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INSIDE

Editorial
Bihar Shows the Way! 5
B.K.
Prospects of India-UAE Strategic... 7
Anilkumar B. Halu
India's Energy Security and West Asia 9
Narendra Sharma
Europe and the World at 75 14
Nora Wolf
The BIMSTEC and its Free Trade Agreement (FTA) 16
Jeetendra Kumar
Women Empowerment..... 21
Dr. Vasant H. Mundargi
ASEAN at Crossroads: NAM 25
Prof. Anis H. Bajrektareviæ
The Economic Impact of Tourism 26
Chitrajyoti Ojah
Unearthing Reasons for School.... 29
S. Ramanjaneyulu & Dr A.S. Jalandharachari
Impacts of Interpersonal Transgressions... *34*
Chitra Pegu
Semblance of Cultural Pluralism 37
S. Bharathi & Dr. P. Malathy
Hopkins as a Pre-Modernist Poet 42
Dr Fayyaz Ahmed H Ilkal
Impact of Mining and Quarrying ... 46
Dr. Sharanappa Saidapur
Morale and Teaching Competency.... 49
Shakti Singh & Prof. Mamta Gupta
Re-visioning Patriarchal Myths:... 53
Ms. Pooja Halyal

Editorial

Bihar Shows the Way!

Bihar has once again demonstrated that the state is capable of guiding the political destiny of India by setting exemplary role to be emulated and practiced by other states. In the recently-held elections to the Bihar State Assembly, unity of non-NDA parties under the banner of RJD has given the BJP-led NDA a tough run for its money and proved that a young leader just at the cusp of 30s can mobilize the masses and pose a tough challenge to BJP's high-profile leaders as well as garner support of the mases on issues like unemployment.

Election results show NDA comprising BJP and Nitish Kumar led Janata Dal (United) or JD (U) have been able to garner slender majority and formed the government in the State. This ruling coalition won 125 seats in the 243-member State Assembly. The NDA alliance in Bihar is also supported by Hindustan Awam Party led by Jiten Ram Manjhhi and Vikassheel Insaan Party (VIP). On the other hand, the opposition Grand Alliance or Mahagathbandhan, led by Tejashwi Yadav of the RJD also performed well by securing 110 seats in Assembly polls. Mahagathbandhan is an alliance of RJD, Congress and the Left Parties.

Elections to the Bihar State Assembly were held at a time when the entire country was reeling under the COVID-19 pandemic and Election Commission of India is reported to have taken all precautionary measures to let the elections being held without any hassle. There were burning issues like economic distress compounded by a pandemic for the last nine months, the plight of millions of migrants many of whom had to walk on foot hundreds of miles to reach their native places in Bihar, uneasy situation on Sino-India border in Ladakh, as well as people's growing disenchantment with the dispensation led by Nitish Kumar and the Mahagathbandhan led by Tejashwi Yadav focused attention on local issues as a bulwark against BJP's tactics of diverting people's attention from these issues by raking up communal and caste sentiments.

By focusing on generation of jobs for the youth of Bihar, Tejashwi Yadav set the narrative of Assembly polls and the NDA and its allies were finding it tough to counter this narrative and the BJP in its election manifesto was forced to focus on creation of 1.9 million employment opportunities for the unemployed in the state. In other words, Tejashwi Yadav has set the precedent that by focusing on local issues in the state assembly elections, non-BJP opposition parties can deliver a tough run to the BJP for its money and in the ensuing state assembly elections in West Bengal, Assam and Tamil Nadu this precedent entails the potential of being replicated by regional satraps as a main bulwark against the BJP propaganda blitzkrieg.

Bihar elections have also proved that the youth of the day is capable of garnering massive mass support and it has been demonstrated by Tejashwi Yadav who tirelessly campaigned for the candidates of his party as well as for other allies. Need of the hour is that young leaders should be encouraged to come to the fore and command the reins of politics. Old order needs to yield place to the new order of youth power that entails repository of fresh ideas, enthusiasm, hard work and dedication. There is something for every regional party to take a cue from recent developments in Bihar.

While regional satraps like TMC in West Bengal, BJD in Odisha, AIADMK and DMK in Tamil Nadu, Shiv Sena and NCP in Maharashtra, TRS in Telangana, SP in UP etc., are potential forces in their respective jurisdictions to take on the BJP. Nevertheless, the challenge is for the Congress that has been reduced to almost a regional level party from being the dominant national party, to resurrect itself and regain its lost space in Indian politics. It is high time that the High Command of the Congress takes a fresh look at its recent drubbings in by-polls and devise its strategy afresh along with revamping its organizational set-up by infusing fresh talent.

There are many lessons to be learnt from recent Bihar polls and those who improvise their strategy are destined to last longer in the political space and the rest are to fade away from the scene.

— BK

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Prospects of India-UAE Strategic Partnership

Anilkumar B. Halu*

[As West Asia is an extended part of Greater Asia and UAE is an important core member of this region just as India is in East Asia, both countries need to explore and consolidate the roots of their social and cultural ties coming down today since ages. Indeed, both India and United Arab Emirates (UAE) enjoy strong bonds of close friendship having legacy of age-old cultural, religious and economic relations which certainly require a new thrust in the present era of eastward shifting global geo-politics.]

In fact, several new developments have compelled the UAE and other West Asian nations to follow "look east" policy where India continues to be a traditionally favourable destination for them due to its proclaimed commitment towards eternal values like world peace, solidarity, non-violence, non-alignment and also being a prominent founder member of the Non-aligned movement. Among these developments are the mounting Islamic State terror in the region and in the world, crumbling regional security architecture supported by the US, declining oil revenues of oil producing countries in the region and rising Chinese presence in the region based upon its brute military force etc., as worth mentioning.

In fact, the rising Chinese imperialist-militarist assertions and aggressions not only in the Asia-Pacific over South China Sea but in the entire Indo-Pacific region along with its revival of Grand Silk Road Strategy etc., have aroused suspicions about its "Middle Kingdom" complex and that, perhaps, pushes forward the Gulf monarchies like Saudi Arabia, Oman etc. to seek friendly relations with India. On its part, India too is pursuing its "Look West" policy towards the Gulf for its energy security and other geo-strategic goals, besides maintaining close cordial relations with Iran.

Although the relationship between India and UAE flourished after coming into power of H.H. Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan as the Ruler of Abu Dhabi in 1966 and subsequently with the creation of the UAE Federation in 1971, but no Indian prime minister could visit the country following three decades, the last one only in 1981 by the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Their mutual relations received a fresh impetus particularly after Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the UAE in August 2015 followed by Sheikh Mohammad Bin Zayed's- the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces- visit in February 2016. Thus "Indo-UAE relations have become much closer and stronger, and this can only become better in coming years," said Yousuf Ali, Chairman of Lulu Group and Board member of Abu Dhabi Chamber. Similarly, Indian Charge d' Affaires at the Indian Embassy in Abu Dhabi, Neeta Bhushan also holds that Indo-UAE relations have become much closer and stronger with these reciprocal visits. During this visit of the Indian Prime Minister both sides agreed to upgrade their bilateral relations to a new comprehensive strategic partnership. Since then, both sides are pursuing sincerely to improve their mutual relations in all areas of human endeavour.

It is in this context the already-fixed visit of His Highness Sheikh Mohammad Bin Zayed Al Nahyan to India to grace the country's Republic Day as the chief guest has aroused a remarkable euphoria and celebrations in New Delhi which are being visualized as another sign of the consolidating bi-lateral relations between the two nations. Obviously, the Modi government is keen on pushing forward the strategic nature of bilateral relations between these two traditional friends, particularly in the context of ongoing turmoil and insecurity caused by ISIS and also because the American President Donald Trump is at loggerheads with China over South China Sea and Taiwan, as they make sincere efforts to forge an overarching and deepening engagement which is being described as a strategic government-to-government partnership reaching out to people at large.

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But the continuing tensions between China and the US as well as Beijing's close links with Iran may trouble the Gulf countries. Also, the uncertainty over policies that President Trump may pursue to deliver on his campaign promise to tackle China may weigh on the Gulf monarchies' interactions with China. Nevertheless, things are expected to change under in the event of advent of Biden Administration in Washington in January 2021.

Foreign policy and economy

Ever since the creation of the UAE Federation in 1971, trade relation between these two friends has played a major role in giving momentum to their close ties. At the heart of its foreign policy, the UAE is very much interested in extending bridges of cooperation and friendship with India. In fact, the UAE's foreign policy, since being laid by the late founding father, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, has been attaching paramount importance to these ties, which rose to a new height when Sheikh Zayed paid a historic visit to India in 1975 and had talks with the then Indian Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, the Indian President and senior statesmen.

Today, President His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan is not only pursuing the same path as Sheikh Zayed, but has also added further vibrancy, momentum and strength to these relations. In the overall realignment of the country's foreign policy goals, India attaches considerable importance to the relations with UAE with respect to its coordinated strategy in international relations spreading over economic, political, security and strategic interests. Sheikh Mohammad's visit comes at a time when the Indian economy is opening up more sectors to foreign investments.

Since Indian economy is recovering strongly as International Monetary Fund (IMF) said in its annual projection of the "World Economic Outlook (WEO), forecasting its growth for the current and next year 7.6 per cent the past fiscal and next, up from 7.4 per cent estimated in July for both the years. Last year, the World Bank said that India's GDP could grow 7.6 per cent in 2016-17 and 7.7 per cent in 2017." According to January 2015 figures, the total foreign direct investment (FDI) from the UAE to India was estimated to be $3.01 billion. During Modi's visit, the two sides had agreed to establish an UAE-India Infrastructure Investment Fund, setting an ambitious target of $75 billion to support investment in India's infrastructure. Both sides have set up a task force to nudge investments under this fund. The growing warmth in their mutual relations has set expectations rising among the business community.

UAE as third largest trading partner of India

The UAE and India are making tremendous efforts to push their economic investment and trade cooperation to new heights. As per forecasts, India is expected to rise as the world's third largest economy by 2030 after the United States and China. "The UAE was the third key trade partner to India after China and the US in 2013 and 2014.The two-way trade has seen meteoric growth over the years, rising from US$43.5 billion in 2009 to nearly US$60 billion in 2014 from just US$180 million in 1971. The UAE-India bilateral trade continued to grow in strength with Indian exports of goods and commodities expected to surge to US$100 billion and two-way trade exchange to US$160 billion by 2030", making the UAE the largest trade partner to India in the world.

According to a study by the UAE Ministry of Economy, "India is the number one trade partner of the UAE with a relative share of 9.8% of the total UAE non-oil trade. It also ranked first in the UAE's overall exports with a relative share of 14.9% and ranked second in the UAE's re-exports to the world accounting for 8.7% of the UAE's total re-exports. India also ranked third in the UAE's total imports with a relative share of 9.2%." The UAE is the largest Arab investor in India, accounting for 81.2% of total Arab investments in India, and is ranked 11th in the world in terms of foreign direct investments in India.

The total UAE investments in India amounted to US$8 billion, including US$2.89 billion in the form of direct foreign investments. "The value of investments by Indian companies in the UAE is estimated at more than US$55bn, according to statistics by the Indian Business and Professional Council." The UAE also hosts the largest Indian community overseas, with more than 2.6 million Indians living and working in the UAE.

Security and counter terrorism

As regards peace and security of the region, the UAE pays due attention to regional security in Asia and puts India at the forefront of its international

partnerships besides broadening a comprehensive dialogue with a view to deepen and diversify their mutual engagement. There are particularly strong opportunities for UAE-India security cooperation in combating terrorism against the backdrop of mounting ISIS terror in Syria and Iraq and various other global terror outfits like Taliban in Afghanistan and Jaish-a-Muhammad and Haqqani networks in Pakistan.

In recent years, UAE, like Saudi Arabia, has embarked on a closer relationship with India on security and counter-terrorism because the Islamic State is openly calling for total destruction of established monarchies in the region. In any eventuality then, India is at closest proximity to step into any vacuum that arises if the US pulls out of the region to focus on China under its "Rebalance to Asia" policy.

Thus at a time when the UAE desires a trusted strategic partner-cum-net-security provider and also a reliable customer and India needs the uninterrupted supply of reasonably priced crude oil and investments into its territory for economic reasons, which are declining and moving towards the US and Europe, the visit of the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi will be a welcome change for ensuring growth and welfare of people of both the countries as they lie at the heart of India-UAE relations. Indeed, both governments wish to sincerely nurture these relations not only for ensuring their own mutual progress, prosperity, security and stability but also that for the entire extended Asian region and even beyond.

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India's Energy Security and West Asia

Narendra Sharma*

[*Energy Security is the uninterrupted availability of energy sources at an affordable price. Lately, it has become a critical issue for India with overall energy import dependence estimated to rise to 36%-55% by 2040. Further, India's over dependence on West Asia particularly Middle East Region, a politically volatile region undermines its energy security. India's pursuit of import diversification is limited by factors like transport infrastructure, pricing and quality of fuel. Thus, despite the volatility of West Asian region and Western sanctions on Iran, West Asia will still remain India's preferred energy destination. This paper attempts to analyse the present energy security scenario of India, alternative sources and as how both West Asia and India recognize the centrality of each other in forging a long-term partnership as far as energy cooperation is concerned.*]

Energy Security which is "the uninterrupted availability of energy sources at an affordable price" has become a critical issue for India. According to the National Energy Policy document, overall energy import dependence could rise to 36%-55% by 2040. This will be a result of a rising population of Indian middle class, a higher share of manufacturing in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and a more urbanized population and fast depleting domestic energy resources and technological limitations as far as renewable energy alternatives are concerned.

Also, three out of the four barrels of crude we consume is imported and two of these barrels come from the West Asia particularly Middle East Region, a politically volatile region, thus undermining our energy security. Further, politics of cartelization, geo-political power play over energy resources and price fluctuations have serious political and economic consequences for India. It is in this context that the other regions rich in energy resources like Central Asia, Russia, Africa and America come into picture. However, issues of transport infrastructure, pricing and quality of fuel have hindered the Indian pursuit for import diversification. It implies that despite the volatility of West Asian region and Western sanctions on Iran, West Asia will still remain India's preferred energy destination.

The Present Scenario

Energy security is one of the components of present day broadened definitional criterion of national security. And, according to Harold Brown, national security is the ability to preserve a nation's physical

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territory; to maintain its economic relations with rest of the world on reasonable terms; to protect its nature, institutions and governance from disruption from outside; and to control its borders. It clearly points out that present day national security is a comprehensive and holistic idea and energy security is an integral part of it.

This also gets reflected in former Planning Commission's (2006) definition of energy security which states that, "The country is secure when we can supply lifetime energy to all our citizens as well as meet their effective demand for safe and convenient energy to satisfy various needs at affordable costs at all times with a prescribed confidence level considering shocks and disruptions that can be reasonably expected".

The concept of 'energy security' has evolved in the context of its excessive dependence on imported energy and the localization of supplies in the Persian Gulf. The focus of policy until the oil shocks of the 1970s was mainly on supply management. After the oil shocks, many organizations like Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries have also paid equal attention to demand management and investment in energy saving technologies as well as in alternative sources of energy. The concept of energy security was, thus, made more comprehensive, including both the demand side and supply side strategies.

Energy is acknowledged as a key input towards raising the standard of living of citizens of any country, so it is for India. With nearly 304 million Indians without access to electricity, and about 500 million people, still dependent on solid bio-mass for cooking, it may be acknowledged that the country has still a long way in securing its energy security objective (NEP, 2017). This importance to energy security was clearly highlighted when former Indian Prime Minister said, "Energy security is second only in our schemes of things to food security".

With recent developmental ambitions of the Government of India like 175 GW of installed capacity of renewable energy by 2022, 24X7 Power for all by 2022, 100 smart cities mission, 10% reduction of oil and gas import dependence by 2022 from 2014-15 levels and provision of clean cooking fuels, India is likely to account for 25% of the rise in global energy demand by 2040 (IEA 2018). Thus, Though India is diverse in its energy endowments and requirements, its need for clean and stable supplies of energy at sustainable prices will rise in tandem with its development graph. Moreover, its declining oil reserves, uncertainty over its future oil supply, fluctuations in global oil prices and the growing concerns over climate change have further increased its apprehensions with regard to energy security.

Viewed against this background of rising demand for energy, Indian search to ensure energy security is no exception. India's rising international profile, rapid economic growth, rapid industrialisation, urbanisation, low domestic production, increased middle class disposal income etc., have all contributed to ensure energy security a top priority in Indian foreign and security policy. Though domestic production is rising but, it is unable to keep pace with growing demand. Consequently, India is dependent on imports and these imports have assumed enormous proportions thus depleting essential foreign reserves, causing inflation, economic and political consequences (Joshi, 2012).

Today, the energy scenario in India is paradoxical. The country is endowed with abundant coal reserves and has only recently discovered gas resources in the Krishna-Godavari basin. Besides, several parts of the country are blessed with an estimated 300 clear and sunny days in a year (a number that is significant for its solar power sector) apart from being richly endowed with thorium fuel reserves (for its nuclear reactors). Despite this, however, India imports about 20 per cent of its total coal demand, the figure touched 77 per cent for the oil and gas sector in 2017, while renewables and atomic energy have been developed as commercial energy resources, only recently.

A bulk of India's energy demand is met by imports, thus putting it in a position of 'structural dependence'. India, being world's third-largest oil consumer, its dependence on imported oil is already touching the levels of around 80 per cent, it is predicted that these could go up to 90 per cent by 2030–31. Similarly, it is estimated that around 66 to 75 per cent of coal in 2030 could be imported (TERI, 2018). Besides the shortage of supply from domestic fuel resources, the energy sector in India also faces pressure to reduce carbon emissions under the COP-21 Agreement and technological limitations as far as renewable energy potential is concerned.

What is more paradoxical is that it's over dependence on a region that is politically very volatile – Middle East – from where around 60 per cent of its total crude oil is imported makes it vulnerable to 'dependency syndrome'. This poses double risk for India of security of supply and volatile market conditions.

Alternative Sources

It is in this context that it is imperative for India to diversify its sources of energy. Several options come to the fore, prominent among them being Africa, USA and Latin American states and Central Asia. However, none of these options are free of challenges like politics of cartelization, political instability and global geopolitics of power equations and energy resources and their costs. Here, Central Asia, one of alternative to meet growing Indian energy needs, has significant reserve of energy resources in the form of fossil fuels, nuclear and hydropower. Though, these reserves are not comparable to that of Middle East and Persian Gulf, they do nevertheless constitute a significant alternative.

Looking at Caspian region, there exists an opportunity now than ever before because there are three important independent actors like Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan besides Russia and Iran that can facilitate energy supplies to Indian market for longer durations. High potential coupled with geographical contiguity makes 'neighbourhood syndrome' a phenomenon of mutual dependence (Dash, 2011). However, this need for cooperation in energy with Central Asian republics particularly Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan are not one way as it might seem because these republics are in dire need for diversification of supply and investment in their energy sector and energy deficient South Asia is a promising alternative for them.

The biggest South Asian economies, India and Pakistan, require affordable and reliable energy to maintain their recent economic growth. At this juncture, the leaders of both the Central Asian and South Asian states have expressed interest in securing energy trade deals with these Central Asian states (Zafar, 2016). There are some major impediments in the Indo-CARs and Indo-Russia energy cooperation like the issue of payments, lack of direct connectivity, lack of viable transport infrastructure, geo-political power equations, political and ethnic volatility of Af-Pak region and further strained Indo-Pak relations and more recently renewed USA sanctions on Russia and Iran.

