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- ❖ **India-Nepal Border Tussle**
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Alarming Signals!

Warning signals have been sounded by the latest report of the SBI that points out that India is under the grip of the second wave of COVID-19 infections in the wake of rising cases being reported since February this year. According to this report, taking into account the number of days from the current level of daily new cases of victims falling prey to the pandemic to the peak level during the first wave of the pandemic in 2020, India may peak in the second half of April this year, with the possibility of total cases reaching around 2.5 million by that period. It is further reported that the entire duration of the second wave could last up to 100 days beginning February 15.

Noting that as the entire nation went into lockdown at the outset of the last week of March 2020, when the total number of pandemic cases was not even 500, the SBI report informs that the number of infections started recording spike along with the extensions of the lockdown. Lamenting that lockdowns were ineffective in many states in 2020 in curbing the spread of the pandemic, the report cites the example based on multiple studies on the Great Spanish Flu of 1918-1919 to show that speedy implementation of numerous non-pharmaceutical interventions, including closure of schools, churches and theatres, could substantially reduce influenza transmissions; nevertheless, that viral spread is prone to be renewed on relaxation of such restrictions. During the first phase of the pandemic in 2020, in none of the most affected districts across the major states, the lockdown failed to contain either infections or the death rates, while fresh caseloads have started increasing in top 15 districts, mostly urban in the second wave and the spread in rural areas is mostly stable and the cases are vastly localized and concentrated. This is also evidenced from Google Mobility data that demonstrate that mobility has declined in many states like Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh in the aftermath of imposition of localized lockdowns; nonetheless, the infection level has only spiked in these states.

As per media reports, on March 24 close to 53, 500 new infection cases were reported across the nation and just in couple of days the count topped one lakh, taking the total caseload to 1.18 crore since January 2020 when the first case was reported in Kerala. This burgeoning upsurge in COVID-19 cases, though limited to some states, is really a matter of grave concern. While attributing casual behaviour of the public in response to the pandemic as the basic reason behind the spike in pandemic cases, experts have called for reverting to masks, social distancing, hand-washing protocol, increase in testing along with decentralizing the vaccination programme as appropriate measures to protect against a second wave of the pandemic. Taking into account the fact that new mutant of COVID-19 is more lethal and spreading at a faster pace, experts have emphasized on redefining the priority parameters for administering vaccination by including all segments of the society, irrespective of age and comorbidities in order to minimize the wastage of vaccine and maximize the safety net to wider sections of the population.

Noting the fact that Rajasthan, Gujarat, Kerala, Uttarakhand and Haryana have vaccinated over 20 Per cent of their elderly population, the SBI report laments that several states with higher elderly population such as Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and West Bengal have vaccinated much less. Assuming that an increased number of people is vaccinated with the daily inoculation jumping to 4/5 million from the current level of 3.4 million, the report is hopeful that with this capacity the population above 45 years can be vaccinated in coming four months from now. The presence of vaccines has enabled many experts to discount the second wave of COVID-19 that thus far has been more intense and fatal in many countries as these are triggered by many mutant strains of the pandemic. Admitting that the second wave is much higher in intensity than the first wave, experts are sanguine about the presence of the vaccines as making difference currently, thereby, enabling them to tide over the emerging crisis in a better way. Faster pace of vaccination is a more effective way to defeat the pandemic.

— BK

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India- Nepal Border Tussle: The China Factor

Dr. Aparna*

[Geostrategic location of Nepal enhances its geo-political significance in the South Asian and East Himalayan region. Geographic situation of Nepal makes it share borders with India and China. India and Nepal share a dramatic amalgamation of strained and extemporaneous relationship. Historically, socially, culturally, politically and economically India-Nepal relations go beyond an unfeigned bilateral relationship. Yet the relations between these two nations- states are not affable.]

Nevertheless, Nepal has often shown her discomfort with the Treaty of Sugauli (1816) and the Treaty of Peace and Friendship (1950) and avoided India's basic security concerns. Nepal is inwardly conscious of and prejudiced towards its geo- political location i.e., buffer zone. Another bone of contention between India- Nepal relations is the transit facilities and access to seaports. In the post-Cold War era, India and China are the fastest growing economies. Also, between India and China, Nepal becomes inevitable part of their regional geopolitics and geo-economics.

Present crisis

The year 2020 can be characterized as high watermark of heightened border tension between India and Nepal. Speaking in the parliament of Nepal, Prime Minister K. P. Sharma Oli had stated that Nepal's southern border is the "real reason" of Nepal's vulnerability. Immediately after that, at Indo-Nepal border firing was reported which allegedly killed one and injured two people (The Hindu, 12 June 2020). Couple of days before, Nepali government had come up with a Constitutional Amendment Bill according to which disputed areas of Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiyadhura (approximately 372 square km) would be incorporated in the extended map of Nepal.

This area is the tri-juncture of India- Nepal- Tibet (Autonomous region of China). Main opposition party Nepali Congress has also given their support to this bill. National Congress and Nepali Communist Party together have more than two-third required majority to pass this bill in the parliament. However, under Indian pressure this Constitutional Amendment Bill was withdrawn but the future is unpredicted.

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Treaty of Sugauli 1816, accepts three river boundaries of Nepal, i.e., Mechi, Mahakali and Narayani rivers in the east, west and in the Susta area respectively. Susta is also a disputed region and here the dispute is not political but geographical. Changing course of Narayani River is the main stumbling block for the land demarcation. Alike every river changes its course; Narayani also got reshaped because of various large floods. Reportedly, the river has changed its course towards the Nepali side. As Susta is surrounded by the Indian territory from three sides east, north and the south; accordingly, Indian calls to restore the actual position are not acceded to by Nepal and the resultant outcome is the prevalence of disagreement between the two sides.

Why this issue ignited?

Root of the present border crisis is imbedded in the past. Since 1954, India and China have recognised Lipulekh-pass as their border trading point. In July 1992, a Protocol of Entry and Exit, for strengthening the border trade was signed between India and China. Remarkably, Lipulekh-pass was mentioned in the agreement as a mutually recognized border trading point between India and China. Nepal has voiced against this development and outlined it as the attack on Nepalese sovereignty and national integrity.

On May 15, 2015, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's state visit to China had raised the dormant issue of Lipulekh once again. Present Dharchula-Lipulekh Pass Link Road is the result of an agreement signed between India and China in 2015. Developing a trading outpost was the motive of this agreement. Whereas, Nepal calls it as a disputed tri-juncture and claims equal share (IDSA, 09 June 2015) in it.

In November 2019, India published a new political map showing Kalapani as her territory. This proved instrumental in straining Indo-Nepal relation again. Further, on 8th May 2020, India inaugurated Dharchula Lipulekh Pass Link Road for facilitating pilgrims to Kailash Man Sarovar Yatra (Al Jazeera, 30 May 2020). Nepal asserts that this 75-km road is passing through the disputed area of Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiyadhura. This has aggravated hullabaloo to the worst! After 1962 Indo-China war, India considers Lipulekh pass very sensitive for its national security. Consequently, Indo-Tibetan Border Peace Keeping Forces (ITBP) has been monitoring the movement in this region for decades. Like before, Nepalese civil society, opposition parties and vociferous Nepali media are supporting the anguished move of the ruling dispensation in Kathmandu. For immediate political gains, anti-India ultra-nationalist groups in Nepal are spreading confusion and distrust. While the territory is geographically a tri-junction, it is disputed only by India and Nepal. Intentionally, Nepal is willing to make China as the third party to this bilateral dispute. Beside this, officially China has responded to this problem by conceding it as a dubious land between India and Nepal.

Notably, Chinese involvement in this issue as ‘a catalyst’ cannot be overlooked or denied. Just before this fuss started between India and Nepal, Chinese ambassador to Nepal had conducted a series of meetings with the Nepal Communist Party leaders (Sunday Guardian Live, 30 May, 2020). India is cautious and vigilant about these current developments in Nepal.

Chinese Shadow

Nevertheless, a communist Nepal is working as “a shadow” of Chinese government. Over J&K issue (amendment in Article 370), hesitantly Nepal has remarked that “the Nepal government is in favour of regional peace and stability” and are optimistic that the “dispute should be resolved through talks (Deccan Herald, August 20 2019). On the other hand, the Nepal government opens her front strongly in favour of the controversial national security law for Hong Kong and reiterates her commitment to “one China policy” (The Hindu, June 3 2020). China is on back-foot for this law and facing criticism all over the world. Nepal is equally vocal about the Tibetans in favour of China but critical about the US stand on Venezuela

(The Kathmandu Post, January 25 2019). Systematically, Nepal is fulfilling strategic interests and ambitions as a “Chinese satellite”.

China’s foreign policy is aggressive since the beginning and it still revolves around Mao Zedong’s unfulfilled dreams. Ideologically and ideally, Nepal is an opportunity and a dream long pursued by China. Perhaps the growing nexus of Nepal- China relations is for counterbalancing India in the South Asian region. Consequently, Indian Army Chief General M. M. Naravane has indicated “someone else” role behind the present border dispute between India and Nepal. China projects her foreign policy to Nepal as an ideal model for any bilateral relations. But sooner or later, Nepal has to realise that after all she is an important finger of Mao Zedong’s “five finger policy” along with Ladakh, Bhutan, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh (IDSA, May 18 2009).

Historically a “hard power”, China has spent a great deal of money on building soft power through communications and broadcasting. To the needy countries of South Asia, through abundant foreign aid and economic assistance, China is trying to pull her soft power policies, especially in Nepal. China sees a better role of Nepal in its Belt and Road program. The escalating growth of China’s soft power is also getting new impetus because the United States’ soft power seems to be declining. Comparatively, Indo-Nepal relation is truncated since the economic blockade was imposed in 2015 by the Madheshi people. India always shows its compassion and support for the Madheshis.

Origin of Kali River and the Treaty of Sugauli

In the wake of Indo-China standoff in Pangong Lake area of Ladakh, Indo-Nepal acrimony has also started. Nepal lays its claims over the disputed area of Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiyadhura ‘consistently’ as per the Sugauli Treaty of 1816. Significantly, the documents submitted to the United Nations by Nepal at the time of taking UN membership in 1955, declared Kali River as its Western border and Mechi river as the Eastern border (Khabarhub, May 15, 2020). But according to India, Nepal had lost the Garhwal- Kumaon (in the west) and Sikkim (in the east) region in the Gorkha war with East India Company (1814-16) (Treaty of Sugauli, article-05). Also, after 1962 war with China, India has realised the strategic importance of this region. Misinterpretation of Treaty of Sugauli is the main irritant between Indo-Nepal present border crisis.

Paradoxically, the original copies of Sugauli Treaty and the Treaty of Peace and Friendship, 1950 are missing in Nepal. Neither National Archives nor any government office has its trace (Outlook India, 17 June, 2008). Supreme court of Nepal has given fifteen days limit to the Nepal government to search for these two documents of historic importance.

To add more fuel to this controversy, Nepali newspaper Kantipur, has produced different evidences in support of Nepal's claim over these areas i.e., Five British-Indian maps issued between 1819 and 1894 that show Limpiyadhura as the headwaters of the Mahakali; a 1904 letter written by then Prime Minister Rana Chandra Shamsher to village chiefs of the triangle; and evidence of a 1958 voter list and the 1961 census by Nepali authorities in the region. (Aljazeera, 30 May 2020).

Beyond Politics: A Way Forward

Origin of Kali River is a controversial issue and a root cause of the present crisis between India and Nepal. Many small tributaries together form this river. The main catchment area of these tributaries is Kalapani village. India considers Kalapani village (east of Lipulekh area) as the origin or birth place of Kali River and the Treaty of Sugauli supports Indian stand. Contrary to the above point, Nepal believes the origin of Kali River from Limpiyadhura. But in reality, only one tributary of Kali River originates from Limpiyadhura. Nepal's stand on Lipulekh and Kalapani appears to be away from reality and motivated politically.

Kailash Man Sarovar is a sacred place for Hindus, Jains and Buddhists. This Yatra is organised by Ministry of External Affairs, India whereas beyond Indian territory it is conducted by the Chinese government. To ease the extremely difficult route of this Yatra, Indian government has inaugurated Kailash Man Sarovar Yatra route in 2020, which will connect Dharchula to Lipulekh (The Print, 08 May 2020). This route will not only ease the connectivity, but also would be cost-effective and time-friendly. For the pilgrims of Kailash Man Sarovar Yatra this route is a blessing. Dharchula- Lipulekh Pass Link Road will cut the travel time of the Yatra from five days to three days.

Till this date, only one thousand pilgrims are allowed from India for Man Sarovar Yatra but from Nepal the number reaches to twenty to thirty thousand. China controls over this pilgrimage immensely. From fixing the number of pilgrims to the lodging and staying facility, China decides for the days pilgrims will stay

in the region. Thus, Dharchula pass will remove China's monopoly over this yatra and related profitable tourism sector. India's policy is breaking the ice!

Directly or indirectly, hundreds of border-side villages will be immensely benefited by this route. Villages like Tawaghat, Nabi, Bundi, Gunji, Kutu, Kalapani etc., will again be prosperous and more connected with the world. Many of these villages like Gabaryang that had been called as the "Mini Europe" and were centre for international trade, would be able to revive their glorious past. Before 1962 Indo- China war, these villages had lucrative trade with Tibet (Autonomous region of China).

China is trying hard to reiterate its position among international fraternity after facing criticism over its fishy role in mal- handling the Coronavirus. In South China Sea, border dispute with India, its relationship with Hong Kong, Taiwan, Tibet, everywhere China's assertive and aggressive aspirations are stripped and loud. Now, to deviate global focus from main course of discussion, China is playing foul in Nepal and also in Ladakh. Between India and Nepal, the on-going crisis will soon settle down if China does not interfere.

Conclusion

For the on-going border dispute and related security dilemma in Nepal, Indian political establishment has to be careful. Growing affinity between Nepal and China would be costly for the Indian strategic interests. In the wake of the changing political dynamics in Nepal, India's political and economic strategy shall also change accordingly. India has to realise that the world is no more same as it used to be. India has braced her neighbours in the times of grim circumstances, but it cannot be denied that our economic policies have failed immensely and not yielded the desired results, especially in Nepal. Our decade-old uncompleted projects or schemes are hanging in air. Simultaneously, China is gaining its ground in Nepal at economic level.

