a fair, equal and balanced manner, with objectivity, respect for cultural diversity and national sovereignty and territorial integrity, non- interference in the internal affairs of States, taking into account the political, historical, social, religious and cultural particularities of each country. Special attention should be paid to the rights of the youth and women and the way be paved for building capacity in this respect and facilitating their participation in the politico-social and economic processes.\

5. The declaration termed nuclear weapons as most inhuman weapons. The maintenance of strategic and tactical nuclear stockpile and their continued modernization, as well as new military doctrines setting the rationale for their possible use, particularly against non-nuclear weapon states (NNWS), represent the greatest threat to humankind. The Non- Proliferation Treaty (NPT) did not provide a right for nuclear weapon states to keep their nuclear arsenals indefinitely. States parties to the NPT have obligations under Article VI of the NPT to destroy all nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework, which is yet to be fulfilled. Therefore, it is imperative to conclude a comprehensive convention on nuclear disarmament.

6. All states should be able to enjoy the basic and inalienable right to the development,

research, production and use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes, without any discrimination and in conformity with their respective international legal obligations. Therefore, nothing should be interpreted in a way to inhibit or restrict the right of states to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. States' choices and decisions, in the field of peaceful uses of nuclear technology and their fuel cycle policies, including those of the Islamic Republic of Iran, must be respected.

7. The inviolability of peaceful nuclear activities should be upheld and any attack or threat of attack against peaceful nuclear facilities operational or under construction amounts to a serious danger to human beings and the environment, and constitutes a grave violation of international law, of the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, and of regulations of the IAEA. There is a pressing need for a comprehensive multilaterally negotiated legal instrument prohibiting attacks, or threat of attacks on nuclear facilities devoted to peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

8. The members of NAM agree to refrain from recognizing, adopting or implementing extra-territorial or unilateral coercive measures or laws, including unilateral economic sanctions, other intimidating measures, and arbitrary travel restrictions, that seek to exert pressure on Non-Aligned Countries-threatening their sovereignty and independence, and their freedom of trade and investment- and prevent them from exercising their right to decide, by their own free will, their own political, economic and social systems.

Where such measures or laws constitute flagrant violations of the United Nations Charter, international law, the multilateral trading system as well as the norms and principles governing friendly relations among States; and in this regard, they agree to oppose and condemn these measures or laws and their continued application, preserve with efforts to effectively reverse them and urge other States to do likewise, as called for by the General Assembly and other UN organs; agree to request States applying these measures or laws to revoke them fully and immediately.

9. All acts of terrorism, in all their forms and manifestations are unequivocally condemned. All States should abide by their international obligations in addressing the threat of terrorism, which continues to adversely affect peace, security, stability and development of many NAM countries. All victims of terrorism, including the Iranian civilian researchers and scientists who have fallen victim to inhumane terrorist campaign, deserve the deepest sympathy.

10. Dialogue among religions, cultures and civilizations should be enhanced, through supporting efforts made at the international level, towards reducing confrontation, suppressing xenophobia and Islamophobia, promoting respect for diversity based on justice, fraternity and equality should be promoted, and all attempts of uni-culturalism and imposition of particular models of political, economic, social, legal or cultural systems should be opposed, and promote dialogue among civilizations, culture of peace and inter-faith dialogue, which will contribute towards peace, security, stability and development.

11. The NAM should mobilize all its capabilities in order to implement the decisions of its leaders as expressed in its documents. Accordingly, the NAM should consider the possibility of creating necessary mechanism with a view to following up on its decisions[10].

The NAM members expressed their conviction that international cooperation for the promotion of democracy, on the basis of respect for the principles enshrined in the UN Charter as well as those of transparency, impartiality, non-selectivity and inclusiveness, could contribute

to the attainment of the goal of democracy consolidation at regional, national and international level. They reaffirmed that democracy, development and respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing.

The Conference reaffirmed the importance of strengthening the current institutional mechanisms for South-South cooperation and expressed their support for the principles on which South-South cooperation is based which were adopted by the G-77. The Conference committed to support and promote mechanism aimed at enhancing intra/interregional trade, investment and cooperation among developing countries and emphasized the importance of strengthening coordination and co-operation at the regional, sub-regional, interregional and bilateral levels, particularly in the context of the negative impact of the current financial and economic crisis.

The Conference appreciated the cooperation initiatives and the substantial financial contributions made by some non-aligned countries, including inter-alia OPEC countries, based on solidarity and principles of friendship among States which are conductive to the realization of human rights, in particular economic, social and cultural rights, and the right to development, as well as initiatives for scientific and research programmes on energy, environment and climate change as decided at the OPEC Summit in Riyadh in November 2007.

In this regard, they encouraged member states to consider supporting and engaging in those mechanisms of cooperation or other relevant regional or sub-regional arrangements of a cooperative nature.

Acknowledging the need for an increased interaction between the leaders of developing and the developed world, the conference agreed to undertake the following measures among others:

a) To generate, expand and deepen a more dynamic relationship and cooperation with developed and industrialized countries, in particular with the G-8, firmly rooted on mutual respect, mutuality of benefits, shared and differentiated responsibilities, constructive engagement and dialogue, broad partnership and genuine interdependence with the aim of forging compatible or complementary responses or initiatives on global issues and generate greater understanding between the North and the South.

b) To highlight the importance of North-South cooperation being aligned with national development priorities of recipient countries as well as the importance of increasing the efficiency of development assistance.

An action programme for economic cooperation had also been adopted by the conference. It covered wide range of aspects viz., trade, food security, water, desertification, energy, climate change, human rights and fundamental freedoms, nuclear weapons and peaceful nuclear activities, terrorism, racism, racial discrimination and slavery, unemployment, information and communication technology, role of women, illiteracy, health, HIV/ AIDS, Malaria, Tuberculosis and communicable diseases, crime, drug-trafficking and corruption terrorism[11].

At the end of the conference, Iranian President, the rotating chairman of the Conference, read part of the final documents at the closing ceremony of the event, and said that the NAM participants unanimously expressed their commitments of the principles and objectives of the non-aligned movement. Further he said participants called for 'fundamental changes' in global governance and collective management of the world as the precondition of establishing peace, and all of them expressed the call for avoiding in the world[12].

He emphasized that "we agree to ensure human rights and human dignity to develop love, affection and honesty" and added that "we can solve the global challenges based on friendship". In his concluding speech he stressed that by

approving the final documents of the summit, the member States sent 'important political message' for establishing peace and justice in the world. Finally, the summit conference decided that the next summit of Heads of State and Government of non-aligned movement would be held at Venezuela in the coming year. The summit requested member states and observers to actively participate in the seventeenth Conference by expressing firm commitment to peace with concerted efforts.

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Development of Foreign Banks in India

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[The Indian banking has an interesting mix. It consists of "non-scheduled banks" and "scheduled banks". Further, scheduled banks consist of "scheduled commercial banks" and "scheduled cooperative banks". Scheduled Commercial banks (SCBs), the most dominant segment, are divided in six groups according to the ownership structure.]

In the initial years of post-independence development planning, a group of state-partnered and state-sponsored banks was created by taking over the Imperial Bank of India and integrating with it seven former state-owned or state-associate banks, i.e. State Bank of India and its associates (SBI group). In July 1955, the Imperial Bank of India passed into state ownership, among other changes, was renamed State Bank of India.

The Imperial Bank itself was born in 1921, when the three Presidency Banks – Calcutta, Bombay and Madras – were amalgamated. The oldest of the trio was the Presidency Bank of Calcutta (or Bengal), born in 1806. Further July 1969, 14 major commercial banks were nationalized with the objective of meeting progressively and serving better the needs of development of the economy in conformity with the national policy and objectives. Another six banks were included in this group in March 1980. This group of 19 banks (one such bank was subsequently merged) is known as the nationalized banks group.

These two groups of banks under majority government ownership are also known as public sector banks. The banks which were in existence prior to the initiation of financial sector reforms in the early 1990s are known as old generation banks. The banks which came into being in the post-reforms period are known as new generation banks. Foreign banks can operate in India through their branches.

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Besides these five major groups, a new institution by the name Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) was created in 1975 in the rural areas of the country specifically to meet the credit needs of these areas. The Public Sector Banks (PSBs) are bigger in terms of the size of their total assets, deposits or credit and wider branch network spread across the rural and urban areas of the country. Thus, in terms of business per branch, they lag behind the private sector banks and the foreign banks considerably. Foreign banks, even after number of years of operations in India, are comparatively smaller in size, compared to most of the private sector banks.

Historical Genesis of Foreign Banks

The origin of Foreign Banks in India could be traced to about a century ago. Under the colonial rule, British took the lead in establishing foreign banks in India. There were attempts to establish foreign banks as early as 1836, for instance, "The Bank of India" to be headquartered in London, with branches spread across India. The next initiative was in 1840 to set up "The Bank of Asia".

Further, the "Oriental Banking Corporation" was the first Anglo-Indian Commercial Bank to be set up in 1842 at Bombay with a royal Charter. This bank, however, shifted its head office to London within three years. This was followed by the opening up of "The Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China" and "The Chartered Bank of Asia" in 1853. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, shift in the balance of global East-West trade flows through Indian ports,

introduction of the railroad and telegraph and other infrastructure improvements, all contributed to growing inter connectivity of the orient with the occident, as the colonial powers of Europe spread across Asia and Africa.

This was followed by a phase of numerous Indian or foreign banks coming up to service in different segments of the economy. The story of foreign banks in India goes back to the 19th century when the colonial economy brought with it the need for modern banking services, uniform currency and remittances by British army personnel and civil servants. Though British initiated the process of setting up banks in India, banks from many other countries viz. France, Germany, Japan, Holland and US actively followed. Further, three presidency banks would latter merge to form the State Bank of India which was British owned and controlled.

These early banks may be considered India's first "Foreign Banks". The foreign banks were originally called as "Exchange Banks" as the exchange transactions relating to foreign trade and foreign exchange. The foreign banks engaged mainly in the financing of foreign exchange business and foreign trade and this area was a virtual monopoly of these banks according to Indian central banking enquiry committee report of 1931. The exchange banks invested adequate funds in the discounting of foreign bills during the busy season.

Incidentally, references state that the term "exchange bank" was used even in Western countries, mainly referring to those banks that were dealing with the financing of trade of India and China as these countries did not adhere to the gold standard and their exchange rates were subject to wider fluctuations. Interestingly, even the Indian joint stock banks played a negligible role in providing agricultural finance. The foreign banks played an important role in promoting the foreign exchange business, foreign trade-related financing and bill discounting etc.

Foreign Banks in Colonial India

Foreign banks came to being in India since the 1860s, when Comptoird' Escompete de Paris (which latter combined with three other banks to form BNP Paribas) setup a branch in Calcutta. Of the current crop of foreign banks operating in India, Standard Chartered started its Indian operations by opening its first branch in Kolkata in April 1858, after receiving a Royal Charter from Queen Victoria a year after the first war of independence of India.

Standard Chartered now has 94 branches spreading over 37 centres with around Rs 1 trillion of assets. Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Ltd or HSBC has been in India even longer. Its origin can be traced back to October 1853, when Mercantile Bank of India, London and China was founded in Mumbai with authorized capital of Rs 50 lakh. By 1855, Mercantile Bank had offices in London, Chennai, Colombo, Kandy, Kolkata, Singapore, Hong Kong, Guangzhou and Shanghai. Later on, it was acquired by HSBC in 1959 with 47 branches added with three new branch licences in India.

Citi Bank NA, which has the biggest asset base among all foreign banks in India is 107 years old. It has 42 branches across 29 centres. ABN Amro Holding NV, which come to India in 1920 has 31 branches. However, major American banking companies at that time were restricted by law from operating outside the US. The relaxation of these laws paved the way for the global expansion of American banks in early 20th century. JP Morgan, which had ambitions of entering in India as early as 1902, did so in 1922 via an ownership stake in the Calcutta merchant banking from Andrew Yule & Co Ltd.

Foreign Banks in Post-Independent India

Foreign banks experienced a good growth of performance in terms of deposits and credit, their relative share in aggregate deposits and credit in the banking system. The post- Independent India witnessed many landmark events in the financial system in general and the banking system in particular, which affected the functioning of foreign banks in India both directly and indirectly.

The Indian Central Banking Enquiry Committee recommended in 1931 a comprehensive legislation for banking companies. This legislation encountered many hurdles, but with the RBI's initiative, it took the shape of Banking Companies Act 1949. This Act held both foreign and domestic banks on an equal footing.

Foreign Banks in the Pre-Reform Period

The milestone events for banking in India such as the passing of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Act, 1934, the creation of the central bank in 1935, bank nationalization in 1969 and 1980 did not impact foreign banks. Foreign bank operations have continued to remain confined to the big cities and metros. Foreign banks had an edge over domestic banks in the creation and deepening of these markets in terms of both volume and multiplicity of products. Foreign banks have adapted well to the changing economy and retained their niche as service providers and employers of the elite; bringing capital, innovation and best practices from their home countries.

These developments eventually trickled down to domestic banks through the demonstration effect in the 1980s. This period could rightly be referred to as the "expansion period" in Indian banking. Till bank nationalization, entry of foreign banks was largely restricted to port towns, although some foreign banks were keen to have presence in industrial towns like Pune, Ahmedabad and Kanpur.

Foreign Banks in the Post-Reform Era (1993-2005)

A number of structural reforms were implemented owing to the crisis of balance of payments in 1991. A broad financial reform agenda was established in India by the committee on the financial system (CFS), appointed by the Government of India to examine the existing financial system and to make recommendations for improving its efficiency. The committee recommended allowing more foreign banks to enter into India. However, no significant action was taken by the Government of India regarding the CFS recommendation on foreign banks until April 1994 when the government agreed to allow for an expansion of foreign banks under the WTO General Agreement on Trades in Services (GATS).

In the initial GATS agreement, India committed to issue 5 additional branch licenses to both new and existing foreign banks each year. In a subsequent supplemental agreement in July 1995, India increased the limit to 8 licenses per year and in February 1998; the limit was increased to 12. While there were no restrictions on where foreign banks could choose to establish new branches, the expansion of foreign banks in India was by *de novo* branches only, as foreign banks were not allowed to own controlling stakes in domestic banks.

After signing of the GATS agreement, very few licenses for new foreign bank branches were granted and the presence of foreign banks in India was limited. Further, as on March 31, 1994 there were 24 foreign banks with 156 branches in India. In eight years following the acceptance of GATS, 17 new foreign banks and 89 new foreign bank branches were opened in India bringing the total number of foreign banks to 41 with 212 branches as on March 2002.

Conclusion

The Public Sector Banks (PSBs) are bigger in terms of the size of their total assets, deposits or credit and wider branch network spread across the rural and urban areas of the country. Thus, in terms of business per branch, they lag behind the private sector banks and the foreign banks considerably. Foreign banks even, after number of years of operations in India, are comparatively smaller in size, compared to most of the private sector banks.