However, a little progress made in transport infrastructure like INSTC, and TAPI has given new hope to these efforts. Therefore, suitable strategies and policies need to be formulated to tackle these important issues for strengthening the energy ties achieve overall economic development and thus harvesting mutual benefits.

Apart from Central Asian republics and Russia, significant supplies come from countries like Nigeria, Sudan, Angola, Egypt in Africa, Brazil, Venezuela in Latin America and recently enhanced supplies from USA, Canada and Mexico. Similarly, in Indo-Pacific, Malaysia, and Australia are significant. However, these supplies and long-term sustainability are again limited by similar factors like the issue of payments, lack of direct connectivity, lack of viable transport infrastructure, geo-political power equations, political and ethnic volatility and costs of energy imports.

It implies that despite the volatility of West Asian region and Western sanctions on Iran, West Asia will still remain India's preferred energy destination. However, this relationship must transcend the traditional buyer-seller and remittances-based dynamics. To acquire the true nature of the bilateral potential of sustainable partnership, equal focus must be on other sectors like technology, defence and trade and investment cooperation. It will broaden the scope of mutual dependence between India and Gulf and thus making it immune from the temporary volatility of energy markets and geo-political turmoil.

India is in the happy situation of having friendly relations with both Russia and the US, and is now cementing one with Saudi Arabia. The reduced dependence on Iran and Venezuela, under US pressure, is being balanced out by ensuring adequacy of supply from other sources, including the US. Going beyond such energy-focused diplomacy in West Asia, India should play an active role in reducing the risk of heightened conflict in the region and promote efforts to resolve differences between the Sunni and Shia States, working with the US, Russia and China. India's interests in West Asia go beyond oil and gas and its influence remains underutilised.

The changing dynamics of geopolitics has resulted in a change in India's position on its import of crude oil from Iran. While USA hopes to increase its market share and include Indian market into its selling basket, New Delhi looks to US supplies as a means of scaling down the dependence on Gulf and West Asian crude suppliers as also the OPEC member countries accounting for about 65% of our oil imports constituting about 82% of our requirement. Though USA has exempted India's development of Chabahar port from its Iranian sanctions and India has dropped its dependency on Iranian oil, but in the long run, it will have to reconsider its decision and protect its strategic autonomy in the decision-making process (Singh, 2019).

India views Saudi Arabia, Qatar and UAE amongst the safest suppliers and thus is eager to broaden the horizon of partnership with these states through investment especially in the hydrocarbon sector in India. This is also the time when major Middle Eastern countries like UAE and Saudi Arabia are also focusing on diversification of their economies and for that India is a natural partner. Thus, bilateral cooperation is expanding to the domains of technology, investment and finance. However, despite several challenges, recent progress like Saudi Investment in energy sector in India provides fresh impetus to realize the vast potential of energy cooperation.

Thus, considering an energy partnership both energy-rich West Asia and energy-hungry South Asia would benefit. To start with, a natural gas pipeline is a logical step in regional cooperation, later on, focus can be shifted to building regional gas grid, investing in equity oil and enhanced cooperation in nuclear and renewable energy. These projects can provide cheap and reliable sources of energy for the South Asian economies; and on the other hand, generate much needed diversification of economics of West Asian countries and thus fuelling economic prosperity in the region as a whole. Issues of geography, geopolitics and security need to be resolved to realize the true potential of energy cooperation.

Emphasis on having close historical, cultural, civilizational and trade ties between the two regions needs to be matched by significant improvement in the energy and trade relations. Proactive diplomacy is the need of hour to address the vital issues of connectivity, geopolitics and security in the region along with economic prosperity via human resource development, shared knowledge and innovation. Both West Asia particularly Gulf States and India need to build a long-term strategy and secure the energy interests by promoting the diversification and independence of energy sources and supplies as well building viable transport infrastructure. There are immense opportunities and challenges before both but sustained and close cooperation in diplomatic, trade, energy security arenas will certainly move the relations between India and West Asia to new heights. As Bedil urged, "The Sea of time and place, for you, is but one gulp limit not your boundless imagination".

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THIRD CONCEPT *welcomes your valuable comments on articles published in each issue. Suggestion to further improve quality and get-up of your favourite magazine, which has a record of uninterrupted publication since 1987, are also solicited.*

Europe and the World at 75

Nora Wolf*

[*In this brief article, the author, while dealing with the main focal points of the recently delivered keynote address by the present vice-president of the EU Commission, emphasizes on the indispensability of human rights, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly for the vulnerable communities and hopes that human rights would be accorded due priority in times to come.* Ed.]

Vice-President of the EU Commission, Margaritis Shinas, was a keynote speaker at this summer's Diplomatic Conference in Vienna organised by the International Institute *IFIMES*, Media Platform *Modern Diplomacy* and their partners. High dignitary of the Commission seized the occasion to express the EU's take on the 75th anniversary of victory over fascism, unfolding health crisis and to it related pressure on human and labour rights, as well as on the Union's continued efforts towards remaining a 'rock' amid the volatile climate.

It is known by now – and acknowledged by the EU Commission VP – that the COVID-19 crisis has had some severe implications for Human Rights and, to a lesser extent, for cooperation outlooks. In the face of the first wave, countries in Europe and elsewhere have adopted different courses of actions in order to manage the health crisis and attempt at containing its threats. Placed in an unprecedented situation, governments have undoubtedly each reacted in ways they deemed most appropriate at the time.

However, the pandemic itself topped with the varied policies have caused notable restrictions on Human Rights. Most notoriously, the right to life and that to health have been challenged in extreme circumstances where, at the peak of the crisis, health institutions were so overflowed that the provision of maximal care to every single individual was compromised. The effective and equal access to healthcare has therefore quickly become a central preoccupation of many governments, drawing on some dramatic first-hand experiences.

On that, I will say that if the global health crisis has been a synonym for many negative impacts, it has also been a precious opportunity to rethink carefully the existing narrative of programmatic and progressive rights – such as the right to health – needing no immediate attention, nor realisation. This narrative held predominantly by some Western democracies ever since the adoption of the UN International Covenants, has been unduly weakening the universal and indivisible stance of Human Rights. Needless to say, in adhering to that dangerous narrative, planning for and prioritizing health access, resources and system capabilities is undermined. This, in turn, contributes to the difficult and insufficient responses of some governments that have been witnessed. May the victims of inadequate infrastructures due to an obsolete distinction between rights serve as a poignant reminder: social, cultural and economic rights need be readily available to all.

Equally interesting is the toll taken on a whole other range of Human Rights – an international system built up in last 75 years on the legacy of victory of antifascist forces in Europe and elsewhere. Numerous individual freedoms have also suffered limitations, often as a direct result of actions taken to promote and ensure the right to life and the right to health for the most vulnerable. Indeed, people's freedom of movement, that of religion (external dimension), that of assembly and association, as well as their procedural rights – only to name a few – have all been greatly affected during the crisis.

Of course, voices have raised their discontent at those restrictions put in place to mitigate the crisis, considered by many to be too incisive and too

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manifold when cumulated. But despite an apparent clash between two groups of interests protected by different rights, the resolution which has emerged from the approaches followed by most countries is very telling. In fact, a balancing exercise revealed that protecting the right to health and to life of the minority of people ought simply to be considered predominant in comparison to the other individual freedoms and rights of the majority. This reasoning, grounded in solidarity and the protection of minorities and vulnerable persons, is in fact very encouraging in an era of growing individualism combined with overwhelming challenges which will certainly require peoples to unite against them.

Nevertheless, this does not take away from the fact that the full and optimal enjoyment of Human Rights has generally been seriously affected as many interests have been caught in the crossfire of the fight against Coronavirus' harmful effects. Moreover, the crisis has also created some divides amongst European countries. This is because the sanitary emergency has caused for precarious contexts of resources shortages and sometimes unfruitful cooperation, even shift in alliances.

This has naturally brought about separate criticisms and questioning of the EU cooperation strategy and security arrangements. In that sense, growing expectations are felt for the EU to uphold and promote its fundamental values including the rule of law, solidarity, non-discrimination and antifascist line.

Vice-President Schinas is well aware of that reality and reiterates the EU's unalterable commitment to peaceful cooperation, human dignity, liberty, equality and solidarity in these troubled times. He further ensures that the most recent security strategies led by the Union do not – and never will – eat away at the protection of fundamental rights. What is more, whilst the EU's arrangements can be seen as slightly 'under attack' currently, the VP feels that rather than seeing this period as a high-stakes test on EU democracies it should be seen as an opportunity to take a bigger stand than ever for the European common values and call for strengthened multilateralism. This necessitates constructive reciprocal and respectful active engagement with the EU Mediterranean and eastern European neighbourhood.

All that is because it is not too difficult to imagine that the aftermath of the C-19 crisis can open several paths of new dynamics in international relations. Yet, as it cannot be stressed enough, an upcoming change in the conception of relations between nations could be decisive for numerous other contemporary challenges – namely: migration crisis, armed conflicts, climate change. While one of the paths could consist in an increase in protectionism and nationalist attitudes, another one would involve, on the contrary, a shift towards reinforced cooperation and enhanced solidarity. The latter outward approach, advocated by the EU Vice-President and believed to be the best hope for the future, is one deeply enshrined in the antifascist legacy and the very *raison d'être* of the Union.

Above all, at the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the Victory Day, Excellency Schinas reminds us with much humbleness that the journey for safeguarding Human Rights is one that is perpetually underway.

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The BIMSTEC and its Free Trade Agreement (FTA)

Jeetendra Kumar*

[*The BIMSTEC, a sub-regional arrangement established in 1997, is a conglomeration of the five littoral states of the Bay of Bengal that include: Bangladesh, Thailand, Myanmar, India and Sri Lanka, and two landlocked Himalayan nations Nepal and Bhutan. With a population of around 1.5 billion, it accounts for nearly 22 per cent of the global population and its total gross domestic product (GDP) is estimated to be US $ 2.7 trillion.]*

The historical journey of the BIMSTEC has been one of the stunted growths for the past twenty-five years. Recent years have been marked with increased academic discourse and reinvigoration of the organization among scholars, including Dr. C. Raja Mohan, Harsh V. Pant, Constantino Xavier, Prabir De and N. Chandra Mohan etc., who have written extensively to give life to BIMSTEC. Thus, the present paper broadly takes up the rationale for its re-energising, its attempts to sign a Free Trade Agreement and way forward.

Rationale towards the Shift to BIMSTEC

Different rationale underlies the reinforcement of BIMSTEC from the country-centered perspective. The economic and technical cooperation are major domains of cooperation including "Technology, transport and communication, energy, tourism, agriculture, fisheries, human resources development and people-to-people relations" (Banik, 2006, p. 5264). For Sri Lanka, it would enable it to play a significant role in the Belt Road Initiative (BRI). Myanmar and Thailand's attachment to the BIMSTEC enable them to ease off their over-reliance on China. On the other side, it would provide consumer markets in India and other emerging BIMSTEC economies (Hussain, 2018).

For India, being the largest economic power in the sub regional organisation, the renewed interest got prominence with ascendency of present dispensation since 2014 under Prime Minister Narendra Modi and is being visualised as an alternate to South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). This platform also accentuates engagement of north-eastern India with countries lying on the belt of Bay of Bengal. Celebrating the 20th Anniversary of the establishment of BIMSTEC, Prime Minister Narendra Modi regarded this sub-regional forum as "a natural platform" meant to accomplish India's key foreign policy objectives of "Neighbourhood First" and "Act East" (Roy, 2018).

Over thirty years' experience with SAARC, as a regional integration initiative, has been more frustrating than being fruitful for the South Asian region. The India-Pakistan imbroglio, postponement of the summits, Pakistan's objection to initiatives, to cite, denial of road connectivity to Afghanistan, its recalcitrant attitude to the SAARC Free Trade Agreement as well as uproar for China's full membership of SAARC (Parthasarathy, 2017) has sealed the fate and fear of SAARC.

Simultaneously, the route to South Asian free trade agreement has been stalled because of non-grant of Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status to India by Pakistan. Additionally, issues of border terrorism have caused diplomatic limbo between the two countries. The SAARC summits had been cancelled or postponed, due to boycott by India of SAARC summit in Islamabad in November 2016 and the summit was cancelled. This further caused distaste among other members of the SAARC.

These developments have aroused uncertainties among smaller neighbours of the region that India, the dominant economy of the region, could extensively integrate with South East Asia, leaving them isolated (Sikri, 2009, p. 73).

The surge of the Chinese economic and political engagement in India and its periphery and its conception of a "new" South Asia, coupled with

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its expansive strategic geography, necessitates new engagements (Pant, 2018b). The changing milieu, associated with One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative rolled out by China having strategic implications, is catching the attention of some of the countries in the sub-region. Here, the BIMSTEC has potential to produce its roadmap in the sub-region's interests.

Simultaneously, the Bay of Bengal region is also significantly evolving itself economically and strategically with the expansion of port projects, increased maritime activity, newer SEZ (Special Economic Zones) initiatives and rising resource exploratory activities around many points along the Bay's coastline. The political turn around with Myanmar gearing to democratic transition followed with economic openness and space created in Sri Lanka with the end of the ethnic conflict and aspiration to rise on the economic front (Seshadri, 2017, p. 9-10) etc., are such developments that reinforce a hope to move forward with this organisation.

Quest for Free Trade Agreement

With uncertainty lurking in the path of multilateral trade negotiations, the developing countries are scrambling to become part of RTAs (Regional Trade Agreements) with a motive to access markets (Pal, 2011). The South Asia's economic integration, under the regional development agenda, is facing the constant difficulty of the SAFTA and that has caused to reallocate focus on BIMSTEC as an alternative institutional basis for South Asian integration. The idea of BIMSTEC FTA was mooted in the first (Special) Ministerial Meeting held in Bangkok on 22 December 1997 that envisioned on three foundations "first, close public-private partnership to promote economic cooperation; second, identification of sectors, sub-sectors and projects for economic cooperation, and third, elimination of non-tariff and tariff barriers through government-to-government negotiations" (BIMSTEC, 2019).

The inception of the BIMSTEC was marked with the hope that the ties would be a win-win situation characterized by the varied scales of economic levels as well as resources. The contiguous nature of the region facilitated a ground for coalescing with each other. Besides these factors, the countries are also characterised by the meagre volume of inter-regional trade and signalled for harnessing the untapped potential in the region (Wijayasiri, 2016, p. 21).

An estimated assessment puts that implementation of BIMSTEC Free Trade Agreement (FTA) can inflate trade to USD 240 billion from the current estimated USD 40 billion. The BIMSTEC Energy Outlook 2030 states that BIMSTEC countries are faring better in GDP growth compared to ASEAN and SAARC in recent years. The figures of the aggregated GDP of this sub region in 2016 were estimated at US$3.06 trillion, thus contributing to around 4.03 per cent of the total global GDP. Among these countries, India's share to the region's GDP is at 74%. Consistently, the contribution of the BIMSTEC to the Global GDP exhibits consistent surge for the last 16 years. The BIMSTEC share to the global GDP in 2001 was 2.04% that has amounted to 4.03 per cent as in 2016 (BIMSTEC Energy Outlook).

In his analysis of the potential of BIMSTEC trade and free trade agreement Nilanjan Banik argues, "These countries have several commonalities among themselves. Barring Thailand, all these economies are predominantly associated with service-related activities. Geographical proximity along with similar economic profile indicates similarity in consumption, production, and trading pattern" (Banik, 2006, p. 5266).

Analysing countries' perspective with reference to BIMSTC FTA, for Bangladesh, it would help it to project and expand itself in the Bay of Bengal and explore and reap benefits out of the blue economy. For Sri Lanka, it is an apt route to strengthen its ties with Southeast Asia and act as a facilitator to the entire subcontinent and into the Indian Ocean and Pacific regions. For the Himalayan kingdoms of Nepal and Bhutan, BIMSTEC furthers their grandiose plan to reconnect with the Bay of Bengal region and snuff off with its land-locked disadvantages. For Myanmar and Thailand connecting with surging consumer demand in the Bay of Bengal as well as to balance Beijing and diverge its trade beyond China's massive inroads

into Southeast Asia, this grouping is considered to be a way out (Xavier, 2018, p. 7).

From India's perspective, the advent of the Modi government in India has emphasized a bigger role of BIMSTEC with infrastructure and high-tech connectivity projects reinforcing advancement of the Northeastern states with BIMSTEC cross-border initiatives (Chowdhary & Chowdhary, 2016).

The Framework of Agreements for FTA is under negotiation since 1997. There were intense negotiations leading to the creation of a framework agreement in February 2004 and all members agreed to set up a Free Trade Area (FTA) by July 2007. The Framework Agreement outlines the following areas to be covered by the Comprehensive Free Trade Area (CFTA) including the gradual removal of both tariffs and non-tariff barriers pertaining to trade in goods and incrementally include the service sectors. It also stresses upon creating a transparent as well as competitive investment regime. The aim is also to establish a trade and investment facilitating measures meant for simplification of customs procedures as well as the development of mutual recognition arrangements.

Finally, the aim is to create a mechanism that would help in implementation of the Agreement (BIMSTEC, 2019). The hope for the FTA continues, with customs cooperation agreement, among the member nations to be finalized by 2019 and the agreement on trade in goods by 2020.

Bottlenecks to the BIMSTEC FTA

The framework of the FTA was agreed in 2004 and it took seven years since 1997 itself to reach this initial level. The framework was finalized in 2004 under Article 7 of the BIMSTEC Framework Agreement that stipulated that the negotiations for trade in goods would begin in 2004 and would be realized by 2005. Such a goalpost has not been realized and still is in the pipeline. The 2005-2007 timeline for talks on trade in service and investment has been surpassed. The negotiation of the FTA between two countries is rather easy like India and Sri Lanka but with a set of seven countries negotiating the agreement is full of pitfalls and challenges. Several factors continue to boggle and derail the process of attaining BIMSTEC-FTA.

On the broader premises, the framework of the trade, few members did not submit their tariff liberalisation schemes within the stipulated deadline and staggered till the 20th meeting in Bangkok on 25 September 2015. Negotiating on the service sector is filled with the extent of opening of the economy. To keep consonance with changing time, India standpoint calls for a fresh pact to be negotiated and signed and revised and formulated, a revised new tariff reduction as agreement on FTA and not one signed in 2004. Countries like Bangladesh and Sri Lanka called for the entry of China into the grouping that is not feasible unless it can join BIMSTEC as 'observer (Basu, 2018) and thus lingering of the FTA.

India and Thailand, two powerful economies of the region, entertain standpoint that diverges with regard to market access for professionals and duty cuts on traded goods and policy relaxation. It is compounded by the protectionist economies of South Asian countries.

Connectivity is another prime concern in realizing the plentiful benefits of the BIMSTEC FTA. The Kaladan multimodal transit transport project and other shipping links among countries like Sri Lanka, India, Bangladesh and Myanmar are required to boost the trade in the region. Bangladesh is skeptical of India's emphasis on the talks of connectivity; Bangladesh fears India to be its sole beneficiary. Such apprehensions question the basic fabric of BIMSTEC and foster mistrust, thus blighting the prospect of even free movement of goods. This makes the FTA a tough way (Hussain, 2018). The need for infrastructure building is bedrock for trade. Besides, the weak Regional Values Chains (RVCs) continue to dampen the road to FTA.