Unsurprisingly, Nepal will always take leverage of its geo-political location and her policies and stand will remain volatile. Still an "elder brother" India has to take bigger responsibility as always. A democratic and stable Nepal is in the interest of India, especially to protect the interests of minorities, Madhesis there. In 2006, Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran had underlined that, "stability in Nepal is in the best interests of India" and that "democracy in Nepal is the best guarantee of such stability." We cannot 'force' anyone to become our friend for long; rather it should

be accepted from heart (willingness). It's a high time for both the countries to self-introspect and retune the temperateness of their bilateral relations.

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India-Kazakhstan Energy Cooperation

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. 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. 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 Central Asia, a region rich in energy resources, comes into picture. Central Asian republics (CARs), particularly Kazakhstan, being rich in energy sources are pursuing the policies of diversification and independence of export supplies of energy resources and further seeking foreign investment and technological cooperation to diversify the base of their economies. Despite several challenges, recent progress made in International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) provides fresh impetus to realize the vast potential of energy cooperation. Issues of geography, geo-politics and security need to be resolved to realize the true potential of energy cooperation.]

India and Central Asia relations are shaped by shared history, culture and civilizational links. And, in modern times, these ties are driven by convergence of mutual geo-economic and strategic interests. Against the rising challenges to energy security of India and an urgent need of independence and diversification of energy exports for Central Asian Republics including Kazakhstan, both India and Kazakhstan seek greater energy and strategic cooperation with each other.

Today, India has strategic partnership with Kazakhstan and cooperation in energy is also picking up, though slowly. Kazakhstan being rich in hydrocarbons, mineral and other natural resources and given its strategic location it is of immense significance to India's energy security. This paper attempts to analyse the present energy scenario of India, alternative sources and as how both Kazakhstan and India recognize the centrality of each other in forging a long-term partnership as far as energy cooperation is concerned.

India's Current Energy Scenario

Today, the energy scenario in India is paradoxical. The country is endowed with abundant coal reserves. 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, 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 is world's third-largest oil consumer, and 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.

With 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, along with burgeoning middle class and enhanced consumption levels etc., have all contributed to accord energy security a top priority in Indian foreign and security policy. Though domestic

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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).

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 West Asia, 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 geo-politics of power equations and energy resources and their costs. Also, 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.

In this context, Central Asia, a region rich in energy resources comes into picture. Being landlocked, these states faced hurdles in exporting their energy products and relied on Russian pipelines and this monopoly position gave Russian an instrument to influence the policies of CARs. But today, with coming of many international players, these states are pursuing the policies of multiple pipelines for diversification of energy supplies and export independence. India being a fastest growing economy is lucrative market for them.

Energy exports have brought huge economic benefits to these republics. But from long-term perspective, these states have to diversify the base of their economies using these petrodollars and foreign investment, and technological cooperation is key in this context. In this regard, there is vast potential of energy cooperation between downstream Central Asian republics, particularly Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, due to their abundant energy resources and geo-strategic location.

While Turkmenistan due to its abundant natural gas reserves, transit potential; and its proximity to Afghanistan and Iran occupies a central place in India's regional strategic and energy interests; on the

other hand, Uzbekistan given its abundant gas reserve and uranium reserve holds a prominent place in India's energy interests. Today, strategic partnership agreement, nuclear co-operation agreement and joint working group on hydrocarbons points towards the enhanced energy cooperation with these countries.

There are some major impediments in the Indo-CARs 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, Chabahar and also 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 to achieve overall economic development and thus harvesting mutual benefits.

India-Kazakhstan Energy Cooperation

It is important to note that oil and natural gas resources are not uniformly distributed over the five CARs. Among them, Kazakhstan is well-endowed with oil and natural gas resources. According to the Oil & Gas Journal (OGJ), Kazakhstan had proved crude oil reserves of 30 billion barrels as of January 2018, the 2nd largest endowment in Eurasia after Russia, and the 12th largest in the world, just behind the United States (EIA, 2018). It is also estimated that Kazakhstan will be able to maintain its current production up to 83 years as compared 42 years in case of Saudi Arabia, a major exporter of crude oil to India. Thus, from Indian point of view, this makes it even more lucrative for future investments (Warikoo, 2011).

It has also huge reserves of gas. However, landlocked nature of geography, lack of infrastructure and excess dependence on Russia and China has led it to pursue policies which promote investment in their energy assets and diversification of supply chain. 'Strategy 2030' which envisions the future development of the country, energy resources are put at fifth long-term priority and diversification of energy supply and foreign investment for the development of country's energy sector are integral part of this strategy (Warikoo, 2011). This lines up with the Multi-vector Foreign Policy adopted by the government. In this context, South Asia, particularly India, an energy deficient but a fastest growing economy is one of its best suited options.

India is a 'latecomer' on the Central Asian energy map. For the first time, ONGC setup its office in Almaty in the 1990s, but did little to advance its energy interests in the region. However, by the turn of century, things changed and India included energy security as one of the key elements in its foreign policy. The major boost to Indian initiatives came with the visit of Indian Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee in June 2002 when he stressed on the importance of Caspian energy for India.

An agreement was signed for the acquisition of stakes in a number of oil and gas fields, to be developed by ONGC Videsh Limited (MEA 2002). Again in 2005, ONGC Videsh Limited signed an MOU with KazMunaiGaz to undertake joint exploration in the Caspian Sea (ONGC, 2005). But these negotiations moved very slowly. However, at the same time, India was making impressive inroads in Russian energy sector. The Sakhalin-1 investment and purchase of Imperial energy by ONGC are points in that direction. Further, as some geo-political experts' points out that Russia has its own interest in furthering Indian presence in the region to keep out USA and other western countries (Akiner, 2011).

However, it is understood that cooperation with Russia was instrumental for Indian presence in this region. But, despite this, competition is very fierce in this region with Chinese making huge inroads with investment and physical infrastructure. This was clearly illustrated in 2005 when China outbid India to get PetroKazakhstan, Kazakhstan's third largest oil producer. Unlike their Chinese counterparts which are aggressively backed by state, ONGC's weak financial position and lack of enough government push to their efforts cost India of this project (Sachdeva, 2011).

After many efforts, in April 2011, India reached an energy deal with Kazakhstan for a 25 per cent share in the Satpayev bloc in the North Caspian offshore. Joint Working Group for cooperation in hydrocarbon sector with Kazakhstan was established in 2008 (MEA, 2011).

Energy reserves of Kazakhstan are not limited to only hydrocarbon fuels. It has huge uranium resources. Kazakhstan has 12% of the world's uranium resources. Since 2009, it is the world's leading uranium producer, with almost 39% of world production in 2015 and 2016. The Kazak government is committed to a high level of uranium exports as well as development of its nuclear power sector. During the strategic partnership agreement of 2009,

a MOU was signed to supply uranium to India. Further, in 2011, 'India-Kazakhstan Nuclear Cooperation Agreement' was signed. This agreement covers the supply of uranium and a comprehensive co-operation in civil nuclear energy programme as well as the exchange of scientific and research information in this regard (MEA, 2011).

Thus, in the words of Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL), it represented "a mutual commitment to begin thorough discussions on long-term strategic relationship." It also opened up avenues for Indian cooperation in building Kazakh nuclear power sector particularly in cooperation with Russia. This nuclear co-operation agreement was revived in July 2015. Agreement was signed for the continuous supply of uranium with 5000 tons of uranium to India during 2015-19. With this deal Kazakhstan became the biggest source of uranium for India.

The Indian Prime Minister in his joint statement with Kazakh President indicated that nuclear cooperation is a key pillar of partnership with Kazakhstan and mentioned that, "Kazakhstan was one of the first countries with which we launched civil nuclear cooperation through a uranium purchase contract". It is significant here to underline that although the agreement signed with Kazakhstan assures long term uranium supply, the pricing policy should be carefully addressed. In recent years, uranium prices like that of oil have also suffered from erratic market fluctuations. The main reason for this fluctuation in uranium prices is the rush for clean energy as well as to diversify the sources of energy due to spikes in hydrocarbon prices in recent years.

Thus, nuclear cooperation in the form of uranium purchase from Kazakhstan and recently from Uzbekistan are signs of ever-expanding Indian reach to energy sources in areas other than hydrocarbon resources. Apart from securing raw uranium for its domestic consumption, opportunities lie in building Kazak and Uzbek atomic power sector particularly in joint ventures with Russia (Akiner, 2011).

It is clear that among CARs, Kazakhstan has special place in India's energy diplomacy due to its geostrategic location, vast energy and mineral resources and secular and composite identity and social structure. As it needs to strengthen its export capacity and diversification and processing capabilities, it is here that India has good opportunity to make forays into the petrochemical sector of Kazakhstan. Chinese majors are important players in the region but still USA and European countries

continue to dominate Kazak energy sector along with Russia and this provides an excellent opportunity with joint ventures with these countries (Akiner, 2011).

Indo-Russian cooperation in fields like setting up refinery and processing plants, energy assets and development of Kazak atomic energy industry can further Indian energy interest in the region. Also, Russia might have fewer objections to Indian presence as it is in Russia's interest to involve India to counter Chinese and American presence in the region.

Equity oil is another important feature of Indo-Kazakh energy cooperation. India being a 'latecomer' in the region and with poor financial health and lack of diplomatic push by government, ONGC Videsh Limited loses out to its Western, Japanese and Chinese counterparts as far as equity oil purchase and exploration and production contracts are concerned. Though, these measures ensure supply security but lack of physical connectivity makes cost of oil very high (Singh, 2005). Therefore, Indian PSUs must focus on rational decisions keeping affordability in mind and cooperation with China, Japan and Russia would be an added advantage. Also, active oil diplomacy, financial and decision-making autonomy and government support to ONGC Videsh Limited are required.

Conclusion

Energy resources of Central Asia, particularly Kazakhstan, have a significant potential to address India's growing energy demand. Emphasis on having close historical and trade ties between the two countries 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 geography, geo-politics and security. A definite, comprehensive and meaningful relationship with CARs can be established towards overall future cooperation, particularly in the spheres of hydrocarbon and nuclear energy by adopting multi-dimensional approach.

There are immense opportunities and challenges before both but sustained and close cooperation in trade and energy security arenas will certainly move the relations between India and Kazakhstan 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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Democracy in World Bank in the era of Global Governance

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[With the emergence of globalization, the state alone cannot manage global affairs. Therefore, it accords roles to an International governmental organization (IGO's), Non-governmental organizations (NGO's), Multi-National Corporations (MNC's), and Financial institutions (World Bank, IMF). Global governance refers to a transnational network institution building, norm entrepreneurship, regime creation, and global change management. It describes regimes or systems of rule, embracing both formal and informal regulatory mechanisms. This paper identifies profound democratic deficits that have emerged as consequences of globalization and considers the questions against the yardsticks of Democracy in the World Bank and develops a general argument in four main steps. The first section presents a working definition of global governance. The second section identifies the Democracy in governance in worldwide space and models of Democracy. The third section presents the World Bank and 'Good Governance.' The fourth section presents the Democracy in the World Bank, explaining hegemonic position of U.S. and how it influences the World Bank.]

Traditionally, the rationale of global governance arrangement can address the problem and generate benefits for states and societies. Yet in recent years, international institutions and other governance arrangements have increasingly been challenged and suffer from democratic deficits (Heal and Koenig 2005). Transforming Democracy models initially developed for the national context and developing new models of Democracy tailored for the international level, democracy theorists have to advance blueprints for how global governance arrangements may be reformed to integrate transnational actors and thus meet the standards of democratic decision-making. World Bank plays a vital role in global governance through its policies, e.g., 'Good Governance' and its influence on the concept of democracy.

Global Governance

The prefix 'global', here tends to mean one of two things. In one of these sets of meaning it refers to governance as conducted by a global institution such as the United Nations, International Monetary Fund, World Trade Organization, and World Bank or else to governance that is practiced through regimes and policy networks that likewise span the globe and operate at a global level.

In the second sense, by contrast, the prefix 'global' is suggestive not merely of institutions, networks, or norms located at a 'global level,' but instead of the multiple scales and levels at which governance is now practiced globally. In this broadest sense, global

governance is governance that is the practice within rather than by the international (Selby 2003: 5). Global governance is not the same as the world government. The world system of the 21st Century is not merely a system of unitary states, interacting with one another through diplomacy, public international law, and international organizations. We can think of this international system as the skeleton of the modern world system essential to the world system's functioning but not as a whole system (Verma 2005:17).

Since the turn of the millennium, the question of resistance to the liberal project of global governance has come to occupy centre stage in transnational and international politics. From the mass demonstrations at the Seattle WTO summit in November and December 1999 to the attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon in September 2001 to the Bush administration's ambivalent if not downright hostile attitude towards multilateralism, all of these can be through of especially conspicuous instances of resistance to global governance. If the 1990s were dominated by the collapse of communism and the consequent resurgence of liberal hopes and political agendas, these encapsulated the notions of globalization, 'global governance,' and the 'new world order' (Selby 2003: 1).

Concept and Models of Democracy

The famous definition of Abraham Lincoln delineates Democracy as the people's government, by the people, and for the people. They acknowledge a government of the people as 'their' (identification) because it is viewed simultaneously as government

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by and for the people. The people's notion indicates that rulers take into account the interests of the individuals or groups that brought them to power. It refers to the so-called 'input legitimacy' of the political system (Scharpf: 1999).

By contrast, the government 'for the people' refers to 'output-legitimacy'; in other words, the notion that government should govern in a way that is profitable for the collective wellbeing of the people. Hence not only do the intrinsic values of democracy matter, but 'out approval of democratic institutions is equally conditional on their delivering the beneficial effects associated with democratic decision-making' (Ballamy and Castiglione 2000: 73).

The concept of Democracy adequate for the evaluation of governance should also consider the functional and institutional differentiation between those who govern, as representatives, and those who are headed. Democracy then refers to the interaction between these groups of actors. It is characterized by structure and processes in which collectively binding decisions are made by responsive actors in the interest of those citizens who authorized them to rule in their place. Thus, the democratic legitimacy of a polity and particular politics required a circular relationship between decision-makers and the citizen (Benz and Papadopoulos 2006: 5).

One common distinction in the literature of democracy is *representative Democracy, participatory Democracy, and deliberative Democracy* (Elster 1986). Below, we very briefly outline the main characteristics of these three models. The model of representative Democracy emphasizes the opportunity for citizens to choose between competing political elites with alternative political agendas, and to hold decision-makers accountable for their actions (Dahl 1967). The participatory Democracy model stresses direct citizen participation as a prerequisite for a proper democracy (Barber 2003).