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Rural Development through MGNAREGA in India

Chennanarasimhappa * & Dr G Sreeraramulu**

[Rural development implies both the economic betterment of people as well as greater social transformation. In order to provide the rural people with better prospects for economic development, increased participation of people in the rural development programmes, decentralization of planning, better enforcement of land reforms and greater access to credit are needed.]

This article provides complete information on initiatives taken by the government for bridging the urban-rural divide by upgrading the standard of living of people in rural areas. Besides, information about programmes, schemes, employment opportunities, Panchayati Raj institutions, development authorities, drinking water, sanitation, road construction, electrification of villages and food supply etc. is also provided.

The Department of Rural Development is implementing a number of programmes in rural areas through the state Governments for poverty reduction, employment generation, rural infrastructure, habitat development, provision of basic minimum services etc. The important programmes presently being implemented by the Department are:

● Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)

● Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY)

● Rural Housing (Indira Awaas Yojana)

● DRDA Administration

● Training Schemes

● Promotion of Voluntary Schemes and Social Action Programme, organization of beneficiaries, advancement and dissemination of rural technology through CAPART.

● Monitoring mechanism.

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Keeping in view the fact that rural road network is vital to economic growth and measures for poverty alleviation in the village, Government had launched a 100% Centrally-sponsored scheme called the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), which seeks to provide connectivity to all unconnected habitations in the rural areas with a population of more than 500 persons through good all-weather roads by the end of the Tenth Plan Period. In respect of the Hill States (North-East, Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Uttarakhand) and the Desert Areas, the objective would be to connect habitations with a population of 250 persons and above.

The Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) is the single self-employment programme for the rural poor. The Yojana which came in to effect from 1 April 1999, has been conceived as a holistic programme covering all aspects of self-employment like organization of rural poor into Self-Help-Groups (SHGs) and their capacity building, training, planning of activity clusters, infrastructure development, financial assistance through bank credit and subsidy and marketing support etc.

Housing is one of the basic requirements for human survival. Therefore, construction of houses was included as one of the major activities under the National Rural Employment Programme which began in 1980. Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) was begun in 1983. Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) was launched during 1985-1986 as a sub-scheme of RLEGP and thereafter it continued as a sub-scheme of Jawahar Rozgar Yojana.

From 1st January 1986, IAY was delinked from JRY and made an independent scheme. The Government of India, in 1998, announced a National Housing and Habitat policy which aimed at providing "Housing for all" and facilitating the construction of 2 million additional housing units (13 lakh in rural areas and 7 in urban areas) with emphasis on standing benefits to the poor and the deprived.

The intention was to end shelterlessness and ensure the conversion of all unserviceable kucca houses by pucca houses by the end of 11th plan period. The Action plan was being implemented through various programmes such as Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY), Credit cum Subsidy Scheme for Rural Housing, Innovative Scheme for Rural Housing and Habitat Development, Rural Building Centers, Equity Contribution by Ministry of Rural Development to HUDCO and National Mission for Rural Housing and Habitat.

MGNREGA

Evolving the design of the wage employment programmes to more effectively fight poverty, the Central Government formulated the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) in 2005, which was subsequently renamed as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). With its legal framework and rights-based approach, MGNREGA provides employment to those who demand it and is a paradigm shift from earlier programmes.

It aims at enhancing livelihood security by providing at least one hundred days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. The Act covered 200 districts in its first phase, implemented on February 2, 2006, and was extended to 130 additional districts in 2007- 2008. All the remaining rural areas have been notified with effect from April 1, 2008.

Salient features of MGNREGA

1. It is right-based framework for adult members of a rural household willing to do unskilled manual work.

2. It offers time bound guarantee of 15 days for provision of employment, else unemployment

allowance up to 100 days in a financial year per household, depending on the actual demand.

3. Labour-Intensive Work: 60:40 wage and material ratio for permissible works; no contractors/machinery.

4. Decentralized Planning: Gram Sabhas to recommend works and at least 50% of works by Gram Panchayats for execution;

5. Principal role of PRIs in planning, monitoring and implementation;

6. Work site facilities : Crèche, drinking water, first aid and shade provided at worksites

7. Women empowerment: At least one-third of beneficiaries should be women

8. Transparency & Accountability: Proactive disclosure through Social Audits, Grievance Redressal Mechanism;

9. Implementation Under Sec 3: States are responsible for providing work in accordance with the Scheme. Under Sec 4, every state government is required to make a scheme for providing not less than 100 days of guaranteed employment in a financial year, to those who demand work;

10. Funding: Central Government -100% of wages for unskilled manual work, 75% of material cost of the schemes including payment of wages to skilled and semi-skilled workers. State Government- 25% of material including payment of wages to skilled and semi-skilled workers cost.

11. 100% of unemployment allowance by state government;

12. Non Negotiable: Only Job Card holders to be employed for MGNREGA works; to provide employment within 15 days of application, no contractor, task to be performed by using manual labour & not machines and Muster- rolls to be maintained on work sites.

13. Proactive disclosure of information: Wage payments to be through accounts in banks/ post offices Wage material ratio- 60:40 At least 50% of the works in terms of cost under a Scheme to be implemented through GPs.

14. Natural Resource Regeneration and impact on agricultural productivity:

i) The works undertaken through MGNREGA give priority to activities related to water harvesting, groundwater recharge, drought-proofing, and flood protection. Its focus on eco-restoration and sustainable livelihoods will lead over time, to an increase in land productivity and aid the workers in moving from wage employment to sustainable employment. Almost 80% works relate to soil and water conservation. MGNREGA works by their very nature place stress on increasing land productivity, recharging ground water and increasing water availability.

ii) Recent amendment of the Act to permit MGNREGA works on individual land of small and marginal farmers who constitute 89% of the farming community, in addition to the individual land of SC/ST/BPL/IAY/ land reform beneficiaries will augment the impact on agricultural productivity and household income.

In view of the inter-sectorality of MGNREGA, the need to create durable assets and improve livelihood security and the common target groups of certain development programmes with MGNREGA, the Ministry has developed and disseminated convergence guidelines with different Schemes and specific programmes viz. Indian Council of Agricultural Research, National Afforestation Programme and other schemes of the Ministry of Forest & Environment, Schemes of the Ministry of Water Resources, PMGSY (Department of Rural Development), SGSY (Department of Rural Development), Watershed Development Programmes (Department of Land Resources, Ministry of Rural Development),

Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and schemes of Ministry of Agriculture. These convergence initiatives have been documented and shared among States.

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Violence against Dalits in Maharashtra

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[The caste system has produced numerous rules about untouchability that govern everyday interactions between social groups in rural India. From not being allowed to use certain wells and hand-pumps to being forced to eat separately, rules regulate all aspects of life for Dalits and constantly reinforce their sense of subordination. While norms about maintaining caste boundaries apply to all castes and even upper caste individuals may be socially ostracized by their caste members for violations. Dalits are most severely punished for transgressions. When Dalits attempt to resist the unjust rules imposed upon them, retaliation by upper caste is swift and often violent. Dalit trying to assert their right face the risk of social and economic boycott, even physical intimidation and beating.]

Most societies have at sometime in their development witnessed violent crimes, caused civil and human rights violation, injuries, death and impoverished of their assets. Though crime does take place in the process of change and particularly so when radical shifts take place, in this traditional, social and power relations, the oppressed who question the social relation become its victims. The crime against dalits, in that sense, has long been a historical fact and continues to be an unfortunate feature of contemporary India.[1]

Nation at the Glance

Atrocities against dalits are not a new phenomenon. They are established techniques adopted by the dominant castes to reinforce their power and to assert their superior status.[2] The whole phenomenon has greater significance as it generally occurs when upper castes feel threatened that the *status quo* is being challenged by Dalits seeking human rights and equality. A number of instances from different parts of the country show that Dalit men and women become the target for upper-caste violence when they dare to protest the infringement of their rights.

On 30th June 2014, National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) published its report on cases regarding atrocities and discrimination. According to the report, 4,09,642 atrocities were committed on Dalits during the period of 2001 to 2013. Further it says that everyday two dalits are killed and four dalit women are being raped.[3]

Maharashtra - A progressive state?

Maharashtra is the land of radicals and progressive thoughts. Its progress and development in the fields like education, industry, economy and agriculture is definitely commendable. But unfortunately in this progressive state, the walls of caste are still strong. Maharashtra is as casteist as any other state. Maharashtra has inglorious track record of heinous atrocities perpetrated on Dalits.

According to the crime statistics for 2012, Maharashtra, ranks at number 16 among 35 states for the crimes committed against dalits.[4] The case of recent atrocities in Maharashtra reflect a qualitative change in the mode of perpetration as well as their intensity.

The Number of Crimes reported from 2007 to 2012, in which members of scheduled castes are victim

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No.	Crimes Heads	Year						% Change in 2012 over2007	% Change in 2012 over 2011
		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012		
1	Murder	16	23	27	24	26	36	125.00	38.46
2	Rape	80	93	105	89	95	97	21.25	2.11
3	Kidnapping & Abduction	13	24	10	25	12	23	76.92	91.67
4	Dacoity	2	17	20	22	16	16	700.00	0.00
5	Robbery	11	6	8	20	12	13	18.18	8.33
6	Arson	19	10	8	12	7	9	-52.63	28.57
7	Hurt / Grievous hurt	78	97	56	77	84	81	3.85	-3.57
8	Protection of civil rights act	20	20	24	25	10	5	-75.00	-50.00
9	Prevention of Atrocities (SC/ST) Act	370	334	291	319	304	267	-27.84	-12.17
10	Other	557	568	547	519	577	544	-2.33	-5.72
11	Total	1166	1192	1096	1132	1143	1091	-6.43	-4.55

Source - *Crime in Maharashtra, 2012* (CID), Pune, p. 175

Unlike in the past, when individuals mostly committed caste atrocities, in recent years they tend to be committed by collectives in a grotesque celebratory mode.[5]

Above table shows crime head-wise incidences reported against SCs (in which members of scheduled castes are victims) during the period 2007 to 2012 along with percentage variations as compared to 2007 and 2011.

The chains of slaughtering

Since April this year, the graph of atrocities on Dalits seems rising rapidly in Maharashtra because four Dalits including a 17 year old boy have been murdered and a 50 year old man set aflame because their actions displeased the dominant upper castes in their respective villages. The 'Dalit Atyachar Virodhi Kruti Samiti' has claimed that Ahmadnagar district alone accounts for 102 atrocities against dalits in the last five years.[6]

On 3rd April, Manoj Kasab, the Dalit Sarpanch of Nanegaon in Jalna district, was beaten up by upper-caste men, reportedly because of work-related rivalry and died of the wounds almost a month later . On 25th April, a Matang Youth, Umesh Aagle, was murdered by the men of dominant caste in Deopur, Aurangabad district, because he dared to fall in love with a girl from their family.

On 1st May, 22 year old Manik Udage was stoned to death by upper caste men allegedly unhappy at the fact that he had set up an organization called 'Samvidhan Prathisthaan' and had celebrated Dr.

Ambedkar Jayanti in Chikhli village in Pune district. More recently in Kawlewada village in Gondia district, 50 year old Sanjay Khobragade was set aflame by five persons of the dominant caste-his assailant and Khobragade had dispute over land for a Buddha Vihar in the village.

A 17 year old boy Nitin Aage was brutally murdered in Kharda village of Ahmednagar district. He was punished for committing a 'cardinal sin' by having dared to speak to a girl of a higher caste. The assailant or accused of the above cases belonged to the caste which is the intermediate castes those referred to as BCs or OBCs enact violence against Dalits today.[7]

Conclusion

Caste-based discrimination and atrocity against the dalit community has been increasing at an alarming rate in the country. Notorious atrocity cases like Khairlanjii from Maharashtra and Bathani Tola from Bihar have proved that the prevention of atrocity Act (POA Act 1989) has not been able to ensure that the victims get the due justice and the criminals be brought to court. Most of the times, the crime is never reported as the attackers warn the victims of further dire consequences.

More often than not, the police and other state officials who should be responsible for safeguarding Dalits and Dalits' rights; are often closely allied with upper caste groups. Thus instead of upholding the state's constitutional mandate of securing positive liberty for subaltern citizens, they work to undermine it. As far as Maharashtra is concerned, dominant castes, which are economically rich and politically connected, are responsible for the ghastly killings of dalits in the state. Hence, Maharashtra does not have a moral right to claim the legacy of Phule and Ambedkar.

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Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Indian Freedom Movement

Dr. Sachinkumar M. Kattimani*

[Bal Gangadhar Tilak, born as Keshav Gangadhar Tilak (23 July 1856 - 1 August 1920), was an Indian nationalist, journalist, teacher, social reformer, lawyer and an independence activist. He was the first popular leader of the National Freedom Movement. The British colonial authorities called him ''Father of the Indian unrest. '' He was also conferred with the honorary title of ''Lokmanya'', which literally means '' Accepted by the people (as their Leader)''.]

Tilak was one of the first and strongest advocates of ''Swaraj'' (self-rule) and a strong radical in Indian consciousness. His famous quote, "Swaraj is my birth right, and I shall have it!" is well remembered in India even today. He also formed a close alliance with Muhammad Ali Jinnah, later the founder of Pakistan, during the Indian Home rule movement.

Early life

Tilak was born in a Chitpavan Brahmin family in Ratnagiri, headquarters of the eponymous district of present day Maharashtra (then British India). His father, Gangadhar Tilak was a school teacher and a Sanskrit scholar who died when Tilak was sixteen. Young Keshav graduated from Deccan College, Pune in 1877. Tilak was amongst one of the first generation of Indians to receive a college education.

In 1871 Tilak married Tapibai. After marriage her name was changed to Satyabhamabai. Tilak actively participated in public affairs. He stated: "Religion and practical life are not different. To take Sanyasa (renunciation) is not to abandon life. The real spirit is to make the country your family, work together instead of working only for your own. The step beyond is to serve humanity and the next step is to serve the God."

After graduating, Tilak started teaching mathematics at a private school in Pune. Later due to ideological differences with the colleagues in the new school, he withdrew and became a journalist later.

He organized the Deccan education society with a few of his college friends, including Gopal Ganesh Agarkar, Mahadev Ballal Namjoshi and Vishnushastri Chiplunkar. Their goal was to improve the quality of education for India's youth. The Deccan education society was set up to create a new system that taught young Indians nationalist ideas through an emphasis on Indian culture.

The society established the new English school for secondary education and Fergusson College in 1885 for post-secondary studies. Tilak taught mathematics at Fergusson College. He began a mass movement towards independence that was camouflaged by an emphasis on a religious and cultural revival.

Political career

Tilak joined the Indian National Congress in 1890. He opposed its moderate attitude, especially towards the fight for self-government. He was one of the most-eminent radicals at the time. Despite being personally opposed to early marriage, Tilak opposed the 1891 age of Consent bill, seeing it as interference with Hinduism and a dangerous precedent. The act raised the age at which a girl could get married from 10 to 12 years.