Way out

The BIMSTEC entails huge potential but the road to BIMSTEC FTA is skewed with finalization of framework agreement in 2004.The BIMSTEC's Trade Negotiation Committee had over 20 rounds of talks but has not reached any conclusive outcome. The Indian government has been championing renewed focus on BIMSTEC and emphatically envisaged for continuing negotiation to finalise BIMSTEC FTA. The attainment of FTA in the short term seems illusionary. Therefore, an

alternate strategy to engage is a viable way out that may take place simultaneously with FTA.

According to scholars, these include: The settling for a limited FTA as a way out- a limited trade deal is better than a stalemate (Xavier, 2018, p. 16). Prabir De argues that the BIMSTEC FTA implementation may not immediately enhance intra-BIMSTEC trade in the short term as the members have other regional trade preferences (De, 2017). He recommends "parallel to tariff negotiations, BIMSTEC should sequentially focus on facilitating the (1) mutual recognition of national standards, (2) harmonization and development of common standards, and (3) identification and targeted exploration of existing value chains across the region" (Xavier, 2018, p. 16).

Several studies suggest non-tariff barriers is the major stumbling block in the operationalisation of BIMSTEC FTA; therefore, BIMSTEC should target non-tariff trade barriers (Xavier, 2108, p. 16). Designation of Bay of Bengal as the blue economic zone is a way out. The rationale behind creating a blue economy is to "promote economic growth, social inclusion, and the preservation or improvement of livelihoods while at the same time ensuring environmental sustainability of the oceans and coastal areas" (World Bank, 2019).

Therefore, the visions to create BIMSTEC FTA has been an ongoing task with interest of several countries converging. But FTA has not been realized and thus, an incremental approach may be a way out and in the long term the full operationalisation may be a solution.

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Women Empowerment and SHGs – A Developmental Intervention

Dr. Vasant H. Mundargi*

[Women empowerment is the need of the day. Empowerment comprehends the manifestation of redistribution of power that challenges patriarchal ideology and the male domination. It is a way of transformation of structures or institutions that reinforces and perpetuates gender discrimination. The present study provides conceptual clarity of women empowerment.]

The need for multi-dimensional empowerment of women has been highlighted in the Indian context. In this process of empowerment of women, the role of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) has been examined in all its dimensions in the present Indian context where the Government and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) have been encouraging the formations of SHGs for women empowerment in the country.

Need for the Study

Conceptual clarity about 'Women Empowerment' and its social and economic implications is of much significance in the present context of India's socio-economic environment. Further, the role of (SHGs in the process of women empowerment is equally significant. Hence the present study has strived to provide a multi-dimensional women empowerment as a socio-economic policy and the role of (SHGs in the empowerment of women in the country.

Objectives of the Study

The study is conducted with the following major objectives:

1. To highlight the need for women empowerment in the present Indian socio-economic environment.
2. To provide a comprehensive conceptual dimension of women empowerment.
3. To identify and examine the role of Self-Help Groups in the process of women empowerment in the Indian context.

Methodology of the Study

The study is an analytical approach to 'Women Empowerment' and the specific role of (SHGs in the process of women empowerment in the Indian context. Hence the study is based on conceptual aspects and socio-economic issues involved therein. The data and information are derived from secondary sources published in books, reports and research articles, etc.

Discussion

The discussion in this study is related to,

i. Conceptual aspects of empowerment in general and empowerment of women in particular.

ii. Multi-dimensional aspects of empowerment of women in the Indian context.

iii. Inequality and vulnerability of women in the socio-economic environment and the need for their empowerment.

iv. Role of SHGs in women empowerment in India.

Empowerment is a multi-dimensional process which would enable individuals or group of individuals to realize their full identity and powers in all spheres of life. Empowerment consists of;

- Greater access to knowledge and resources;
- Greater autonomy in decision making to enable them to have greater ability to plan their lives on;
- Have greater control over circumstances that influence their lives; and
- Free them from shackles imposed on them by custom belief and practice.

Multi-dimensional Empowerment of Women includes;

- Education (opening the new portals of knowledge),
- Social (focusing on welfare),
- Economic (access to opportunities and resources),
- Psychological (concretization that gender inequality is not God given and can be altered) and

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- Political (participation and control over decision making process).

Empowerment comprehends the manifestation of redistribution of power that challenges patriarchal ideology and the male domination. Empowerment is a way of transformation of structure or institutions that reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination. Empowerment should be a process that will enable women to gain access to and control of material as well as information resources. Empowerment is conceived as a process of awareness and capacity building to greater participation, the greater decision-making power and control and transformative action.

Further, the concept relates to process whereby women become able to organize themselves to increase self-reliance and to assert their independent right to make choices and control resources both of which will assist in challenging and eliminating their subordination.

Inequality and Vulnerability of Women – Need for Empowerment

There is a continued inequality and vulnerability of women in all sectors – economic, social, political, educational, healthcare, nutrition and legal. The discrimination of women during their life time in the country is well-known. The Perspective Plan for Women 1988-2000 has made a free, frank, objective and masterly analysis of the impact of development plans and programmes of Indian women with special reference to rural women. The following profile of women in India is given by the Perspective Plan for Women 1988-2000. The indicators are as below.

- Women illiterates over 75%.
- Rural illiterate women 83%.
- Women working in unorganized sectors over 90%.
- Of these unskilled labour in agriculture and construction 83%.
- Women having full time employment in organized sectors 14%.
- Maternity benefits and child care available in organized sectors 3.5%.
- Registered unemployed school graduates 51 lakhs.
- Pregnant women who are anemic 65%.
- Infant mortality rate (in the first year of birth) 10%.
- Of which in slum areas 12.4%.
- Children dying because of malnutrition before the age of 5 years 40%.
- Sex ratio – 933 females to every 1000 males.
- Expectation of life at birth 51.6% as against 52.6% for males.
- Property owned by less than 1% on an average rural woman working for 18 hours a day.

(Source: Reproduced from "Women and Empowerment" by Jaya Kothai Pillai, p. 60)

Development of women is indispensable who constitute about 50 percent of the population. Safeguarding the rights and privileges of women has found its best expression in the Constitution of India. Giving special attention to the status of women, Article 14 confers equal rights and opportunities on men and women in the economic, political and social spheres. Article 15(3) empowers the state to take affirmative discrimination in favour of women. In spite of it the credit programmes have ignored women for a long time. In India universal concern for women found recognition in the Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85). Since then a concerted effort has been made in this direction by rural credit institutions to uplift rural women.

Role of SHGs in Women Empowerment

Self Help Groups are voluntary informal groups of homogenous rural poor on need basis. These groups have a common perception of need and impulse towards collective action. Self Help Groups promote savings among members and use the pooled resources to meet the emergent needs of members including the consumption needs. Sometimes the internal savings generated by the SHGs are supplemented by external sources such as;

- Loans from banks or
- Donation or
- Grants from Government and
- Also, from NGOs.

In India, government is playing a major role in the formation of Self-Help Groups. Non-Government

Organizations have also been active in the formation of Self-Help Groups in India. NABARD has been facilitating the linkages between banks and SHGs. In India more than 90 percent of the Self-Help Groups have exclusively women members. The SHG-Bank Linkage programme covered 412 districts in 27 states and Union Territories. SHGs are increasingly being used as tool for various developmental interventions.

Empowerment of Women – Self Help Group Approach

Self Help Groups are used as vehicles for triggering the process of empowerment of women. The Self-Help Group (SHG) offers the canvas to conduct social intermediation which would in turn provide women the opportunity to,

- Acquire the ability and entitlement to control their own lives,
- Set their own agenda,
- Gain skills,
- Solve problems and
- Develop autonomy

Empowerment sets the tone for converting the "Welfarist Ability" to "Entitlement where women do not take hand me downs but demand and claim rights".

Self Help Groups have laid the seeds for economic and social empowerment of women. The basic strategy of promoting empowerment of women through SHGs comprises in organizing women SHGs around;

- Savings and rotational credit programmes using their own resources.
- Facilitating regular interaction and exchange of information.
- Linking SHGs with external credit sources like banks, cooperative societies, etc.
- Imposing skill training to the members to manage their credit and take decisions.
- Linking SHGs with rural development programmes thus enabling the members to expand their investment capital and develop leadership qualities and self-confidence.

Group dynamics among the women members empower them against social evils in the community like;

- Female infanticide,
- Dowry problem,
- Evils of drinking,
- Corruption, etc.

The strategic needs and interests of women as group (SHG) have been rightly identified as;

- Reduced vulnerability to violence and exploitation;
- More economic security, independence options and opportunities;
- Shared responsibility for reproductive work with men and the state;
- Organizing with other women for strength, solidarity and action;
- Increased political power;
- Increased ability to improve the lives and futures of their children and
- More humanistic and just development processes.

Credit and its delivery through Self Help Groups has been a means of empowerment of women.

Findings of the Research Study

- The study has revealed that the empowerment of women is necessary to overcome the challenges and patriarchal ideology and the male domination in the country.
- Self Help Groups are found suitable for women empowerment in the country.
- Multi-dimensional empowerment of women includes education, social, economic, psychological and political development of women.

- Profile of Indian women reveals the disadvantages of women in India who suffer in various areas – i.e. illiteracy, women working in unorganized sector, unskilled women working in agriculture, etc.
- Self Help Groups have been triggering the process of women empowerment by helping women in;

1. Acquiring the ability and entitlement to control their own lives
2. Setting their own agenda
3. Gaining skills
4. Solving problems
5. Developing autonomy
6. Promoting saving and rational credit
7. Promoting regular interaction and exchanging information
8. Linking Self Help Groups with external credit like banks, etc.
9. Imposing skill training in credit management.

Suggestions

The effectiveness of Self-Help Groups in their functioning needs to be strengthened to promote empowerment of women.

- There is need to create and develop a cadre of resource persons with innovativeness and credibility. This will help in taking the process of social mobilization.
- There is need to provide adequate budget allocation for quality and stability of Self-Help Groups.
- The supervision of Self-Help Groups needs to be improved through creation of a special resource centre to cater for the same.
- It is desirable to redesign the training modules to impart social skills which include communication, leadership, decision making, conflict resolution, etc.
- Now there is attention to economic gain through Self Help Groups. It is time to have well defined social agenda and direction to address social issues such as domestic violence, child labour, alcoholism, etc.

Conclusion

Self Help Groups are effective tools to bring about holistic empowerment of women. SHGs provide (i) Confidence and mutual support for women striving for social change; (ii) A forum in which women can critically analyse their situations and devise collective strategies to overcome their difficulties; (iii) A framework for awareness raising, confidence building, dissemination of information and delivery of services and (iv) A vehicle for the promotion of economic activities.

Women Self Help Groups are increasingly being used as a tool for various developmental interventions.

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ASEAN at Crossroads: NAM has no alternative

Prof. Anis H. Bajrektareviæ

[As the present world order weakens, the mega confrontations have appeared more likely: On its post-Soviet revival quest, Russia becomes increasingly assertive in Euro-MED theatre and beyond. The Sino-American relations are increasingly adversarial, with escalating frictions over trade, advanced technology, human rights, and global strategic influence.]

Currently, both sides – as president of the US Council of Foreign Relations Richard Haass states – 'are developing scenarios for a possible war'. The two countries' rhetoric has grown so hostile that its speed and severity is unprecedented for the post Second World War period, rather belonging to the forgotten vocabulary of the 1910s and 1930s. (E.g. referring to PRC as 'Country of Kung Flu' or to the US as 'trigger happy nation', calling the C-19 'China virus' or 'US Army brought pathogen', China's Foreign Ministry Spokesman referring to the US leadership as 'Elements deluded by the Capitol Hill metastasis' while the US State Secretary calls the Chinese Communist Party 'rogue actor', and then in return Secretary Pompeo gets proclaimed as 'the public enemy of mankind' – just to name but few from the long list of heavy verbal fire exchanges between the two.)

Strategic decoupling between the biggest manufacturer of American goods, China and its largest consumer, the US seems inevitable. It also appears increasingly irreversible, no matter if the change of leaders in Beijing or in Washington may or may not happen beyond 2020. This will of course trigger a global realignment and new fragilities on a default lines on land and seas, in skies, cyberspace and near outer space.

Asia's History of Future – There is no Asian century, unless

It was expected that by the end of 2020s, Asian economies will be larger than the rest of world's economies combined. Of course, that was only a prediction made before C-19 and the sudden Sino-American rift. Or this was the origin of that rift? – It is still to be seen.

Past the demise of global communism, many in Asia enjoyed for decades, the best of both worlds: Cheep products from China and the military protection (or at least an implicit security guaranty) from the US, nearly for free. This especially goes to the southeaster Asia (formerly representing the mayor Asian default line), large sways of south Asia and the Far East.

The imposed re-alignment will hit them particularly hard – from a prosperous meeting point of goods, cultures and ideas to the politico-military default lines. This painful readjustment may last for decades to come. Opting for either side will not only impact economy trade and security but will also determine a health of population and societal model, too.

Unprepared and unwilling for 'either-or', Asia missed to build what I called for, for over a decade – a comprehensive cross-continental security setting (the pan-Asian OSCE).

The inland giga-demography, inward looking culture, obedient imitator, humble manufacturer en mas – overnight presses globally and over the sea lanes: From diligent labourer to the omnipresent global power. In the grand rapprochement of 1970s, the coastal areas of China have been identified by the west as its own industrial suburbia, and now that 'suburbia' has a coherent planetary plan. The shockwaves swept all in the west. The US – after its initial hangover – undergoes a painful adjustment: There is a growing consensus among all stakeholders in Washington that the strategic engagement is a failed policy with Beijing – something that obviously did not preserve the US interests. Chine is not a dangerous (trade) rival, it is a foe.

All this will now seek for the binary acclamation all over the rest of Asia. 'Time of 'either-with-us-or-against-us' comes and Asia has no its third way readily prepared to offer but only alignment with one or the other – reminiscence of the pre-WWI Europe with the two rigid blocks.

Beyond the Sino-world, the rest of Asia is also dominated by mega demographics, brewing social mobilisations, expectations and migrations, inward looking regressive political culture (oft lacking the

world-view perspectives and contributions), insecure nuclear powers, and history of rather hierarchical international conduct and architecture than of a multivector vibrant active foreign policy (bandwagoning instead of multilateralism).

All this necessitates SEA to revisit the fundamentals of and reload ASEAN, but even more to rethink and reinvigorate the best of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) which saved the world from the past irresponsibility and frictions of the two confronted blocks that contested each other all over the globe for decades.

Case of the EU – ASEAN twin sister – is indicative: At present, the EU is destructive in MENA, dismissive with Russia, neuralgic on Turkey and post-Yugoslav space, obedient to China and submissive to the US. None of it serves interest of Europe on a long run.

However, realities are plain to see: the ME seeks for consolidation, Russia for cooperation, China for domination and the US for isolation. Judging the (in-)action of the current Commission, seems the EU do not grasp it well. Therefore, it loses its appeal, and tomorrow it may its substance with overall BRAINXIT. The ASEAN should desirably learn from its Twin's, not from its own, mistake:

The Indo-Pacific, 'The Quad', initiative is not viable policy response to the age of global realignment. It is rather a panicking tactics of imperial retreat (seen in the past with the 'Coalition of the Willing') in lieu of the long-term principles shouldering the skilfully calibrated strategic and emancipatory orientation.

Indonesia and other ASEAN member states should not exhaust its entire foreign policy intellectualism on that. A host of historic south-south summit of 1956, champion of true multilateralism and founding member of NAM should not peripheriese itself and SEA by becoming a default, Maginot Line but should lead a reinvigorated Third way.

Between confrontation and bandwagoning, it is time for a true multilateralism (active and peaceful coexistence postulated by the NAM). The Movement gave for so many and for so long a security shelter and voice above weight, sense of civilisational purpose, and promising future prospect on the planetary quest for a self-realisation of mankind.

Confrontation is what you get, and cooperation is what you are fighting for. Good morning ASEAN.

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The Economic Impact of Tourism

Chitrajyoti Ojah*

In recent years, the role of tourism in the economic development of a country has been the focus of study and research. It is the general consensus that tourism has been pivotal in social progress as well as an important vehicle of widening socio-economic and cultural contacts throughout human history. The importance of tourism as a contributor to economic growth is so widely accepted that year after year throughout the world a massive investment continues to pour in its development. It is with this backdrop; this paper is an attempt to investigate the dynamics of the relationship between tourism sector development and economic growth of India.

When we think of tourism, we think mainly of people who are visiting a particular place for sightseeing, visiting friends and relatives, taking a vacation and having a good time. 'They may spend their leisure time engaging in various sports, sunbathing, talking, singing, taking rides, touring, reading, or simply enjoying the environment. Furthermore, we may include in our definition of tourism people who are participating in a convention, a business conference, or some other kind of business or professional activity, as well as those who are taking a study tour under an expert guide or doing some kind of scientific research or study.

These visitors use all forms of transportation, from hiking in a wilderness park to flying in a jet, to travelling by rail or going on a cruise. Any attempt to define tourism and to describe fully its scope, we must consider the various groups that participate in and are affected by this industry. Their perspectives are vital to the development of a comprehensive definition.

Four different perspectives of tourism

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The tourist:

The tourist seeks various psychic and physical experiences and satisfactions. The nature of these will largely determine the destinations chosen and the activities enjoyed.

The business providing tourist goods and services

Business people view tourism as an opportunity to make a profit by supplying the goods and services that the tourist market demands.

The government of the host community or area

Politicians view tourism as a wealth factor in the economy of their jurisdictions. Their perspective is related to the incomes their citizens can earn from this business. Politicians also consider the foreign exchange receipts from international tourism as well as the tax receipts collected from tourist expenditures, either directly or indirectly.

The host community

Local people usually see tourism as a cultural and employment factor. Of importance to this group, for example, it is the effect of the interaction between large numbers of international visitors and residents.

World tourism scenario

People in general now view tourism as a way of life rather than a luxury item reserved for the affluent and the elite. Tourism has emerged as the largest service industry globally in terms of gross revenue as well as foreign exchange earnings. The present annual global income from tourism (international and domestic) is nearly US$13 trillion, an amount more than the GNP of all countries except the United States.

According to the World Tourism Organisation (WTO), the number of international travellers has risen to more than 500 million per annum, which means that one out of every ten inhabitants of this planet is a tourist. With rapid developments in the field of transport and communications, the global tourism industry is likely to double in the next decade.

WTO forecasts that there will be 702 million international arrivals in the year 2000, that arrivals will top one billion in the year 2010 and that by 2020, international arrivals will reach 1.6 billion nearly three times the number of international trips made in 1996 which was 592 million.

The 21st century will see a higher percentage of the total population travelling, especially in developing countries, and people will be going on holidays more often, sometimes two, three or four times a year. Travellers of the 21st will also be going farther and farther. The "Tourism 2020 vision" forecast predicts that by 2020 one out of every three trips will be long haul journeys to other regions of the world. Long-haul travel is expected to increase from 24% of all international tourism in 1995 to 35% of all international traffic arrivals by the year 2020.

Tourism is the industry of industries and has a great multiplier effect on other industries. Tourism serves as an effective medium for transfer of wealth because here income earned in places of "residence" is spent in place "visit". It is the highest generator of employment. A total of 212 million persons are now being employed globally through direct and indirect opportunities generated by this industry. This means that out of every nine persons, one person earns a living from tourism. For every million rupees of investment 13 jobs are created in manufacturing industries, 45 jobs in agriculture and 89 jobs in hotels and restaurants. Tourism is therefore considered to be an important area for intensive development for all governments. As the fastest growing foreign exchange earner, especially in developed countries, it is being given priority attention.