The model of deliberative Democracy emphasizes deliberation among citizens or their representatives as the mode for realizing Democracy (Fishkin 1991). According to this model's ideals, it is highly unsatisfactory if citizens are reduced to voters, whereas political elites control actual decision-making. Instead, citizens must be brought back into the political process itself. Compared to those favouring representative Democracy, participatory democrats also tend to be more concerned about avoiding exclusion and marginalization based on, for instance, gender, ethnicity, and class.

World Bank and Good Governance

Over the last decade, the World Bank has embraced 'good governance' as a set of principles to guide member countries' objectives. The World Bank faces pressure to apply to some similar transparency, accountability, and population standards. The World Bank is an institution that came to the world arena during the post-Second World War era that also saw a mood of reconciliation during death and mayhem. The world though engaged in global trade, but no standard was acceptable to all the trading partners. Mostly the trading used to take place in the form of a barter system, and it was always that one of the parties to this trade felt intensely exploited.

This was why the increase in the colonialization that developed Europe and suddenly highlighted the USA could have their economy flourished amid exploitation that they were engaged in. The trading pattern was in the form of the slave trade or commodity exchange. This also resulted in increased volatility in the economic cycle, and the example of this was the Great Depression of 1929. All this resulted in the world leaders coming together to meet at the Bretton Woods in the USA's North-Eastern Sea resort. This was the starting point of the global financial institution, and the World Bank was one of them.

This institution gives sovereign loans to the different sectors of a country. Generally, the loan, if for a longer-term thus, mainly engages in the infrastructural and banking loan, which can bring in long-term reforms. Some of the loans and the grants that it gives mostly to the more impoverished nations are structures tied to the written international contract. They will have to bring in the desired reforms, though sometimes criticized. It becomes necessary to reduce the corruption at the individual country-level.

For economic growth and sound business environment, the World Bank gives five key factors – *Build capacity* – strengthening governments and educating government officials. *Infrastructure creation* – implementation of legal and judicial systems to encourage business, the protection of individual and property rights, and the honouring of contracts – *Development of financial systems* – establishing a robust system capable of supporting endeavours from microcredit to the financing of large corporate ventures. They are combating corruption – support for countries' efforts at eradicating corruption.

Research, consultancy, and training – the World Bank provides a platform for research on development issues, consultancy, and conducting training programs open for those interested in academia, students,

government and non-governmental organizations (NGO) officers, etc. Thus, the World Bank plays a significant role in global governance through its policies as good governance at the cost of democratic deficit.

'Good Governance,' a term that came into vogue in 1990 with the World Bank leading the charge, has assumed the status of mantra for donor agencies and donor countries for conditioning aid upon the performance of the recipient government. This is intended to ensure that development assistance is used effectively (Nanda 2006: 269). To spend the new aid productively, suggestions were made to increase support beyond its current levels to countries with good governance (Bhagwati and Gambari 2005) and give debt relief only to countries with good performance and tolerable political accountability (Wolf 2005). Economist Jagdish Bhagwati and UN Undersecretary-General and Special Advisor for Africa Ibrahim Gambari responded to those calling for debt relief only to those with Good Governance.

As there is no consensus on the criteria for measuring good governance, however, the term remains ambiguous and hence imprecision results. Should economic performance be the sole or a primary measuring rod, or should the time be extended to encompass political entities' governance by the central or state governments or even municipalities? What is the political content of good governance? And liberal democratic values included that content element, and if so, how important are they? What kind of participation in decision-making is envisaged, and by whom? What kind of accountability is required? How universal are or should be the standards used to evaluate good governance?

Democracy in the World Bank

Since for Democracy, the World Bank gives the concept of good governance. But for this, the World Bank put some condition on the respective countries for giving aid or loans, so where is Democracy? The United States has the veto power; it can prevent the World Bank from taking action against its interests. The U.S. has found the World Bank a beneficial instrument for projecting its influence in developing countries. The Bank is a source of funds to be offered to the U.S. friends or denied to the U.S. enemies. It is a source of Anglo-American ideas about effective ways to organize an economy and increasingly a polity too (Wade 2002: 203).

Democracy: "Democracy is not intended to be efficient, linear, logical, cheap, the source of absolute

truth, manned by angels, saints or virgins, Profitable, the justification for any particular economic, a simple matter of majority rule or for that matter a simple matter of majorities. Nor is it an administrative procedure, patriotic, a reflection of tribalism, A passive servant of either law or regulation, elegant or particularly Charming ... the key to its secret is the citizen's involvement." John Ralston Saul (1994). Beyond citizen, parliamentary and government participation in and control over decisions at the national level, key democracy issues relate to the World Bank and the IMF's internal decision-making processes.

The creation of international institutions, such as the World Bank and IMF, during the 20th Century, has presented new challenges for Democracy because such institutions are a long way, physically, politically, and legally, from those whose lives they affect. The governance of these institutions relies on the participation of member government representatives who are then accountable to their home country citizens for their actions.

The US has found the World Bank a beneficial instrument for projecting its influence in developing countries. The Bank is a source of funds to be offered to US friends or denied to US enemies and a source of Anglo-American ideas about effective ways to organize an economy and, increasingly, a polity too. In effect, the US chooses the president of the Bank, and the president has always been a US citizen. The U.S. enjoys a unique position in the IMF and World Bank. When the institution was created, its structure, location, and mandate were all pretty much determined by the United States. The U.S. had just over a third of the voting power in each institution. No drawing from the World Bank was approved without US agreement first is being made clear (Michael & Neil 2003: 1).

These observations suggest that the US was set to play a dominant role in the institutions. The Bank's location in the heart of Washington DC, a convenient stone's throw from the White House, the Treasury, and the Washington think-tanks, plus the fact that its staff read US newspapers and watch American TV, plus the fact that English is its only language of business, mean that American premises structure the very mindset with which most Bank staff approach development. Wade cites Brunsson and argues that the Hindi proverb says, 'The elephant has; two sets of teeth, one to eat, the other to show.' The Bank, too, has two sets of teeth, one for action, one for politics (Wade 2002: 204).

In summary, the international financial institutions have a close relationship with the United States, which creates tensions for them since they must both please their most powerful political master and, at the same time, maintain their independence and credibility both as specialized agencies and as multilateral organizations. To be effectively the institutions need to be perceived by their member countries as a legitimate multilateral organization, pushing internationally-determined objectives in a rule-based way. They need to recognize credibility and expertise in economic policy based on the research's scope and depth.

To enjoy this legitimacy, they also need a visible degree of political independence from the United States' interferences or any other significant power or bloc, such as the European Union. This poses two questions. First, how much influence does the US wield in the institutions, and through what mechanism? Second, in the opposite form, what features of the institution give the relative autonomy from the U.S.? Significantly US influence over the World Bank leading, but through evolving rather than stable relationship. US interests in policy towards the World Bank frequently change with presidential administration and economic and political circumstances.

Conclusion

The new geography of global governance has raised the opportunities for human betterment and significant challenges for Democracy. Existing arrangements to govern global space suffers from significant democratic deficits. To achieve the clarity of Democracy, we propose to use 'global governance' as an analytic concept that provides a specific perspective on world politics different from that of 'international relations.' But the vision of democratization in 'global governance' through the World Bank with the concept of 'Good Governance' trade-off between different democratic values, deliberation Vs. Transparency, inclusiveness Vs. Accountable is only on paper, not in practice, because the United States plays a hegemonic role in the World Bank in policymaking and policy implementing the World Bank.

It is worth that for the Democracy regarding the financial transaction, e.g., Loan or Aid with World Bank, it is contradictory with the 'Good Governance' because granting the loan or aid to developing or under-developing countries World Bank restricts their Democracy by applying some conditionality with the concept of 'Good Governance.'

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India's Afghanistan Conundrum: A Third World Perspective

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[The relevance of peace and stability in the Afghanistan cannot be confined only to the domain of challenges of Indian diplomacy and objectives of foreign policy but a stable and friendly north-western neighborhood has a profound and elaborate significance on equanimity, development and tranquility of India. This paper attempts to analyze the Afghan peace process from Indian perspective with a broader 'third world prism' with emphasis on trajectory of India's soft power and developmental assistances to further its national interests. This paper also attempts to showcase the hegemonic neo-colonial attitude of US towards 'Third World' democracies along with the imperative and stakes of women's rights in the on going peace progress.]

India and Afghanistan shares the ancient and cultural relations from the era of Indus valley civilization to the modern age of globalization in the uncertain and fluctuating world order with both the states having visible traits of third world countries struggling with poverty, unemployment, corruption and neo-imperialism with the exception of democratic political stability in India. Since the ancient time unstable Afghanistan had always remained a challenge for stability of India as all the foreign intruders attacked the India from porous north west border of Khyber pass.

Even after independence, Afghanistan remains a foreign policy challenge for India due to rise of radicalization and 'Great Game' played on the Afghan soil by direct involvement of great powers of the world, between Persian and Mughal Empire in medieval times and between Britain and Russia in modern age. Disintegration of Union of Soviet Socialist Republic in 1991 and withdrawal of soviet forces leaves the fundamentalist Taliban the sole power in the Afghanistan which was traditionally averse to the Indian interest and a proxy of Pakistan's deep state. The 9/11 attack on the US by AL Qaeda with the implicit support of Afghanistan-Taliban led the world to abandoned the differences between Good and Bad Taliban and NATO war on terrorism led by US forces topple Taliban from Afghanistan and establish a new regime with democratic credentials.

Its been 20 years now to the ongoing war on terrorism having gone through many phases and USA along with great powers are on the table of talks with

Afghan-Taliban with ambitious target of disengagement of its armed forces and withdrawal from Afghanistan soil. India till remains almost practically stagnant in its policy on no dialogue with any terror outfits and have no visible negotiating coupling with the Taliban. However, in the present geo-strategic milieu India can't afford to remain a mute receptor of ongoing Afghan peace process.

The Biden Approach

After the four years of hefty Trump policy of engagement with Taliban without the participation of elected government, the new Biden administration has shown a more comprehensive approach of both continuity and change with eye on May 1, 2021 as date of withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan¹.

Tony Blinken the Biden's Secretary of State wrote a "take it or leave it" letter to Ashraf Ghani the Afghan President about "intra Afghan talks" recommending an UN deliberation body hosted by Turkey encompassing US, Russia, China, Iran, Pakistan and India which was earlier excluded from the peace process, thus exclusive "Doha process" becoming comprehensive "Istanbul process" with the participation of all major stakeholders and regional giants².

It's eventually understandable that "Doha talks" spearheaded by Trump's administration failed to bear fruits as Taliban continues its offensive strategy as according to the February, 2020 report of "United Nations assistance mission in Afghanistan" more than 100,000 civilians were killed in last decade. However, with "Istanbul process" Biden's administration is pushing Afghanistan's "leaders to choose between war and sharing power with dominant Taliban"³. The Blinken's neo-colonial letter categorically mentioned about the "revised proposal for a 90- day reduction

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in violence, which is intended to prevent a spring offensive by the Taliban to support a political settlement”⁴. The US secretary of State’s letter to the elected President of a democratic country of the third world in a tone of ultimatum “underscored a blatant disregard for democracy in Afghanistan”⁵.

Women Rights: Constitutional Regime V Sharia Law

Afghanistan is known as a country of “The Great games” now witnessing “New Great games” has traditionally been a patriarchal society like any other third world country with authoritarian regimes with fundamentalistic visions and programs curtailing the human rights in general and women liberty in particular⁶.

The ongoing peace talks while focusing on political settlement where every party intended to maximize its interest but pondering less about the fate of half of Afghanistan population as “protecting the hard fought fundamental and constitutional rights of the women is one of the imperative of the Afghan republic in contrast to Taliban which insist that Afghan women have to exercise their rights and liberties according to ‘Islamic tenets’ a term that mean the Taliban’s interpretation of Sharia laws”⁷.

During the fragile last two decades the Afghan women spearheaded the democratic movement with ultimate sacrifices. Hujjatullah Zia in his article “No peace without equality” salutes the braveness and democratic spirit of Afghan women in words that “the blood of Afghan women was spilled in polling stations, schools, universities, educational institutions, hospitals, wedding halls, streets and social and political gatherings”⁸.

The present Afghanistan constitution is a gender sensitive document in line with the charter of “United Nation Universal Declaration of Human Rights” where Article 22 stipulates that “Any kind of discrimination and distinction between citizens of Afghanistan shall be forbidden. The citizens of Afghanistan, man and woman, have equal rights and duties before the law”⁹. Article 24 of the Afghan constitution specifically provides for human rights which reads as “Liberty is the natural right of human beings. This right has no limits unless affecting others freedoms as well as the public interest, which shall be regulated by law. Liberty and human dignity are inviolable. The state shall respect and protect liberty as well as human dignity”¹⁰.

All the above gender sensitive democratic gain could be lost if unbridled “Taliban seek to impose their

warped ideology and tailor women’s rights and freedom to their dogmatic conviction”¹¹.

India’s Soft Power

Joseph Nye, neo-liberal American scholar coined the term “soft power” in his book “Bound to Lead: The changing nature of American power” in 1990 implying “non- traditional forces such as cultural and commercial goods”¹². Afghanistan is the classical example of India’s soft power approach where strategic options are either absent or minuscule and limited. Indian approach to have friendly relations with Afghanistan went back to treat of friendship of January 1950 signed by Indian Prime Minister and Afghanistan’s Ambassadors to India Mohammad Najibullah.

In 1980s after the defeat of Talabani regime, India was among the first and only south Asian country to not only recognize the “Democratic Republic of Afghanistan” but also to establish diplomatic relations with then “Afghanistan Interim Authority”. In 2011 Afghanistan and India signed “The Strategic Partnership Agreement” to take relations to the next level in all comprehensive areas of mutual trust and cooperation”¹⁴.

India’s soft power approach towards Afghanistan remain although soft but it always has a neoclassical realistic perspective of protecting intending national interests as “neorealists go on to factor in specific features of a given situation to generate more complete explanation of foreign policy” and manufacturing the suitable responses to that particular situation¹⁵.

Every successive government faces the same old conundrum of Indo-Afghan relationship with NDA 2.0 also facing this fundamental foreign policy challenge of maintaining a balance between “muscular and hardline postures and softer and more conciliatory accommodations while pursuing the overarching goals of burnishing India’s credentials as a rising and responsible global power”¹⁶. With regional rivals and great power engagement in Afghanistan, India chooses to walk on a well calculated narrow path of providing humanitarian and developmental assistance without any strategic boots on Afghan soil to pursue its national interest in emerging strategic scenario of uncertainty with not a peaceful rise of more assertive China and deep state of Pakistan.