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During the 1896, a Bubonic plague epidemic spread from Bombay to Pune, and by January 1897, it reached epidemic proportions. British troops were brought in to deal with the emergency and harsh measures were employed including forced entry into private houses, examination of occupants, evacuation to hospitals and segregation camps, removing and destroying personal possessions, and preventing patients from entering or leaving the city. By the end of May, the epidemic was under control.

Even if the British authorities' measures were well-meant, they were widely regarded as act of tyranny and oppression. Tilak took up this issue by publishing inflammatory articles in his paper *Kesari* (*Kesari* was written in Marathi, and *Maratha* was written in English), quoting the Hindu scripture, the *Bhagavad Gita*, to say that no blame could be attached to anyone who killed an oppressor without any thought of reward. Following this, on 22 June 1897, Rand and another British officer, Lt. Ayerst were shot and killed by the Chapekar brothers and their other associates.

Tilak was charged with incitement to murder and sentenced to 18 months imprisonment. When he emerged from prison in present-day Mumbai, he was revered as a martyr and a national hero. He adopted a new slogan, "Swaraj (self-rule) is my birth right and I shall have it."

Following the partition of Bengal (1905), which was a strategy set out by Lord Curzon to weaken the nationalist movement, Tilak encouraged the Swadeshi movement and the Boycott movement. The Boycott movement consisted of the boycott of foreign goods and also the social boycott of any Indian who used foreign goods. The Swadeshi movement consisted of the usage of goods produced by oneself or in India. Once foreign goods were boycotted, there was a gap which had to be filled by the production of those goods in India itself. Tilak, therefore, rightly said that the Swadeshi and Boycott movements are two sides of the same coin.

Tilak opposed the moderate views of Gopal Krishna Gokhale and was supported by fellow Indian nationalist Bipin Chandrapal in Bengal and Lala Lajpat Rai in Punjab. They were referred to as the Lal-Bal-Pal triumvirate. In 1907, the annual session of the Congress party was held at Surat, Gujarat. Trouble broke out over the selection of the new president of the Congress between the moderate and the radical sections of the party. The party split into the "Jahalmatavadi" ("Hot faction" or radicals), led by Tilak, Pal and Lajpat Rai, and the "Mavalmatavadi" ("soft faction" or moderates). Nationalists like Aurobindo Ghose, V.O.Chidambaram Pillai were Tilak's supporters.

Imprisonment in Mandalay

On 30 April 1908, two Bengali youth, Prafulla Chaki and Khudiram Bose, threw a bomb on a carriage at Muzzafarpur, in order to kill the Chief Presidency Magistrate Douglas Kingsford of Calcutta fame, but erroneously killed two women travelling in it. While Chaki committed suicide when caught, Bose was hanged. Tilak, in his paper *Kesari*, defended the revolutionaries and called for immediate Swaraj or self-rule. The government swiftly arrested him for sedition. But a special jury convicted him, and the Parsi judge Dinshaw D.Davar gave him the controversial sentence of six years' transportation and a fine of Rs 1,000.

The jury by a majority of 7:2 convicted him. On being asked by the judge whether he had anything to say, Tilak uttered these memorable words "All that I wish to say is that, in spite of the verdict of the jury, I still maintain that I am innocent. There are higher powers that rule the destinies of men and nations; and I think, it may be the will of providence that the cause I represent may be benefited more by my suffering than by my pen and tongue".

The judge sentenced Tilak to six years' transportation and a fine of Rs 1,000. In passing sentence, the judge indulged in some scathing strictures against Tilak's conduct. He threw off the judicial restraint which, to some extent, was

observable in his charge to the jury. He condemned the articles as "seething with sedition", as preaching violence, speaking of murders with approval. "You hail the advent of the bomb in India as if something had come to India for its good. I say, such journalism is a curse to the country".

Tilak was sent to Mandalay, Burma from 1908 to 1914. While imprisoned, he continued to read and write, further developing his ideas on the Indian nationalist movement. While in the prison he wrote the most-famous Gita Rahasya. Many copies of which were sold, and the money was donated for the freedom fighting.

Life after prison

Tilak had mellowed after his release in June 1914, because of the attack of diabetes and also the ordeal faced in Mandalay prison. When the First World War started in August, Tilak cabled the King- Emperor in Britain of his support and turned his oratory to find new recruits for war efforts. He welcomed the Indian Councils Act, popularly known as Minto-Morley reforms, which had been passed by British Parliament in May 1909, terming it as "a marked increase of confidence between the rulers and ruled". Acts of violence actually retarded, than hastened, the pace of political reforms, he felt.

He was eager for reconciliation with Congress and had abandoned his demand for direct action and settled for agitations "strictly by constitutional means" – a line advocated by his rival Gopal Krishna Gokhale. Tilak saw the spark in Mohandas Gandhi and tried his best to convince Gandhi to leave the idea of "Total Ahimsa" and try to get "Swarajya" by all means. Gandhi, though looked upon him as his guru, did not change his mind.

All Indian Home Rule League

Later, Tilak re-united with his fellow nationalists and re-joined the Indian National Congress in 1916. He also helped found the all India home rule league in 1916-18, with G. S. Khaparde and Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Annie Besant. After years of trying to reunite the moderate and radical factions, he gave up and focused on the Home Rule League, which sought self-rule. Tilak travelled from village to village trying to conjure up support from farmers and locals to join the movement towards self-rule. Tilak was impressed by the Russian revolution, and expressed his admiration for Vladimir Lenin.

Tilak, who started his political life as a Maratha propagandist, progressed into a prominent nationalist after his close association with Indian nationalists following the partition of Bengal. When asked in Calcutta whether he envisioned a Maratha-type of government for free India, Tilak replied that the Maratha-dominated governments of 17th and 18th centuries were outmoded in the 20th century, and he wanted a genuine federal system for free India where every religion and race was an equal partner. He added that only such a form of government would be able to safeguard India's freedom. He was the first congress leader to suggest that Hindi written in the Devangari script be accepted as the sole national language of India.

Social contributions

In 1894, Tilak transformed the household worshipping of Ganesh into a public event (Sarvajnik Ganeshotsav). In 1895, Tilak founded the Shri Shivaji fund Committee for celebration of "Shiv Jayanti" of the birth anniversary of Shivaji Maharaja, the founder of 17th century Maratha Empire. The project also had the objective of funding the reconstruction of the tomb (Samadhi) of Shivaji Maharaja at Raigad fort. For this second objective, Tilak established the Shri Shivaji Raigad Smarak Mandal along with Senapati Khanderao Dabhade II of Talegaon Dabhade, who became the founder president of Mandal.

Tilak started the Marathi weekly *Kesari* in 1880-81 with Gopal Ganesh Agarkar as the first Editor. *Kesari* later became a daily and continues to be published to this day. Tilak said, "I regard India as my Motherland and my Goddess, the people

in India are my kith and kin, and loyal and steadfast work for their political and social emancipation is my highest religion and duty".

Communal Nationalism

In 2010 Orient Black swan published a book *Foundation of Tilak's Nationalism: Discrimination, Education and Hindutva*" authored by Parimala V. Rao. A review of this book states, "Tilak categorically opposed all brands of social change under the pretext of confronting colonial intervention in the sacred and internal domains of the religious order. The author goes on to show that Tilak has persistently argued for the safeguards of the money lenders and opposed pro-peasant legislations and other measures meant for the empowerment."

Books

In 1903, he wrote the book *The Arctic home of the Vedas*, wherein he argued the Vedas could only have been composed in the Arctic, and the Aryan bards brought them south after the onset of the last ice age. He proposed the radically new way to determine the exact time of the Vedas. He tried to calculate the time of Vedas by using the position of different Nakshtras. Positions of Nakshtras were described in different Vedas.

Tilak also authored *Shrimad Bhagvad Gita Rahasya* in prison at Mandalay, Burma- the analysis of 'Karma Yoga' in the Bhagavad Gita, which is known to be gift of the Vedas and the Upanishads. As noted in Shree Gajanan Vijay, he was devotee of Gajanan Maharaj of Shegaon. Many reference texts of his are available in the epic.

Legacy

- The *Kesari* is still published as a daily newspaper in Marathi.

- The Deccan Education Society that Tilak founded with others in the 1880s still runs much respected institutions in Pune like the Fergusson College.

- The public Ganesh festival has become a central part of the culture of Marathi Hindu communities throughout the world.

  Increasingly, other Hindu communities are also adopting the practice.

- Because of Tilak's efforts, Shivaji the founder of Maratha Empire is the only figure form that era revered by contemporary Marathi masses and Hindu nationalist parties like the Shiv Sena.

- The Swadeshi movement started by Tilak at the beginning of the 20th century became part of the Independence movement until that goal was achieved in 1947. One can even say Swadeshi remained part of Indian Government policy until the 1990s when the Congress Government liberalized the economy.

- Tilak Smarak Ranga Mandir, a theatre auditorium in Pune was dedicated to him.

- In 2007, the Government of India released a coin to commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of Bal Gangadhar Tilak.

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Dilemma of India's Burgeoning Population

Dr Kailash C Garg*

[After independence in the year 1947, India has made noticeable progress in the field of food production, information technology, heavy industry, automobiles, telecommunication and space technology etc. However, in several fields, India's development record is worse than the poor. Social indicators leave that in no doubt. There are several problems that the country still faces. These include child labor, crime in general and against women in particular, environmental degradation, several diseases like malaria, dengue, diarrhea, HIV/AIDS, TB etc, corruption in different walks of life, sanitation and public hygiene, malnutrition, poor and inadequate infrastructure, illiteracy, poverty, inequality in society, suicide by farmers, terrorism by different groups and unemployment among the youth.]

The question arises as to why after more than six decades of independence, India has failed to solve these perennial problems. What is that ails India? In my opinion the root cause for most of our problems is India's burgeoning population. At the time of independence India's population was a mere 350 million and now it stands at more than 1.25 billion which constitutes 17% of world's population. More than one billion people crowed in the country is a matter of concern for all of us. The states of cow-belt region are more populated.

India probably was one of the first countries to start a family planning program. In early 1950s, the government of India started its family planning program to control its population. The target was to limit the birth rate to 25/1000 by 1984 and 21/1000 by 2001. Though these initiatives resulted in decline of birth rate, but did not meet the stipulated targets. Failing to meet the stipulated targets, the Government of India announced a health policy in 1983 to bring down the fertility rate to 2.1 in the year 2000. But it also did not happen.

In the year 2000, another health policy was declared to achieve the fertility rate of 2.1 by the year 2010. But this too failed. At present India's fertility rate is 2.8 and is much higher than the replacement rate. Even, this was achieved because the elite class in India is producing fewer children than even the replacement rate and several states of the south have

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controlled its population. India will achieve its replacement rate only in the year 2050, but before that India will swell to more than 1.6 billion people, overtaking China in 2022. This has been recently stated by UN in its latest World Population Prospects forecast report 2015.

Stipulated targets of fertility rate in India could not be achieved because of the vote bank politics of the successive governments. Politicians are mainly responsible for this, because all the political parties consider the rising population as their vote bank and a non-serious issue. In India the majority of the votes are cast by those who are poor and live in rural areas, which are also mainly responsible for the population growth. In certain communities family planning is not allowed as the children are considered the gift of the God. Islamic countries like Indonesia, Iran, Nigeria and Bangladesh have brought down their fertility rates in last 20 years.

Several of the problems mentioned above are directly or indirectly linked to the burgeoning population of the country. For instance, millions of children involved in child labor are from families who have large number of children. Having a large family needs more income and hence they employ their children as laborers. For them education is not important, but some earning to meet the day-to-day expenditure.

Lack of sanitation causes several deaths in the country. People without access to proper sanitation facilities defecate in public or on river banks and other water bodies, which is a major cause of communicable diseases. India's exploding population is the primary cause of India's environmental degradation, water pollution and soil pollution. According to a report prepared by Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) 37,000 million liters per day of untreated municipal and industrial waste is being disposed into 302 river stretches on 275 rivers. It has resulted in high level of contamination of the rivers and a cause of several diseases resulting in many deaths, especially among children.

The Government of India has spent several millions of rupees for the cleaning of Ganges and the Yamuna, but in vain. These rivers are more polluted than before. Increasing population growth rate is putting a heavy pressure on the limited resources and leaving many Indians in absolute poverty. Due to migration from villages to cities, several cities have virtually grown into city states.

One-third of India's population lives below the so-called poverty line which has always been contentious. This has also resulted in climbing expenditure on welfare schemes. Large number of children in families is also a cause of illiteracy as they employ them as a child labor. Delhi with a population of 1.62 million generates more than 9000 Mt of garbage daily and has no space for its disposal.

Unemployment is a cause of concern for the youth. According to sixth NSSO survey, the unemployment rate in India is increasing. On January 1, 2012 the number of unemployed was 10.8 million, while on January 1, 2010 this was 9.8 million. It is because the economy has slowed down and the population is increasing producing more number of eligible youth for employment. Water scarcity is going to be a serious problem in future and there may be more inter-state conflicts on the issue than the present. With such a mammoth population, India can never have the demographic dividend as pointed out by some of the economists.

A country can have the demographic dividend only when it can put its growing labor force to productive use, which India has failed to do as indicated by rising number of unemployed youths.

I don't suggest that India should introduce one child policy like China and nor to adopt coercive methods to control the population as adopted during the Emergency in India during 1975. To control the population people are to be educated about the advantages of small families by awareness programmes in the mass media.

The Government of India is spending several millions of rupees on advertisements for drawing attention of the people towards the problem of malnutrition, clean India, save girl child etc and engages several prominent persons like Aamir Khan as its brand ambassador for malnutrition and Big B for polio and several other celebrities for other programmes. Why can't the Government of India

engage some prominent celebrities and sportspersons for teaching the importance of small family?

Mass media like the TV channels, radio and print media should also be engaged to demonstrate the ills of big families and there should be advertisement about the importance of small families every hour or so on all the TV channels and radio. There are 2 million NGOs working in India for different purposes and the government provides these NGOs millions of rupees as funds. The government can involve these NGOs in propagating the message of small families and at last all the political parties should stop considering them as their vote bank and should consider the exploding population as important as winning an election.

India needs to tackle the population in mission mode and mobilize all its energy and resources in this task. Once the population is controlled, the fruits of development would reach increasingly to larger number of people below-poverty-line. This would have a positive cascading effect in all walks of life in the country. If India fails to halt its population growth, it will never be possible to render social and economic justice to millions of our masses and all welfare measures will be waste of public money.

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Evaluating Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojna

Dr. Alok K. Gupta* & Salma Zafar**

[*Mahatma Gandhi strongly felt that future of India resides in its villages. Governments in India have formulated and implemented number of rural development programmes to provide a facelift to Indian villages. The greatest Indian paradox is that fate as well as face of political leaders has undergone a sea-change but villages in most cases have either remained in same status or have gone bad to worse.]*

Contemporary villages lack even the basic facilities like safe drinking water, education, sanitation, housing etc.[1] Development literature and reports are replete with reasons and analysis; however, the paradox can be understood only by understanding the political and administrative environment under which these policies are formulated and implemented. Undoubtedly, the political process that evolved since independence has increasingly led to politicization of public policies and the visible development in different walks of Indian political, social and economic life can be better explained by the fact that in Indian context development is never planned rather it is 'by the way'.