Economic development activities

Thus, tourism may be defined as the sum of the phenomena and relationships arising from the interaction of tourists, business suppliers, host governments and host communities in the process of attracting and hosting these tourists and other visitors.

Tourism is a composite of activities, services, and industries that delivers a travel experience, namely transportation, accommodations, eating and drinking establishments, shops, entertainment, activity facilities, and other hospitality services available for individuals or groups that are travelling away from home. It encompasses all providers of visitor and visitor-related services. Tourism is the entire world industry of travel, hotels, transportation, and all other components, including promotion that serves the needs and wants of travellers. Finally, tourism is the sum total of tourist expenditures within the borders of a nation or a political subdivision or a transportation-centered economic area of contiguous states or nations.

Impact of tourism

As an industry, the impact of tourism is manifold. Tourism industry nourishes a country's economy, stimulates development process, restores cultural heritage, and helps in maintaining international peace and understanding. Tourism at present is India's third

largest export industry and the forex earnings is estimated to be about Rs.91861cores in 2011-12.

The Tourism Industry

Tourism today has become an important segment of India economy contributing substantially to sustainable development of the country. India has succeeded in becoming the most preferred place amongst domestic and overseas travelers. Tourism exposes international travelers to India's diverse culture. The tourism sector has been instrumental in generating foreign exchange, employment opportunities and household income for Indians, as it has in many other developing economies. Thus, the development of 4 the tourism sector appears to have been as important as the development of other sectors of the Indian economy.

Eco-Tourism in Tamil Nadu

Eco-tourism is considered one of the most viable tools to enable economic growth and ecological security. Ecotourism is considered 'inclusive' since local considerations and demands are woven into the programme. One of the key points of ecotourism is that smaller players like local residents; tribal groups etc. get to participate and benefit from the programme. Ecotourism is a sustainable form of natural resource-based tourism which focuses on experiencing and leaning about nature. It is ethically managed so that minimal impact is caused on the immediate environment.

Ecotourism should be able to contribute to the conservation of natural areas and maintain species and their habitats by either directly contributing to conservation and/or indirectly, by providing revenue to the local community. The provisions should be sufficient for local people to value and therefore protect the wild life heritage as a source of income. Ecotourism should also be planned and managed to improve the quality of life of residents and should strive to preserve natural and cultural resource capital.

Tourism - Impact Analysis- Positive impacts

- Conservation of the historic and cultural heritage of an area. Because these cultural patterns are often important tourist attractions, tourism provides the justification and helps to pay for their conservation.
- Renewal of pride by residents in their culture when they observe tourists taking an interest in and wanting to learn about the local culture. One of the interesting Lao characteristics which can be understood and appreciated by tourists is the great diversity of ethnic groups.
- Cross-cultural exchange between tourists and residents can lead to mutual understanding, acceptance and peaceful relationships among people of different cultural backgrounds.

Employment potential

The most significant feature of the tourism industry is the capacity to generate large scale employment opportunities even in backward areas, specially to women, both educated and uneducated. Another important feature of tourism is that it contributes to national integration of the people who live in different regions of the country with diverse cultures and languages.

Growth of tourism

Furthermore, despite economically and politically induced setbacks, threats of terrorism from a variety of global hotspots, recession in Europe, and economic upheaval in Japan, and the once Communist Eastern Block, the future of tourism is brighter than ever.

Expectations for growth of tourism are 6.1 percent, 23 percent faster than the world economy. Travel and Tourism will create 144 million jobs worldwide between now and the year 2005 (112 million in the fast-growing Asia pacific.) "In the 21st century" says Geoffrey Lipman, President of the world Travel and Tourism Council, "there will be a surge of Asian travellers in markets around the world, and Asian countries will be the premium destinations." If tourism is such a major contributor to the world's economic well-being, then the question arises, why has tourism received so little attention from domestic policy makers and crafters of international trade agreements.

Conclusion

There is no obvious answer. One explanation is that tourism is a multicomponent industry, many parts of which are inextricably linked to other economic sectors such as airlines to transportation; souvenir shops, concession stands and restaurants to retail or service; hotels and other accommodation to commercial development.

"The Brussel based World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) is a coalition of 65 chief executive officers from all sectors of the industry. Its goal, as stated in WTTC reports, is "to convince governments of the enormous contribution of travel and tourism to national and world economic development, to

promote expansion of travel and tourism markets in harmony with environment and to eliminate barriers to growth of the industry."

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Unearthing Reasons for School Dropouts – A Study

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[In India, one in three students doesn't complete schooling due to various reasons though the students have the right to a free and compulsory education. This crisis has been an academic nightmare for the past few decades. The present study examines the factors that cause students to depart before schooling. A sample of seventy-two respondents was selected randomly from six secondary schools in Kosigi Mandal of Kurnool District in Andhra Pradesh State. The study used both qualitative and quantitative data. The required primary data was collected through a schedule and secondary data was collected from various journals, reports and websites. The objectives of the present study were to find the association of personal, socio-economic and school factors and school dropouts in the study area and also to find the influence of these factors on school dropouts. The study found that personal factors and socio-economic factors were associated with school dropouts in the study area while as socio-economic factors influence the school dropouts statistically. Though personal factors had an association with school dropouts but don't influence the school dropouts statistically in the study area.]

Education is the fundamental prerequisite for human improvement. Both boys and girls have equivalent opportunity to get free and compulsory education in India till they attain an age of fourteen. Secondary education plays a significant role to make child into a complete man, it enhances the chances of an individual in getting into higher education thereby fetching an employment while as the grounded scenario in India has different face. The lliteracy rate and dropout rates in Kosigi Mandal of Kurnool District in Andhra Pradesh state was alarming as compared to state and national averages.

The majority of the student dropouts in secondary schools in Kosigi Mandal of Kurnool District in Andhra Pradesh State have been reported when they reach either class IX or class X, which fundamentally prompts different issues. The issues are likely migration of family, parental discouragement, poverty, lower level of education of their parents, work on the field etc.

The school and district authorities and the elected governments have been putting forth their efforts unconditionally to root out this problem since independence. Though they have achieved in bringing down the number but not at the expected level i.e., to reach level zero. Therefore, researcher intended to conduct the study to address the problem which has been associated with numerous issues as mentioned above.

The percentage of students in the sample schools in the study area have the chances either to dropout or retain in the same classes during the study period was comparatively very high and is evident from the Table-1.

Table-1: Number of students having less than fifty per cent attendance during the academic 2019-2020 in the study area.

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Classes	Boys			Girls			Total		
	Number	Total	Per cent	Number	Total	Per cent	Number	Total	Per cent
IX	32	330	9.69	72	213	33.80	104	543	26.33
X	15	305	4.91	60	173	34.68	75	478	15.69
Total	47	635	7.40	132	386	34.19	179	1021	17.53

Source: Primary data.

Review of Literature

Patrick Ajaja (2012) reported in his study that "four factors influence the school drop outs viz., school, job, family and community related factors". Mandina Shadreck (2013) suggested that "parents, teachers and pupils work together to inspire and assist children on the verge of dropping out to stay in school and established deprivation and financial constraints."

Arun N. R. Kishore and K. S. Shaji (2012) reported in their study that "for dropping out of school was 'lack of interest' (36 per cent boys and 21 per cent girls)." S. M. Shahidul and A. H. M. Zehadul (2015) concluded in their investigation that "the financial factors, parents with a lower socio-economic status and cultural factors often play a major role in the high rate of early female dropouts." Sharma *et al.* (2007) claims that "dropout influences pressure from parents, lake of interest, household poverty, household duties and large family size."

According to Snigdha and Goswami (2012) "household jobs, lack of parental encouragement in research, large family size, poor family economic status, ill-health and parents' illiteracy were found to be the major reasons for dropping out of school students." Chirtes (2010) claimed in her study that "dropping out of school leads to social integration failure." From the perspective of the families, Sengupta Susmita and Ghosh Shovan (2012) observe that 'the parents are less likely to spend on girls' education."

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the present study are to study the association of personal, family, socio-economic and school factors and school dropouts in the study area to study the influence of these factors on school dropouts in the study area. To address these objectives the following specific objectives were framed.

1. To investigate the association of personal, family, socio-economic and school factors and school dropouts.
2. To study the influence of personal, family, socio-economic and school factors that led to school dropouts.
3. To suggest the measures that may be adopted to reduce the school dropouts based on the study.

Hypothesis of the Study

To study the stated objectives the following hypotheses are formulated.

1. There is no association between Personal/Family/ Socio-economic/ School factors and School dropouts.
2. Personal/Family/ Socio-economic/ School factors do not influence the School dropouts.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey design to study the factors that influence the student dropouts in the study area. The investigator drew a sample of six schools from the twelve secondary schools in Kosigi Mandal which is fifty per cent portrayal of all secondary schools in the study area. The schools were selected through random sampling. Total number of students having less than fifty per cent attendance in class IX and X was one hundred seventy-nine; out of which ninety students were selected as sample for the present study which constitute fifty per cent. Respondents were selected through simple random method. Seventy-two students responded to the schedule in all respects which constitute eighty per cent. Hence the present study considered seventy-two students as sample. The data gathered was analyzed by using SPSS program. The study created both qualitative and quantitative information. Descriptive statistics and regression analysis were used to analyze the data.

Discussion

Personal Factors

Personal factors were computed from the independent variables namely Felt no need for education, Ill-health, Friend's advice, Not allowing mobile, Fear of exams, City craze, Age reason and Gender reason

and entered as a variable. To test the association between Personal factors and school dropout, Chi-square test is used.

Table - 2

Chi-Square Tests_Personal Factors			
	Value	**df**	**Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)**
Pearson Chi-Square	37.479	20	.010
Likelihood Ratio	48.302	20	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	.085	1	.771
N of Valid Cases	72		
Chi-Square Tests_Socio Economic Factors			
Pearson Chi-Square	53.863a	9	.000
Likelihood Ratio	66.039	9	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	45.765	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	72		
Chi-Square Tests-School Factors			
Pearson Chi-Square	72.000	68	.347
Likelihood Ratio	99.313	68	.008
Linear-by-Linear Association	.003	1	.959
N of Valid Cases	72		

Source: SPSS output based on Primary data.

In Tables - 2, the chi-square value is 0.010 which is less than 0.05 at 5 per cent significance level. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected and inferred that there is an association between personal factors and school dropout. This is further tested with regression analysis to find out the influence of personal factors on school dropouts.

Influence of Personal factors on school dropout

The regression analysis is carried out to test the influence of personal factors on school dropouts. The 'p'-value in Table-4 is 0.773 which is higher than 0.05 at 5 per cent significance level. Hence this study accepts null hypothesis and conclude that explanatory variable viz., personal factors do not influence the explained variable i.e., school dropout.

Table-3

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
Personal Factors				
1	.035a	.001	-.013	.505
a. Predictors: (Constant), Personal Factors				
Socio-economic factors				
1	.803c	.645	.639	.301
c. Predictors: (Constant), Socio-economic factors				

Source: SPSS output based on Primary data.

Table-4

ANOVAa						
Personal Factors						
	Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.021	1	.021	.084	.773b
	Residual	8.196	70	.117		
	Total	17.875	71			
a. Dependent Variable: Dropout						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Personal Factors						
Socio-economic factors						
1	Regression	11.522	1	11.522	126.947	.000d
	Residual	6.353	70	.091		
	Total	17.875	71			
a. Dependent Variable: Dropout						
d. Predictors: (Constant), Socio-economic Factors						

Source: SPSS output based on Primary data.

Socio-Economic Factors

To test the association between socio-economic factors and school dropout, Chi-square test is used. Socio-economic factors were computed from the independent variables as defined in the study namely Drought, Poverty, Distance of the school, Annual income of family, Sexual harassment, Lack of transport, Disputes in villages and Cost of education and entered as a variable.

In Tables-2, the chi-square value is 0.000 which is less than 0.05 (Significance level of 5 per cent). Hence the null hypothesis is rejected and inferred that there is an association between socio-economic factors and school dropout. This is further tested with regression analysis to find out the influence of socio-economic on school dropouts.

Influence of Socio-economic factors on school dropout

The regression analysis is carried out to test the influence of family factors on school dropouts. In Table - 3, the 'R'- value is 0.803 and R square value is 0.645, which indicates that the proposed model is fit and significant.

The 'p'-value in Table-4 is 0.000 which is less than 0.01 at 1 per cent significance level. Hence the study rejects the null hypothesis. Hence the study concludes that explanatory variable viz., Socio-economic factors influence the explained variable i.e., school dropout.

Table-5

Coefficientsa					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.871	.063	13.800	.000	
Socio-economic Factors	.217	.019	.803	11.267	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Dropout					

Source: SPSS output based on Primary data.

Table-5, explains the linear relation between the school dropout and Socio-economic factors.

School Dropout = 0.871 + (0.217)* f2

Where f2= Socio-economic factors

The said relation in the model suggests that Socio-economic factors influence and stimulate the school dropouts by about twenty-two per cent. Therefore Drought, Poverty, Distance of the school, Annual income of family, Sexual harassment, Lack of transport, Disputes in villages and Cost of education influence the school dropout.

School Factors

School factors were computed from the independent variables as defined in the study namely, lack of teachers, lack of infrastructure, teachers' odd behaviour, water facilities in school, toilet facilities, mid-day meal, school timings, unhygienic school environment, academic pressure and not allowing mobile in the school and entered as a variable. To test the association between socio-economic factors and school dropout, Chi-square test is used.

In Tables - 2, the chi-square value is 0.347 which is more than 0.05 (significance level of 5 per cent). Hence the null hypothesis is accepted and inferred that there is no association between school factors and school dropout. It is further inferred that school factors do not influence school dropout.

Findings and Conclusions

The study found that there is an association between personal factors and school dropouts and personal factors do not influence the explained variable i.e., school dropouts in the study area. The study also reports that there is an association between socio-economic factors and school dropouts and socio-economic factors influence the school dropouts. Further this study didn't find any association between school factors and school dropouts.

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Impacts of Interpersonal Transgressions in Poile Sengupta's *Mangalam*

Chitra Pegu*

[*Transgression happens when one person harms another mentally or physically, by hurting or trespassing a restricted domain, implicit or explicit. The current paper studies the women characters of Poile Sengupta's play, Mangalam from interpersonal transgression point of view. Depending on its intensity, interpersonal transgression leaves a person with different emotional complexities. Sometimes, it can cause severe depression and even lead to suicide. This study aims to figure out how women are mostly the victim of interpersonal transgressions like rape, molestation, domestic violence and marital infidelity. It also aims to bring to light issues and consequences of nosy neighbours, prying and interfering in-laws and family members, sibling complexities, etc., of very normal looking Indian households. It also discusses the importance of forgiveness in the healing process of post-transgressed trauma and how the characters suffered devoid of it*.]

Transgression literally means an act or process of breaking a law or moral rule. In critical theory it is used to describe a process that goes beyond the apparent, the symbolic, and the socio-political or physical norms. In contemporary social and political theory, the concept of transgression is related to the idea of 'boundary crossing'. In *Powers of Horror (1982)*, Julia Kristeva marks that transgression begins very early in a child, when it gains an oedipal identity or acquires a natural urge of symbolic separation from its mother.

The focus of this paper will be on the negative effects of interpersonal transgression within the members of a social set up as subjected in the play, *Mangalam (1993*) by Poile Sengupta. Interpersonal transgression occurs when one person harms another by mentally or physically hurting or trespassing a restricted domain, implicit or explicit. Interpersonal transgression ranges from a simple act like asking a personal question to horrifying physical violence like rape, molestation and physical violence. They can create a serious negative impact on the individuals that has been transgressed, leading to major mental health issues and disorders.

Interpersonal transgressions are a class of interpersonal stressors in which people perceive that another person has harmed them in a way that they consider both painful and morally wrong. Interpersonal transgressions can have negative effects on mental health. For example, discovering that one's spouse has been sexually unfaithful is associated with a sixfold increase in the likelihood of major depressive disorder (Cano & O'Leary, 2000), and the experience of humiliation is associated with a 70% increase in the risk of major depressive disorder (Mccullough et al. 2006, p. 887).

Therefore, interpersonal transgressions can create a serious traumatic impact on the transgressed depending on the type and intensity. *Mangalam* is a play by a woman about women representing domestic violence, marital infidelity and the other forms of abuse that women face irrespective of class, age and culture. Significantly, these issues are various forms of interpersonal transgression. Issues like nosy neighbours, prying and interfering in-laws and family members, sibling complexities, incest, etc., are also dominant which makes the play all about family politics resulting out of transgressive behaviour of the individuals of a very normal looking Indian middle-class household.

Poile Sengupta's play *Mangalam* holds a remarkable place in the women's theatre of India. It won a special prize for representing socially relevant theme in the Hindu-Madras Players play scripts competition of 1993. Sengupta employs the technique of a play within a play. It has two acts with two different storylines. It presents Act I as a play that the characters of Act II watch in a theatre. The characters that play the roles in Act I become the key characters in Act II. Both the acts though have different plots, deal with the same situation, blurring the distinction between theatre and reality. The play shows women as a victim of various suppressions and violence common in every Indian society, irrespective of age, education and economic condition.

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Act I revolves around Mangalam, the central character of the play. Though she is physically absent in the play, her presence is constantly felt through her frequent mentions by the other characters. The Act begins with the transgression of Thangam into the Dorai Household, the family of her recently dead sister Mangalam (wife of Dorai and mother of Sriram, Mani, Usha, Chitra and Kannan). She storms into the otherwise calm household causing a stir into their day-to-day life and critiquing their way of life and conduct and gradually manipulating and controlling. When Mani says that Thangam will stay for a month and shall leave only after fixing Chitra's marriage, Dorai explodes with rage, "I will not allow a shaven head to fix my child's marriage. That woman will leave my house immediately. Tell her that. I will throw her things out. I will..." (Sengupta, 2010, *Women Centre Stage* p. 8).

Thangam also disrupts the monopoly of the cook over the kitchen. Apparently, the cook was doing well in his job but Thangam comes in and demands, "From now on, I will give the orders in the house... you understand?" The cook tries to defend: "Amma never even looked into the kitchen... she left everything to me..." (Sengupta, 2010, p.14). Apparently Thamma comes to conquer the site. We also find in the act characters like Vaithi and Kamala that act as noisy neighbours. Vaithi and Kamala came into the house to show condolences or in the words of Sengupta, 'trying to pry out information' (p. 11).

Kamala speaks up her reason for concern: "When did it happen? What actually happened? People are showing many things. You know how nosy people are. They always make big things out of something small. So, I told him, even if it is Thursday, we must go. Anna won't mind" (p. 11).

Ironically, Sengupta through this dialogue critiques the prying neighbours and points out how they can really make an unpleasant situation worse. And as the play progresses, the neighbour tactfully transgresses again and supplements the plot by bringing in Chitra's letter from the postman and also witnessing a family fight where the unhappy married life of Usha was being hinted. --

As the play progresses, the actual cause of Mangalam's death comes to light. Mangalam was a constant victim of abuse by her husband. This is a brutal way of physical transgression. Mangalam was both mentally and physically ill after being with her husband for about 31 years. Tired of her life, she overdosed sleeping pills and intentionally deteriorated her health, thus committing suicide. However, with the unravelling of the secret of Sriram's biological father, another secret came to light. The secret being that Thangam's husband raped Mangalam, Dorai tortured Mangalam, knowing the fact that she was pregnant from before they married.