The success of India’s soft power approach and its positive image on the minds of Afghans can be ascertained from the fact that in 2010 domestic polls

“71 percent of Afghans believed that India is playing the most positive role among all countries in the rehabilitation of Afghanistan with only 2 percent of votes cast in favour of Pakistan’s role”¹⁷.

India is working on 5 pillared developmental partnership with Afghanistan. First being the ‘Humanitarian Assistance’ in the likes of supply of 1.1 million MT of wheat, building a 400 bed’s ‘The Indira Gandhi Institute of child Health’, supply of medicines and other pharmaceuticals¹⁸. The second pillar is partnership in ‘Economic Development’ in the form of private investments, employing 116 new ‘High Impact Community Development Projects’ in 31 provinces etc.¹⁹. Third is partnership in ‘capacity building’ where India is providing skill training to more than 3,500 Afghans, ICCR providing 1,000 scholarship yearly to Afghan students in India along with 500 reserved seats in Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC)²⁰. Fourth pillar of partnership is Infrastructure development in Afghanistan with construction of 218 km Delaram Highway, 220 kv transmission line, chintala substation, Salma Dam and New Afghanistan Parliament among others²¹. The last pillar of developmental partnership is ‘Extended Connectivity’ with the development of Chabahar port under International North South Corridor, Direct air Freight Corridor and many more, with assistance exceeding US 3bn Dollars, the highest in the region²².

During the hard Covid-19 pandemic, India continued its humanitarian aid and developmental assistance even in the war-ravaged areas of the Afghanistan. India is renowned to be the world’s pharmacy. It has provided 5,00,000 tablets of HydroxyChloroquine to Afghanistan at a time when major countries of world and even US is demanding the same due to acute shortage and exponential increases in demand²³. India also continued its assistance when it has developed Covid-19 vaccines and provided 5 lakh coronavirus vaccine doses to Afghanistan, which in the words of Afghan Foreign Minister Mohammed Haneef Atmar, is seen as the “A clear sign of generosity, commitment & strong partnership”²⁴.

Conclusion

Afghanistan represents a textbook example of a ‘Third World Country’ whose destiny and future- political, social and economical is being dictated by the forces of First world and Second World with almost negligible participation of people of Afghanistan. Jeo Biden the new president of US although with a liberal outlook is visibly continuing the old policies as adopted by

his predecessor Donald Trump and engaging with same Taliban with which US has fought war since last 20 years. The active involvement of major powers including India’s rivals in the peace process of Afghanistan with inevitable coming of Taliban at the helm has created a perplexing situation to safeguards India’s boundaries and national interests. Taliban always remains a threat for India’s security and stability as images of hijack of IC-814 is still alive in the memories of Indian policy makers. Peaceful and stable democratic regime is also crucial for tranquillity and stability in the Kashmir as many terror outfits operating in Kashmir like Hizbul Mujahidin, Jaish-e-Muhammed and Lashkar-e-Taiba have Afghan connections with Afghan Taliban only provides training to new militant recruits but also the safe heaven to hide themselves. India has chosen well to engage in this ‘new great game’ through soft power approach of 5 pillared development partnership in the line of ‘Neighbourhood First Policy’ to further its national interests. India has heavily invested in the women education and democratisation in Afghanistan as a result of which Afghan women has become India’s permanent ambassadors in Afghanistan. As said by former PM A.B. Vajpayee “we can choose our friends but not neighbours”, India needs to continue its development assistance without having boots on Afghan soil in the spirit of ‘south-south’ cooperation.

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Japan-India Relations

Dr. Anilkumar B. Halu*

[The emerging strategic relationship between India and Japan is significant for the future security and stability of the Indo-Asia-Pacific region. It is also a critical emergent relationship for U.S. security objectives across the Asia-Pacific. India possesses the most latent economic and military potential of any state in the wider Asia-Pacific region. Therefore, India is the state with the greatest potential outside of the United States itself to contribute to the objectives of the “Rebalance to the Pacific” announced by Washington in 2011. India and Japan share complementary, but not identical, strategic vision. Both seek to manage—and minimize—the potential negative impacts from the rise of China in accord with their own strategic perspectives. As of early 2017, Japan has been perceiving China’s growing assertive actions to be a great and rising strategic threat.]

The Japan-India relationship dates back to centuries, involving both cultural and commercial interaction. Buddhism came to Japan from India in the 6th and 7th centuries. The Asuka Temple in Nara was constructed in 588 and the Great Buddha of Nara was added in 609. Travel of Buddhist scholars from India to Japan and of Japanese students to India can be traced back to the 8th century. The shared Buddhist tradition spiritually and culturally links the Japanese and Indian people and differentiates Japan from Confucian Asia.

The first direct economic contact can be traced to the beginning of Japan’s Meiji period (1868), when Japan used raw materials from India to enable its

early industrialization. The focus of this monograph is the 21st-century evolution of the Indo-Japanese strategic relationship. Modern forces are driving this relationship forward—in particular, the rise of China, the promise of India, and the re-emergence of Japan as an active contributor to international peace and stability.

The Indo-Japanese strategic relationship shares a clear symmetry, in language and processes, with the historic U.S.-Japan alliance and with the emerging U.S.-India strategic partnership. In this context, the United States has a conspicuous stake in the success of the relationship and seeing that it reaches its full strategic potential.

The monograph was researched over the course of a year from late 2015 to late 2016. It is based upon extensive research into primary Japanese and Indian

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sources and references. It is leavened by author's interviews with key political and security officials in New Delhi and in Tokyo during visits to those locations in December 2015 and May 2016, respectively.

Japan-India strategic relations can be conceptualized as having evolved through three major phases since the end of the Second World War: 1945–1999, 2000–2005, and 2006 through today. In the first phase, Japan and India maintained a harmonious relationship but remained at a political distance due to the geopolitical divide between India's leadership of the nonaligned movement and Tokyo's close alignment with the U.S.-led anti-communist, anti-Soviet Union block. U.S.-India antipathy—and the distance between Tokyo and New Delhi—grew greater after India's treaty of "friendship and cooperation" with Moscow, which was signed in 1971 and was operative through 1990.

At the same time, the harmony beneath the distance was demonstrated in several warm episodes during the last 45 years of the 20th century. In the immediate post-Second World War era, India provided urgent supplies of food and other equipment to Japan. Indo-Japanese warmth was also evident between India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Japanese Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi, who was the first post-war Japanese prime minister to visit India in 1957. This first phase came to a rather frosty end after India's nuclear tests of 1998 and the Japanese decision to join Washington and impose economic sanctions against New Delhi.

The second phase of the relationship began in 2000 and continued through the end of 2005. It followed the historic visit of President Bill Clinton to India in March 2000, the first by a U.S. President in more than 20 years. Taking a cue from the Clinton visit, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori travelled to New Delhi later in August 2000.⁵ Japan's most pressing aim with India was economic. A growing India, divested from the Soviet bloc since 1991 and committed to creating a more capitalist, world-oriented economy, was becoming increasingly attractive as a trade and investment partner in Tokyo, as it also was in Washington. Mori established the Japan-India Global Partnership during his August 2000 visit.

In 2001, Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee visited Japan. The bilateral relationship has broadened and deepened ever since, enjoying bipartisan support in both countries. Since August 2000, prime ministers

of both the Liberal Democratic Party and the Democratic Party of Japan have visited India. Beginning with the visit of Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi to India in 2005, Japanese and Indian prime ministers have held annual summits alternating between New Delhi and Tokyo for more than a decade. On the security front, the Indian and Japanese coast guards began annual joint exercises and leadership exchange visits in 2000.

Japan was a natural partner for India's Look East policy, although relations between the two expanded only slowly at first during the 1990s as Japan took its cues from a cautious United States and India focused most intensely on relationships with Southeast Asian states. During the 1990s, India first focused on the build-out of strong commercial, cultural, and military ties with Singapore, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Thailand. New Delhi signed free trade agreements with a range of East Asian countries, including South Korea and Japan. India also pursued membership in multiple Asia-Pacific economic and security forums.

It became a sectoral dialogue partner with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1992. In 1995 it attained advisory status in ASEAN and became a member of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific. It became a member of the ASEAN Regional Forum in 1996 and a summit-level partner in ASEAN (on par with China, Japan, and Korea) in 2002.

Indian thought leaders today believe that the Japan relationship is built on a number of complementary dynamics that matter to the Look East policy. Japan is an aging society, while India is a young one. Japan needs to invest its capital offshore successfully to gain and grow, and India offers an attractive, relatively untapped infrastructure and manufacturing base upon which to grow value. Japan needs access to educated workers for offshore ventures, and India has such a demographic capital.

Japan and India share political values anchored in democracy and diversity of opinion and expression. Japan and India share a common history of religious ideals, namely Buddhism. Indeed, unlike many of Japan's relations across Asia, Tokyo's engagements with India feature tremendous goodwill and "few discordant notes." By the mid-2000s, Indian policymakers positioned the Japan-India relationship at the top of a growing array of strategically important bilateral relationships evolving across the Indo-Asia-Pacific region.

Japan and India share a vision for the future order in the Indo-Pacific that meshes well with the January 2015 U.S.-India Joint Strategic Vision for the Indo-Pacific Region. Much of this bilateral vision is mirrored in the India-Japan Vision 2025 document of late 2015. In turn, the context of the India-Japan partnership aligns strongly with a chief aim of the U.S. “Rebalance to the Pacific” framework: that of encouraging regional partners to do more for themselves and to work more closely in security relationships with other like-minded partners across the region.

Senior officials in India and in Japan credit the critical role of the United States in signalling and encouraging the two nations to pursue their bilateral strategic relationship to its historic heights as of early 2017. It remains important for the United States to continue signalling—and supporting—Japanese and Indian initiatives to more closely advance their relationship in a strategically significant way. The interest of the Donald Trump administration in seeing U.S. strategic partners and allies do more to assure their own security, including doing more with other regional partners, will benefit greatly from a deeper and stronger India-Japan strategic relationship.

Put another way, the United States has a tremendous role to play in further advancing Japan-India ties. The way Washington deals with disappointments and challenges in relations with New Delhi can encourage Japanese forbearance in its disappointments with India and set a model for Japan’s engagement toward a long-term strategic partnership.

Japan expects India for improving the business environment, including the easing of regulations and the stabilization of the system. India established the “Japan Plus” office in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in October 2014 as a “one-stop” location for resolving problems faced by Japanese companies. Japan and India agreed to set up for 11 candidates of Japanese industrial townships around DMIC and CBIC areas in April 2015. Prime Minister Abe requested India’s early decision on introducing special incentive packages in Japanese industrial townships in December 2015 and November 2016.

India decided to introduce the Shinkansen system in December 2015, when Prime Minister Abe visited India. The Japan’s Shinkansen system is in a highest class of High-Speed Railway systems around the world in terms of its safety and accuracy. Japan and India confirmed that the General Consultant would start its work in December 2016, the construction

work would begin in 2018, and the railway’s operation would commence in 2023.

India has been the largest recipient of Japanese ODA Loan for the past decades. Delhi Metro is one of the most successful examples of Japanese cooperation through the utilization of ODA. Japan will cooperate on supporting strategic connectivity linking South Asia to Southeast Asia through the synergy between “Act East” policy and “Partnership for Quality Infrastructure.”

In terms of human resource development in the manufacturing sector in India, Japan announced its cooperation of training 30,000 Indian people over next 10 years in the Japan-India Institute for Manufacturing (JIM), providing Japanese style manufacturing skills and practices, in an effort to enhance India’s manufacturing industry base and contribute to “Make in India” and “Skill India” Initiatives. JIM and the Japanese Endowed Courses (JEC) in engineering colleges will be designated by Japanese companies in India, and this is a good example of cooperation between the public and private sectors. The first three JIMs would start in summer 2017 in the States of Gujarat. Those institutes are also expected to give more Indian students the ambition to study the Japanese language.

Conclusion

Over the past few years, consistent engagement between India and Japan has transformed the bilateral relationship into a significant, broad-based and strategically oriented one. Both the countries have been intent on strengthening ties in both economic and defence domain and work towards influencing the future Asia-Pacific landscape. Abe and prime minister Modi were also wary of China’s growing presence as well as the vacuum which can be created by a declining US involvement in the region especially given uncertainty over US’s future foreign policy. India and Japan also look to complement each other economically with Japan providing India with capital and technology and finding new markets in the process.

Interestingly, recent developments in Washington where new administration under President Joe Biden has taken over since January 20, 2021 and the change of leadership in Japan, where Shinzo Abe resigned as prime minister of Japan on health grounds in August 2020 and was replaced by Yoshihide Suga as the new prime minister, have not brought any change in India’s friendly relations either with Washington or

Tokyo. Recently held virtual Quad Summit in which leaders of Quad member nations – Australia, India, Japan and the United States – took part and exchanges views is a testimony of the fact of growing friendly relations between India and Japan.

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Women in Power Structure and Decision-Making

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[The promulgation of the Constitution of India bestowed legal equality on women of India. Though the constitutional provisions allowed the women to leave the relative calm of the domestic sphere to enter the male-dominated political sphere, the involvement of women in politics has been at low key. This article enumerates the factors which have resulted in a wide chasm between the ‘de-jure’ and ‘de-facto’ status of political participation of women in Gujarat. Political participation is a complex phenomenon, which can be comprehended by analysing several factors. It analyses the process of women’s participation in Parliament, Rajya Sabha and local government and assessing its significance. And, it also tries to investigate the impact of women’s participation in politics, and obstacles for women’s participation in politics, long with suggestion to enhance women’s participation in politics, power structure and decision-making.]

Throughout history, women have generally been restricted to the roles inside the house, like that of attending to domestic chores and looking after the family, while major changes have occurred in the status of women in some parts of the world and also in India in the 20th century. The emergence of new trends has drastically changed the domain of women and relationship during the last five decades. The increasing involvement of women in the mainstream politics and the impact of feminist movements all over the world led to an entirely different approach towards the role of women in politics.