Politicization of Public Policy?

Politicization generally means to "give a political character or bias to". Collins English Dictionary defines it as "to render political tone or interest or awareness". Merriam Webster Dictionary defines it as "to relate (an idea, issue etc.) to politics in a way that makes the people less likely to agree". Oxford Dictionary defines it as a "cause (an activity or event) to become political in character".

The continuous extension of reservation policy is the best example to understand how policies are politicized just for the sake of cultivating political gain. Whenever a new political party

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comes to power it has many obligations to fulfill towards its political workers and fund managers. As a result, in order to facilitate these party workers, government comes up with new public policies which are not often merit based.

Squashing or derailing the policy brought by the previous government irrespective of their goals and objectives, the political parties end up often competing with each other. Rather than finding out the loop holes and controlling the spillover of fund allocation, the parties display the one-upmanship syndrome.

Politicization of public policy also means that during evolution of political process in a state when public policies across different sectors are hardly made on account of need and aspirations of the people in real sense of the term but it is made on account of extraneous considerations like: (i) the policy in the given sector may have failed but the incumbent government calls if off lock, stock and barrel just because it bears the imprint of an adversary political party or the outgoing government; (ii) there are rent seeking proclivities in all political parties who play instrumental role during the election process in terms of election expenditure and other needs and such agencies are to be facilitated benefits once the party comes to power and it could be made possible only by re-distributing the exchequers money by way of a new policy and its implementation; (iii) the image of the incumbent political party and its leaders requires to be built and strengthened for future, therefore, they resort to discontinuation of old policies and launching of a new policy for the same problem and claim that the new one is an innovative one which has the potential to provide permanent solution to the problem; (iv) somewhere somebody has to be facilitated as a

stooge of the incumbent political party and therefore a new policy becomes inevitable.

Therefore, when an old policy is replaced by a new policy claiming it to be innovative whereas it is mere an old wine in a new bottle the endeavour by the incumbent government leads to politicization of public policy. This phenomenon could only be understood by a critical analysis of a new policy launched by a new government and its comparison with an old policy by a different government for the similar problem. Accordingly, authors make an endeavour to present a critical analysis of Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) by NDA government of 2014. This policy has been weighed *vis-à-vis* other policies that were made in the past for rural development.

Rural Development: Policies Thus Far

India is fast becoming a manufacturing industry of public policies. Nevertheless, with the advent of the era of good governance and development, policy has become a secondary consideration to a politics of survival.[2] Since Independence, the economic development, rural poverty alleviation and rural transformation have been the cardinal goals every government that happened to be at the helm in India. Even with the political changes in the country from Congress system to coalition politics to NDA rule, the aspiration of all leaders continue to be the same. This aspiration is reflected through various rural development programmes initiated by them through various innovative policies. Following are some such policies:

1. Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLAD, 1993)— Each MP has the choice to suggest to the District Collector for works to the tune of Rs. 5 crore per annum to be taken up in his/her

constituency. The Rajya Sabha Member of Parliament can recommend works in one or more districts in the state from where he/she has been elected.

2. Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana (PMAJY, 2010)—To build an Adarsh Gram of schedule caste majority villages.

3. Providing Urban Amenities to Rural Areas (PURA, 2004)—To provide urban amenities and livelihood opportunities in rural areas to bridge the rural-urban gap.

4. Integrated Rural Development Program (IRDP,1978)—Self-employment program to raise the income-generation capacity of target groups among the poor.

5. RURBAN Mission—Intends to provide urban infrastructure in rural areas.

6. Bharat Nirman—Six components under Bharat Nirman are-

   a) Rural Housing   b) Rural Drinking Water
   c) Irrigation   d) Electrification
   e) Telecommunication f) Road Connectivity

Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) is the latest addition to the long list of existing policy interventions to upgrade and uplift the life of rural and urban poor.

This reflects the Indian paradox that despite having same goals, rural underdevelopment, rural unemployment and poverty continues to be high and ever growing. L.I Rudolph and S.H Rudolph view that such paradox happens only when the state sector that bourgeoned and flourished on the way to socialism began to acquire vested interests. Means began to become ends…petty bureaucrats and senior officials became the beneficiaries of rents.[3]

It shows that reforms have become stylish and the policy, merely a political statement rather than a techno-rational output of state action.[4] Accordingly, policy making in Indian context smacks of political nature and to put it precisely its politicization. The obvious reason is the overlapping between politics and policy, where state fails to strike a balance between enforcement and neutrality.

Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojna (SAGY): A Case Study

SAGY was outlined by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the birth anniversary of Jai Prakash Narayan (11th October, 2014). Taking the inspiration from Sampurn Kranti (Total Revolution) of Jai Prakash Narayan, it aims at developing smart villages simultaneously with smart cities. Punsari village in Gujarat and Hiware Bazar in Maharashtra were considered as the model of Adarsh Gram. PM appealed every Member of Parliament (MP) to build an Adarsh Gram by adopting a village.

Objectives

1. To substantially improve the standard of living and quality of life of all sections of the population through –

   a) Improved basic amenities

   b) Higher productivity

   c) Enhanced human development

   d) Better livelihood opportunities

   e) Reduced disparities

   f) Access to rights and entitlements

   g) Wider social mobilization

   h) Enriched social capital

2. To generate models of local level development and effective local governance which can motivate and inspire neighbouring Gram Panchayats to learn and adapt.

Strengths and Weaknesses

The modalities and objectives of the SAGY are no different from the previous policies.[5] The only difference is, unlike the other policies which take the surgical approach for the village development, the SAGY conceptualizes the holistic development.

It undertakes the gamut of activities in a single policy only like—ensuring every house has a toilet, piped water connection, better road connectivity, permanent pucca house, clean energy sources, basic health facilities along with inculcating hygienic behaviour among children and adults, adult literacy, violence and crime free villages, integration of socially excluded groups, especially Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, organic farming, clean and green villages, social forestry, watershed management, e-governance, telecom connectivity, electricity connectivity, Infrastructure for PDS outlets, Pensions for all eligible families—old age, disability and widow, Provision of UIDAI cards to all, Rainwater harvesting and many more.

Therefore, it is difficult to understand as to how the scheme is different from other previously launched schemes as most of these issues related to development have been there in different erstwhile policies.

Partially Innovative

Prima facie, it seems to be an innovative policy as it allows the MP to identify a suitable Gram Panchayat to be developed as Adarsh Gram, other than his/her own village or that of his/her spouse. It allows the Lok Sabha MP to choose a Gram Panchayat from within his/her constituency and Rajya Sabha MP to choose a Gram Panchayat from the rural area of a district of his/her choice in the State from which he/she is elected.

It allows the nominated MPs to choose a Gram Panchayat from the rural areas of any district in the country. In case of urban constituencies, (where there are no Gram Panchayats), the MP can identify a Gram Panchayat from a nearby rural constituency. Moreover, it aims to develop three Adarsh Grams by March 2019, of which one would be achieved by 2016. Thereafter, five such Adarsh Grams (one per year) will be selected and developed by 2024.[6]

Therefore, based on the above explanation, it can be called as an innovative policy broadly on two grounds—

1. By restricting the MPs from selecting his/her own or spouse village, it curtails the favouritism;

2. If all the MPs are compulsorily made to select their villages then by 2019 it has the potential to what we call in local term as 'kaya palat' of around 2500 villages and thereby will inject a process of change all over the country.

An evaluation on the programme basis only, programmes like—soil health card, post-harvest technology, celebrating village day, it seems to be an innovative policy with a future orientation. Beside this, it heavily seems to be borrowing the idea from the already existing ideas. In other words, it can be called as the mere compilation of the few existing programmes with a drop of innovation.

The government fails to address those issues which need its direct attention like it does not talks of the creation of the agro-export market, identifying and marketing geographical

indicators, building of agri-infrastructure etc. It needs to control the suicide committed by a large number of farmers.[8]

Government needs to understand that village modernisation does not mean urbanisation rather it means bringing the urban like facilities in the villages. Even keeping the ethos of Indian tradition intact, the villages can still be modernised.[9] Therefore, the policy though has not spelt out but *prima facie* it seems that it aims at creating urban like relevant facilities within the ambit of adopted villages rather than aiming to urbanize the same.

Since, most of the previous attempts at modernizing villages were dislocated in different sense and misplaced in terms of ideas, policy content and modalities regarding its implementation, this program could be ascertained as an innovative to a great extent, if not an out of the box solution.

Drawbacks

Firstly, the media reports revealed that at the end of one-month deadline only one sixth of the total MPs selected villages to be adopted and that reveals the attitudinal acceptance of law-makers themselves in terms of their commitment for the success of their programme.

Secondly, religious considerations being one of the major factors in the Indian politics are most likely to play an important role when it comes to adopting villages. Therefore, while adopting a village the 'vote bank' considerations shall prevail on account of caste and religion domination of a particular village thereby creating a fault-line within the constituency among villages.

Thirdly it may lead to asymmetrical development as states like U.P. has large number of M.Ps while states of north-east have less M.Ps.

Fourthly, bottlenecks like lack of tech-savvy officials would seriously affect the execution of the goal of SAGY as e-governance depends on accessibility as well as technological know-how.

Fifthly, it shall accord elite status to few villages and it raises question as to only those three villages have the right to be developed and others do not have. The trickledown theory advocated by the liberal economist would not help to materialise. It is also morally not correct that MPs using all their funds to develop three Adarsh Gaon while depriving the rest of the people and villages of his/her constituency. It may further perpetuate the lopsided and imbalanced development from which Indian society is already suffering.

Sixthly, the lack of time limit to execute the program may defeat the purpose as MPs are good at not honouring the time limit as they know nothing shall happen to them even if they fail.

Seventhly, no power has been accorded to Gram Panchayats. The program though provides that design of model villages will be done with the help of Gram Panchayats but it does not provide them the honour to become an implementation vehicle. It once again places the most powerful tool for Bharat Nirman under the MPs and bureaucrats. Therefore, the biggest lacuna of the scheme is to rely on the same worn out vehicle for its implementation.

There is ample evidence of strong alliance between politicians and bureaucrats for mutual gain with the latter turning into a 'yes man'. If they failed to turn the rule in favour of their political masters then at minimum they face the regular transfer. A study conducted in a district in Rajasthan shows that the average tenure of a project director was 18 months. The longest stay of a project director was of 48 months, but during this period three changes in the office of the district collector, two in that of APO (agriculture),

two in that of APO (animal husbandry) and five in that of APO (co-operatives) took place. Therefore, this shows that little effort is made either to create a team or imbibe expertise that comes from knowledge of the area and the people.[10]

Further, in India history is witness where even the best of the policy launched by the government failed to achieve its target only because of the corrupt bureaucrats. One such example is of MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) launched in 2005. It has been called as a demand-driven project as it provides the legal guarantee for one hundred days of employment in every financial year to adult members of any rural household willing to do public work related unskilled manual work at the statutory minimum wage for Rs.120 per day at 2009 prices (presently it is Rs.178 per day and number of days also stands revised). Beside this, the Act also provides the mandate that at least one-third of the workers should be women.

Finally, there is lack of any method of *Jan Sunwais which is* the best method to bring transparency in any schemes and make the implementation agency accountable to the common citizen and help the latter to become more aware. Though it has been always resisted 10, but still the Government fails to understand its potential and implement it fully.

Conclusion

A detailed analysis of SAGY suggests that it is mere rewriting of the on-going programmes. However, one may accept the same provided the government promises to cure the existing problems. The government will require doing the surgical operation but there lie certain challenges.[11] Some such challenges are as follows which requires to be addressed in right earnest: Changing the rent seeking mind-set of the officials and stakeholders; Giving more powerful role to Gram Panchayats; Develop the basic understanding of the target area and population; Maintaining the transparency and accountability; garnering the support of the local people.

The common citizen has lost confidence in administration and this has to be restored first; by educating the local people about the policy and creating enthusiasm among them regarding its implementation; to adopt a long term planned and consistent policy rather than a mere political policy; strengthening the cooperation between political executive and local people; to revitalize the role of bureaucrats on whom the success and failure of the policy depend; rescuing the policy from becoming hostage to the political game. Therefore, these enumerated challenges require to be addressed to enhance the probabilities of the success of the programme.

References

1. Shivapura village in the dense forests of Joida Taluk in Uttara Kannada district village houses 51 families and has no facilities. Such as- pucca road, school, health centre, electricity, telephone service, piped water. Located on banks of Kali, it is totally disconnected from rest of district during the monsoon. Villagers have to tread 9 km to reach the bus stand, primary health centre, gram panchayat office, fair price shop and post office located in Ulavi, a small town. It is located at a distance of 55km from the Taluk headquarters (Joida). Few years ago KPCL (Karnataka Power Corporation Limited) sanctioned Rs.50 lakh to construct a hanging bridge to the village. The project has not been yet completed.

   Another example is of Brahmani (Rairakhol, Odisha)- A rickety wooden bridge is the only link to Brahmani village under Ghusramal Gram Panchayat in Naktideul block of Sambalpur district. There is no motorable road to village. During monsoon it is cut off from the world. It

is inhabited by around 60 households. No electricity connection while drinking water is a scarce commodity in Routiasahi and Sudrasahi. Purunasahi has piped water. People of Routiasahi depend on a well in backyard of one of inhabitants, while of Sudrashi depend on a water pit dug up in an agricultural land. Nearest hospital is Rairakhal sub divisional hospital while the community health centre at Naktidul is located 35km from the village. Ambulance does not reach and in case of emergency patients are carried on shoulders by villagers. Villages are accustomed to live with diseases like malaria, diarrhoea, and skin diseases. Primary school is there but upper primary school is 10 km away run by St. Antony Church, Mission School at Badmal. For detail see-*www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-karnataka/a-village-without-basic-facilities/article1209428.ece* February26, 2008.

2. Kuldeep Mathur (ed.) 2013, "*Public Policy And Politics In India*" , p-24

3. L.I Rudolph and S.I Rudolph, 1987, "*In Pursuit of Lakshmi: The Political Economy if the Indian State*", pp-62-63.

4. Kuldeep Mathur (ed.) 2013, "*Public Policy And Politics In India*", pp. 21,30.

5. Guidelines of SAGY pib.nic.in/archive/others/2014/oct/d2014101101.pdf

6. Ibid.

7. The change in climate particularly untimely rainfall in April has drawn many of the farmers in north India (U.P, Bihar, Jharkhand, Delhi) in debt. 90% of the farmers have lost their means of survival. On being asked of muawza, they said-"hame kisi se koi umeed nahi hai. Afsaron ke kagazo ka pet hum kahan se bharenge. Hame to roti ke bhi lale pade hain". See series of 'kisano par kahar', *Hindustan*, Patna edition from April 10,2015. Dharnai village of Bihar is fully lighted by solar power, Chappar village of Haryana where there is no gender discrimination, Mawlynnong village of Meghalaya is the Asia's cleanest village. Likewise there are number of other villages which

show that to develop the village the most important thing is to change the thought of the people.