But he could never know who impregnated her, even after his incessant torture. Mangalam was a victim of an extreme transgression that shredded her will to live and search for happiness. Her own family members, her brother-in-law, husband and even her own sister Thangam, continuously violated her domain. Sengupta thus writes for a voice-over: "...others violate her, and she must pay for their *trespass...*" (p. 36).

Thus, Poile Sengupta portrays Mangalam as a victim of hatred and violence in the hands of her husband throughout her life. She was in her husband's opinion, a sinner that carried the child of another man without marriage, while she was only a victim. Her bother-in-law transgressed and impregnated her when she was just a teenager. Even though she was the victim, she had to suffer from disgrace until her death. She suffered from trauma all through her life for the sin she had never committed. She could end her trauma only by death which she led herself.

Even Dorai confesses that he tortured and mocked Thangam throughout her life but he thinks it was all her fault as she would not reveal the biological father of their first child. He says that she was always cold and never reacted whenever he asked about the father who angered him and tortured even more: "...she wouldn't tell me who the father was. First, I used to ask her softly, sweetly. She would not tell me. Then I beat her. ... She would not even cry out in pain. ... Then it became a game to see how I could take it out of her..." (p. 34).

With each blow and mockery, she experienced one emotional death. Therefore, before her actual death she died a number of physical deaths. Sengupta aptly writes for a voice-over:

"Women die many kinds of deaths; men don't know this.

For them, when a woman cooks, and arranges flowers in her hair and makes place in the bed, she is alive.

But a woman can smile, she can pin flowers in her hair and arrange a red dot on her forehead, and makes place in the bed Because her husband is alive, she may be dead" (p.12).

Act II begins with Suresh and Sumati discussing the play they watched the previous day. Among the various issues they also talked about the biased treatment that a girl child has to face when she grows up in an Indian traditional household. Sumati reveals that she has her own such experience from her childhood even though her family was a modern and sophisticated urban family. After her brother Suresh was born, all her mother, Thangam's attention and care slanted towards him. Therefore, she learned to become independent from a very early age. But despite being educated and 'empowered' she becomes a victim of multiple transgressions.

She goes through the trauma of a broken engagement for resisting the abuse by her fiancé. She becomes aloof and 'always enclosed within herself' (Sengupta, p.63). She changed her perspective of the 'other' and always perceives with doubt and fear. To add to her trauma, she also becomes a victim of physical abuse by her uncle Nari, who is a very close friend of her father, and was visiting her household along with his family. Nari was a father figure for Sumati. This incident shook not only Sumati but also the members of both the families. It is not only interpersonal transgression, but social as well.

Similarly, Thangam, who apparently seemed to have a happy relationship with her husband Sreeni was being cheated on with another woman. Even Nari transgressed the trust of his wife Vaidehi by trying to molest Sumati. Most of the male characters in this act use and abuse women for their own wasted interest or sexual conquest. In this situation, only the character of Vikram, Nari's son, stands in opposition to what the majority does. From the very beginning he tries to understand Sumati and comfort her. He even warns his sister to stay away from playboys like Suresh. When his father tries to molest Sumati, he threatens him, calling him a bastard. Perhaps, through Vikram, the playwright tries to show that in a world full of transgressors there are also people like Vikram who acts as a protector of laws and boundaries.

Poile Sengupta through this play shows how women suffer irrespective of class, caste, time and place or how well educated or uneducated they are. Women in many ways become a mere object of sexual gratification. She has been a space which is constantly transgressed by men easily and universally. She is given an identity irrespective of choice and is forced to carry throughout her life. In India since ancient times, woman has been an up-lifter of age-old tradition and have to go through cultural appropriation. By staging the play *Mangalam*, Sengupta is able to raise her voice against the horde of crime committed against women. She uses the Shakespearean play within play technique which widened the scope for representing women's issues from different class and social set up.

As a human being is a social animal, transgression is an inherent attribute. Humans learn to transgress as soon as they realize the existence of the *other* besides themselves. They transgress from their semiotic phase (pre-oedipal, pre-verbal or pre-effable state of being) to embrace the symbolic phase (language, society, culture, etc.). As they grow up, they learn to transgress into the broader spectrum of life. In this way their knowledge grows and boundaries are built. Many get emotionally hurt and fall prey to health issues. Transgression, though sounds like an intrusion, cannot always have a negative impact on the transgressed. Some transgressions are necessary for the mental health of the individuals and the society and it prevents from total alienation.

Transgression can never be a totality but is rather a therapeutic interrogation of social codes, a process of constant critique which prevents any system from becoming totalitarian. As such it is an ethical safeguarding subjectivity against total alienation or psychosis and yet enabling the boundaries of social, political, sexual, literary, cultural and national identity to be constantly interrogated and modulated (Smith, 1997, p. 271).

In the play *Mangalam* many a relationship gets severed and detached because of interpersonal transgression - the character Mangalam of Act I commits suicide; Thamma of Act I decides to forgive her husband and stay together but remains 'a barren woman' and that of Act II decides to leave her husband. Therefore, individuals experiencing transgression react with different levels of complex emotions. One could try forgiveness as it is not an act of condoning. It is an act important for removing the negative and hateful emotions from our system to bring back healthy way of life. But educating the society and changing their perspective in the treatment of women is even more important.

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Semblance of Cultural Pluralism in Vikram Seth's Novels

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[*Pluralism signifies the Doctrine of Multiplicity that is conceivably opposite to monism observed through the doctrine of Unity and Dualism deciphered through the doctrine of duality. In epistemology, plurality edifies how there is no single constant means of approach about the world but for the prevalent discrepancy. observing from the conglomerated dimension of the cultural and sociological perspective, one comprehends that pluralism refers to the fact how actually the cultures are expressions of a variety of values, practices and beliefs. Cultural variations yield in turn ethical diversity. The word "Culture" is derived from the Latin `Colre', which means to tend to the earth and grow or cultivation and nurture. Cultural Pluralism is a sociological contention of the existence of heterogeneity in practices, beliefs and value systems. This research article aspires to explore "Cultural Pluralism" in Vikram Seth's novels - The Golden Gate (1986), set in California revolves around the cultural lives of a noticeable group of American youth, A Suitable Boy (1993) depicting cultural and political aspects of post-independent India and An Equal Music (1999) manifesting personal, professional and cultural lifestyle of musicians. In Seth's selected works there are cluster of evidences picturing the traditions of the entire world divided on the discrepancies of culture practices reflected on the facets namely education, society, marriage as an institution and individual attitude.*]

Pluralism is an expansion of social diversity or variety. It can be observed in various components of society as cultural, political, philosophical etc. From Greek Philosopher Protagoras to the French Renaissance philosopher Michel de Montaigne, one of the most significant philosophers of French Renaissance, to the German Maximilian Karl Emil Weber, the German sociologist, philosopher, jurist-cum-political economist, all have acknowledged the relevance of cultural diversity. Some other theorists and philosophers admit to the prevalence of cultural pluralism and integrate it into a political arrangement and a philosophical theory about justice but without asserting anything conclusive about its values or their impact on social agency.

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John Bordley Rawls, an American moral and political philosopher in the liberal tradition, describes a society of free citizens holding equal basic rights and cooperating within an egalitarian conception of justice in his *Political Liberalism (1996)*. Indeed, this research helps to decipher Vikram Seth's works through the dimensions of John Rawls's conceptualization of *Political Liberalism* (1996) as it paves the connecting bridge between the different manifestations of cultural pluralism traced in his fiction.

Environmentalists, sociologists and social workers have together put in their efforts to understand, improvise and develop ecosphere, wherein subordinate groups needn't forsake their life style and traditions but rather can express themselves free of prejudice. Literary writers have also contributed through their work in the prevailing standards of behaviour that enable people to live cooperatively in groups. The two important and long-lasting questions about pluralism: Can we prove the existence of pluralism? And is pluralism a good thing? An attempt has been made to search an answer to the above problems through Vikram Seth's selected novels. Vikram Seth's literature is a mirror reflecting pluralism and this paper is an endeavor to highlight "Cultural Pluralism" as it is observed in the multifaceted Indian writer and how it has got itself reflected in his works of literature.

Vikram Seth – A transnational writer

Vikram Seth, a post-colonial Indian English novelist and poet, was born in Calcutta on 20th June 1952. He studied economics & philosophy at Oxford. He is a proud recipient of many awards – Padma Shri, Sahitya Academy, W.H. Smith Literary Award etc. His multicultural interests add to his artistic skills which have helped him to be the master of many genres. One cannot categorize his works to any particular genre of literature because he writes poetry with the same ease as he writes a children's book, a libretto, a travelogue or a biography. His major works are *The Golden Gate* (novel in verse 1986), *Beastly Tales from Here and There (*1992), *A Suitable Boy* (1993), *An Equal Music* (1999), *Arion and the Dolphin* (1994), *Two Lives (*2005) etc.

His experience of living in three continents is reflected in his literature. As Seth himself says, "I have been quartered between California, China, India and England" (Gupta,8) and his interest in these cultures is not of a mere observer but the one who wants to get the essence of all. Seth's control over linguistic structure and its concomitants and the pleasure that a repeated reading of his books provides, make him one of the creative writers on pluralism of the post-1980 Indian writers in English.

Discrepancies in Traditional Practices

The term "tradition" is a faith or behaviour passed down within a group or society with symbolic meaning or special significance with origins in the past. Traditions can persist and evolve for thousands of years – the word tradition itself derives from the Latin, literally meaning to transmit, to hand over, to give for safekeeping. While it is commonly assumed that traditions have been invented on purpose, whether that be political or cultural, over short periods of time. Human beings have their own views and beliefs regarding the significance and meaning of human life and its activities. The various practices that structure and regulate the individual as well as collective lives refers to "Tradition".

Vikram Seth's The *Golden Gate (1986), A Suitable Boy (1993) and An Equal Music* (1999) shall be pursued as a comparative study of Eastern (India), Western (America) and European traditions. All the countries have their own distinct cultures, moral values, and other special hallmarks and Seth has made us peep into the lives of the people of different countries and to know about the social, political, economic, and religious scenarios of the particular country and observe cultural pluralism and its impact on his characters.

Love & Relationship

Man being a social animal is always longing for love and passion and in the delineation of the theme of love and relationship, *The Golden Gate(1986)* and *An Equal Music (1999)* are the hallmarks for Western and European culture, Seth presents romantic love as beastly and is used as a weapon in their battle against the loneliness and boredom of life and in *A Suitable Boy(1993),* he has also depicted the Indian mentality about love and Romance. John, in *The Golden Gate (1986)* feels boredom and lonely and his anguish and loneliness is universal and it symbolizes the Californian life:

Young handsome yuppie, 26, Straightforward, sociable, but lonely,…..impulsive, fit and fun, let's meet Be rash, Box…. (2.3)

There are love triangles in all the three novels of Vikram Seth. In *the Golden Gate*, Liz, John and Phil completes the triangle. In *A Suitable Boy (1993),* set in post-independent India, Seth has proved that

romance, love and passion are discarded totally through the instances of Lata and Maan Kapoor. Lata while rejecting Kabir from the choice of her possible suitors among Amit and Haresh, rejects the turbulent, violent and passionate part of herself. She explains to her best friend, Malati about the choice made by her:

Lata sighed. 'Malati, I can't describe it – my feelings for him are so confused. I'm not myself when I'm with him. I ask myself who is this –this jealous, obsessed woman who can't get a man out of her head – why should I make myself suffer like this? I know that it'll always be like this

if I'm with him.' (1475).

In A*n Equal Music (1999)*, Seth weaves an impassioned tale of love, longing and the power of music in Michael's passionate relationship with his music, his deeply moving 12-year old attachment to his 270 year – old Carlo Tononi violin; and his intense love for Julia who is his love lost, found and finally lost again forever. The lines have got music in them. The author has successfully turned prose to poetry and the rhythm makes the novel musical: What is the difference between my life and my love? One gets me low, the other lets me go.O Luke, O Luke, rack me no riddles more. (346)

Pluralism in Indian Weddings

Marriage is a socially and culturally licensed relationship between a man and woman that validates a sexual and economic union. Marriage is a social institution, wherein individuals make a long-lasting agreement to be life partners to complement each other. Marriage rules, regulations, rites and rituals vary around the world according to their religion, caste and the geographical boundaries to which they belong and so on. Marriage is a celebration in which number of cultural, traditional, customary and religious rituals take place.

Vikram Seth's insight of marriage, the aftermath of marriage, has made him conclude that marriage is a relationship "where accepting each other with their imperfections is the key" (Daily Excelsior, 17 February 2013). Through the marriage theme, Seth has depicted cultural pluralism in three different societies – American, Indian and European – in their values and traditions. In Indian marriage system he not only describes the practices in North Indian weddings but also embarks on the aspects of Islamic ceremonies as shown in *A Suitable Boy (1993)*.

Seth has enabled us to compare and contrast the marriage rites of the American society: "It is a traditional church wedding amidst family and friends, with the bride in white, children and cats gorging on the tiered wedding cake and confetti raining down on everyone" (Punekar, 2008: 83) with that of an Indian marriage system, where the bride is beautifully dressed in red not in white like a Western bride, generally the ceremony takes place at home not in church like the Western marriages and the vows and mantras are pronounced by the priest and not by the couple as in Western culture. There is certain Indian attitude to the lines, which makes it easier for us to identify with the characters:

Now that the exchange of garlands was over, the crowd paid no great attention to the actual wedding rites. These would go on for the better part of an hour while the guests milled and chattered round the lawns of Prem Nivas… Lata's aunt from Kanpur horrified by the complexion of the groom was talking to aunt from Lucknow about "Rupa's black grand – children', (15).

Heterogeneity in Family Values

In Indian society, family is the backbone and provides a person with physical, psychological and socio-cultural stability whereas family as a social unit is dying in the Western culture. Indian culture is absolutely on familial relations and this is applicable to all communities in India. Vikram Seth in his *A Suitable Boy (1993)* has emphasized that a family made of suitable life-partners sharing mutual love, regard and respect is a source of essential warmth, happiness, tranquility, and bliss. In *A Suitable boy* (1993) Lata's short stay with the sinister Sahagal family makes her to change her perspectives on judging her mother. Pran's illness and the birth of his and Savitha's baby are the two incidents which occur side by side in the same hospital and that leads Lata to realize the significance of family as a bulwark against trouble and pain. She also understands that her mother is the guardian of the bulwark:

Her mother appeared to her now as the guardian of the family; and with life and… Pran and Savita are powerful advisors by precept: the affectionate and supportive relationship that they enjoy,'' that" marriage and children were a great good (994-995).

The American society depicted by Seth in *The Golden Gate (1986)*, "... there is loneliness so intense that people build walls around themselves to convince themselves that they are islands, there is self-doubt,

unrelenting professional pressure, no set of values to live by, confused moral codes and ever-increasing alienation from the human touch (Gupta, 44).

In Vikram Seth's *An Equal Music (1999)* we are shown evidences of familial intrusions in the life of the Michael Holme who wanted to become a musician. But Michael's father being a butcher had no inclination for music and questions him, "What sort of future is that?" (23). He felt that Michael won't be able to support a family. With great difficulty he finally gets to convince his father. Seth describes this reunion beautifully:

Later, he attended my first recital in Manchester, but grudgingly… urbane world far outside his ken and after a fashion, conceded that there might be something to my chosen line of work after all. He is proud of me now, and curiously uncritical (23).

Heterogeneity in Gender Issues

In a country like India that reports high rates of teenage pregnancies and sexual abuse, sex is considered as a taboo subject in our Indian society and sex education for adolescents is a highly controversial topic in Indian culture. Sex education, as the UNESCO defines it, "Provides opportunities to …build decision-making, communication and risk reduction skills about many aspects of sexuality…. Encompasses the full range of information, skills and values to enable young people to exercise their sexual and reproductive rights and to make decisions about their health and sexuality" (Shai Venkatraman, NDTV). Vikram Seth in his *A Suitable Boy (1993)* portrays the hesitation of Indian parents towards imparting sex or gender issues as they find it embarrassing to discuss these issues:

Lata recalled that neither her mother nor Savitha had told her Even about menstruation before it had suddenly happened to her With no warning while they were on a train. Lata had been twelve (673) … When she asked Savitha why she hadn't told her about it, Savitha said: 'But I thought you knew, I did before it happened to me' (674).

Lata could not speak about the sexual torments of Mr. Sahgal, that she had to face twice in her life because she had not mentioned the incident to her mother when it occurred for the first time when she was fourteen and had blamed herself for misunderstanding what her uncle had said and had forgotten about it. And this lack of communication about the gender issues between the mother and daughter made the incident to repeat itself for the second time during their visit to Sahgals when Lata is nineteen:

I know you are a lipstick girl, Do you want some lipstick? Said Mr. Sahgal, Moving forward along the bed. 'No -' cried Lata. 'I don't – Mausaji — please stop this—-'... I'll shout ——my mother is a light sleeper ——go away —— go away…. Ma— Ma— —' 672).

Towards the end of the novel, *A Suitable Boy (1993)*, Seth hints for a meaningful social change in the Indian culture - in the attitude of parents by reaching out to boys and girls on gender issues & sex education. Lata is a nineteen-year-old Indian girl without having any kind of sexual knowledge until her mother, Mrs. Rupa Mehra presents her an erotic book titled "Ideal marriage" just prior to her wedding with Haresh:

... You should not let your wedding and other things distract you'And with that she put *Ideal Marriage*, carefully wrapped in the bridal, Colours of red and gold into her hand. 'This book will teach you everything – about Men,' she said, Lowering her voice for some reason. 'Even our Sita and Savitri had. To have these experiences' (1514).

In *The Golden Gate (1986),* Vikram Seth has given a passionate description of homosexuality through the characters of Phil and Ed. By the reaction of Liz after knowing the relation of Phil and Ed, one could assume that homosexual relationship is common and accepted in American society. On the other hand, in *A Suitable Boy* (1993), a novel set in India; the author only hints at the homosexual relationship of Maan and Firoz, their caressing, ruffling heads and sleeping together.

Vikram Seth's Theory of Justice

Vikram Seth through cultural pluralism of tradition depicted in his novels has arrived at a theory of justice as a guide for social ethics. The ignorance or initial situation prevalent in the main characters of his novels by engaging in a sort of thought process arrives at a sort of agreement carrying out a reasoning rationally that benefits not only the individuals but their family as well as the society of which they are a part. His explicitly comprehensive conception of justice for an entire society that are going to govern the way society works and victory of certain ethics and virtues over the vices.

The three main female characters in the selected novels of Seth after reasoning rationally reject their passionate, over-demanding lovers and choose mature, practical and understanding persons who not

only bring back reality into their land of fantasy but also benefit their family and society. Liz in The *Golden Gate (1986)* prefers pragmatic Phil over a romantic John because she understood that in the game of life what will last long is steady affection rather than a passionate, romantic love relationship. Julia in *An Equal Music (1999)* ends her relationship with Michel and returns back to her husband James who had stood by her – "In the worst days when I could hardly recognize myself in the mirror, I saw in his eyes that I was myself" (327). But in Michael's presence, she becomes "restless and uncertain, afraid and guilty (324).

In *A Suitable Boy (1993)*, Lata chose the stable dependable Haresh rather than Kabir whom she truly loved. She thinks that her feelings for Kabir as confused, jealous and obsessive and their choice is for family over passion. Love is an impermanent, excited and uncontrollable feeling and for leading a happy and contented life one cannot rely totally on love or passion and is insufficient to face the hard realities of the world. According to Seth, love and passion lead man to a land of magical realism, which is a kind of escape from the realities of the world but after enjoying the world of dreams one must have to return back to the world of reality in time and save oneself from drowning totally in the dream land of romance and passion. Seth has emphasized that the true meaning of life is to be found in arranged marriages.