Women’s participation in mainstream politics has important implications for the broader arena of governance in any country. Liberal democracy is founded on reason, law and freedom of choice but the position of different social groups in the social and political space, where power is located, is not always equal in practice. This is particularly so in the case of women. The nature of society of state has a decisive impact on the extent and effectiveness of women’s political presence and participation. It is necessary to examine the gender balance in women’s participation in the political process, decision-making and policy formulation. The limited nature of female participation and representation in national decision-making institutions has important consequences for women and for the legitimacy of the institutions.

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Where women constitute half of the total population in a political system which supports equality and where both women and men are legally eligible for political office, women's participation should be equal to that of men. If this is not the case, it signifies deep flaws within the political system. Women's disproportionate absence from the political process would mean that the concerns of half the population cannot be sufficiently attended to or acted upon. In this backdrop, this article discusses about condition of women in power structure and decision-making in Gujarat, emerging obstacles to their political participation and then focuses on as to how to enhance women's participation in politics, power structure and decision-making.

Conceptualizing Political Participation

Analytically, this paper is organized around the problem of political participation. As survey of Gujarati women enables to assess female political participation in various ways: by describing people's involvement in attempts to solve collective problems; through measures of support for political parties, of electoral participation, and of participation in political activities of different kind; and through measures of associational practices. 'Political participation' is defined, generally, in the words of Verba, Schlozman and Brady as: "activity that is intended to or has the consequence of affecting, rather directly or indirectly government action" (1985:9).

These authors also recognize, however, in their classic work on the US, that there are many social activities that are non-political in themselves but which do have political consequences (the overtly non-political is also political). They argue, therefore, that political participation should be understood as including "much... non-electoral activity. (that) takes place outside official channels. This includes a vast number of official contacts and communication with government officials as well as a large volume of informal, problem-solving activity among friends and neighbours in local communities" (1985:8).

Rosen Stone and Hansen, similarly, in their more recent work on political participation in America, offer what they describe as an 'expansive definition': "Political participation is action directly toward influencing the distribution of social goods and values" (1993:4). The understanding of political participation in this paper follows this wider definition, and it is concerned with that 'large volume of informal problem-solving activity' to which Verba, Schlozman and Brady refer, as well as activity intended directly

to affect government action. (John Harris, 2005:1042)

Political Participation in India

In India, the post-independence period has seen many positive steps to improve the socio-economic status of women. But still, the constitutional equality for women and provision for affirmative action have not been translated into political participation in all these years of independence. In India, electoral politics continues to remain a male preserve, both empirically and symbolically. Male voters have consistently outnumbered women voters by 11 per cent over the last five elections, although this gap is narrowing.

Sociologists consider that only 30 per cent of female voters are aware of the political happenings in the country. In fact, when women cast their votes in India, there is a *de facto* pattern whereby women first take advice from male family members or follow the instructions of male members in the household, suggesting that they are incapable of their own reasoned decision-making. Moreover, there is also very little women representation in the party organization, which to a great extent, contribute to the lack of their participation in the process of policy-making.

In India, political parties tend to give few tickets to women for the parliamentary elections. So far, there have been only one woman Prime Minister, 13 female Chief Ministers and a woman President. The percentage of women in the 11th Lok Sabha Election, both at Union and State level, and in the Council of Ministers, has been around 6-7. The number of women contestants dropped from 599 candidates in the 11th Lok Sabha Election to 278 in the 12th one.

The situation is no better in the case of State Legislative Assemblies. In the West Bengal Legislative Assembly, the number of women members in 1991 was 21 of a total strength of 294 and in Uttar Pradesh it was only 14 out of 422 (1993); Tamil Nadu had 32 out of 234 (1991); Rajasthan 9 out of 199 (1993); Punjab 6 out of 117 (1992); Orissa 8 out of 147 (1995); Maharashtra 1 out of 288 (1995); Madhya Pradesh 11 out of 320 (1993); Delhi 3 out of 70 (1993); Bihar 11 out of 324 (1995); Assam 6 out of 122 (1996); Andhra Pradesh 8 out of 294, Kerala 13 out of 140 (1996) and in Gujarat 2 out of 182 (1996). (Jameela V.A. 2009:293)

Gujarat at a Glance

Gujarat state came into existence as a separate state on 1st May 1960. Gujarat is one of the developed

states in India. It has progressed to achieve the fourth ranking in per capita income among major states in India. Today it is one of the prosperous states of India with about 50 million populations in 2001 spread over 196,000 sq.km. Though the state has less than 5 per cent of population, it contributes about 7 per cent of the production and about 13 per cent of the industrial output. According to 2001 census, the total population of the Gujarat state was 4,83,87,270, consisting of 2,52,08,865 males and 2,31,78,405 females. The total literacy rate for Gujarat (2001) was 69.97% among them 80.50 males and 58.60 females. Gujarat literacy, as usual remained higher than the all-India average for all Censuses. A provisional figure on Literacy of India accounts for 65.38 per cent, that for males 75.85 and females 54.16 per cent. However, major states like Kerala, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu are ahead of Gujarat with literacy 90.92, /77.27 and 73.47 respectively. The sex-ratio of females per 1000 males was 919. Population Density rate was 258. Percentage decadal growth of the State had increased during 1991-2001 in comparison to 1981-1991.

There was 21.19% growth in the decade 1981-91 which had become 22.66 per cent during 1991-2001. The birth rate (25.4) in Gujarat is higher than all India (24.8). The poverty in rural Gujarat is less by about 14%, in case of urban areas and it is less by about 8% and in overall terms, it is less by about 12% Except for polio, the percentage of children vaccinated is higher (5.3) in Gujarat when compared to all-India (13.1), may be due to higher number of child births taking place outside health centres. Healthcare facilities in Gujarat of PHCs 1044, CHCs 7247 and community centres are 253. Despite all these positive indicators, participation of women in the political sphere remained less than 10 per cent.

Extent of Participation of Women in Politics

The representation of women in the formal political structure within the three levels of governance has remained abysmally low. At the parliamentary level, the Gujarati women's representation has never crossed 10 per cent. In the 14th Lok Sabha only there, women represented Gujarat though the number of male members was 26. This means that the percentage of women's representation amounts to only ten. It is true that "where power is, there women are not". Table 1.0 given below shows the representation of women of Gujarat in the Lok Sabha from 1962-2014.

Table: 1.1. Women's representation from Gujarat in Lok Sabha -1962-2014.

Year	Total Seats	Men	Women
1962	25	23	2
1967	25	24	1
1971	25	24	1
1977	26	25	1
1980	26	26	-
1984	26	24	2
1989	26	26	-
1991	26	24	2
1996	26	24	2
1999	26	24	2
2004	26	25	1
2009	26	22	4
2014	26	22	4

Source: Lok Sabha Elections, Gujarat, 2014.

Women's Participation in Rajya Sabha

Rajya Sabha or the 'Council of States' is the second chamber or the Upper House of the Indian Parliament. Its members are indirectly elected i.e., they are elected by the members of State Legislatures. 12 members are nominated by the President of India. These nominated members belong to some specific field like art, culture and literature etc. Since 1952, 130 women have become its members. During the period 1952-1967, most of its women members were those who have been fighting for the women's cause. During this period, the noted women members were Violet Alva, Rukmini Arundole, Lila Devi, Savitri Devi Nigam, Lilavati Manshi, Aizaz Rasid, Dr Seeta Parmanand and Uma Nehru. Educationally speaking, these women members have been highly qualified having the graduate and post-graduate degrees and even the degree of doctorate. Nevertheless, by inquiring into the participation of women in Rajya Sabha from Gujarat, it is noted that a very low number of women have participated in Rajya Sabha.

The 73rd Amendment of Constitution 1992, has provided for reservation of one-third of the seats for women at every level (Gram, Taluka, District) of Panchayat. This has made it compulsory for more participation of SCs, STs, OBCs and other women in Panchayat. It is only in the case of local bodies election that women's participation is encouraging in the state. In these elections, the number of women contestants and winners exceeded the requirement of 1/3 of total seats (33 per cent).

Table: 1.2 Participation of women in Panchayati Raj Institutions of Gujarat State- 2015.

Panchayat	Category	SC	ST	SEBC	General	Total
Seats in District Panchayat	Women	16	53	28	157	254
	General	37	104	51	315	507
	Total	53	157	79	472	761
Seats in Taluka Panchayat	Women	43	239	185	807	1274
	General	227	489	231	1593	2540
	Total	270	728	416	4200	3184
Chairperson of Taluka Panchayat	Women	--	12	11	37	60
	General	13	23	7	81	124
	Total	13	35	18	118	184
Chairperson of District Panchayat	Women	--	1	1	4	6
	General	1	3	1	8	13
	Total	1	4	2	12	19
Sarpanch of Gram Panchayat	Women	355	620	443	3017	4435
	General	710	1245	1331	5595	8881
	Total	1065	1895	1774	8612	13316
Ttotal Members of Gram Panchayat	Women	3294	5765	4118	28003	41180
	General	6583	11520	8229	55958	82290
	Total	9877	17285	12347	93961	123470

Source: Panchayati Raj Institutions, Balwant Rai Bhavan, Govt. of Gujarat.

It becomes clear from the table no.1.2 that in the present times as a result of 73rd CA Act a large number of women belonging to the different castes as members, chairpersons and Sarpanch were represented in the PRIs. Due to this amendment, women from different categories have been able to participate in the power structure and decision-making process at different Panchayat levels and particularly in the local Panchayats. The enactment of the 73rd CA Act was facilitated with a view to involve women in decision-making, providing psychological empowerment and a sense of political efficacy to those who had been left powerless to intense public decisions that affected them.

Consequently, approximately a million Indian women entered formal politics and local elected administration, often with little prior experience or knowledge of political systems and processes (Pillai, and V.S. Badari, 2004:5). But a constitutional provision is only necessarily an enabling step, which should be followed by effective measures for women's upliftment in the country (Mathew, 1994: 130).

Factors accounting for the low participation of Women in Politics and Decision-Making:

1. The lower socio-economics status of women and their continuing devaluation process intensified by government policies (New Economic Policy through Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) tend to further marginalize women leading to reduction in employment opportunities for women workers, exclusion of women workers in the productive process, reduction of wages of women and actualization of female workers.
2. Parties' attitudes are also responsible for this state of affairs. Generally political parties do not favour nomination of women candidates because of their ability not to mobilize substantial resources. Women, whose access to financial resources is negligible, hardly stand a chance of getting a seat. Moreover, the women candidates are also not sure of their success.
3. Male chauvinist-thinking dominating political parties does not encourage women to come up in the party hierarchy and reach leadership positions. Although the extent of such prejudice differs from party to party depending on their ideologies, it is an all-prevailing phenomenon. Besides, in the election manifestoes, political parties normally do not take women's issues, which need special representation of women. Most parties do not set aside a quota for women or provide for reservation of seats.

4. The declining moral values, the increasing use of money to achieve the political power, rapid criminalisation of the society and politics, politicisation of criminals, fear of character assassination, and muscle power reflecting the country's deepening socio-economic crisis are some of the factors which do not encourage women to take active part in politics. These evils have a great entailing impact on the condition of women in the country.
5. The women's vulnerability is heightened primarily due to increasing unemployment and exploitation. Here, exploitation may be understood as unequal wages for equal work among males and females, overt or covert barriers to entry or to upward mobility of female labour, unequal access to females to factors of production, to technology to information and to social and family resources. Legal rights to property are yet another area gaining repeated articulation in the recent past.
6. It was seen that the political parties were represented in the corporation. But the predominant political culture, which is masculine, is reflected in the political parties as women were put up as candidates only in the reserved seats. The women's wings of political parties, therefore, have a major responsibility in facilitating women participation in the political process. They should emerge as models to women and thereby breaking the traditional male dominance.
4. Women need to be empowered at the earliest. Employment has to be in terms of equal access to factors of production, to technology, to information/knowledge, to social and family resources and legal right to property besides social, economic and political employment.
5. Statutory representation is important not as an end itself but as the first step in promoting political participation of women. The reservation quota should take into account the representation of the vulnerable sections. Statutory provisions will induce them to give women their due. This would also motivate women to come forward to shoulder higher responsibilities.
6. As the quality of political participation is crucial, electoral reform is the major key. However, the system by itself has a crucial role to play. Transparency in the government functioning, effective and a responsive public participation together will go a long way in political mobilization of women and thereby promote their participation.

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B.L Gautam's *Andy Leelu*: A Study in Regional Literature

Apoorva Hooda*

*[Regional literature plays an important role in binding us to our traditions and culture. A regional novel not only presents the cultural and social milieu of a region, but also records the transition that comes in our culture with the changing times, and thus connects the present and the past. Regional novel, as a branch of literature, primarily paints the regional life in its vivid colours as it accurately depicts the atmosphere, traditions, speech, and customs of a particular locality. The actions, thoughts, feelings, and temperament of the characters are influenced by the cultural and social setting of that particular region. It is specifically centred around a particular geographical area generally a rural area, rather than a metropolis. These regional novels not only make the reader aware of the uniqueness of that particular area but also differentiate it from others in a nation. The present paper is an attempt to evaluate B.L. Gautam's *Andy Leelu* as a piece of regional novel.]*

In a country like India, which has diverse traditions, cultural patterns of life, and geographical boundaries, there are ample opportunities to stimulate a writer to describe the unique features of a place. Writers such as Thomas Hardy, Maria Edgeworth, R.K Narayan, Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand have very beautifully and artistically given expression to the unique features of their regions.

Hardy has renamed his countryside Dorsetshire as Wessex, after a medieval Anglo-Saxon kingdom in England. His major novels including, *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874), *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886) and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891) are primarily set in Wessex. Maria Edgeworth, the inventor of regional novels, limited her place of action to London and Bath.

Indian writer R.K Narayan's short stories and novels also revolve around the life and people of Malgudi. Raja Rao says in the preface to the novel entitled *Kanthapura*, "There is no village in India, however mean, that has not a rich sthalapurana, or legendary history of its own. Some god or godlike hero has passed by the village – Rama might have rested under this Pipal tree, Sita might have dried her clothes, after her bath, on this yellow stone, or the Mahatma himself, on one of his many pilgrimages through the country, might have slept in this hut, the low one, by the village gate. In this way the past mingles with the present, and the gods mingle with men to make the repertory of your grandmother always bright."

I have taken B.L Gautam's famous novel *Andy Leelu* to study its social realism. The writer of this novel,

B.L. Gautam is a well-known film producer, who previously worked as a Superintendent of Intelligence and later worked as a Director in various Bollywood movies. The novel revolves around a teenage boy Leelu who rebels in his own way and often runs away from home to escape punishment.