8. Some Indian villages which wrote their own success stories long before the launching of SAGY are available at www.mdaily.bhaskar.com

9. Dharnai village of Bihar is fully lighted by solar power, Chappar village of Haryana where there is no gender discrimination, Mawlynnong village of Meghalaya is the Asia's cleanest village. Likewise there are number of other villages which show that to develop the village the most important thing is to change the thought of the people.

10. Kuldeep Mathur*, "*Politics and Implementation of Integrated Rural Development Programme, *"Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 30, No. 41/42 (Oct. 14-21, 1995), p. 2706.

11. Rajasthan Public Hearings Hit Sarpanchs Hard', *The Hindu*, March 13, 2002 mentioned how over 240 sarpanchas organised themselves and waited on the CM to resist further sunwais. Further, Urban Development Minister's order for placing a particular file on land deal for public scrutiny was reversed by the bureaucrats' shows the fear of open decision making. *The Statesman*, New Delhi, September 13,1998, 'Bureaucrats Misled Cabinet on CVC Draft. Charges Jethmalani, as quoted in Kuldeep Mathur (ed.) 2013, "*Public Policy And Politics In India* "p-274.

12. The above-mentioned challenges have also been identified in these write-ups: *"Unspent balances and fund flow Mechanism under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS)"*, as contributed by N.R Bhanumurthy, H.K Amarnath, AkhileshVarma, Adarsh Gupta. See Also S.R Maheshwari, "Public Policy Making In India", *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 48 no. 3 (1987), Refer also to Kuldeep Mathur (ed.) 2013,*"Public Policy and Politics in India"*.

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Voting Behaviour of Tamenglong District in Manipur

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[*Voting is considered to be the most important and basic element indispensable to democracy. It is an ultimate activity through which citizens are equipped with the knowledge of politics and learn how to exercise their power. Elections provide the citizens an opportunity to directly or indirectly participate in the decision-making process for the making and/or unmaking of governments. Elections crowned the public "as the Sovereign voters." In real sense, in democracy sovereignty lies in the electors. They collectively take decision upon the political elites who would be part of the government. They are responsible for either the success or failure of democracy. They could elect the candidate whom they think best by exercising their right to choose.*]

Sociologists vividly express about the voting behaviour in terms of sociological variables such as clan, ethnicity, religion, attitudes, and orientations towards political participation. A well-known political scientist S.P. Verma opines that voting is an act of response to "internal" and "external" stimuli. The former in terms of preference and commitment and the latter is of pressures, campaigning techniques, and manipulation.

This interplay of internal stimuli and external manipulation, operate on a voter's choice. Thus, voting behaviour may be defined as the behaviour that "explicitly reflects voter's choices, preferences, alternatives, ideologies, concerns, agreements, and programmes in respect of various issues, questions pertaining to the society and nations". Voting is a special influence, which acts upon the individual to express his/her "opinion on candidate, parties and issues confronting socio-economic and culture in particular and political system in general".

Voting seems to be the voluntary act but sometimes it is induced by some factors like influence of fellow-clan men, village leaders(Chairman, Authorities) , family head or a 'political broker' or stimuli generated during the election campaign.

Voting behaviour may be said to be a very "basic features of democracy". Thus, the study of voting behaviour has become an important aspect of contemporary political research. It involves an analysis of individual psychological make-up and their relative corresponding to political action as well as institutional patterns, such as the communication process and their impact on elections. The study of voting behaviour constitutes an important area of political science in which theory can be systematically and qualitatively analyzed and tested. The complex role of elections in the political system is "sidelined by an examination and observation of voting behaviour of the electorate".

Thus, voting is an "individual behaviour", which indicates the voter's "inclination, choice, preferences, agreements, ideologies, concerns, alternatives and so on with regards to various questions of issues on which the elections are fought". Moreover, voting behaviour indicates the dynamic role that one plays in the achievement of collective ends. It implies the essential "assertion of his rights and commitments for the society and nations".

A number of candidates and turnouts of voters determine the most basic aspects of aggregate voting behaviour. The former is an indicator of the political participation of the populace and the latter is the participation from the party

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system. An election is, in a sense, a place where both "level of participation meet". What factors determine the turnout of voters or number of candidates? What is the relationship between the level of electoral participation, that is, the turnouts, and the number of candidates? It is still difficult to answer these questions, not only for India but also for developed countries.

Different factors may lead to the same level of electoral participation in different countries. However, it may be an exaggeration to maintain that each country has a completely different set of factors determining the turnout. It is generally observed in many developing countries/societies that higher socio-economic development is likely to lead to higher turnouts. Politically sensitive issues are likely to raise the turnout in the election. Intense electoral competition between major candidates may attract people to the ballot boxes. These factors can be considered to exist in every country, though the magnitude of their effect may vary.

Voting Behaviour in *Tamenglong* District

Tamenglong District is located in the hilly region and forms a part of the outer Manipur Parliamentary Constituency. It is fully represented by the Scheduled Tribes. The District has three constituencies: (i) 52–*Tamei* (ST) Assembly Constituency, (ii) 53–*Tamenglong* (ST) Assembly Constituency and (iii) 54–*Nungba* (ST) Assembly Constituency. Candidates are elected from these three separate Constituencies. All the three constituencies have some common characteristics of voting behavior.

There are various factors, which motivated the voters of the *Tamenglong* District to vote for a particular candidate during elections. Some of the common factors that influence voting behaviour of these three constituencies are: (1) Party loyalty, (2) Money power, (3) Political party and its ideology, (4) Personality of candidates, (5) Local influence, (6) Family influence, (7) Religion (8) Current issues, (9) Kinship/Clanism, (10) Muscle power (11) Interference of insurgency (12) Election campaign through various means and methods

such as pitching of party flags, posters, holding of election meetings, Using loud-speaker, Launching of door-to-door canvassing, group/community election feasting, Vote-bribing, and flag hoisting ceremony, etc.

Voting Behaviour of Three Constituencies of *Tamenglong* District

Tamenglong and *Tamei* Assembly constituencies have separate electorates and fully represented by the Scheduled Tribes. These two constituencies have some common characteristics, which influence the voting behaviour of the electorate. Factors, which are most important in influencing the electors to vote for particular candidates are:

Candidates' Personality: Candidates' charismatic personality has largely influenced voting behaviour. People support the candidate who possesses a very good moral standing. Voters have confidence in such candidate and he/she has a high chance of winning the elections. Candidates who are approachable, kind, and helpful in any way would gain the mass support. In every election, people vote keeping in mind the potentiality and charisma of the candidates. Electors' choice to vote for the candidates is influenced by the educational qualification, moral virtue, potentialities, and approachability. Other factors such as socio-economic, local issues, religion, campaign, etc. also have a special influence on voting behaviour but these factors are of little importance in these two constituencies.

Candidates' economic status too is not less important. Though candidates belong to well-to-do families but if they are disabled or insolvent, voters turn away from the candidates. Personality rather than economic status of the candidates is usually very much counted and has a biggest influence on the voting behaviour of the voters. It is evident from the fact that during the last Assembly Elections Independent candidates most often won from these two constituencies.

Role of Money: Some sections of the people are influenced by money. During elections

candidates used to lure the voters by offering money. Some poor section of electorate fall an easy prey to mischievous offer. Money given during the elections was only nominal and was not usually even enough to meet one's square meal. Deliberately, the candidates tried to persuade them convincingly by giving assurance with a make-belief promise.

Candidates assured the voters in terms of financial aid and securing respectable jobs for the educated unemployed youth if they come to power. Therefore, the electors were elated and soaring with a lofty dreams but this happened very rarely. In most cases, the voters received nothing from the candidates. The recent last two Assembly Elections showed that money power seems to lose its importance as bribing becomes rare. Money is spent only on group feastings and donations.

However, money still plays an important role in moulding electoral behaviour of the voters during the elections. Rich and economically well-off candidates have a better opportunity of winning. Bribing seems to be an open secret. People's craze for money is not just because of the economic instability but also due to ignorance of their rights and values of democracy. The candidates have no faith upon the voters and the voters in turn have less confidence in their candidates and vice-versa. That is why the voters attempt to fill their pockets as much as they can. Candidates also try to play with money to win more voters. Each candidate arranges almost crore of rupees to win the votes of just for twenty to thirty thousand votes in their respective constituencies.

Nungba Assembly Constituency

Nungba Assembly Constituency is under *Tamenglong* District which falls under Nungba Sub-Division and Khoupum Sub-Division. *Nungba* has a unique nature of voting behavior in comparing with the other two. There are various determinants, which influence the voting behaviour. The most important factors, which determine the voters' choice of a particular candidate are: (a) Party Loyalty, (b) Kinship, (c) Feasting (d) Muscle power/Insurgents involvement and (e) Pre-election Promise.

Party Loyalty: People have favours for a particular party and firmly believed in its ideology. Party politics is very strong and active. It is evident from the fact that ever since the first Assembly Election of Manipur, there is no victory of the Independent candidates from this constituency. They viewed that candidates or ministry may change but the party and its ideology are rigid and unchangeable. It has a long history of the people being faithful to a particular party.

People from this constituency have remained glued to a single political party i.e., Congress. Shri Gaikhangam, a prominent Congress candidate won repeatedly in spite of many rival candidates contested against him in all these elections. In all the political scenario of *Nungba* constituency, the Congress seems to be swaying party which won the hearts of the people, and loyalty to the Congress has been continuing over many past decades. Prominent leaders like Prof. Gangmumei Kamei and Shri Gaikhangam contested the elections neck to neck with voters loyal to their candidates. This is the evidence that party politics is deeply rooted in this constituency.

It is observed that even family members and close relatives are sidelined among the electorate. Party flavour subordinates the relative bond of love and brotherhood. And thus, they harboured ill feeling against each other. The party groupism shatters good will, neighbourliness, sympathy, and sense of belongingness. People harboured a feeling that even the distant neighbours are more emotionally attached and closer than their real brothers or family members for being belonged to same political party.

Clan/Kinship Ties: It is generally believed that candidates belonging to bigger clan will have a greater influence and possibilities of winning the elections. As people are emotionally close to the kinship and clanhood, they will vote for a particular candidate taking into account the category of clan of the candidates. In other words, if the clan of the candidate enjoys majority in the

area of the constituency, then the clan members would follow suit and vote for him. According to the statement collected from an interview with Shri Ngamthaolung Riamei, Village Authority of Soubunglong, 'Nungba Constituency is dominated by one major clan i.e. Gangmei clan, which is deeply embedded in the Congress. Shri Gaikhangam being a candidate belonging to this clan has bigger influence over the voters of the *Gangmei* clan.

The Congress party emerged victorious for the fourth term in the last Assembly Election from this Constituency. This may be due to the clan conservativeness and sense of clanism. Thus, clan to a very great extent influences voting behaviour of *Nungba* Constituency.

Local Favouritism: In *Nungba* Constituency particularly in Khoupum area, localism is deeply rooted. A candidate belonging to bigger village or locality often succeeds in the Assembly Elections. For instance, Shri Gaikhangam from *Gaidimjang,* one of the biggest villages of *Khoupum* area won election for more than five terms from *Nungba* Assembly Constituency.

Election Feastings: Community feasting is one of the most important features of elections in *Nungba*. Election has been a time of community feasting. The candidates organized this on the eve of election through party workers or local agents. Some were given even alcoholic drinks during the elections. On this day, party corporate offices/ branch offices would be set up at the areas where polling is supposed to be conducted followed by a flag hoisting ceremony. From the day election offices were set up until the election results were announced, the members would remain stationed at their respective electoral offices. When the election results are declared and if the candidate they supported won the election then another victorious feast is organized in a grand manner.

Muscle Power and Insurgencies: Muscle power also exerts pressure on the electorate. Candidates employ some insurgent groups which supported him through political link for money. Both the insurgent groups and the candidate shared a kind of comfort level by making a deal. This insurgent group would operate in the areas by intimidating the people at gunpoint in a bid to score more votes in favour of the candidate they supported. Often physical assault and harassment are meted out to the local people by the insurgent groups.

During the Elections of 2002, such untoward incidents occurred in some polling stations particularly in *Taosang* and *Khoupum* areas. At *Taosang*, some youths with an intention of obstructing the poll, crept inside the polling hall and interfered with the Presiding Officer and the poll ended abruptly.

In the case of *Khoupum,* prior to the 2002 Assembly Elections, there were local infightings between the parties such as Federal Party of Manipur and the Congress as these were the only major parties in *Khoupum* areas. Due to the growing of party feeling among the people of the two parties, tensions and clashes were intensified. Some had been physically abused while others received bullet injuries from the firings among the member of the same party. Some incurred heavy loss from the destruction of personal properties such as orange estate, vehicles, etc.

In the Assembly Elections of 2007, some armed men stationed near *Joujangtek* village and vandalized a mini *Tata* that belonged to the Congress Party. According to the statement of Shri Dingkulung, an occupant of the vehicle, "some armed men jumped out from the bush and forced them to alight from the vehicle at once. They were blindfolded, hand cuffed, threatened, physically assaulted and interrogated to identify themselves which party they belonged.

They were detained for several hours and released later but the gang took the ignition key of the vehicle and rode away. Later, the vehicle was found damaged. The miscreants supposedly pushed the vehicle off the road." The armed group executed this task in order to restrict the vehicular movements carrying voters who were coming to exercise their voting right from different destinations.

Another similar incident also occurred in the same area. Some unidentified gunmen hijacked another vehicle, a *Maruti Gypsy* that too belonged to the Congress Party's man. The occupants were asked to vacate and flee from the spot. The vehicle was dragged away from the spot and pushed off the road.

Elections in *Nungba* A/C are often characterized by terrifying incidents such as fist of furry, destruction of polling stations, interference in publicity, hijacking vehicles, etc. Never were elections held peacefully and without the involvement of insurgents so far in this Constituency in one degree or the other even in the recent most election of 2012 which I intentionally avoided to give the details.

Pre-election Promise: The major needs of the people are materials for house construction, schemes for farming, contract works, employment, education, constructions of public buildings, improvement of roads, bridges, community development, etc. The candidate would promise to do all these requirements if he comes to power. Moreover, candidate promises to provide the needs of the people individually or in groups such as Youth clubs, Women's Societies, etc. of various villages, village councils, etc. Roofing tins were distributed to each household and clubs were provided sporting materials as a part of campaign.