Conclusion

Cultural pluralism holds social multiplicity and the disagreement that grows from it which are never ending. To make life interesting, pluralism places us in a position of searching and questioning, it brings back values into our lives. It will forever haunt us with the ethical and moral questions like "where we go?", "how we do it?", and "why"? and these introspections would fully guide everyone to lead a socially and rationally acceptable and ethical life. As Joseph Raz has put it: "Incommensurability speaks not of what does escape but of what must elude it" (Raz, 334). Cultural pluralism is a secular form of enchantment infusing values into our lives and an interminable quest for ethical orientation.

Our Study of Vikram Seth's selected novels as an evidence for cultural pluralism and his theory of justice about the victory of certain virtues or ethics over the vices gives solution to the two most wanted and long-lasting question on the debates about pluralism: 1. Can we prove the existence of pluralism? 2. Is pluralism a good thing?

Vikram Seth's constant change in literary 'citizenship' – from the Californian poet of *The Golden Gate* to the Indian story teller of *A Suitable Boy* and finally to the European narrator of *An Equal Music* shows pluralism in his nationality. And these works created an integrity among world nations because people of Britain, America or Australia who read these works would now travel more to India through *The Golden Gate* may be to find a *A Suitable Boy or Girl* and blend harmoniously into the *The Equal Music* of Life and soul of the globalised world.

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Hopkins as a Pre-Modernist Poet

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[Gerald Manley Hopkins is considered the single greatest influence upon the development of modern poetry with the solitary exception of T. S. Eliot. Hopkins is considered to be Janus-faced like the two-faced Italian God of doors. On the one side, his poetry reflected his own Victorian age, while the other face looked towards the modern age. As an artist, his one face looked at beauty with deep sensuous appreciation while other face looked at the ascetic denial as an intense devout man of religion.]

To understand the poetry of Gerald Manley Hopkins, one needs to read only the poems – The Candle Indoors, The Wreck of Deutschland, The Windhover and Pied Beauty. In spite of the 'terrible pathos', Hopkins' poetry gives the impression of strength which is also often refined to delicacy. Even in the poems of desolation, there is a note of heroic resistance or stoic acceptance, or willing surrender to the higher necessity. His style is dramatic and contemplative, strenuous and graceful.

Analysis of Hopkins' poetry

'Elected-silence, sing to me, and beat upon my whorled ear, Pipe me to pastures still and be The music that I care to hear…' These 'lines from the poem The Habit of Perfection' by Gerald Manley Hopkins, reflect not only his poetic prowess but his general attitude towards poetry. He was born in 1844 in an Anglican family at Stanford, Essex. Today he is considered the single greatest influence upon the development of Modern poetry with the solitary exception of T. S. Eliot. He is also said to be a typical Mid-Victorian, even though when we read his poems, we find him anything but Mid-Victorian.

He was a major influence on leading poets. When the second edition of his poems was published in 1930, the reviewer of Times Literary Supplement stated – "It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that Hopkins was the most original of poets of the 19th century.

G. M. Hopkins was unique in many ways. Except for a few intimate friends like Coventry Patmore and Robert Bridges, his work was hidden away in manuscripts form until Bridges launched his major works in 1918 after the poet had died in 1899 due to typhoid fever at the age of 44. Hopkins was considered to be Janus-faced like the two-faced Italian God of doors. On the one side, his poetry reflected his own Victorian age, while the other face looked towards the modern age. As an artist his one face looked at beauty with deep sensuous appreciation while other face looked at the ascetic denial as an intense devout man of religion.

Though born in an Anglican family, as a youth he came under the influence of Cardinal Newman and the Oxford movement. So, he became a Roman Catholic in 1866 and a Jesuit Priest in 1877. As a boy he was influenced much by the Pre-Raphaelites and Keats. The main recurrent themes of Hopkins poetry were of God, man, nature. His poetry was also of death and resurrection, of mutability and recovery, of desolation and consolation. He found symbols in stars, fire, rain, lightening, the plough, the soldier, the rod of chastisement.

To understand his poetry, one needed to read only the poems – The Candle Indoors, The Wreck of Deutschland, The Windhover and Pied Beauty. In spite of the 'terrible pathos', Hopkins' poetry gave the impression of strength which was also often refined to delicacy. Even in the poems of desolation, there was a note of heroic resistance or stoic acceptance, or willing surrender to the higher necessity. His style was dramatic and contemplative, strenuous and graceful. He had a unique command of rhythm. As a Sonneteer he was both an innovator and preserver. His poetry basically was the outcome of a tension between creativity of an artist and the dedication of a priest. But, on the whole he wrote to serve and praise God. His imagery had originality, variation with an organic function.

Some of his unique poetic features were:

- The poetic diction and imagery
- The Inscape and Instress
- The use of Irishisms and Welsh words e.g. disremembering, unchanceling, voel etc.
- The use of internal alliteration referred as Cynghanedd

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- The use of enjambment that is the running of syntax over from one line to next without punctuations
- The use of Syllepsis that is various meanings converged into a word
- The omission of conjunctions, prepositions and verbs
- The use of interjections, colons and dashes
- The innovator of curtail sonnets with 101/2 lines, terrible sonnets which reflected his inner conflict between a Jesuit-Jekyll and the hedonist-Hyde
- The use of sprung rhythm whose origins could be traced back to old English verse and nursery rhythms. Each metrical foot consists of a single stress, which can either stand alone or place before a number of unstressed syllables. According to Hopkins he called this rhythm and not metre which are measured by the number of syllables. The wreck of Deutschland is the best example for sprung rhythm. Hopkins considered it to be the rhythm of the common speech, rhythm of good music, rhythm of nursery rhymes which arises in common verse with counterpoints. In short it is the rhythm in which only the stressed syllable is counted.
- The use of compound epithets, example 'dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon'

When Hopkins joined as a Jesuit in 1868, he destroyed all his poems and gave up writing poetry as he considered it being inconsistent with the profession of a Christian priest. However, the Wreck of Deutschland, was the result of a Newspaper account about the tragedy in 1875 at the mouth of Thames where five Franciscan nuns, who were exiles from Germany due to the Falk laws, were drowned and the poet was greatly affected by the news. When he mentioned this to his superior, the Rector expressed his regret and wished someone could write something on the terrible occasion. This Hopkins considered to be the permission for him to once again take up his writing to express himself.

The Wreck of Deutschland: The poem in general was divided into two unequal parts. The first part comprised of only the initial 10 stanzas, while the second part consisted of the rest 25 stanzas. The first part was a profound religious meditation in God and his personal faith. The second part dealt with the details of the shipwreck and then his spiritual vision through the nun's experience on-board and her cry "O Christ come quickly".

Critics had recently tried to consider the poem in 4 parts to make it easier to understand: First part-1 to 10 stanza, Second part-11 to 16 stanza, Third part-17 to 31 stanza, Fourth part- 32 to 35 stanza

Analysis of the poem: First Part

The poem begins with the praise and greatness of Almighty who is the Lord-giver of breath and bread, the Lord of living and dead. He is the creator of the poet's flesh, bones and veins and also the shape of his body. Similarly, he is also the one who can unmake the poet and also the destroyer if he wills, so one should also dread his wrath.

In the next stanza, he continues with his personal strife, which he went through before his decision to become a Jesuit priest and adopt Catholicism. He confesses that the Almighty is witness to the terrible spiritual experience he went through, but at the end while praying for His mercy and apprehensive of the anger of his Lord for the indecisive nature, he was able to take the right decision.

'The frown of his face, Before me, the hurtle of hell'. So, he is thankful for 'gospel proffer, a pressure / a principle, Christ's gift.' Even though he is just a 'soft sift / in an hour glass…with a motion a drift'.

In the 5th stanza the poet kisses his own hand to the stars because he sees the Lord or Christ even in the starlight. He sees the glory of Christ even in the thunder. He kisses his own hand as a gesture of acknowledgment and praise even to the Western sky because of the setting sun and its purple hue on the horizon. His gesture is his mark of worship and appreciation of the Lord's grace.

The poet expresses, in the next stanza, his perception of the Lord's presence, not only through the peace and beauty of nature, but also through but also through the suffering and misfortunes which the humans face. The stress of hardships, according to the poet, move the guilty hearts to repentance and bring hard hearts to tears, which is also a blessing in disguise. Those are not devout and faithful, are not able to understand the mercy of the Lord or Christ, in the pain and sufferings. But, the incarnation of the Lord is eternal and ever reaching and ever flowing.

The poet continues in the following stanzas, that the greatness and sweetness and mercy of the Lord cannot be assimilated in any human language, while the most eloquent words will always fall short to describe the attributes of the Almighty. He can destroy as well as protect according to His will. He can be the cold of winter as well as the warmth of the summer. He is the punisher and the comforter.

Second part

In this section of the poem, Hopkins gives the description of the great tragedy about which three was an account in the newspaper. According to his narration of the wreck, the Deutschland, a German steamer started its journey from Bremen with emigrants on the way to New York, but due to an unfortunate snow storm, got grounded on the Kentish knock at 5 a.m. on Monday morning of December 6th 1875. Between the morning and Tuesday night about 200 lives were lost to the sea. After 3a.m on Tuesday, people on the coast, witnessed the horror of women and children along men on the deck being swept away into the numbing sea.

Among them there was a man who was safe in the rigging, but tried to save a child and the mother on the deck by tying himself to a rope, but the waves dashed him against the bulwarks and at dawn his headless body was seen swaying on the rope with the waves. Then, there were five Franciscan nuns whose bodies were in the dead house later, who had held their hands and were drowned together. But, before that, the chief sister among them about 6 feet tall was heard to call out loudly, "O Christ, come quickly".

In the stanzas from 11 to 16, there is a detailed account of this tragedy in the memorable poetic words of Hopkins: 'On Saturday sailed from Bremen …American-outward bound…The goal was a shoal, of a fourth the doom to be drowned…… wiry and white-fiery and whirlwind-swivelled snow……spins to the widow-making, unchilding, unfathering deeps'

The fury of the hailstorm and icy stormy sea and snow hurled the 200 people into the deep graves of the sea water that made them widows and childless and fatherless. "One stirred from the rigging to save…with a rope and round the man…He was pitched to his death at a blow."

Third part

'They fought with God's cold…Till a lioness arose… a virginal tongue told…'The poet described the rise of the Franciscan nun as a prophetess who called out the Lord even in such drastic and terrible state and welcomed her reunion with her Lord. The description about her call, affected the poet deeply and bought tears to his eyes: 'Why tear! Is it? Tear; such a melting, madrigal start!'

The poet wonders, if the tragedy was an occasion to mourn the death of the nuns or it had some unknown and mysterious message from the Lord, hidden within. Though for the world, it was a storm of death, but the poet felt that it was a boon for the sisters, as they were drowned and united with their 'martyr-master' and the fiery storm, rain and ice were in fact for them like 'scroll-leaved flowers, lily showers – sweet heaven astrew in them'.

In the 20th stanza, Hopkins says that, the ship was doubly ill-fated because, firstly it got stuck in the storm and secondly because it came from a country that had committed the crime and sin of expelling the five nuns for their religious belief. He remembers the town of Eisleben in Germany which gave birth to two opposing great personalities. The town was the birth place of Gertrude – the Catholic saint and mystic and also Martin Luther an Augustinian monk – a religious reformer, also said to be the enemy of the Catholic faith.

For Hopkins, Gertrude was Christ's Lily while Luther was the beast in a jungle. It reminds him of Cain and Abel, the two sons of Adam, who represent the two opposing forces of good and evil, as Cain committed the first murder on this earth because of his jealousy over his own brother Abel.

In the 22nd stanza, he reveals his religious outlook and tries to symbolise the tragedy of the nuns as a significant message from his Lord to revive the lost religious fervour of the people of England and the birth of Catholicism once again on the poet's misguided motherland. The five nuns according to the poet can symbolise the five wounds of Christ when he was crucified. The nuns thus belonged to the Lord so became the device, the seal and the index that reminds the suffering and sacrifice of Christ- 'the sake and the cipher'.

'Joy fall to those, father Francis, Drawn to the life that died……and these thy daughter's, And five lived and leaved favour and pride'

In the above 23rd stanza words, Hopkins informed that the nuns belonged to an order established by St. Francis who lived during 1181-1226, who renounced wealth and chose to follow Christ's humility, poverty and active love of mankind. He even received the stigmata in 1224- the five wound marks of Christ on his body. Hopkins now alludes that the five nuns have become the objects of the saint's pride as they represent the stigmata by impressing the suffering of Christ which had been 'sisterly sealed'

In the next stanza, he tries to evaluate the suffering of the five nuns in relation to his own position. The poet contrasts his position which was far away from the tragic incident, while he was safe and sound under the roof, the nuns were falling prey to the snow storm. But, in spite of the dire situation, the chief sister decided to accept her fate and surrender herself to the will of her Lord, with unwavering faith for 'wild-worst' to be endowed with Christ's experience and power.

In the next stanza, Hopkins further asserted the basic purpose of this poem, which was to justify the ways of God. According to him, it was necessary for man to understand the purpose of God. In his poetic words, the poet tried to wonder, whether the chief sister was able to understand the divine purpose of the tragedy. He requested the Holy Ghost to inspire him, so that he could comprehend the motive behind the impassioned cry of the nun to Christ. He wondered, whether it was with selfish motive or with an unselfish one. Did she call because of her desire to undergo he same suffering as her master had undergone or was it her craving for salvation? Obviously, the other passengers on the ship, except the nuns, did not want to die, while lamenting 'we are perishing in the storm', which the poet alludes to be similar to the Biblical incident.

The doubting Thomases, among the Disciples of Christ had asked Christ, if he cared not 'whether they perished' when they were in danger of being drowned in the sea of Galilea in Nazareth. The poet wonders if the nun's cry too was for safety and peace amidst all the buffeting and clamour.

In the 28th stanza, the poet narrates, how in the midst of the tumult and cries of the passenger, the poet was on the part of the land and sitting cozily in his room in Wales. The broken sentences of the stanza tell us about the hysterical state in which the chief sister had reached. The last cries of the doomed passengers mingled with the broken exclamations of the sister. Among these truncated statements, the poet merged his own gasping efforts to evoke the scene in words – the terrorising the 'unshapeable shock-night'.

In the 30th stanza, Hopkins alluded to the call of Christ by the nun as the occasion for the re-birth of religious devotion coinciding with the feast of 'Immaculate conception'. The news of the shipwreck reached the poet on December 8th which happened to be the day of the feast of the Immaculate Conception, which represented the day when Catholics believed that the Virginal Mary was freed from the original sin, in the moment of her conception with her son Jesus. The poet believed that the tragedy represented the birth of Christ again through the virgin nun's complete surrender and call for her Lord. So, she glorified Christ and sealed her loving faith.

Hopkins asked his Lord, who according to him is 'heart's light son of virgin Mary', to tell him what kind of feast was held that day in heaven. On one side Virgin Mary gave birth to Christ, while on the other side due to the scene of the shipwreck, another virgin – a nun, conceived mentally forming a picture of Christ in her mind even in her last breath.

In the last stanza, the poet wished that the sacrifice of the dead nuns may restore Britain to the true Christian faith. The poet said that the nuns were drowned off the coast of England, so he requested the nuns to remember the people of England when she was on her journey to heaven which was her future abode. He earnestly wished that the nun may restore Christ to the hearts of the people of England. Though he lamented that the people of his nation had deviated away from the path shown by Christ, still it was his native land and he loved his country dearly. So, the poet wished that the people of England should again embrace Roman Catholicism and he would like to invoke the help of the nuns for this purpose.

Hopkins concludes by reverting again to the theme of mastery, majesty and wisdom of his Lord about which he spoke in the initial stanzas of the poem: 'Remember us in the roads, the heaven-haven of the Reward…Our king back, Oh upon English soul! More brightening her, rare-dear Britain, as his reign rolls

Pride, rose, prince, he roofs us, high priest…Our heart's charity's hearth's fire, our thought's chivalry's throng's Lord.'

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Impact of Mining and Quarrying Industries on Indian Economy

Dr. Sharanappa Saidapur*

[Mining and quarry industries play an important role in the development of Indian economy. Economic development of any country largely depends upon the availability of natural resources. Resources are commonly divided into two groups, exhaustible and renewable resources which may be used without depletion. Exhaustible resources like minerals (stones) are necessarily depleted by use. The mining and quarrying sectors in India were estimated to grow at 1.5 percent in fiscal year 2020. While this was an increase of 0.2 percent compared to the previous year, the country's agricultural, industrial and service industries were all expected to see decreased growth this year. Government itself can own and operate the quarries. This will create competition on sound basis which is beneficial to the workers and ultimate consumers. The government also will be beneficiary as it will increase its income.]

The mining industry in India is a major economic activity which contributes significantly to the economy of India. The Gross Domestic Product contribution of the mining industry varies from 2.2% to 2.5% only but going by the GDP of the total industrial sector it contributes around 10% to 11 percent. Even mining done on small scale contributes 6% to the entire cost of mineral production. Indian mining industry provides job opportunities to around 7, 00,000 persons, and is the third largest employment-generation sector.

Economic development of any country largely depends upon the availability of natural resources. Resources are commonly divided into two groups, exhaustible and renewable resources which may be used without depletion. Exhaustible resources like minerals (stones) are necessarily depleted by use. Exploitation of mineral resources has played an important role in generating industrial development and economic growth. Minerals that can attain any value or generate any amount of growth, have to be located, extracted and converted into usable products for which a demand exists and delivered to consumers in the required quantities and qualities at the needed times.

Manmade products are marketable only after the investment of considerable amount of capital and labour. Modern industrial development depends critically on the easy availability of various minerals. Minerals are thus, essential raw-materials for many industries of cement, fertilizers, and non-ferrous metals. Emerging new materials and economic development are determined by a nation's ability to mine and process its mineral raw materials in the most efficient manners.

Mining and quarrying extract a wide range of useful materials from the ground such as coal, metals, and stone. These substances are used widely in building and manufacturing industries while precious stones have long been used for adornment and decoration. Mining and quarrying involve investigating potential sites of extraction, then getting the required material out of the ground and finally processing with heat or chemicals to get the metal or other substance of interest. All these operations may use large amount of water.

India has large reserve of a variety of natural stones, from limestone, granite, marble to stand stone and slate. It is also a major supplier of the global stone industry in competition with South Africa, Italy, Brazil, Spain and China. A few countries are also well endowed with natural mineral resources as India. The resource potential offers good growth prospects for rapid industrial progress, employment and export.

While the mining operations have provided a much desired and considerable scope for export of processed minerals, necessarily follow up measures are yet to be taken to push up the same. The mining and quarrying sectors in India were estimated to grow at 1.5 percent in fiscal year 2020. While this was an increase of 0.2 percent compared to the previous year, the country's agricultural, industrial and service industries were all expected to see decreased growth this year.

Concept of Mining and Quarrying

Mining is the extraction of valuable minerals or other geological materials from the ground usually from an

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ore body, lode, vein, seam, reef or placer deposit. These deposits form a mineralized package that is of economic worth to the miner.