The author confesses that the story is semi-autobiographical and he drew inspiration from his cousin Leelu who died at a young age. Interwoven with the story of Leelu and his companionship with the author is the story of a small village Sehere in the Mahendergarh district of joint Haryana-Punjab state of the 1960s.

B.L Gautam is a pure storyteller, an artist who portrays reality in its real rare rhythm. In *Andy Leelu* the writer seems to be narrating the story of mischievous Leelu who comes to stay at his 'Nani's place' Sehere after his mother 'Imarti bua' could no longer bear her husband Atma Ram Kaushik's torture and abuse. In Sehere, Leelu gets into trouble with almost everyone around his uncle- Masterji, headmaster of the village school - Raghubir Yadav, wrestler boy of the village- Dharamender, village peon-Ganpat, neighbourhood ladies like Bharto, and even the SHO of Kanina Zile Singh.

Leelu may be obstinate and rebellious but at the same time, he is courageous also as he saves Gindori's son Naurang from drowning in the "Brahmin's well" (91) when everyone else expressed helplessness to risk their lives to save a fellow villager. This daring task won him the title of *Andy Leelu*. Leelu risks his life and saves the author by driving him to the civil hospital of Mahendergarh for the treatment of Cholera. So, the author also owes his life to Leelu. Thus, the novel may appear like Leelu's story, but at the same time the landscape of Sehere "a neglected

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area of erstwhile undivided Punjab” (51) comes out to be an alive and active personified character.

Gautam has created Sehere of the 1960s from his own experiences of childhood and his memories of living in his native village. The social life, customs, traditions, and crisis of the village are vividly described with unbiased objectivity and sharp observation. It is a place to which every Haryanvi or even every Indian could relate to- one can go to its shabby streets, roam in the open fields –with some having ‘chattris’ erected in them in the memory of their ancestors, attend aarti in the temple and celebrate its various festivals-Teej, Rakhi, Dussehra, and Diwali.

One can see the village children playing in the ‘bani’, plucking ‘peels’ from the ‘jaal’ trees, drinking water from Kadeel or playing kabaddi or ‘doing dirty gossip’ (19) on the sand dunes outside the village or one can also visit the “secured or lively courtyard...and inner dark rooms where bahus...sashay their stuff...share their woes and kinks...talc their faces and necks, kohl their eyes with locally made black paste and streak their well-parted hair with a pinch of vermillion.” (2)

This novel has ordinary people reminding the reader of next-door neighbours, cousins, school teachers, and village urchins thereby providing the reader with a greater ability to understand the world of Sehere. The writer’s Buddhima could be the grandmother of any of us- an old woman with quivering lips and shaking body trying to keep the joint family together with her wisdom and sternness. Her peculiar trait of keeping the money in a “home woven colourful bag” (167) and relying on favourite grandchild to count it reminds us of our grandmother. Masterji is painted as a typical father in rural Haryana - “strictness personified not loving but ferociously protective one as in those days definition of love was altogether different.” (7)

The everyday mundane activities and the humdrum happenings of Sehere keep the reader bound to the book. Life here moves at a slow pace and people believe in strongly rooted traditions and age-old customs. Their connection to the outside world was through “rumours and radio news” as mainly life was a “stretch between a few mounds of barley at the cornerstone and a distant dream of the next crop.” (10) People believed in the curative power of local healers who would give “black pills of Sanjivini...which brought back Lakshman from the door of death” (18) to the ailing people. They also

believed in astrology and the Brahmin astrologer of the village was the “sole source of knowledge” (15) about the plans of the almighty and the rain God.

The unity of Sehere was well known and it had a Muslim mother-son duo living fearlessly in the Ahir and Brahmin dominated village. It like any other part of India encouraged patriarchy and believed in the superiority of male gender. Here boys were precious and deadly possession –and the only son was “like one eye- blindness was a wink away...a woman was more blessed if she produced a few boys whereas girls were creditors of the past life all the way to settle their account” (3). Every night wives were supposed to “limb massage their tired husbands” (11) and “corporal punishment was a way of life for women...” (66). Thus, the author by giving these subtle details about the beliefs and lifestyle of the village has established the intimate sense of the reality of Sehere.

The countryside may have been celebrated for its beauty, peace, and simplicity by various writers and poets but B L Gautam has presented a faithful picture of the complexities of the social set up of Sehere. ‘Imarti bua’ though has left her abusive husband yet feels ashamed of her fate. She and her son Leelu become a burden on her own mother as “Buddima had two extra stomachs to fill.” (17) The writer’s mother also did not let go of any opportunity to insult her and criticize Leelu for any of his wrongdoings.

Though the world of Sehere is warm and intimate yet it is not free from the tensions of caste differences. Caste of people is tagged along with their names like ‘Budhram ahir’, ‘Guttu jogi brahman’. Jogi Brahmins were supposed to earn their livelihood by collecting bhiksha from the villagers and other sects of Brahmins considered them beggars. They would not accept any eatables from the jogi Brahmins. Leelu’s shifting with Guttu, a jogi, raised eyebrows of his family as they considered having food from Guttu below their dignity.

When Arya Samaj, founded by Swami Dayanand, became popular in Sehere it created a kind of rift between the Brahmins and non-Brahmins and a “sudden venomous whiff of casteism permeates the air of Sehere.” (98) Believers of Arya Samaj like Dharamendra started using abusive words like ‘pakhandi or popes’ for the Brahmins of the village. This new development encouraged the enmity between Leelu and Dharamender. Leelu had no qualms in desecrating the bull temple of Arya Samajis by masturbating inside it.

But one thing that is common in the village is poverty. It rules in Sehore and it makes life miserable. "Money was hardly visible in Sehore-It floated in singles –a single coin or a single big-sized note of small denominations" (10) Poverty affects the emotions of people so much so that during India-China war of 1962, feeling of patriotism became "simply an antidote to forgetting the ills of poverty and sacrifice was just a feeling to overpower the difficulties posed by scarcity." (9) It is poverty that forces Gindori, a peon's wife, to develop an illicit relationship with the school headmaster. Poverty along with the dowry system makes the parents curse their daughters.

The curse of poverty is multiplied manifold when rain fails and famine knocks at the door of Sehore. As a result, family members turn into "bellies to be filled up every single day." (27) To survive, people shift from wheat to mixed grains or maize or millet. And women are the worst affected by famine. They would manage "rotis with an onion or red chilies or simply plain water." Ghee, cooked vegetables if any were meant for the men of the house. Poverty and famine would dampen the festive spirit also- "the clash of high voltage emotions and dried-up cash reserves would often bring people to tears" (14) But people knew how to wipe these tears of helplessness. The scarcity of resources and cash was compensated by zealous cleaning and decoration of houses and livestock. All the festivals were celebrated in traditional ways with great enthusiasm. Thus, the world of Sehore may have its share of problems, the people may be poor or illiterate but they are alive and interesting.

Life may be moving at its own pace but Sehore is also a witness to the developments taking place in post-independent India. When the novel opens Sehore is afflicted with the epidemic of cholera and "Death paid a daily visit. If not enough ...it returned for a second or even a third visit" (1) Young children are dying of Cholera even the writer loses his cousin Kundan to it. At the end of the novel Cholera again makes a comeback but this time the author is saved as a new drug called tetracycline has come to the hospitals of Mahendergarh and Kanina.

People of this village take full interest in the national affairs. They keep a close eye on the developments happening during the Indo-China War of 1962 and the Indo-Pak War of 1965. Every house of the Ahirs has a member of its family in the Army and thus contributes to safeguarding the boundaries of the nation. Sehore's brave son Lance Naik Dheelu Ram had sacrificed his life for the nation and brought laurels for the village in the form of a gallantry award.

The death of Pandit Nehru jolts the people of the village. For an old woman like Buddhima, it was like a personal loss. The villagers shared the nation's grief by taking out a procession in memory of Pandit Nehru. A hard nut Leelu too wept genuinely. The rise of a common man like Lal Bahadur Shastri to the position of the Prime Minister raised the hopes of the people of Sehore. As a result of the education policy of the government, importance of education was realized by the people of Sehore. Children were sent not only to the village school but also to different places like Kanina and Mahendergarh. Ghasi, the son of an Ahir farmer could stand first in his class replacing the author, son of a teacher. Similarly, the author, a boy of humble background, could become a famous writer and make his village proud.

Thus, B L Gautam presents in his novel *Andy Leelu* a miniature model where culture of real Haryana exists. He has accepted the social system as it is and makes no attempt to criticize or preach. His background is absolutely realistic and at times philosophical in its realism. Haryana is now one of the richest states of India. It's most developed cities like Gurgaon and Faridabad are on the world map. The parts of South Haryana like Narnaul and Mahendergarh are still considered backward and the whole credit goes to B L Gautam for making this remote part of Haryana accessible to the outside world through his novel.

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Urban Local Governance in India

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[In India, urbanisation has been accelerating since the dawn of independence mainly due to acceptance of mixed economy as a primary factor which gave impetus to the development of the private sector economy in the country. Rapid urbanization in India in the 20th century as well as in the present century has been pushing people to migrate to urban areas primarily for economic reasons. The comparative jump in the rate of urbanization in India since the last century has been sharply observed. According to 1901 census only 11.4% people lived in the urban areas. The data of 2001 census puts it to 28.53% while the last census held in 2011 puts the figure to 31.16%. In 2017, the rate of urbanization increased to 34% according to the World Bank. According to Allan Chirare, an urban expert, 'Urbanization, if not managed appropriately by a local government, can become a disaster for a bigger city like Mumbai in India'.]

While exploring the genesis of the term 'urban' and 'urbanization' in the historical context, it is speculated that a particular prosperous and efficient village attracted the attention of other less prosperous tribes who then attached themselves to the successful settlement. This process called urbanization, gave rise to the densely populated places which gradually came to be known as 'urban' areas and were later termed as towns, cities and city regions according to the degree of concentration of the population and the extent of geographical area it occupied. Although, urbanization began in ancient Mesopotamia in the Uruk Period (4300-3100 BCE), the dramatic increase in population, and change in population distribution took place during the first Industrial Revolution which lasted from the mid-18th century to about 1830 and was mostly confined to Britain.

In order to deal with this demographic upsurge and its accompanying challenges and necessities, there was a need for an authority to determine and execute measures within a specified and restricted area. This authority which was responsible for governance at the local level, gradually came to be known as 'local government' in an urban setting. Since then, some form of local institution of governance is regarded as essential and inseparable aspect of the structure of a government. Subsequently, this governmental narrative became an acceptable practice all over the world. No government, even in modern context, can declare itself to be fully adequate in the absence of a local government irrespective of its nomenclature and form of functionality.

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The system of local government can be traced in every nation as part of its governing mechanism or constitutional structure. It has been regarded as quite conventional; however, to think of Great Britain as point of genesis for local self-government where a democratically elected council was required to function at the local level with an active support from a professional civil service duly appointed for the purpose. However, the history of local government in England has been of gradual change and evolution since the Middle Ages. Its concept spans back into the history of Anglo-Saxon England of 700-1066 AD period.

In terms of connectivity, certain aspects of its modern system have been directly derived from this period. The popular notion in the West that towns and the countryside should be administered separately seems to have come from this historical narrative. The sudden and dramatic increase in human habitation and change in the pattern of population distribution in particular areas caused by the Industrial Revolution, as mentioned earlier, created a necessity to bring about systematic reform in local governance in England. This however, was achieved gradually throughout the 19th century. Much of the 20th century was used for a genuine search for a perfect and idealised system of local government.

The more glaring and characteristic feature of American local government is the extreme autonomy enjoyed by American municipal structures at the grassroot level. However, local government in the United States which is referred as governmental jurisdictions below the level of state may operate under their own charters or under general law or a mix of both and enjoy control over such matters as

zoning issues, property taxes and public parks. While local government in France has a long history of centralisation, the past 20 years have brought about some radical changes.

Despite its complexity, the new system aims to bring French local government closer to the people. It has now been given far greater autonomy in decision-making by sharing administrative and budgetary tasks between central and local authorities. Moreover, the French local government revolves around the prefects who are political administrators. The Swiss pattern of local government is unique in a sense that it not only determines and defines the sphere of local autonomy but accords them residual powers which the national constitution does not specifically grant to the authorities at the federal level. The federal constitution thus protects the autonomy of municipalities within the framework set out by the cantonal law.

India, traditionally recognised as an agrarian economy, has enjoyed the longest tradition of village self-government in the world, the notion of which was actually derived from the idea of self-sufficient and self-governing village communities. In the time of Rig-Veda (1700 BC), evidences suggest the existence of self-governing village bodies called 'Sabhas' which rendered useful services and empowering environment to the communities at the local level. However, with the passage of time, these bodies came to be known as 'panchayats' which actually meant council of five persons.

These panchayats were regarded as functional institutions of grassroot governance in almost every Indian village. Their foundation was so much rooted in the tradition and the cultural values that they endured the rise and fall of powerful empires in the ancient times and in the recent past. They have even withstood the criticality of the highly structured system of the present times. The term local self-government even in terms of history of its nomenclature, implying the transfer of power to the lowest rung of political order, has some historical connectivity with the tradition of panchayats. This popular practice of local self-empowerment, later became the basis of democratic decentralisation in rural and urban areas of the country.

This system further encouraged the institutionalisation of participation of even the grassroot level of society in the process of administration. However, despite the traditional significance, the modern system of local self-government in India is largely a British creation

as the term originated when the country was under British administration and did not enjoy any self-government either at the central or state levels. However, when the decision was finally taken by the British Government to include the Indian nationals in administering the local affairs, it actually suggested a symbolic self-government for the people.

However, in the present context the term has lost its significance as the nation has attained self-government both at the central and the state levels. Even in the Constitution of India, the use of the term 'local government' has been preferred by the members of the Constituent Assembly.

The origin of municipal government in India can be traced back to 1687 A.D. with the establishment of a municipal corporation in the city of Madras. In post-independence India, systematic process was evolved and attempts were made to recognise the significance of local self-government. Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India emphasised its administrative relevance and termed it as the basis of true democracy. In order to legally strengthen the concept, article 40 of the Constitution of India directs the State to organise and empower the Village Panchayats. Recognising its importance at the national level, article 246 of the Constitution of India gives special powers to state legislatures to make suitable laws to strengthen the local bodies and realise the fruits of democracy at the grassroot level.