Alcoholism: Majority of the people in *Tamenglong* district are Baptist Christians. The teaching of Baptist prohibits all forms of intoxicants. Yet they are more given to merry-making by consuming alcohol especially during the Constituent Assembly Elections. Young people are more attracted to wine than the aged people do. Wine is an instrument used by the politicians to arouse or motivate the voters unconsciously. Drunkenness is also one of the factors that ignite poll-violence. Wine is therefore, the suitable bait to lure voters from the younger generation.

Election Boycott: Constituent Assembly elections were often encountered with boycott by some elements. *Nungba* A/C has experiences of such boycott imposed by some underground activists. To cite an example, during the 2002 Assembly Elections, some local youths of *Soubunglong* were on their way to *Taosang* polling station for depositing their votes. Then some armed men confronted and stopped their way. The youths were asked to go back otherwise face a dire consequence.

However, the youths showed no sign of submission. Having seen this, the armed men fired several rounds of shot in the air to drive them back. Despite this blockade, the electors marched through and made it to the venue of the polling station. Later, the armed men came to *Soubunglong* village and apprehended all those who participated in casting votes at *Taosang* polling station and brought to *Khoupum* Valley where they were physically harassed.

Role of Women: Women actively participate in the State Assembly Elections. They form groups or associations in village-wise and based on the party line. Each party will have a group of women consisting 30 to 50 members. These women are the party associates who shoulder the responsibilities for ensuring peace during the elections. The women group has multiple roles. They assist the local volunteers in ensuring peace and preventing the poll-violence. In almost every Assembly Election poll-violence erupted that resulted from party feeling.

Womenfolk tie up with the local volunteers to put out the possible untoward incidents. They are so powerful that they deal with the situation which even the law-enforcing agency finds itself helpless. Some of these Women's Associations are the permanent official body of the locality while some others are dissolved after the election. During the elections, they are very active in organizing prayer meeting, each party prayed for the victory of their respective candidates or parties. They are the reporters of inter-village news. They render service to the Local Village Council in times of needs. *Nisha* Bandh Women's Association and the *Mahila* Congress are the two strong and dynamic Associations in *Khoupum* valley.

Impact of Party Bickering

Polling in *Tamenglong* is often characterized by riots and commotion which are flared up by the outcome of party bickering. Some of these negative practices are discussed as under:

Inter-Party Feuds: There are some games inter-played among the rival parties, which are provoked by the prolonged resentment among the party members. It is worthwhile mentioning some of the concrete incidents that occurred during the last elections.

Example–1: Prior to the 2002 Assembly poll, a grave incident occurred at *Taodaijang* village, *Khoupum*. The whole orange plantation that belongs to a local Congress party man was trimmed down to stump by the local political rival group.

Example–2: Such identical incident recurred at *Longjang* village (*Thangal*) during the 2002 Assembly Elections. Another citrus farm was cut down indiscriminately by some local political rivals.

Example–3: Similar incident broke out at *Khoupum*. A plot of land which had once been owned by a non-*Rongmei*, located at *Khoupum* Bazaar was allotted to Shri *Thenlakpou Riamei* of *Lubanglong* village by the Government of the People's Republic of *Nagalim* (GPRN). With the agreement and directives of the GPRN he constructed a house over the portion of land. When the house construction was nearing completion, local youth from a rival village (name withheld) armed with daggers and other destructive tools, demolished the house. The owner of the house has met irreparable loss. The cause of this house demolition is not due to personal enmity but the mere outcome of political resentment.

Recurrence of such incidents are likely to continue in this Constituency as there were many similar cases reported from various parts of the Constituency in the recent polls too. Moreover, government employees who belonged to rival parties also played games against each other. According to the statement collected from personal interview with *D. Jaolung*, he pointed out two cases.

Case–1: A local Secondary teacher of Khoupum who was primarily posted at *Khangsillung* Higher Secondary School, *Khoupum* was transferred to *Ukhrul* by an agent of the rival party without assigning any reason. After a long struggle, he was restored.

Case–2: In another example, government employees regardless of the departments were suspended by the ruling rival groups without furnishing proper reasons. The suspension of jobs was neither caused by the negligence of duties nor failure in discharging duties on the part of the employees. There were no particular reasons for such termination or no personal enmity either but it was done on mere political grudge.

It is indeed interesting to note that the people who are in the same political party criticize their leaders. This criticism is out of their selfish interest for leadership among the party members. They form another sub-group within the same party against the interest of the other. For them politics seems to be a struggle for achieving leadership. Each individual pangs for occupying the designated post.

There are various acts of such political rivalries that remain unearthed. These activities are not a thing of the past. But, while in the recent Assembly Election of 2007, this political cold war seemed to have subsided to some degree it is not totally wiped out from the electoral scene.

Local Antagonism: Usually there are other candidates in fray in every election. But only two candidates Shri Gaikhangam and Prof. Gangmumei Kamei are the only two prominent candidates contesting the election neck to neck. The people are very loyal to their respective leaders. Both the supporters of each candidate struggle for political domination. If either of the two candidates was in the ruling, the people of opposition group would condemn and criticize simply because of party antagonism. No good works ever done by the candidate is acknowledged by each party and this is the point where criticism arises.

Political Rivalry Affecting the Churches: This misunderstanding finally has led to the split of Church into many denominations. Some newly converted Protestant Christians will turn back to their previous doctrines of non-Christianity. While others join with the other denominations like, Roman

Catholic, Seventh Day Adventist, *Tingkao Raguang Chapriak* (TRC), Judaism, etc. This animosity is not disappeared over the last decade. Surprisingly, this deep-rooted antagonism has been minimized with the increase of awareness brought by education yet not totally wiped out from the minds of the people.

Poll-Violence: Poll-violence paints a dark picture of electoral behaviour. It is generated by such acts of attempting to exercise multiple vote casting, compete for voters by deletion or addition of electoral rolls, minor age voting, etc. Local party agents play a game of addition and deletion of electoral rolls. In some cases, names were modified to disguise the real names of the voters or totally omitted from the list. Sometimes, the names of the whole family members were found deleted. In a bid to increase voters' strength of a particular party, its agents add even the names of minors. Both ways are being played between each rival party agents and staff in the election office.

Moreover, during elections, each party members attempt to sit inside the election hall and work close with the presiding officers in order to work in their own favour. Voting through fraudulent means – voting in lieu of the absentees created by migration, business, marriage, death, etc.– endangers the proper channel of elections and poses a serious threat to the healthy democracy. It sows the seeds of destructions.

Unless it is unanimously agreed upon by each party this kind of voting flares up commotion and violence and the poll may end abruptly. Poll-violence is the common phenomenon of periodical elections. In almost every Assembly Poll, *Nungba* is a tension-ridden constituency. The recent Assembly poll witnessed some changes in the voting behaviour. Election in this constituency was somewhat peaceful with less poll-violence. This trend, if continues, may prove a healthy change as far as past experience in the constituency is concerned.

Conclusion

Exercising universal adult franchise is the most important and basic element indispensable to democracy. It is an ultimate activity through which citizens exercise their real power. Elections provide the citizens an opportunity to directly or indirectly participate in the decision-making process for the making and/or unmaking of governments. Elections crowned the public "as the Sovereign voters". In real sense, in democracy sovereignty lies in the electors. They collectively take decision upon the political elites who would be part of the government.

They are responsible for either the success or failure of democracy as people have the right to vote or not to vote for particular candidate(s) or political party. Therefore, electors must know the value of their votes and should cast for the right candidates without expecting anything for their-self-benefits and gains.

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Analyzing AFSPA in the light of Common Article 3

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[*Presently, almost all the countries in the world have adumbrated the principles of human rights and humanitarian laws in their constitutions. Many countries have signed and ratified the major international declarations, conventions etc. on human rights and humanitarian laws to show their great concern for universal respect for the same. But despite all these facts violation of human rights is a continuing process in different parts of the world. On many occasions, it is seen that officers of the government themselves involve in violation of human rights and their government provides immunity from prosecution for such activities. In fact, it is the most disgraceful practice in the contemporary world that the governments of the day adopt measures for protection of human rights only on paper and not in practice.]*

The Government of India also keeping shoes in the same footing follows this practice while imposing draconian laws in some parts of its territory for a long period leading to large scale of violation of human rights in such areas. The Armed Forces Special Power Act (AFSPA) is one of such most draconian laws and as such controversial, which has been in force in different areas of North East India for more than a period of 50 years. The Act provides wide power to the military personnel to violate human rights of the people of this area even to kill a person on mere suspicion and no prosecution can be initiated against such violation without prior sanction of the Central government. The Government of India has been imposing this Act in this area to curb the armed conflict between it and the insurgent groups of the area.

A glimpse of Common Article 3

International Humanitarian Law (ILH) is that branch of international human rights which intends to protect rights of the people when an armed conflict is going on in a particular area. Such laws mandate firstly, for humanitarian treatment to the people affected by armed conflict and secondly for imposing restriction on the use of weapons indiscriminately to limit the sufferings

of war. Geneva Conventions of 1949 is the basic international law of contemporary world that provides rules to be followed by the parties involved in armed conflict.

And for this purpose the armed conflicts are divided into two categories namely international armed conflict (IAC) that covers wars among different countries and non-international armed conflict (NIAC) which exist whenever there is a resort to armed force between States or protected armed violence between government authorities and organized armed groups or between such groups of a state.[2] IHL applies from the initiation of such armed conflicts and extends beyond the cessation of hostilities until a general conclusion of peace is reached; or in the case of NIAC a peaceful settlement is achieved.

With the exception of one article i.e., Article 3 – common to all four Geneva Conventions, provisions of Geneva Conventions are applied to international armed conflict. Common Article 3 provides the basic rules to be followed by the parties involved in a NIAC. Under this Article each and every country of the contemporary world which is involved in an armed conflict of non-international nature as well as the non-state

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actors involved in the conflict, have the obligation to provide for humane and non-discriminatory treatment to all those who are not, or who are no longer, taking an active part in hostilities such as civilians, members of armed forces of the parties to the conflict who have been captured, wounded or have surrendered.

Parties should take steps to prohibit acts of violence to life and persons, especially murder of all kinds, mutilation, cruel treatment and torture, taking of hostage, outrage upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment. They can't pass sentences and carry out executions without previous judgement pronounced by regularly constituted court, affording all the judicial guarantees which are recognized as indispensible by civilized peoples.

Finally, it imposes an obligation on the parties to collect the wounded and sick and cared for them. The parties to the conflict may enter into a special agreement to follow the norms laid down in this Article and such agreement does not confer any legal status to the parties[3] Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions says, "in case of armed conflict not of an international character occurring in the territory of one of the High Contracting Parties, each Party to the conflict in the territory shall be bound to apply, at a minimum, the following provisions:

An analysis of the provisions of Common Article 3 reveals the following norms to be followed by the Government Armed Forces as well as non-state actors involved in a NIAC-

a. Persons in the hands of a party to the conflict whether the government side, dissident armed forces or any other armed groups, are entitled to humane treatment at all times. They must not be discriminated against on ground of race, colour, religion, sex, birth or wealth, or similar criteria.

b. The following acts are always prohibited with respect to these persons:

i. Violence to life and persons, in particular murder of all kinds, mutilation, cruel treatment and torture

ii. Taking of hostages,

iii. Outrage upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment.

Outrage on personal dignity includes acts such as rape, indecent assault, enforced pregnancy or sterilization, enforced prostitution, and slavery.

iv. Passing of sentences and the carrying out executions without previous judgement pronounced by a regularly constituted Court affording all the judicial guarantees which are recognized as indispensible by civilized peoples.

Here, indispensible judicial guarantees include as a minimum[4]

a. individual criminal responsibility (so that collective punishment would be unlawful);

b. the right of the accused not to be compelled to testify against himself;

c. the presumption of innocence until proved guilty;

d. notification to the accused of the charges against him;

e. adequate time and opportunity for the accused to prepare his defence;

f. the attendance of both prosecution and defence witnesses and, if necessary, an interpreter;

g. trial in person and public judgement.

v. those who do not take active part in hostilities are to be spared from direct attack and so far as possible, from incidental effect of military operations.

vi. an impartial humanitarian body such as ICRC, may offer its service to the parties to the conflict.

These provisions do not preclude the application of the relevant national law-except to the extent that a particular rule of national law directly conflicts with any of the provisions of Common Article. Thus captured insurgents, whether nationals of the state or not, may be tried for offences they have committed, provided that the basic requirements of law of armed conflict for humane treatment by judicial guarantee are observed.

Testing AFSPA under Common Article 3

The AFSPA was passed by the Parliament in 1958 to curb insurgency problems in NE region. Initially, it was promulgated by then President Dr. Rajendra Prasad, in May 1958 in response to the continued unrest in the North-eastern territories of the Union, including self-determination activities by Naga tribes that spilled into the State of Manipur.

In the original version of the AFSPA only the State Government had the power to declare an area as disturbed as per Article 246 read with 7th schedule of the Constitution which places "public order" under Entry 1 of the State List. But in 1972 the Act was amended and the Union Government took away this power from the State Government and its legislative assembly into its own hand despite the fact that the President of India can proclaim emergency under Article 356 of the Constitution. The Act covers Assam and Manipur, by simple notification, its provisions can be extended to the rest of the region.

The Act grants extraordinary powers to the military personnel to violate the norms laid down in the Common Article 3 to the Geneva Conventions. They can do anything while exercising power under the Act and can even shoot a person on mere suspicion. Section 45 of the Act provides a military personnel license to kill,

destroy property without verification, arrest without warrant and search without warrant. As per this section in a disturbed area, an officer of the armed forces has the power to "fire upon or otherwise use force, even to causing of death, against any person who is acting in contravention of any law or order for the time being in the disturbed area prohibiting the assembly of five or more persons or the carrying of weapons or of things capable of being used as weapons or fire-arms, ammunition or explosive substances.

Thus the Act does not distinguish between a peaceful gathering of five or more persons and a violent mob. Firing upon the latter may sometimes be justified by necessity; shooting into a peaceful assembly would surely fail any test of reasonableness. Further, power under section 4 can be exercised on mere suspicion which always leads way to using discretion, whereas neither the Act, nor the judiciary so long laid down any guideline for applying discretion.

The armed personnel exercise their power without making any difference between the armed members of insurgent groups and those who are not involved in the conflict. They by exercising the power conferred by section 4 of the Act conducted their operations in search of insurgents generally in night hours in the village areas, whereby human rights of the people not involved in the conflict were violated in a large scale.

Civilian are arrested on mere suspicion and kept in their camp for a long time without producing before the magistrate. Torture inflicted by the armed personnel as reported by victims are eclectic shocks to genitals, cigarette burns, pulling out of finger nails, pushing pins on all fingers, dunking the head under water/ urine repeatedly etc. They impose such punishment on the civilians on mere suspicion of having relations with the insurgent groups.

Section 5 of the Act stipulates that after the military has arrested someone under the AFSPA,

they must hand over that person to the nearest police station with the "least possible delay". There is no definition in the Act of what constitutes the least possible delay. Whereas, the Constitution of India laid down the time limit for producing a detainee before the Magistrate as 24 hours, our Parliamentarians have used a very vague term for handing over a detainee to the nearest police station by mentioning as 'least possible delay'.