Ores recovered by mining include metals, coal, oil shale, gemstones, chalk, dimension stone, rock salt, potash, gravel and clay. Mining is required to obtain any material that cannot be grown though agricultural processes, or created artificially in a laboratory or factory. Mining in a wider sense includes extraction of any non-renewable resource such as petroleum, natural gas, or even water.

A quarry is a type of open-pit mine in which dimension stone, rock, construction aggregate, riprap, sand, gravel or slate is excavated from the ground. The operation of quarries is regulated in some jurisdictions to reduce their environmental impact.

Further, a quarry is a type of open-pit mine from which rock or minerals are extracted. Quarries are generally used for extracting building materials, such as dimension stone, construction aggregate, riprap, sand, and gravel. They are often collocated with concrete and asphalt plants due to the requirement for large amounts of aggregate in those materials. Open mines that produce minerals are typically referred as open pit mines. The word quarry can include underground quarrying for stone, such as Bath stone.

Objective of the Paper

Some of the important objectives of the paper are as follows:

1. To understand the mining and quarrying industries.
2. To study the prospects and problems of industries.
3. To make suitable suggestions for improving the industries.

Methodology

Present paper is based on the secondary sources. The secondary sources collected from books, journals, newspapers, government reports like Census report, CSO data and Karnataka Economic Survey and Karnataka at a Glance. Descriptive as well as analytical methods of analysis are adopted in this paper.

Discussion and Analysis

Mining and quarry industries play an important role in the development of Indian economy. The time is now opportune to make an assessment, with the solid experience gained over the last seven decades in the sector of our achievements and shortcomings, so that we can plan our future strategies. In this paper we tried to trace out the problems and prospects of mining and quarry industries in economic development of Country.

The mining and quarrying sectors in India were estimated to grow at 1.5 percent in fiscal year 2020. While this is 0.2 percent increase compared to the previous year, the country's agricultural, industrial and service industries were all expected to see decreased growth.

Table-1

Growth of Mining and Quarrying in India

Sl.No	*Year*	*Growth Rate in %*
1	2015	11.7
2	2016	10.5
3	2017	1.8
4	2018	5.1
5	2019	1.3
6	2020	1.5

Source: Sandhy Keelery April 6, 2020.

The above table-1, analyzes the year-wise growth of mining and quarrying in India. The growth of the mining and quarrying industries is decreasing year after year. There was 11.7 percent growth in 2015, 10.5 in 2016 and 1.5 growth in 2020.Due to policy of the government mining and quarrying industries growth rate is continuously declining.

India's GVA of Mining and Quarrying Industries

Mining and Quarrying data was reported at 4,185,169.739 INR mn in 2019. This records an increase from the previous number of 3,510,577.647 INR mn for 2018. India's Gross Value Added, Industry, Mining and Quarrying data is updated yearly, averaging 2,610,353.690 INR mn from Mar 2005 to 2019, with 15 observations. The data reached an all-time high of 4,185,169.739 INR mn in 2019 and a record low of 937,590.000 INR mn in 2005. India's GVA, Industry, Mining & Quarrying data remains active status in CEIC and is reported by Central Statistics Office Delhi.

Table-2

Gross Value Added by Mining and Quarrying Industries

(In millions)

Sl.No	Year	Gross Value Added
1	2009	1639620.000
2	2010	1932630.000
3	2011	2513030.000
4	2012	2610353.690
5	2013	2858420.081
6	2014	2957943.343
7	2015	3084760.472
8	2016	2940111.531
9	2017	3218715.740
10	2018	3510577.470
11	2019	4185169.739

Source: Global Database's India, 2020

The above table-2 highlights the Gross Value Added by mining and quarrying industries in current price from 2009 to 2019. The gross value added by mining and quarrying industries has increased year after year.

Mining involves taking economically usable materials from the ground substances that are mined which include ores, coal, evaporites and precious stones and metals. Quarrying is the cutting or digging of stone and related materials from an excavation site or pit and it usually leaves behind a large hole in the ground. An ore is a deposit containing an economically viable amount of a mineral, which itself is a crystalline inorganic compound usually containing a metal. It is the metal that is of value. The main groups of minerals that are mined are oxides, sulfide, and silicates. Economically, the most significant metals are aluminum, manganese, copper, chromium and nickel.

Impact and Issues of Mining and Quarrying

In this section, we are assessing and understanding the mining and quarrying industries in India, especially focusing on the impact and issues of these twin industries. Mining and quarrying are, by their very nature destructive to the environment. As the global population grows and many countries improve their standard of living, demand for industrial materials is sure to grow. This creates increasing pressure on existing mineral resources, which are finite prospectors, will go further in search of new suppliers. There have been discussions about trying to exploit the pristine environment of Antarctica. However, there is a growing awareness that mineral resources are indeed finite and that they should be conserved. Efforts to recycle metals and other materials could help prevent depletion of resources.

Mining and quarrying have often been criticized for their social and environmental impact. For fewer lives are claimed by the industry in modern times, thanks to improved technology and safety measures. However, mining was a difficult and dangerous. Valuable materials like gold and diamonds' have often helped finance corrupt regimes, crime and terrorism while inhuman labour conditions have often been employed in their extraction.

The environmental impact of mining and quarrying are several. While the extractions are underway, the landscape is visibly disfigured and habitat loss can be extensive. The mining operations themselves and the accompanying spoil heaps cause a drastic change in the location with direct destruction of habitat and blocking or buying nearby bodies of water. Mining can often affect local hydrology, causing changes in the water flow as well as quality. The pits left behind by large mining operations often fill with ground water, which then becomes polluted.

Mining companies now acknowledge that they need to invest in restoring land they have exploited. This involves leveling soil heaps, filling in holes and re-grassing the area. However, it can take many years for vegetation to become re-established at a former mine site. There are also many abandoned mines where environmental impact is ongoing.

The polluting nature of mining and quarrying is underlined by work carried out by the Blacksmith Institute, which is focused on solving pollution problems in the developing world. Each year they publish a list of the world's most polluted sites. In 2007, six of the top ten most polluted sites were mines or smelter facilities.

Mining and quarrying activities have generally been associated with the adverse effects on existing environment and ecosystem. The ecological disturbances due to quarrying operations are land degradation, air, water and noise pollution etc. The effects of quarrying operations entail the ecological and environmental aspects.

Suggestions

Some of the important suggestions are as follows:

1. Illegal quarrying must be effectively controlled by constant supervision and severe punishment.
2. Government itself can be own and operate the quarries. This will create competition on sound basis which is beneficial to the workers and

ultimate consumers. The government also will be beneficiary as it will increase its income.

3. The quarrying industry must be made to come under Factory Act.
4. Technical assistants should be provided to the quarry owners. And it is further recommended that government provide indirect financial assistance through subsidies.
5. Marketing assistance should be provided to the quarry owners by establishing appropriate mineral purchasing agencies, to assist in local marketing and exporting to promote sales and to ensure a fair price structure.
6. It is recommended that quarrying co-operatives and similar organizations be formed wherever possible to promote quarrying industries.
7. Providing transparency in granting mining concessions.
8. Promote indigenous utilization of minerals.
9. To form the committee to evaluate and to make assessment of mineral resources, including the coastal and sea-belt.

Conclusion

The natural resource plays very important role in the development of any country. The economic development of any country largely depends upon the availability of natural resources. Unused natural resources contribute nothing to a nation's welfare and progress under any policy. Government initiative is integral to the maximum utilization of natural resources in the national interest.

In addition, the mining and quarry industries are economically important to producing regions and countries. These industries provide employment, dividends and public facilities. These industries were important in the ancient times and mining-quarrying are more important today and for the further survival of mankind.

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Morale and Teaching Competency of Secondary Teachers

Shakti Singh* & Prof. Mamta Gupta**

[*Morale is the main ingredient of the behaviour, it refers to the intrinsic capability of the teacher which enables them with great enthusiasm. In the present study, an attempt has been made to analyze the factors of Teachers' Morale and Teaching Competency. Thereafter, to ascertain the inter-correlation among the dimensions of morale and Teaching Competency. The result shows that the teachers, whose rapport with their principal, colleague and students is good, feel lack of exhaustion and depersonalized. They are also seen more satisfied with their profession. The investigator tried to know the competency level of the teachers (male–female) working in Uttarakhand state amongst Govt. & Pvt. schools. The sample consists of 100 teachers. The general findings show that the gender difference does not impact on their competency level, however, there is adjudged some factors which impact on their competency*.]

The term 'morale' refers to the intrinsic capabilities of a person which enables him to work effectively with a great enthusiasm and interest. It diminishes our negative approaches and enriches positive thinking. It is impossible to avoid the influence of morale of a teacher without the competency level of teachers. The competent teachers are those who are capable of bringing desired behavioral change in pupils under their charge to an optimal level in relation to the input in terms of human energy and material resources expended in the teaching-learning process. They possess high morale and good behavior for their better accomplishment. Morale of teachers is strongly related to the Teaching Competency.

Eboka (2016) made a study on Principals Leadership Styles and Gender Influence on Teachers Morale in Public Secondary Schools. The study investigated

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the perception of teachers on the influence of principals' leadership styles and gender on teacher morale. Four research questions and four research hypotheses guided the study. The findings of the study revealed leadership styles of principals and gender jointly influenced teacher morale. However, the transformational leadership style and male principals had a greater influence on teacher morale.

On the other hand, in an earlier study by Ranjini & Mohan A. Sundaram (2012) on "Teachers' competencies and Academic achievement of secondary teacher trainees", it was found that the level of teacher competency and academic achievement of secondary trainees were average and there is significant difference in teacher competencies of secondary teacher trainees and academic achievement with reference to gender and religion.

Rationale & Significance of the Study

The teacher is like a model for his students who possesses good moral values that are praised and appreciated by the students. This study is relevant because on the one hand, we require qualitative improvement in teaching while on the other hand, we commit mistake because we forget that the teachers' teaching may not be made competent until the morale is not developed in the teachers, which assists in enriching teaching method and teaching technique for creating good and favorable climate in the classroom teaching.

Statement of Problem

"A Comparative Study of Teachers' Morale and Teaching Competency of Secondary School Teachers in Relation to their Gender Difference"

Objectives of the Study

To make the study more precise and goal-oriented, the following objectives will be formulated to pursue the proposed study: -

i. To ascertain morale of male and female teachers on various dimensions (i.e. FPB, SOB, AIL, RAA and OPD) and as a whole.

ii To find out the competency of male and female teachers on various dimensions (i.e. TCP, PL, ATTC, RS, LE and RC) as a whole.

Hypotheses of the Study

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, the investigator has tried to frame the following null hypotheses as mentioned below:-

1. There is no significant difference between male science teachers and female science teachers from Govt. school and from Private school in terms of teacher's morale.
2. There is no significant difference between male art teachers and female art teachers from Govt. school and Private school in terms of teacher's morale.
3. There is no significant difference between male science teachers and female science teachers from Govt. school and Private school in terms of teaching competency.
4. There is no significant difference between male art teachers and female art teachers from Govt. school and Private school in terms of teaching competency.

Delimitation of the Study

The study is limited to the sample size of 100 government and private Sr. Secondary school teachers from Udham Singh Nagar and Tehri district of Uttarakhand state only.

Operational Definition of the Terms

a. Teacher's Morale- The morale of teacher is the intrinsic capabilities of the teacher which enable him to work with more enthusiasm. Morale is a person's mental state that is exhibited by assurance, control, and motivation to perform a task.

b. Teaching Competency- This is the ability of a teacher which makes him proficient in bringing out desired behavioral changes in his students and enables him to good procurement.

Methodology

Descriptive-Survey method was used in the present study.

SAMPLE FRAME/SIZE

Group	Science Teachers	Art Teachers	Total
Government School	25	25	50
Private School	25	25	50
Total	50	50	100

TOOLS

The following tools are used:

Teacher's Morale Scale (TMS-JSRA)

This is constructed and standardized by Dr. Sajid Jamal and Dr. Abdul Raheem. The reliability by Guttmann split-half method was found to be 0.95 and test-retest reliability after a gap of fortnight was

found to be 0.81. All yielded significant correlation coefficients ranging from 0.20 to 0.91.

The Self Rating Scale for Teachers by Sidhu (1982)

This is constructed and standardized by Dr. P.S. Sidhu. It is a five-point rating scale. The coefficient of test- retest reliability of the self-rating scale was established for six clusters (aspects) of self-conception of teachers about their own behavior regarding teaching. The scale is highly reliable and stable. The reliability coefficient is .71 to .96 and validity coefficient is recorded as .72. Hence, it was considered a reliable tool for the purpose of present investigation.

Result & Discussion

Finding 1- Significant difference between Male Science Teachers and Female Science Teachers from Govt. school and Pvt. school in terms of teacher's morale

Table-1

S.No.	Dimensions of teacher morale	Male Science teacher from Govt. school and Pvt. school			Female Science from Govt. school and Pvt. school			t- Value	Result
		N	M	SD	N	M	SD		
1.	Fairness of Policies and Behaviour (FPB)	25	19.32	3.60	25	19.04	3.96	0.26	N.S.
2.	Sense of belong-ingness (SOB)	25	22.48	2.20	25	22.56	2.41	0.12	N.S.
3.	Adequacy of Immediate leadership (AIL)	25	22.44	3.53	25	20.32	2.34	2.55	Sig.
4.	Regard and Appreciation (RAA)	25	22.36	3.34	25	22.52	3.56	0.16	N.S.
5.	Opportunity for Professional Develo-pment (OPD)	25	21.52	2.10	25	21.44	2.58	0.123	N.S.
	Overall	25	108.12	7.72	25	105.88	7.24	1.06	N.S.
	DF=48								$p>0.05$ and $p<0.05$

As per t-ratios recorded in the above Table-1, it clearly concluded that there is a marked significant difference between mean scores of male science teachers and female science teachers from Govt. School and Pvt. School on Adequacy of Immediate Leadership (AIL), at the 0.05 level of significance whereas on the other dimensions like Fairness of Policies and Behaviour (FPB), Sense of Belongingness (SOB), Regard and Appreciation (RAA), Opportunity for Professional Development(OPD) and overall scale of teachers' morale were insignificant at the 0.05 level of significance with 48 degree of freedom.

From the above findings, it is clear that the null hypothesis-1, is accepted with Fairness of Policies and Behaviour (FPB) dimension, Sense of Belongingness (SOB), Regard and Appreciation (RAA), and Opportunity for Professional Development (OPD) whereas for the dimension like Adequacy of Immediate leadership (AIL), the null hypothesis were rejected.

Finding 2- Significant difference between Male Art Teachers and Female Art Teachers from Govt. school and Pvt. school in terms of teacher's morale

Table-2

S.No.	Dimensions of Teachers morale	Male Art Teachers from Govt. School (Rural Area)			Male Art Teachers from Pvt. school (Rural Area)			t- Value	Result
		N	M	SD	N	M	SD		
1.	Fairness of Policies and Behaviour (FPB)	25	21.88	3.12	25	19.8	2.69	2.56	Sig.
2.	Sense of Belongi-ngness (SOB)	25	19.76	2.25	25	19.96	3.85	0.20	N.S.
3.	Adequacy of Imme-diate leadership (AIL)	25	22.2	2.5	25	23.12	2.02	1.43	N.S.
4.	Regard and Appre-ciation (RAA)	25	19.4	2.51	25	20.08	2.36	1.00	N.S.
5.	Opportunity for Professional Develo-pment (OPD)	25	19.04	3.25	25	20.2	3.01	0.125	N.S.
Overall		25	102.28	6.57	25	103.16	8.57	0.40	N.S.
DF=48									$p>0.05$ and $p<0.5$

From the t-ratios recorded in the above Table-2, it can clearly be concluded that there is a marked significant difference between mean scores of male art teachers and female art teachers from Govt. School and Pvt. School on Fairness of Policies and Behaviour (FPB) at the 0.05 level of significance, while all other dimensions of teacher's morale i.e. Sense of Belongingness (SOB), Adequacy of Immediate leadership (AIL), Regard and Appreciation (RAA), and Opportunity for Professional Development(OPD) and overall scale of teacher's morale show an insignificant relationship even at the 0.05 level of significance with 48 degree of freedom.

From the above findings, it is clear that the non-directional null hypothesis -2, is rejected with Fairness of Policies and Behaviour (FPB) dimension, whereas for other dimensions like Sense of Belongingness (SOB), Adequacy of Immediate leadership (AIL), Regard and Appreciation (RAA), and Opportunity for Professional Development (OPD) the null hypotheses were accepted respectively.

An analysis of above, clearly shows that there exists an insignificant difference on 'TCP', 'PL', 'ATTC', 'RS', 'LE' and 'RC' dimensions of teaching competency, because the 't' value is sufficiently high than the table value is significant at .05 level for 48 degree of freedom.

From the above discussion, the proposed null hypothesis-3, is accepted for all dimensions of Teaching Competency.

An analysis of above, clearly shows that there exists an insignificant difference between 'PL', 'ATTC', 'RS', 'LE' and 'RC' dimensions of teaching competency, and significant for TCP because the 't' value is sufficiently high than the table value is significant at .05 level for 48 degree of freedom.

From the above discussion, the proposed null hypothesis-4, is accepted for dimensions 'PL', 'ATTC', 'RS', 'LE' and 'RC' and rejected for 'TCP' dimension of Teaching Competency.

Conclusion

On the basis of the analysis and interpretation of data, the conclusions may be drawn as follow:

1. From the t-ratios, Mean & S.D. recorded in Table-1, it can be concluded that male science teachers have high morale than the female science teachers in all dimensions of teacher's morale.
2. From the t-ratios, Mean & S.D. recorded in Table-2, it can be concluded that male art teachers have high morale than the female art teachers in the

dimensions Fairness of Policies and Behaviour (FPB), Sense of Belongingness (SOB), Regard and Appreciation (RAA), Opportunity for Professional Development(OPD) and overall scale of Teachers Morale respectively while female art teachers are morally high than the male art teachers in Adequacy of Immediate leadership (AIL) .

3. From the t-ratios, Mean & S.D. recorded in Table-3, it can be concluded that male art teachers are more competent than the female art teachers in the dimensions of teaching competency i.e. TCP while female art teachers are more competent than the male art teachers in 'PL', 'ATTC', 'RS', 'LE' and 'RC' and overall scale respectively.
4. From the t-ratios, Mean & S.D. recorded in Table-4, it can be concluded that male art teachers are more competent than the female art teachers in the dimensions of teaching competency i.e. 'PL', 'ATTC', 'RS', 'LE' and 'RC' and overall scale respectively while female art teachers are more competent than the male art teachers in TCP.

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Re-visioning Patriarchal Myths: Select Indian Women Writers

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Many Indian women writers have tried to reinterpret the classical texts scripted by male writers that foster patriarchal ideology and they have reworked the images, concerns and roles of the women by recreating the mythical characters as myths are the most powerful tools used by patriarchy to subordinate women in the use of language. Established writers like Shashi Deshpande, Vaidehi , Volga, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Iravati Karve, Mahashweta Devi, S. L. Bhyrappa, Devadhar Patnaik to name only a few have strategically retold the myths from the point of view of mythical characters like Sita, Karna, Kunti, Sachi Devi, Amba, Draupadi, Gandhari, Arjuna, Bhishma, Yashoda and many more from a contemporary perspective. The writers have tried to break away from "the burden of the past", "the great collective myths of women" and seeing semblance in their experiences have thereby been deriving strength by gaining an understanding of common lot of stereotypical womanhood. This kind of subversive revision, according to Adrienne Rich, is "an act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text [patriarchal text] from a new critical direction...and knowing it differently than we have ever known it, [so that we do not] pass on a tradition but...break its hold over us." Hence re-vision of the myths is a re appropriation of male space for female ends.