However, despite these efforts to strengthen and empower the institutions of local self-government, urban local bodies continued to be in a state of neglect and stagnation for several decades in India. As compared to significant changes in the rural local government, the development of urban local government had been slow and disheartening. As the Constitution allotted local government to the State List, the urban local bodies were stifled and mistreated by the respective states. With an elaborate state-control on the functioning of municipal authorities, they could hardly be treated as embodiments of self-government. Their financial dependency on the state government did not allow them to emerge as institutions of empowerment for a long time.

The increasing criticism of the status of urban local government in India and the concern expressed over its neglect and apathy, finally led to some active discussion and deliberations and some rethinking on the structure and functioning of the urban local bodies. Academics and urban experts came forward

with innovative ideas to re-energise these bodies and make them truly functional as institutions of self-government. They were emphatic and unanimous in suggesting the Central Government to bring about policy changes and devise a plan that would lead to both decentralisation and empowerment of the urban local bodies in India.

In 1989, the Central Government led by Rajiv Gandhi for the first time took active interest in this direction and emphasised the need to rejuvenate grassroots democracy in the country. The Central Government held and facilitated wide-ranging consultations with the elected members of the municipalities in different parts of the country. A number of seminars and conferences were held with municipal officers, chief secretaries, ministers of local self-government and chief ministers. The theme of the entire deliberative exercise was to evolve an appropriate constitutional mechanism to provide a constitutional base to urban local bodies in India.

As a result, the Union Government led by Rajiv Gandhi introduced in the Lok Sabha the Constitution 65th Amendment Bill, 1989 which however could not be passed and lapsed due to dissolution of the Lok Sabha. Subsequently, the other bill with almost the same content and intention better known as 74th Amendment was introduced in 1991 and was passed in December, 1992. Hence, the idea of decentralization and the debate to empower urban local bodies finally, culminated in the enactment of the Constitution (74th Amendment) Act, 1992.

The primary objective of the central legislation was to facilitate the democratic decentralisation at the grassroots level and strengthen and empower municipal authorities so that they can acquire the institutional capability to deal with the problems created by the processes of urbanization and tremendous growth in the urban areas. The idea behind the legislative initiative was to have a constitutional amendment to accord constitutional status to the urban local government so that they could directly derive powers from the Constitution itself and enjoy security of tenure in terms of uninterrupted existence for five years and work as autonomous unit of local government.

The other objective of the amendment was to create a conducive political environment to enable all sections of society to associate with local administration in the country. Attempts were made to ensure that the local administration becomes more accountable to people. Planning which was so far

the domain of the central government came to be initiated at the grassroots level. The purpose of this central legislation was also to give a direct message to the state governments to re-frame their administrative powers and stop treating local bodies as extended arms of their governments and devolve more and more functional and financial powers to the local units of governance.

The Constitution 74th Amendment Act further provides for a uniform system of urban local government in the country. Women have been guaranteed due representation in the urban local bodies. The Act also provides for the constitution of a Finance Commission every five year to review and reserve the resources to strengthen the urban and rural local bodies financially. The Act has also provided for a District Planning Committee to consolidate the plans prepared by the 'Panchayats' and urban local bodies in the district and to prepare a draft developmental plan for the integrated development of the district. There is provision for a Metropolitan Planning Committee for metro cities. The Constitution Amendment has also introduced a separate schedule enumerating a number of functions for the urban local bodies.

The Constitution (74th Amendment) Act, 1992 provides to constitute three kinds of urban local bodies, viz; (a) 'Nagar Panchayat' for a transitional area; (b) 'Municipal Council' for a smaller urban area; and (c) 'Municipal Corporation' for a larger urban area. The classification of the mentioned areas would be specified by the Governor of the State on the basis of population, density, the revenue generated, the percentage of employment in non-agricultural activities, the economic importance or such other factors as he deems fit.

In terms of composition, the Act provides that all seats need to be filled by persons chosen by direct election. For this purpose, the city area will be divided into electoral wards. However, with a view to give a municipality a representative character, persons having special knowledge or experience in municipal administration, Members of Parliament and State Legislature whose constituencies comprise wholly or partly the municipal area, the members of Rajya Sabha and the State Legislative Council registered as electors within the area and the chairpersons of the different committees can be included in the council. Many states have however, not included the higher level of politicians.

In order to make the municipal government more accessible and responsive to the common citizens, the Act provides for the creation of Ward Committee in the cities having population of 3 lakhs or more. The Act has also made it mandatory to complete the election before the expiry of the normal duration, i.e., five years. In case of dissolved municipality, the election must be held within six months. The Act also provides for the elections to be conducted by the State Election Commission.

The Constitution of India has provided for the representative parliamentary democracy in the country. The 74th Constitution Amendment Act intends to take care of this provision at the grassroots level itself. It provides for reservation of seats for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes based on their ratio in the local population of the area. The Act promotes representation of women to the extent of not less than one third of the total number. Even the seats of chairpersons and mayors have been reserved for members of the above categories. This decision has certainly helped in bringing about a social change in the country.

As the role of the urban local bodies was curbed and undermined in the past, the Act attempts to reconsolidate and strengthen them. It empowers the municipalities to prepare the plans for economic development and social justice. They are now expected to perform 18 types of functions as mentioned in the 12th Schedule of the Constitution.

As the urban local bodies were facing a resource crunch, they were not in position to even maintain basic civic services. Performance of developmental function was even more difficult. In order to strengthen them financially the Act provides for constituting a Finance Commission every five years which would review their financial position and make appropriate recommendations to the Governor in regard to the distribution of taxes between the state and the local bodies. It would also suggest different measures to improve and enhance financial position of the urban local bodies. However, recommendations of the State Finance Commission are not mandatory on the state government.

The 74th Constitution Amendment has been quite historic in promoting a local approach to the idea of planning which has generally been treated as sectoral in nature. It provides for constituting a District planning Committee which will consolidate the plans prepared by both the rural as well as urban local bodies and in turn finalise a draft development plan for the district

as a whole. Not less than 4/5th of the total members would be elected by and from amongst the elected members of both the local governments in proportion to the ratio of the population of the rural and of the urban areas in the district.

The 74th Constitution Amendment also provides for constituting in every metropolitan area which has a population of 10 lakhs or more, a Metropolitan Planning Committee (MPC) to prepare a draft development plan for the area. Not less than 2/3rd of the members of the MPC shall be elected by and from amongst the elected members of the municipalities and chairpersons of the rural bodies falling in the metropolitan area in proportion to the ratio between the population covered by both types of local governments. Several States however, have not made these committees operational.

Thus, the Constitution (74th Amendment) Act, 1992, which has enormous features of commendable nature as described above was finalised by P.V. Narasimha Rao Government and came to be enforced nationally on 1st June, 1993. However, as the urban local self-government along with the rural local bodies is a state subject as specified by the Constitution of India, all states were legally required to ratify the Constitution (74th Amendment), Act, 1992 and bring all their existing relevant legislations in conformity with that of the 74th Constitutional Amendment provisions by May 31st, 1994. The post 74th Amendment scenario in the urban local government context however has not been very encouraging. There is a need to critically assess the implementation process and reframe certain aspects which have prevented the act to achieve its objectives.

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Passive Resistance of Landless People in Maharashtra (1959)

Dr Avinash D. Fulzele*

[Dalits were denied various rights including social, economic and political etc. They didn't have any means of livelihood. So, they had been leading coercive life. Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar strove hard to make Dalits aware and they enthusiastically supported Dr Ambedkar in his movement. Thereafter, this movement was prominently known as Ambedkar movement. This movement raised and organized the struggle for equality. The struggle for land was one of the most significant part of this movement. Republican Party put forward the issues of dispossessed people through this state-pervasive passive resistance. He started passive resistance of landless people in Marathwada, Khandesh, Nashik, and Vidarbha region. Republican Party's leaders conscientiously campaigned and thrived it. Therefore, many people of various castes and religions vigorously participated in this passive resistance. Many people were imprisoned for it. The jails were filled with the landless protestors. It compelled government to heed on it. This passive resistance gave new direction to the society.]

Though agriculture is the path to lead life prestigiously, the issue of ownership of land was severe one in the contemporary era. Dalits and tribals became agricultural labourers due to unavailability of land. The doors of economic self-reliance were closed for them as they were landless. Vinoba Bhave started Bhoodan Movement (Land Gift Movement) throughout the country during contemporary era. Vinoba Bhave aimed that he would appeal to the landlords to donate excessive land to landless farmers and poor people. Total 20 lakh 69 thousand acres of land was acquired throughout the country till September 1953 from this movement.¹

But local poor people and especially untouchables were not much benefitted from this movement. It was observed that land acquired in Bhoodan Movement were not distributed among poor untouchables.² Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar had organized passive resistance of landless people to get the lands for Dalits and tribals in 1953 in Marathwada region. This passive resistance gave a new direction to the movement.

Passive Resistance of Landless people in Maharashtra

B. S. Murthy, Deputy Minister, Central Society Development Department, appealed to form new laws regarding land reformation to get economic justice to untouchables and other downtrodden communities from the stage of Sixteenth Annual Conference of Indian Dalit Union. He opined, "...Most of the landless and agricultural labourers belonged to untouchable

communities. The financial condition of Dalits can be improved if the possession of land transferred to the cultivators of the land. But the State Governments are not driving ahead to take bold decisions regarding land reformation acts. It would be wise and better not to procrastinate it for Dalits... Total 32 crore acres land is cultivable and 75 percent land is possessed by 5 crore people. Total 8 crore people are landless and agricultural labourers. It is one of the most crucial issue in rural economy. Their thirst for land can't be mitigated by just dressing their thirst...'³

Republican Party propagated to give land to the untouchables and tribals who were scattered in the remote areas of India for their emancipation from economic exploitation and social slavery.

There were 18 lakh tribals and 40 lakh New Buddhists and Untouchables in contemporary Maharashtra. The number of agricultural labours was 40 percent in Vidarbha, 30 percent in Marathwada, and 24 percent in Western Maharashtra.⁴ As far as the unemployment rate of Western Khandesh, total 11,026 people registered their names for job in employment office till 1st January 1959. Only 926 people got jobs in various sectors.

The area of Eastern Khandesh was 4535 square miles, the numbers of villages were 1384, population was 13,18,000, total land was 2,90,900 acres, forest land was recorded at 40,011 acres while barren but cultivable land was 2,00,000 acres, land under crops was 60,944 acres, horticultural land was 38,000 acres out of which 34,000 acres land was under moth production. This was the condition of agricultural land in Eastern Khandesh.⁵

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As far as the division of agriculture is concerned, 1 to 5 acres land was owned by 63,000 people, 6 to 15 acres of land was owned by 55,108 people, 16 to 25 acres of land was owned by 19,934 people, 26 to 100 acres of land was owned by 13,533 people, 100 to 500 acres of land was owned by 1285 people while more than 500 acres land was owned by 57 people.⁶ There were numerous agricultural labours.

It indicates that how land was centralized in Eastern Khandesh. In this way, the issues of land, industrial crises, unemployment, and inflation were predominant in Eastern and Western Khandesh.

Republican Party declared to organize state-wide protest for the issue of land, though the 1953's passive resistance solved few issues to some extent in Marathwada. Because government had decided to revoke 2000 acres of land which was given to the landless agricultural labours since 1947 in Eastern Khandesh district and also determined to implement this policy in other states.⁷ It would culminate into the problem of people's livelihood if it happened so.

So, the struggle of Republican Party was not confined to the Mahar-Mang or Buddhists, it was all-pervasive struggle. Everyone has equal hunger. The problem of hunger was the same for all people. Especially, India is an agrarian country still it imported cereals from foreign countries costing 150 crore rupees per year. Therefore, party demanded for the equal distribution of agricultural land by improving the agricultural system of India.⁸ As well as, they suggested the government to confer barren lands to the landless people.

Congress Party put forward the resolution of socialist structure at Awadi which was not implemented by anyone. Republican Party came forward to complete this work assiduously. Party took the stand to organize agitation and passive resistance of landless people if the government somehow failed to confer lands to the landless and poor people.⁹

Total 40 percent land was included in forest as most of the area of Western Khandesh was hilly. Near about 2 lakh acre land was barren in the district except forest land. Not a single tree was planted on that land and it was not productive land. So, 5000 landless agricultural labours were legally demanding above mentioned land.¹⁰ But government intentionally ignored it.

As a result, a group of 150 people under the leadership of Sakharam Natthu Bhamre, one of the members of Republican Party, entered in the barren government land and started passive resistance at Dhandane village

of Nandurbar district on 30th July 1959. Total 10 women also participated in this passive resistance joining hands with the men. These landless people took shovel and mattock with them as government could confiscate their plough and started cultivating the land with these tools. These protestors were imprisoned and filed lawsuits as per Forest Act Section 26 and Indian Penal Code 143 and 447. These imprisoned protestors had been punished with strict servitude in the jail for seven days.¹¹

The passive resistance had started in Eastern Khandesh and Nashik region. Dadasaheb Gaikwad, a Republican Party's leader, roamed around Shirpur, Shahade, Talode, Nandurbar and Shindkhede region and spread awareness among the people regarding passive resistance for the land. He stated in one of the speeches in Sakri, '... Republican Party has come forward to fulfil the desire of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar of improving economic condition of many landless agricultural labours, unemployed, and Dalits by acquiring land for them. Many acres of land are barren in the name of forest for many years in the district. Government should confer this barren land to the landless people of production and solve the issue of livelihood by doing so. Therefore, this protest is organized in peaceful manner...'¹²

This passive resistance wasn't confined to untouchables and Buddhist labours. Many landless people, labourers, farmers, Koli, Bhill, Tribals, Muslims and Marathas participated in the passive resistance.¹³ Passive resistance of landless people had been spreading rapidly in Marathwada. This protest was at the peak in Aurangabad district's Abal, Paithan, Vaijapur, Bhokardan, Jalana and Aurangabad block. The prominent characteristic of this passive resistance was that not only men but also many young women with their children and old women participated in this struggle without caring for rain.¹⁴

Police adopted the policy of arresting some people and releasing them after some time while lawsuits were filed against them at some places in the court. Court of Ambad block punished the protestors till leaving courtroom. United Maharashtra Committee, Praja Samajwadi Party, Communist Party participated in the passive resistance organized by Republican Party. Krantisingh Nana Patil, Member of Parliament from United Maharashtra Committee declared in the open conference in Tilak square that, 'I have decided rebel for passive resistance of landless people until government imprisoned me and also decided to go in the jail.'¹⁵

Many communist workers participated in the passive resistance in Manmad under the stout leadership of Comrade Kusumtai Madhavrao Gaikwad. Near about 70 to 80 women were imprisoned for twenty days in Manmad struggle. Many members of Communist Party's National Council were participated in this protest. Comrade Manohar Taksal, Eknath Nalawade, Tulashiram Patil like members enthusiastically participated in this struggle.¹⁶

Government strove hard to suppress the protest. Many protestors were perturbed with the news of beating-up the protestors in Central Jail of Aurangabad. Total 3000 prisoners were imprisoned in this jail from Eastern Khandesh, Western Khandesh and Marathwada. Sindhi Jailor was cruelly treating these protestors. Many people demanded probe in this exploitation of the prisoners and attracted the attention of Government into this matter.¹⁷

Dadasaheb Gaikwad warned the government about the commencement of 'Go Back Chavhan Government' movement in the conference of landless people at Shirpur in Khandesh if government ignored the demands of many landless people.¹⁸ Pagare appealed the people to help the party workers who would roam with seal-packed boxes to raise the fund to intensify it and sending the protestors from Mumbai during 1st to 15th September 1959.¹⁹ So, he decided to spread this passive resistance throughout Maharashtra.