Large number of *Habeas Corpus* petitions filed in the Gauhati High Court after the army operations clarify indiscriminate use of sections 4 and 5 of the Act violating minimum judicial guarantee. In several times the Court found that persons who had been arrested by the military under the Act disappear subsequently.[6] In *Luithukla vs. Rishang Keishing*[7], the Gauhati High Court found that man had been detained by the army and the forces had mistaken their role of 'aiding civil power'. The Court said that the army may not act independently of the district administration

Section 6[8] of the Act virtually eliminates any prosecution of armed forces personnel by providing immunity to military personnel from prosecution in any court of law, for anything done in the disturbed area. Even a private citizen has the right to kill someone in self defence, though the final word on the legality of his/ her action belongs to the courts. But, under AFSPA no prosecution can be initiated against armed personnel for use of deadly force without previous sanction from the central government.

Similar provision has also been incorporated by the Government of India in the Geneva Convention Act, 1960, that was enacted by the Government to implement the provisions of Geneva Conventions Act 1949. The Act confers jurisdiction on judiciary to try offences under these Conventions for "grave breaches" referred to Article 50 of the First Convention and equivalent Articles of the succeeding

Conventions, committed by any person within or outside India. But, section 17 of the Act forbids the courts to take cognizance of any offence under the Act except on a complaint by the Government or of an officer duly authorized. The Act, thereby prevents the application of the Act against the Government or its agencies.

The Supreme Court of India in *Rev Mons Sebastian Francisco Xavier Dos Remedios Monteiro vs. the State of Goa*[9] noted the limitation on the Geneva Convention Act of 1960. The Court held that the Act though in force within the entire territory of India, has not been made enforceable against the Government of India neither does it provide for any specific mechanism to give a cause of action to any party for enforcement of the provisions of this Act or to its Schedules.

Section 17 of the Act clearly says that the courts can entertain a complaint only if it is filed by the Government or an officer of the government specified by notification. So, the aggrieved party can approach the court only through Government. No explicit rights are available to the protected person under the Act and at the same time there is no obligation on the Government of India or the municipal courts for their enforcement. The only obligation undertaken by the Government of India to respect the Conventions is regarding the treatment of civilian population. The Act is also ambiguous and does not provide for an unambiguous method to move to the municipal court owing to the breach of various provisions of the Act.

In 1997, a five member bench of the Supreme Court of India upheld the constitutional validity of AFSPA in *Naga People's Movement of Human Rights etc. vs. Union of India in- toto* by holding that the Act is compatible with the pertinent provisions of the Indian Constitution. However, the Court did not address the Act's compatibility with international human rights. It is interesting that, the Supreme Court of the country which had

been very much liberal in reading international human rights jurisprudence to be applied at the domestic level did not adopt the same approach which pronouncing judgement in this case.

Thus, the basic human rights of the people of North-east India have become vulnerable in the hands of AFSPA, which has also received green signal for the same from the highest judiciary of the county. The insurgency problem in the area has been intensifying by the applying the Act by the Government and also legitimized thousands gross human rights violations of the innocent people of north-East India.

The Act legitimizes the sentences impose by the Indian Army as well as the insurgent groups on civilians on suspicion and carrying out executions of the same without previous judgement pronounced by a regularly constituted Court affording all the judicial guarantees which are recognized as indispensible by civilized peoples.

The Government of India has also ignored the obligation under common Article 3 to permit international neutral agencies to present during operations to offer its service to its Parties to the conflict. The International Committee of Red Cross has not been granted access to visit detention centres of NE India. Operations by Indian army are conducted in absence of any agency to provide humanitarian services.

Conclusion

AFSPA is an example of the practice adopted by the Government of India towards international obligation to protect and promote human rights. The Government of India has signed and ratified the Geneva Convention, 1949 but failed to adopt the principle laid down in the convention in the her domestic laws. The Government has misconceived the problem of North-East India as 'law and order' problem, when in fact they are the consequence of unsolved political questions emanating from the time of

independence which resulted in revolt of different insurgent groups against the government and thereby armed conflict of non-international nature.

Under such misconceptions, India has been violating the human rights of the people of North-East India for more than 50 years reflecting its negligence to the universal respect for protection of human rights. No civilized jurisprudence would justify such practice of violation of human rights of the innocent civilian by a government's enactment. 50 years is not a too short period to justify failure of the Act as the problem of the North-East is by no means diminished by its enforcement.

Under this situation, the Government of India cannot permit continuance of AFSPA by keeping blind eye to its obligation under the Geneva Conventions to which it has been the state party since 1950. So the Government of India should repeal this Act and try to go through the root causes of the insurgency problem of North-East India and also protect the rights of people of the area as obliged by the Common Article 3 to the Geneva Convention.

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1. Prosecutor vs. Delalic, Mucic, Delic and Landzo, 16 November 1998, ICTY, case IT-96-21-T

2. Persons taking no active part in the hostilities, including members of armed forces who have laid down their arms and those placed *hors de combat* by sickness, wounds, detention, or any other cause, shall in all circumstances be treated humanely, without any adverse distinction founded on race, religion or faith, sex, birth or wealth, or any other similar criteria.

   To this end, the following acts are and shall remain prohibited at any time and in any place

whatsoever with respect to the above-mentioned persons:

a. Violence to life and persons, in particular murder of all kinds, mutilation, cruel treatment and torture;

b. Taking of hostages;

c. Outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment;

d. The passing of sentences and the carrying out executions without previous judgement pronounced by a regularly constituted Court affording all the judicial guarantees which are recognized as indispensible by civilized peoples.

2. The wounded and sick shall be collected and cured for. An impartial humanitarian body such as the International Committee of Red Cross may offer it services to the Parties to the conflict.

The Parties to the conflict should further endeavour to bring into force, by means of special agreements, all or any part of the other provisions of the present Conventions and the applications of the preceding provisions shall not affect the legal status of the Parties to conflict".

3. Artcle4, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

4. Section 4- any commissioned officer, warrant officer, non-commissioned officer or any other person of equivalent rank in the Armed Forces may, in a disturbed area, (a) if he is of opinion that it is necessary so to for the maintenance of public order, after giving such due warning as he may consider necessary, fire upon or otherwise use force, even to the causing of death against any person who is acing in contravention of any law and order for the time being in force in the disturbed area, prohibiting the assembly of five or more persons or the carrying of weapons or of things capable of being used as weapons or of fire-arms, ammunition or explosive substances;

b. if he is of opinion that it is necessary so to do, destroy any arms dump, prepared or fortified position or shelter from which armed attacks are made or are likely to be made or are attempted to be made, or any structure used as a training camp for armed volunteers or utilized as a hide out by armed gangs or absconders wanted for any offence;

c. Any commissioned officer, warrant officer, non-commissioned officer or any other person of equivalent rank in the Armed Forces may, in a disturbed area, arrest, without warrant, any person who has committed a cognizable offence or against whom a reasonable suspicion exists that he has committed or is about to commit a cognizable offence and may use such force as may be necessary to effect the arrest;

d. Any commissioned officer, warrant officer, non-commissioned officer or any other person of equivalent rank in the Armed Forces may, in disturbed area, enter and search without warrant any premises to make any such arrest as aforesaid or to recover any person believed to be wrongly restrained or confined or any property or any arms, ammunition or explosive substance believed to be unlawfully kept in such premises: and may for that purpose use such force as may be necessary.

5. Nungshitombi Devi vs. Rising Keisbang, CM Manipur, (1982)1GLR 756.

6. (1988)2GLR 159

7. Section 6-no prosecution, suit or other legal proceedings shall be instituted, except with previous sanction of the Central Government against any person in respect of anything done or purported to be done in exercise of powers conferred by this Act".

8. AIR1970 SC390

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Gaon Sabhas and Transformation of Rural India

Dr. Ramen Medhi*

[*The Gaon Sabha is a Village Parliament just like Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha being parliaments at central and state level respectively in the Indian parliamentary system of democracy. It is the initial institution in the democratic set up. According to the provision of the Indian Constitution, any villager who attains the age of 18 years automatically becomes a member of the Gaon Sabha. The villagers, who are eligible for casting their votes by virtue of their age, are the members of the Gaon Sabha.]*

There is no election for constitution of the Gaon Sabha as in the case of the Lok Sabha or Vidhan Sabha. It is an autonomous and sovereign body. The member of the Gaon Sabha elects the members of the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha through elections who subsequently form the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha. Thus, the Gaon Sabha is the mother of the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha. The Ministry of the Government, may it be at the Central or State level, has to take the Lok Sabha or Vidhan Sabha into confidence for undertaking any developmental programme. In the same way, the Gaon Panchayat i.e. the elected body at the village level must take the Gaon Sabha into confidence before undertaking developmental programmes.

Concept of the Gaon Sabha

The Gaon Sabha literally means village meeting. This is a meeting of the villagers to discuss common problems they face in their village. In fact, it is similar to the citizen's forum. The Gaon Sabha is defined as "a body consisting of persons registered in the electoral rolls connecting to a village encompassed within the area of Panchayat at the village level (Consultation Paper: 39).

Indeed, the Gaon Sabha is a forum for registering 'voice' of individual citizens in the process of decision –making on matters that affect their lives. Our democracy—like democracies of all large countries – is based on the principle of representative government. The Gaon Sabha is the only forum where people can take part in direct democracy. It becomes the reservoir of people's power. It is a place where the Panchayats and the people have to stand in face to face position.

In fact, the Gaon Sabha brings the village community under one roof to collectively debate issues concerning the village. It can be used by the people for collective thinking and participating in the activities in the Gaon Panchayats. It may conduct social audit of the Gaon Panchayat, take collective decisions on village level plan and collaborate with the Gaon Panchayat in implementing its programmes. An energetic Gaon Sabha has the potentiality of realizing the dream of participatory governance at least at the village level. In fact, it is an embodiment of the Gram Swaraj.

However, the significance of the model of the Gaon Sabha as a body of all adult people of the village does not seem to have been fully seized upon. It receives a casual treatment in the State Act. It is not envisaged as an organization that is required to perform certain tasks in order to realize specific goals.

This author attempts to examine the role of the Gaon Sabha as village parliament in socio-economic development of the villages. The study is mainly empirical and analytical and it is based on secondary sources of data such as books,

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journals, census report, Internet sources and so on.

Discussion

The 73rd Amendment of the Constitution has conferred numerous new challenges such as grass-root participation to the rural local self-government. The amendment has endeavored to institutionalize people's participation through a body, called Gaon Sabha (Verma: 38). In fact, after this revolutionary constitutional amendment, the Gaon Sabha has been integrated by all states in their amended laws on Panchayats although there are variations in different states in respect of jurisdiction of the Gaon Sabha, number of meeting to be held, issued to be discussed in meetings and so on.

Article 243A of the Constitution affirms that "A Gaon Sabha may exercise such powers and perform such functions at the village level as the legislature of the state may, by law provide" (Consultation Paper: 38)). However, the 73rd Amendment of the Constitution recognizes the Gaon Sabha as a Statutory Unit.

Functional Domain of the Gaon Sabha

It is observed that in most of the states in India, the functional domain of the Gaon Sabha is limited to discussion of annual administration report, annual statement of accounts, and the budget, identification of the beneficiaries, promoting unity and harmony in the village, adult education and so on.

The functions allotted to the Gaon Sabha in different states

Table –I Functions allotted to the Gaon Sabha in different states:

Sl. No.	Functions of the Gaon Sabhas	Name of the States
1	Examine annual statement of the accounts and audit report	Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Andaman & Nicobar Islands
2	Discuss report on administration of the preceding year	Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, PunjabRajasthan, Sikkim, Andaman & Nicobar Islands
3	Review programme of work for the year or any new programme.	Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Andaman & Nicobar Islands
4	Consider proposal for fresh taxation or for enhancement of exciting taxes	Andhra Pradesh, Bihar
5	Select schemes, beneficiaries and locations	Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Kerala, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu & Uttar Pradesh
6	Mobilize voluntary labour and contribution in kind and cash for community welfare programmes	Bihar, Karnataka, Kerala, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal
7	Render assistance in implementation of development schemes and rendering services in villages	Assam, Bihar, Karnataka, Kerala,Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Uttar Pradesh.
8	Undertake Programme for adult education and family welfare within the village	Bihar, Karnataka, Kerala, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Uttar Pradesh

9	Promote unity and harmony among all section of the society	Bihar, Karnataka, Kerala, Punjab, Rajasthan Sikkim, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh
10	Seeking clarification from Mukhia and members of Gram Panchayat on any particular activity,scheme, income and expenditure	Bihar, Punjab and Rajasthan
11	Examine last audit note and replies made thereto	Bihar
12	Consider budget prepared by the Gram Panchayat and future development programmes and plans for the Sabha area.	Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka & Madhya Pradesh
13	Consider and scrutinize existing schemes and all kind of activities of Panchayats	Haryana and Kerala
14	Maintain a complete register for all development works undertaken by Gram Panchayat or by any other government department	Haryana and Kerala
15	Scrutinize the completed works and all kinds of activities of Gram Panchayats	Haryana and Kerala

(Source: Paper by S.P.Jain presented in the National Conference on Gram Sabha held at NIRD, Hyderabad on July, 28-29, 1999).

It is seen that none of the state acts empowers the Gaon Sabha to have control over the Gaon Panchayat. In fact, the role of the Gaon Sabha is only advisory. Nevertheless, the states like Karnataka, Kerala, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Orissa etc. have endeavored to provide extensive powers to the Gaon Sabhas through their respective Panchayat Acts.

In fact, Karnataka is the first country to enact new Panchayati Raj Act integrating all provisions of the 73rd Amendment of the Constitution (Verma: 102). One of the major achievements of the Gaon Sabhas in Karnataka has been that the Gaon Sabha meeting in this state effectively challenged the time-honoured Devdasi system which prevailed in 167 villages of Belgam District (Verma: 46). Kerala on the other hand has involved the Gaon Sabha in its people's plan campaign. The Gaon Sabha of Orissa and Rajasthan has been given power to approve the Gaon Panchayat's plan and budget (Consultation Paper: 39).

The Gaon Sabha has been given due importance in West Bengal. West Bengal has taken a step further by constituting Gram Sansasds apart from Gaon Sabhas. All voters of each of the electoral constituencies of a Gaon Panchayat constitute a Gram Sansad and all voters of a Gaon Panchayat area constitute a Gaon Sabha.

In West Bengal, rural people used to participate in the Gaon Sabha meetings. For instance, in 1995, 63 meetings of the Gram Sansads were held. The figure went up to 88% in 1996. The Gram Sansad meetings are attended by the people of all the groups. Besides, the Panchayats publish the report in most of the meetings. The meetings have been more successful in places where the Gaon Panchayats and the parties have taken initiative in harmonizing them with the cultural programmes to adjust with the local traditions. In fact, the Gram Sansad in West Bengal is going to assume extraordinary importance following the recent decision to implement decentralized

planning at the Gaon Panchayat level with effect from 2001.