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One of the questions this paper tries to analyze is the way in which the Indian women short fiction writers have explored the continuing impact of age old myths-legends-customs-rites, particular patriarchal strategies to restrict women's roles to docility and domesticity, which still remain entrenched within the Indian woman's psyche. The popular myths of India contribute in shaping the mindset, attitudes and expectations of Indian men and women, relegating women to specific positions and roles in the society. In rewriting and deconstructing myths, these writers play their role in creating and highlighting certain elements of Indian identity and positionality. They also play their role as storytellers, contributing to the telling and retelling of tales, telling the tale-within-the tale, creating multiple layers of stories told by multiple narrative voices. It is particularly interesting that although the myths do not portray the women characters as victims (in fact, they present them as paragons), Indian women writers have mostly picked up on the inherent or implicit devaluing of women in the myths, questioning the roles women play and the expectations women are permitted to entertain, which conspire to the victimizing of women. The manner and depth of this literary questioning of women's roles forms the primary focus of the paper.

Myths:

Myth can easily be seen as patriarchy's language that subjugates woman. It is the law of the father that operates within the realm of myths. The masculine language connects itself with the masculine value system reflecting the culture and ideology of patriarchy. Male view of culture and women's role in it are imposed as if the male perception is the only truth. This ideology is internalized by all irrespective of gender. In *Mythologies*, Roland Barthes uses the term myth as indicative of any made up, illusory thing, the false representations and invalid beliefs prevalent in the society which we accept as "natural." According to Barthes, the role of the mythologist is to prove that what appears to be natural is in fact artificial constructs which support existing power structures and construct a world for us and decide our place in it. Barthes suggests that myths not only reflect and explain perceived reality but also convey powerful messages about how this reality should be and how people should behave. Anthropologists like Paul Radin emphasize the functional dimension of myths. A myth is always explanatory. The explanatory theme often is so completely dominant that everything else becomes subordinated to it. In this context, myth, like poetry, is a functional structure. Myths are constructed to legitimize certain perspectives of culture, history and society. Most often it is the fairytales and myths that produce, conserve and transmit a female identity that is construed as natural. In this context, Kate Millett in her seminal feminist treatise *Sexual Politics* observes: "patriarchy has a still more tenacious or powerful hold through its successful habit of passing itself off as nature." (58). The patriarchal ideology of myth is hardly visible due to its defamilarizing capacity. Only a female perspective can unravel the phallocentric nature of myths and challenge their androcentric structure. In this regard, Judith Fetterley observes:

"The first act of the feminist critic must be to become a resisting rather than an assenting reader and, by this refusal to assent, to begin the process of exorcising the male mind that has been implanted in us". (pp. xx, xxii)

Fetterly underlines the need to apply the feminist critique to evaluate the myths and to expose the materials inimical to female identity in them and thereby rectify them.

Feminist stances in the re visioning of the patriarchal myths in short fiction:

Like the African Americans who evolved forms of signifying in language in order to retain, conceal, and convey meanings in the face of oppression while escaping detection and

punishment, Indian women also have evolved their own forms of signifying, one of which is story telling. With this rich story telling culture in India which is inclusive of women story writers also, their reactions to the same ideological background-Patriarchal and Postcolonial makes the retelling of the myths varied invested with feminist stances. Commenting on the relationship between Feminism and 'revision', Chandra Talpade Mohanty in the "Introduction" to her book, *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, says:

"Feminist analysis has always recognized the centrality of rewriting and remembering history. This process is significant…because the very practice of remembering and rewriting leads to space for struggle and contestation about reality itself."(34).

In this light a story each of Shashi Deshpande, Vaidehi and Volga which are reinterpretations of the classical texts scripted by male writers are analysed. Their reworking of the images, concerns and roles of the women by recreating the mythical characters in their stories is explored to highlight their ways of breaking away from "the burden of the past", "the great collective myths of women".

Shashi Deshpande is an authentic voice in Indian English fiction who has captured the pulse of the workings of the inner psyche of Indian women. Rooted in its tradition, yet able to critique its fetters inimical to women, she has unraveled many subtly woven patriarchal ideas detrimental to women's identity. One such story is titled *"And What Has Been Decided"* which figures in the second volume of *Collected Short Stories* published by Penguin Books in 2004. The story takes up the analysis of a crucial decision taken by the Pandavas in consultation of Lord Krishna from Draupadi's perspective. The decision here is of going to war with the Kauravas, which even today in common parlance is understood as being resorted to because of the insults heaped on their wife Draupadi. But in this story, Deshpande takes a feminist stance of seeing the formulation of the decision from Draupadi's perspective. She highlights how the Pandavas very subtly make it appear to Draupadi that their decision of going for war with the Kauravas is at her behest and to avenge insults heaped on her by the Kauravas. The declaration of Dharmaraja-"The Queen wants war and she will have it," puts the responsibility of the causation of war on her. It is only in the end that Draupadi realizes how the generations to follow will blame her for the massive destruction caused by the eighteen days Mahabharata war. So Deshpande strongly illustrates how historically men have used women as pretexts to accomplish their selfish and vested interests. Be it Draupadi or Sita, they are made to be perceived as causes for war, and the underlying politics for this constructed misconception has been dismantled by Deshpande very significantly.

The story engulfs all the significant aspects of Draupadi's relationship with the five brothers that she was helplessly wedded to. The setting is after Uttara's marriage to Abhimanyu, when the Pandavas are in discussion with Krishna, about Krishna going to Kauravas as an ambassador of peace for one last time. Initially Draupadi is angry as she perceives that their attempt for peace is against their promises of revenge against Kauravas made to her after the humiliation of disrobing her. She asks Krishna, "I did not know that promises made to women mean so little, that they are so light they can be as easily blown away …" (p. 240) To which Krishna opens his mind that they already are sure that Duryodhana would never consent to their proposal, would never allow anything to be given to the Pandavas *"Not even a needle point of land."* (p. 240) She mulls over in her mind about how all her five husbands have always been a single entity with one voice, and she had to always obey them. It is at that moment of epiphany she realises how even in the present decision of war, knowing full well the inevitability of war,

the decision of war is already made by them and all the while it was made up as though it is at her behest they are going for war, else they were for peace. When this truth descends on her, she hears and understands the conversation among them about their preparation of war –

"But we still have this problem that we have only seven divisions to their ten.

Don't count the divisions, brother, think of the men we have with us." (p. 245)

Draupadi now aware of the conversation realizes how it's already begun. They are already preparing, they have decided on war, they know for certain there will be war. It's only then that it dawns on her their politics of assigning the responsibility of war on her, which was inevitable between them and the Kauravas. Her final question with which the story ends makes her aware of being used as a pawn in their scheme of things.

"But why, then, did they not tell me that? Why did they make me believe it is my decision, my doing? Why?" (p. 245)

It is on similar lines that Vaidehi's "An Afternoon with Shakuntala" is written to understand the faulty image created about the famed mythological woman character 'Shakuntala' the eponymous heroine of Kalidas's *Abhijnana Shakuntala* .Vaidehi is yet another equally sensitive writer who is well known for her delineation of the women's world in Kannada literature. A contemporary of Shashi Deshpande, she is a match in her incisive analysis of the patriarchal structures that restrict the lives of women. In the present story, she interrogates the commonly accepted notion of the desertion of Shakuntala by Dushyanta as being done under the spell of curse of sage Durvasa. It is pictured that Shankuntala failed in her duties to serve the sage as she was lost in the thoughts of her new found love for Dushyanta, and so is cursed by the angry sage that the very person in whose thoughts she is lost should forget her, putting the onus of Dushyanta's amnesia of her on the curse, which in turn is because of her lapse of duty towards the sage. So, it appears that the grave injustice of Dushyanta towards a pregnant Shakuntala is rationalized by Kalidasa, by shifting the reason of his lapse on Shankuntala's dereliction of duty. Thus all the agony and pain that Shakuntala suffered has been very cleverly accorded to her absentmindedness and Dushyanta is presented as an innocent instrument in the hands of fate, beyond any reprimand.

But Vaidehi's story presents the whole events from Shakuntala's perspective challenging the patriarchal politics of justifying men's actions and protecting their interests in all ways. The whole story is a monologue, where Shakuntala, disillusioned after being rejected and forgotten by Dushyanta introspectively revisits her experiences of blind love for him and analyses all the fleeting but intense emotions that had cast a spell of illusion on her, about him. Vaidehi's Shakuntala unravels the politics of the poet Kalidasa's defense of Dushyanta giving the pretext of curse of forgetfulness. She says-

"The poet under defensive wall of curse has tried to cover-up the men's irascibility. Men have created stories of amnesia to protect all men posing clever forgetfulness."(p. 280) (trans. mine)

When Kalidasa's Shankuntala is asked to produce the ring given by Dushyanta, to remind him of her when she visits his palace claiming to be his wife, Shakuntala tries to show it, but she had lost it on her way to the Palace, and her fate is blamed. But Vaidehi's Shakuntala finds the proposition of proving her identity with a ring, humiliating. She questions- *"Have I become such a non-entity that I need to show the ring to receive the charity of love?"* (p.281) (trans. mine) So she pretended that she had lost it. Again very poignantly she says-*"Can a ring become an antidote for a pretentious amnesia?"* (p. 281). (trans. mine)This is how Vaidehi interrogates the already accepted mythical

formulations, and tries to foreground the muted voice of Shakuntala, which reveal the underlying patriarchal constructions.

Further Vaidehi's Shakuntala tries to trace the genealogy of such suppression by remembering how her mother 'Menaka' has escaped from her motherly duties leaving her new born infant 'Shakuntala' at Sage Kanva's ashram as also of 'Sita' who willingly got swallowed in the womb of mother Earth. These were all women whose stories and fates were decided by men. But Vaidehi's Shakuntala decides to lead her life on the basis of her strength. So the Kalidasa's victim Shakuntala is remade by Vaidehi as a strong and self reliant personality who flourishes the agency of deciding about her life.

The third story is "Samagama" (Union) written by Volga, a radical feminist writer in Telugu who is known for her revolutionary ideas for emancipation of women. Her work is replete with her attempts to delineate the sexual politics that underlies all structures of the society, past and present. In the story 'Samagama', she imaginatively recreates Sita's life and thoughts during her exile in the forest with her children. Sita in this story is a resolved woman, a contented mother living in the laps of nature. It is in the serenity of the surroundings, the calm and poise, free from human vices of scheming, jealousy, competition that Volga makes possible the unthinkable encounter between the two women 'Sita' and 'Shurpanaka,' the representations of the antagonistic binaries 'devi and demon' created by the male discourse. The stage is set when Sita is surprised to see the most beautiful and fragrant flowers brought by her sons Lava and Kusha from the forest for the evening worship. Upon enquiry she finds that they are from a special garden which is nurtured by a most ugly woman, whose description, Sita realizes matches with that of 'Shurpanaki' her abductor Ravana's sister. She remembers the beautiful Shurpanaki who enamoured by Rama's beauty had proposed her love to him, only to meet the mutilation of her nose and ears by Rama-Laxmana rendering her ugly for the rest of her life. The decision of Sita to meet Shurpanaki shows Sita as a woman in control of herself, willing to know and understand the pains and pleasures of another woman.

Volga uses this encounter between the two women who loved Rama, and both in a way abandoned by him to unveil the patriarchal structures which puts women against one another. She expresses the feministic desire to establish 'sisterhood,' to defeat the politics of divide and rule. Simon de Beauvoir in her introduction to *The Second Sex* analyses the lack of united efforts to overcome oppression of men, states-

"The reason for this is that women lack concrete means for organising themselves into a unit which can stand face to face with the correlative unit. They have no past, no history, no religion of their own; and they have no such solidarity of work and interest as that of the proletariat. They are not even promiscuously herded together in the way that creates community feeling among the American Negroes, the ghetto Jews, the workers of Saint-Denis, or the factory hands of Renault. They live dispersed among the males, attached through residence, housework, economic condition, and social standing to certain men – fathers or husbands – more firmly than they are to other women. If they belong to the bourgeoisie, they feel solidarity with men of that class, not with proletarian women; if they are white, their allegiance is to white men, not to Negro women". (Introduction, *The Second Sex*)

Volga definitely wishes women to overcome this feminine mystique and therefore the meeting between the two women, commonly pictured as adversaries, turns contrary to the expected outcome. Sita is able to now understand Shurpanaki's pain and appreciate her efforts of having fought her tarnished prospects and now stands as the creator of beauteous garden herself,

and has learnt to love life selflessly. In turn Shurpanaki also laments over the condition of Sita, the Queen of Ayodhya now leading a hermit's life of austerity. She is even able to gauge Sita's future, when she will have to suffer separation from the future Princes, her sons. She asks Sita with concern -"What will you do when your sons will have to leave the forest and return to their princely duties of protecting the citizens in the city? Will you live alone in Valmiki Ashrama?" (Trans. mine) To which Sita answers "No, shurpanaki, I will take refuge in my mother Earth". (Trans. mine) It is then we realize the magnanimity of Shurpanaki who turning towards the beautiful garden tended by her and says "Your mother is everywhere, but I feel that your mother's beauteous form is nowhere as resplendent as it is here" (Trans. mine) thereby inviting Sita into the folds of her affection. Perceiving this loving gesture, Sita's heart is filled with sisterly love for Shurpanaki, and she assures Shurpanaki by saying- "Without fail Shurpanaki, I will resume to be Earth's daughter, once my sons depart from me. Under these cool boughs, resuscitating myself, I will explore new meanings of life."(Trans. mine) This ending of the story of two wounded women finding peaceful comfort and reinforcement with each other marks the hope of women's solidarity and sisterhood which can be the most effective step towards women empowerment in its truest sense.

Conclusion

Thus a re-examination of the representations of Indian mythological women to discern the gender politics of casting women in a powerless muted conditions willed by men has been at the heart of feminist agenda. As these myths are powerful to have a hold onto women's present and future with the same injustices getting replicated over and over for generations, it is essential that the spell of these hegemonic myths is broken. The voices of women need to be registered to produce counter narratives and revisionist myths where the agency of women is normalized. These agentive women's images need to be percolated into the society, so that women will have more assertive role models to counter the patriarchal restrictions.

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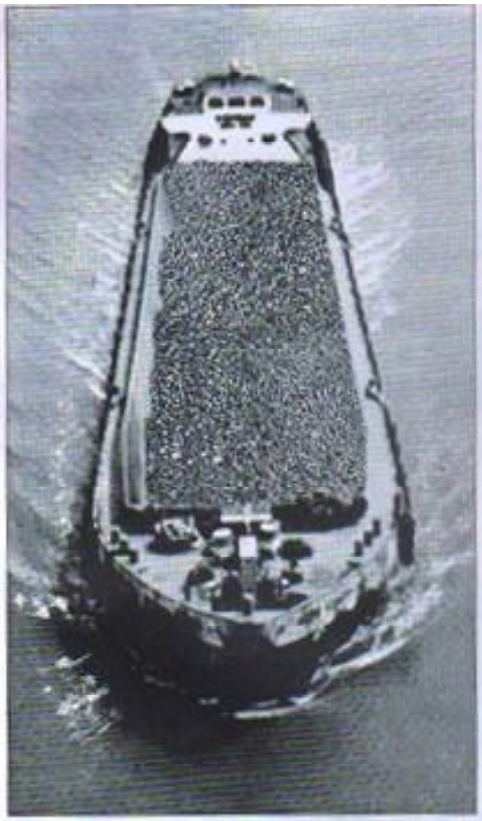

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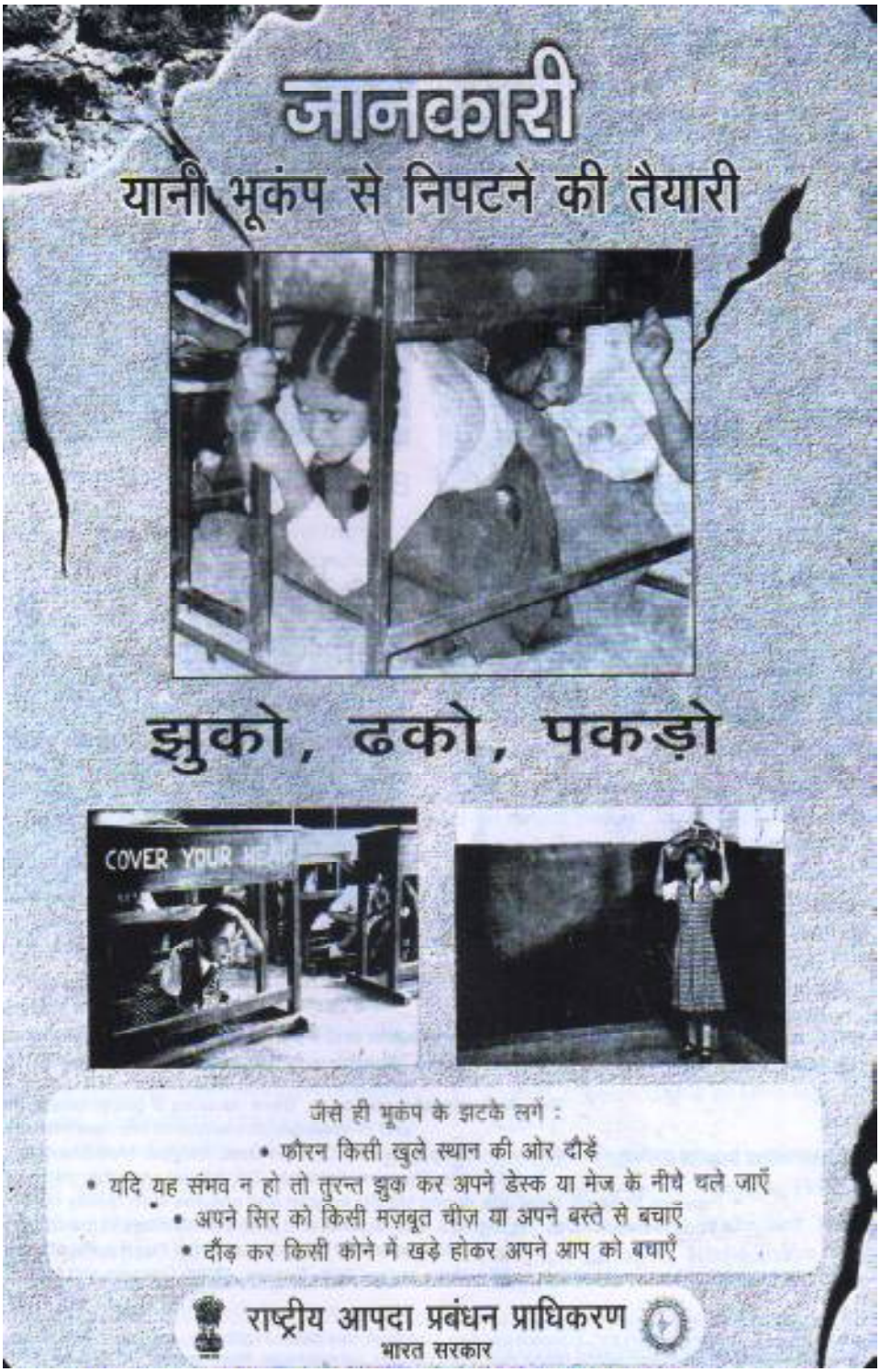
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