A people's movement was carried out some years ago for legislation for granting more rights to the Gaon Sabha. Finally, the Government of Maharashtra passed an Act granting more rights to the Gaon Sabha before spending the money it receives from the Government for different developmental activities. It is found that the Gaon Panchayat did not take permission of the Gaon Sabha and spent the money without informing the Gaon Sabha, then the villagers (minimum 20% of voters) could approach the Zilla Parishad for an enquiry into the expenditure.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) has to make an enquiry within a month and if he is convinced that the money has been spent without the knowledge of the Gaon Sabha, send his report to the Divisional Commissioner recommending for legal action. The Divisional Commissioner can dismiss the Sarpanch (Head of the Gaon Panchayat), the Deputy Sarpanch and the Gram Sevak (Village Development Officer). The Act has helped in bringing transparency in village development schemes and thus curbing corruption to a great extent.

Anna Hazare had to struggle for 11 years continuously against the Government for giving rights to the citizens by making legislations for right to information, more rights for the Gram Sabha, regulating transfers of the government officers, prohibition and against red-tapism. The Right to Information Act came into effect in Maharashtra from 2002. With Anna's persuasion, the same Act came into effect for the whole nation.

It is relevant to mention here that the Gaon Sabha has been playing a vibrant role at Ralegan Sidhi, the native village of the great Gandhian follower Anna Hazare. It is a village in Parner Taluka of Ahmednagar District, Maharashtra which is located at distance of 87 km from Pune. In last 35 years, many institutions and co-operatives like Consumer Society, Credit Society, Co-operative Dairy, Educational Society, Women's Organisation, Youth Organization and the Gaon Panchayats with different mandates are operating in Ralegan Sidhi.

Till date no elections are held for selection of members of these institutions. The members are selected unanimously by the villagers in the Gaon Sabha. In fact, the Gaon Sabha has emerged as a powerful forum for taking collective decisions at the village level. All the money allotted to the Panchayats has been utilized for village development in the Gaon Sabha meeting. In fact, the Gaon Sabha has contributed in socio-economic transformation of the people of Ralegan Sidhi.

Today, the living conditions of the villagers have improved and the gap between the haves and the haves-nots has narrowed down. Further, the per capita income of the villagers has increased from Rs.225 to Rs.2500 (www.annahazare.org). After the economic transformation of the village, the villagers constructed buildings worth of Rs. 1crore for school, hostel, gymkhana and renovated the old village temple through financial contributions and shramdan.

Mass marriages are arranged in the village (generally 25 to 30 marriages at a time) in order to curb expenditure. This has really helped in eradicating caste barriers and promoting cohesiveness. In fact, people of all castes and creeds live together in peace like the members of the same family.

In Assam on the other hand, the then State Government made initial efforts to institutionalize Gaon Sabha through (Raijor Padulit Raijor Sarkar) RPRS and the elected Gaon Panchayat president has a very little role to play in the affairs of the Gaon Sabhas. Of course, after May 2002, the mechanism of RPRS seems to be wiped out form the Gaon Sabha meeting. It is realistic that people's participation is the nucleus of decentralized planning and the Gaon Sabha on the other hand is unavoidable in the popular planning system.

However, the empirical study revealed that the concept of the Gaon Sabha has not been taken seriously by the State Government, concerned bureaucrats, and political parties as well as by the large number of the rural people. In an observed Gaon Sabha, it was seen that hardly one hundred Gaon Sabha members attended in the meeting and some of them focused only on their own individual problems. Of course, only two or three members raised some important social issues like construction of cow-path, establishment of poultry, construction of road and so on.

The rest liked to be mere listeners. In fact, the bureaucrats, the people belonging to the political parties and the elected representatives have been taking responsibilities for selection of beneficiaries as well as for implementation of Panchayat schemes in the name of the Gaon Sabhas. This is not a healthy practice.

Strengthening the Gaon Sabha

There is the need of political will and honesty that will act as a thrust to the successful and enthusiastic functioning of the Panchayati Raj Institutions. To make Gaon Sabha a real legislature of the Rural Local Self-Government, it is the responsibility of the State Government to provide the power of decision-making, controlling as well as monitoring to the Gaon Sabha together with the Social Audit System in true sense to enable it to play a supervisory role over the developmental activities of the Gaon Panchayat.

The power to remove the president or any other members of the Gaon Panchayat for misdeeds and corrupt practices would make the Gaon Sabha in true sense, a democratic controlling body. It is the only powerful democratic device in controlling and making the Gaon Panchayat authorities accountable and responsive to the Gaon Sabha and the people. Under the present political situation, people have nothing to do after electing the representatives for five years. The elected representatives feel safe once they get elected as they know that people cannot remove them. They can be removed only by executive action.

Again, the introduction of Ward Sabhas as Gram Sansads with several important functions in West Bengal, Kerala and Karnataka has brought power and authority and even closer to the people. In fact, it is a kind of experimentation of a grass-root democracy. Assam can also reap the benefits implementing the mechanism of Ward Sabha as Gram Sansad which enables to lead more decentralization of powers and functions to be exercised by the people directly.

Further, Political parties, leaders of the oppositions, and responsible members of the civil society, must have the accountability to edify and mobilize the Gaon Sabha members to perform their law-given functions. The president and the members of the Gaon Panchayat must develop the leadership qualities to enlighten and guide the Gaon Sabha members. Moreover, students and community youths representing various sections of the rural society must come forward to strengthen their respective Gaon Sabhas.

At last, it is deeply felt that there is a greater urgency to amend the Panchayat Act for giving the Gaon Sabha the power of controlling and monitoring, apart from the power to discuss, debate and decide issues, which are essential to their area and themselves. Every citizen has a right to elect his representative in the democracy. In the same way, he should also have a right to recall to the villagers. This will foster a healthy and people oriented democracy. There is a need for an awareness generation and educating people to use the Right to Information Act for bringing more transparency in the development programmes.

Conclusion

In concluding remarks, it can be affirmed that it is impossible to transform the country without changing its villages because India has a large number of villages. According to 1991 census,

India has 5, 58,088 villages and in terms of population size, out of India's total population, 74.3 percent people reside in villages. That is why Anna Hazare precisely remarked that— "The dream of India as a strong nation will not be realized without self-reliant, self-sufficient villages, this can be achieved only through social commitment and involvement of the common man".

Experience of the post-73rd Constitution amendment phase shows that the Gaon Sabha is yet to emerge as a forum where common people can participate in the process of collective decision-making. A major reason for this is, of course, the nature of power relations that operate in rural society under which large sections of the people remain in a disadvantaged position because of their lower social and economic status.

At the same time, the political empowerment that a forum like Gaon Sabha confers to the ordinary men and women, can go a long way in removing caste, gender class barriers that stand in the way of their participation in the process of their collective decision-making. For this to happen, the Gaon Sabha itself has to be made powerful. It has to play a vital role in the functioning of the Gaon Panchayat. It should not be reduced to a decorative forum to make recommendations only. It has to be given substantial authority to influence the functioning of the Gaon Panchayat effectively.

Since the practical situation differs from state to state, it is not possible to make constitutional provisions on the specific functions and powers that should be given to the Gaon Sabha, but the Constitution should explicitly indicate its intention to allow the Gaon Sabha to play substantive role in the functioning of the Gaon Panchayat.

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Sustainable Agricultural Development in India

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[Despite the growth of the population from 350 million in 1974, to more than a billion today and despite the low level of economic development at the time of Independence, India has made significant progress in poverty reduction. The percentage of people living below the poverty line has decreased significantly.]

Poverty is a global concern, and its eradication is considered integral to humanity's quest for sustainable development. The eradication of poverty in India is, therefore, vital for the attainment of national as well as international goals. Poverty eradication has been one of the major objectives of the development planning process.

The high incidence of poverty underlines the need for rapid economic development to create more remunerative employment opportunities and to invest in social infrastructure of health and education. These development priorities would enhance our energy consumption and therefore related GHG.

Energy plays a central role in India's developmental effort and the objective to alleviate poverty. Energy efficiency and conservation, promotion of renewable, and the building up of natural resources and forests are key aspect of India's development objectives. Along this positive direction, India has taken a number of initiatives for sustainable development, which are in accordance with various multilateral agreements including UNFCCC.

Power generation in the country is a mix of thermal, hydroelectric and nuclear. Seventy percent of the generation is thermal. The initiatives taken to increase efficiency include: renovation and modernization (R & M), life extension schemes, reduction of transmission and distribution (T & D) losses, cogeneration and demand side management. These measures also include private participation in R & M to overcome the constraint of funds.

In 1998, the State Electricity Boards (SEBs) owned 63.3% of generation capacity. The rest was owned by central public companies such as National Thermal Power Corporation and Independent Power Producers, which have only a marginal share. The Central government has exclusive responsibility for high-voltage bulk interstate transmission. Power grid, public company, is the central transmission utility. Transmission within states is in the hands of State Transmission utilities. Most distribution rests with the SEBs.

Less than 50% of the power production in India is billed, the rest being lost due to theft, technical losses and unmetered power connection. T & D losses in India are very high almost 26% as compared to international norms 6-7. The power sector in India is formed by several independently run organization including generating companies. Significant efficiency gains at the system level can only be achieved through coordinated management of all these organizations.

The losses in the power sector are generally categorized into two kinds "Technical & Commercial". While technical is on account of poor efficiency of the devices and the systems, the commercial loss is but a euphemism for theft of electricity, something very common not only in the agricultural sector but also in the domestic and commercial establishment "Outsight

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Wastage" because either people are not sensitive to the price they pay for electricity or the price does not reflect the actual value of electricity or just negligence. "Outright Wastage" is a loss that can be avoided, in the addition to the losses that can be reduced by the system improvements.

In order to meet the growing demand for oil, India imports about 70% of total crude oil requirements. As regards natural gas, the Hydrocarbon vision 2025 indicates that the gas reserves in India will decline by 16 billion m3 in 1998-99. Other than consumption of fossil fuel energy, about 90% of the rural and 30% of the urban households in India consume a large quality of traditional fuels or non-commercial energy such as fire wood, dung cake, chips etc. the total renewable energy constipation including biomass amounts to about 30% of the total energy constipation in India. To meet the energy need of rural/remote areas, various initiatives have been taken by the Govt. of India to provide electricity through locally available renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, biomass and small hydro schemes. These renewable resources are GHG free energy resources.

Transport is a critical infrastructure for development. The sector accounts for major share of consumption of petroleum products in India. Transport is responsible for an appreciable share of pollution, both local and global. Local pollutions are concentrated in the urban areas due to transport activities. The emission of global pollutants, especially of carbon dioxide (CO_2) from transport, is also a problem of increasing concern in the global environmental scenario.

Impact of Climate Change on Agriculture

The food security of India may be at risk in the future due to the continued population growth. By 2050, India's population is projected to grow to 1.6 billion. This rapid and continuing increase in population implies a greater demand for food. The demand for rice and wheat, the predominant staple food is accepted to increase to 122 and 103 Mt respectively by 2020. The demand for pulses is also expected to increase very sharply. This additional food will have to be produced from there is no additional land available for cultivation. It is esteemed that the average yield of rice, wheat, coarse grains and pulses need to increase by 56, 62, 36 and 116 percent respectively by 2020.

Table 1: Food Demand Assuming a 5% GDP Growth at constant prices.

Items	Production(Mt)	Demand (Mt)	
	1999-2000	2010	2020
Rice	85.4	103.6	122.1
Wheat	71.0	85.8	102.8
Coarse grains	29.9	34.9	40.9
Total cereals	184.7	224.3	265.8
Pulses	16.1	21.4	27.8
Fruits	41.1	56.3	77.0
Vegetables	84.5	112.7	149.7
Mild	75.3	103.7	142.7
Meat and eggs	3.7	5.4	7.8

Although there is pressure to increase production in order to meet higher demands, there has lately been a significant slow-down of the growth rate in cultivation area, production and yield. The annual rate of growth in food production and yield peaked during the early years of the Green Revolution but since 1980s, it has declined.

The perceived gradual increase in environmental degradation, the early signs of which are becoming visible in areas that benefited largely from the Green Revolution Technologies, is further compounding the problem. There is now great concern about declining soil fertility, change in water table depth, rising salinity, resistance of harmful organism to many pesticides and degradation of irrigational water quality as for example, in north-western India.

Nutrient removal by crops over time has exceeded its application and consequently farmers now have to apply more fertilizers to realize the same yield as achieved 20-30 years ago. The introduction of canal irrigation in Haryana has resulted in almost 0.5 Mha being affected by soil salinity. The rapid increase in the number of tube-wells during the last three decades has resulted in over- exploitation of groundwater in many blocks, leading to declining water tables. In some canal irrigated districts, on the other hand, the water table has risen, resulting in increased problems of salinity. Several pathogens and insect pest have also shown a tendency to increase under the intensive farming system such as rice-wheat system.

In the 21st Century, one of the great challenges for Indian agriculture will be, therefore, to ensure that the food production is coupled with both poverty reduction and environmental preservation. The road map of sustainable agricultural development may also have to consider two additional important global drivers of change in agriculture in the corning decades, i.e.-globalization and climate change. The ongoing globalization process and economic reforms associated with the Word Trade organization (WTO) is forcing India to make structural adjustments in the agricultural sector to increase its competitiveness and efficiency.

Conclusion

India's main challenges are its size, diversity and population. It is the seventh largest country in the world with a geographical and ethnic diversity that is almost unique. It is the second most populous country after China. Various Indian initiatives in different sectors have contributed to de-linking economic growth from energy consumption and hence carbon emission. India's commitment to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is reflected in the various initiatives taken nationality for sustainable development. These include emphasis on energy conservation, promotion of renewable energy, afforestation and wasteland development,

economic reforms such as subsidy removal and joint venture in capital goods and fuel substitution policies.

All these are integrated into institutional framework through a planned approach. Faced with a number of challenges to protect and conserve the environment, the Government of India has undertaken numerous initiatives through constitutional provisions, legislation and programmes. The Indian Constitution contains specific provision on environmental protection.

It is recognized that the developing countries are more vulnerable and will be the first to suffer from global warming. These countries are more dependent on agriculture and lack the resources and infrastructure to cope with the severe floods, droughts and sea-level rise. Pivotal for Indian researchers is also the vulnerability of their country to global warming and devising possible strategies for abatement.

Information on climate change impacts and on feasibility of adaptation option is still scarce for India. The most important vulnerability faced by the Indian sub-continent is the likely climate change in the monsoon. Therefore, research to understand the impacts of climate change on the onset of monsoon, its intensity, its spatial distribution etc. are vital and stand at the center of concern.

The climate change will affect various sectors of Indian economy and there is a need for a detailed study and assessment of the impacts, vulnerability and adaptation including opportunities and participation of stakeholders such as industries, public sectors and NGOs.

References

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