This passive resistance also started in Vidarbha region. Wasudeo Ganar, Patrilinear of Republican Party stated in the open conference in Wardha, '...conferring land to the landless people is the need of today's era. Therefore, passive resistance is legitimate and appropriate in Maharashtra. This passive resistance will not be taken back until the government fulfils their demands.'²⁰ At the same time, a resolution had been passed in the Mumbai Corporation in support of passive resistance.

Borade, the then Chairman of Mumbai Corporation, stated while speaking on the resolution, '...if government distributes the land among landless people, it will provide means of livelihood for them and they will increase the production of cereals in the farm. So, government should negotiate with the leaders of passive protest and approve the legitimate demands of landless people...'²¹ V. D. Deshpande, a leader of Legislative Assembly' committee, declared that all opposition parties will collectively compel the government to solve the issues of landless people if it fails to immediately solve the issues of landless.²²

Finally, Yashwantrao Chavan, Chief-Minister of Mumbai State approved fourteen demands put forward by the delegation of All Indian Republican Party due to the pressure created by the opponents. As well as, Chavan assured to order the probe in the custodial death of Balaji Gaikwad in Nagpur prison and maltreatment with the protestors in Aurangabad Central Jail.²³ Afterward, Standing Committee of Republican Party declared the retreat of passive resistance which had been going on for years for the rights of landless people. Thus, the passive resistance for the landless people came to an end.

Evaluation

Republican Party gave new direction to the passive resistance of the landless people in Maharashtra. It is necessary to confer land to the untouchables and tribals who are dispersed in the remote areas of India to emancipate them from economic exploitation and social slavery. This idea had been brought forth in the political sphere of Maharashtra through the passive resistance. This struggle was not only symbolizing the discontent of landless people but also signifies the economic, industrial, agricultural and political discontent.

Though the intensity of this passive resistance observed in Marathwada and Khandesh areas, it exposed the issues of landless people throughout Maharashtra. The main motive behind this passive resistance was to encroach on the barren land for permanent settlement and prestigiously earn the livelihood from it. The place of a person was determined on the basis of possession of land in traditional Indian rural society. So, Dalits were also genuinely inclined towards possessing the piece of land. Therefore, Ambedkarite movement organized nation-wide passive resistance of landless people for land.

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Role of Caste Panchayat in the Social Reforms

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[The caste panchayat is especially an important characteristic of lower castes. Although abundant changes have occurred in caste system, caste panchayat in lower castes is still performing specific social functions for the caste and their members. Nowadays they involve some reformative activities which are focus of present research. The principal objective of research is to examine the social structure as well as functions of caste panchayat and to analyze role of caste panchayat in social reformation. Sample survey method has followed to examine above research problem which is of exploratory nature. Overall, 33 respondents were purposively selected to collect primary data, through interview guide, from purposively selected respondents of the 11 caste panchayats of various castes residing at four villages. The major finding is that Koli, Karadiya, Bharwad, Suthar-Luhar, Thakore, and Vankar caste panchayats are more active and effectively control over their caste members which has been involved into many reformative attempts.]

India is a very vast, complex, and diversified country with long history and inherent culture which comprises diversified states; regions and union territories; cities and villages. Various religions, castes, ethnic groups, regions, languages, lifestyles make it the heterogeneous country which reflects into basic social institutions like, family, marriage, kinship, religion, economy, and entire culture of the Indian society. Ross (1961) noted, "The joint family, the caste, the linguistic group, and the village were the main units which formed the core of the traditional Hindu society. These groups circled each individual Hindu...." (p.03).

The caste system is peculiar, unique, and indivisible characteristic of the Hindu society of India. The traditional social system in India was controlled around the caste structures and it divides the Hindu society into various small groups whose relations are regulated by cultural notions of purity and pollution. It is a significant form of social stratification which has two most important features like, social hierarchy and endogamy. The caste panchayat is particularly an important characteristic of the lower castes which is focus of this study.

Caste Panchayat

The caste panchayat is ancient organization and works as a small republic with development of caste system and we can find the evidences of its functioning since ancient Indian literature. Blunt (1931) was the first

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scholar who presented sociological analysis of caste panchayat.

In every caste there is some authority charged with the duty of compelling obedience to customary laws. Among the „twice-born -Brahmans, Rajput, and Vaisyas- that authority is often nothing more concrete than public opinion. But most of castes possess a regular system of government, of which the ruling body is a council or assembly, known as a *panchayat*. The word *panchayat* means “quintette - a group of five persons. But it is safe to say that no *panchayat* ever consists of so small a number. the *panchayat* consists of representatives, selected on one basis or another, but always in greater number than five.

On the other hand, there is in most *panchayats* a committee which guides its deliberations -a sort of cabinet in this House of Commons- and this committee always consists of a small number of members, which number is, more often than not, five (pp.105).

Although many changes have been occurring in the modern Indian caste system, caste panchayat of lower castes is still performing specific social functions for the caste and their members. It controlled and regulated over their members; formulated rules and regulations; it strictly insisted to follow the customs and rules of caste from their members. The panchayat played role as a jury and took decisions in different disputed matters. The bodies still exist and the *panch* (jury) do exert leadership role within their respective groups. Nowadays they involve some reformative activities too which is the focus of the present article.

Social Reform

Social reform is a kind of social movement which is important form of social change. Kingsley Davis (1949) said, “By social change is meant only such alternations as occur in social organization i.e., the structure and functions of society” (p.622). Social movement intends to direct social change into social system. There are various types of social movements like, Alternative, Redemptive, Reformative and Transformative social movements. Social reform is the reformative kind of social movement.

“Social reform is a kind of social movement that aims to make gradual change or change in certain aspects of society, rather than rapid or fundamental changes” (Prasad (ed.), 1990, p. XIII). Understanding of the process of social change as well as social reform is crucial in contemporary India, though there is very little study available in literature to examine the role of caste panchayat in the social reform.

Research Problem

The researcher has been observing through various fieldworks that the caste panchayat is still a powerful organization in lower castes, i.e., socially and educationally backward castes and scheduled castes, in Gujarat. The leaders and educated members of such castes consciously attempt to reform through the elimination of some deep-rooted traditions, customs, and rites of the caste as well as handling new activities and functions which will become the means of social reform. So, curiosity to understand the nature, structure and social functions of caste panchayat led to handle a study on “*Role of Caste Panchayat in the Social Reform*”.

Research Methodology

The Goraj, Kuvar, Makhiaiv, and Lekhamba villages of the Sanand Taluka of Ahmedabad district of Gujarat were the research area for present research article. The principal objective of research is to examine the social structure as well as functions of caste panchayat and to analyze role of caste panchayat in social reformation through their new activities and functions. The panchayats of 11 lower castes, reside in purposively selected four villages, (SEBCs- *Koli, Thakore, Karadiya, Bharwad, Valand, Suthar-Luhar, Ramanandi Sadhu, Ravar, Waghari*, and SCs- *Vankar and Rohit*) have been selected for purpose of research problem.

Sample survey method was followed to examine above research problem and three respondents were selected from each caste by purposive sampling method. The first respondent was selected from the organization of caste panchayat (anybody from President, Vice-President, Secretary, or treasurer) while the second from executive member of organization of caste panchayat. The third respondent was selected from any member of caste residing in selected villages of the *ghol* of caste panchayat. Thus, total 33 respondents have purposively selected to collect primary data from purposively selected 11 caste panchayats.

Direct interview and observation technique were used to collect the primary data from respondents. The interview guide was designed to collect primary data from the respondents which contained various topics related to *ghol*, organization of caste panchayat and its field, various kinds of social functions and activities of social reform and its impacts on the entire caste, and role of caste panchayat in social change through social reform.

The Ghol

The observation of the study is that the caste panchayat doesn't rule over the entire caste but only specific territory known as the "ghol" - the circle of villages where the selection of life mate for marriage have been possible - in the research area as well as entire Gujarat State. There hasn't taken place any change as observed by Blunt before independence.

The group which a *panchayat* rules is not the caste as such, but the endogamous group, whether it be caste or sub-caste. There is not one *panchayat* only to endogamous group, but one *panchayat* to each independent local section of that group. The local boundaries of the jurisdiction of each such *panchayat* are clearly demarcated: sometimes a whole village or town, occasionally a group of villages. This jurisdiction is called by various names - *ilaka*, *juwar* (estate), *tat*, *chatai* (mat - from the tribal mat used at meetings of the brotherhood), *ghol* (circle or group) are some of commonest (Blunt, 1931, pp.104).

The ghol is ruling area for every caste panchayat where it exercises their power, enacts customs and regulations, consents social reform and handles new activities. All ghol, the single caste panchayat rule over, never comprises the same number of villages. The highest widespread ghol of present research has seen in Koli caste where 96 villages contained in a ghol. Then successively ghol of Suthar-Luhar and Waghari castes comprised 72 villages while Ramanandi Sadhu and Ravar castes included 60 villages in their ghol. The ghol of Thakore and Vankar castes entailed of 42 villages while Rohit caste contained 40 villages in it. The ghol of Valand caste included 35 villages while Karadiya and Bharwad castes comprised 24 villages in the ghol.

Organization

The caste panchayat is an organized social group which rules over the single ghol, never the all ghols of single caste. The study reveals that all the caste panchayats of the present study are permanent with specific organization. Blunt discussed about organization which have not changed yet.

Though caste panchayats exhibit endless minor variations, it is possible to distinguish two main types. The first or "permanent" type is a panchayat which possesses one or more permanent officers, whose duty is to bring offences to its notice, and who have power to convene it whenever necessary. These officers are always members of that committee, which guides the panchayat's deliberations. The second or

"impermanent" panchayat is one that possesses no such officers, nor any committee save such as may be appointed for the duration of any particular session (Blunt, 1931, pp. 105).

The organization of caste panchayats of present study consists of the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and members of executive committee. The positions in caste panchayat are similar as in the past, but the addressing them by modern terminology. The data exposes that all the positions are mostly selected/nominated, neither elected nor hereditary, through the general meeting of the caste members of the ghol. Every member of the ghol or those who are present in the general meeting of ghol have right to speak, vote and select the members of caste panchayat.

Of course, due to prominent population in every village of ghol, the Koli and Thakore castes have a committee, similar to the body of their caste panchayat, in every village of their ghol who act as caste panchayat at village level. Generally, the duration of committee of caste panchayat would be two or three years according to their caste structure and after the completion of term they either be reselected/nominated or changed through general meeting. Commitment and loyalty to caste, education, prestige, money, efficiency, and age are criterion of the selection in committee of caste panchayat, as reported by the respondents.

There is some variation about selection of members in the executive committee. When members of caste are notable in every village of ghol (Koli, Thakore, Karadiya, Bharwad, Vankar, and Rohit) then one representative from every village of that ghol selects/nominates a member of executive committee of caste panchayat. When the members of caste are very few in villages of ghol (Suthar-Luhar, Valand, and Ramanandi Sadhu) then one representative among every five to ten villages of that ghol selects/nominates a member of executive committee of the caste panchayat.

However, it was reported by the members of Waghari and Ravar castes that they haven't any proper procedure for the selection of the members of caste panchayat but they have definite organization as other caste panchayats whose members select by choice and hold the positions for long duration. Besides, remaining caste panchayats of present study regularly arrange the meeting at every three, six or twelve months. If some important activities like, Samuh Lagn, or distribution of notebooks, or medal to students etc., are planned, then they meet every week

or fortnight at particular place. In a similar way, all caste panchayats of different ghol of similar caste meet occasionally for definite arrangement of any activities, political interest, and reformulate their customs or rules.

The caste panchayat decides and enacts the customs as well as rules and regulations for their caste members and attempts to obey it from their caste members. Most of caste panchayats, except *Waghari* and *Ravar*, have published it through written directory which contained their organization, customs as well as rules and regulations for their caste. In fact, executive member, who is the representative of the village in caste panchayat, controls the caste members at village level and insists on the caste member to conform to the customs and rules of his caste panchayat and acts as the president of caste at village.

Such members of the executive committee possess higher prestige in their village who sometimes are addressed as the *Gampatel* or *Patel*. He is responsible to entire caste panchayat and caste members of his village who conveys the messages about reformation, new activities, and caste rules to each other.

New Activities

The data revealed that all caste panchayats have been performing some traditional functions like, maintain inter-caste relations, obey the customs and rules of caste, to mediate in cases of divorce and marriage related issues and quarrels among caste member, to punish or to fine the caste member for violation of customs. Nevertheless, some traditional functions of caste panchayat as described by Ghurye (1957, pp.03-04) have been weakening due to social changes occurring in the caste system of India. Therefore, they transform field of work and attempt to unite the caste by different ways i.e., new activities and reformation which is described below.

- Distribution of notebook to students of the caste, distribution of medal or prize and certificates to brilliant students, pay school or college fees and scholarship to poor students are most common activities of caste panchayats of the study, excluding *Waghari* and *Ravar* castes due to lack of resources. Likewise, *Suthar-Luhar* caste panchayat provides education loan to their eligible students while the *Karadiya* caste panchayat has been operating career academy for their youth where the mentors and scholars train and coach them for various competitive examinations of government and they attempt to raise the proportion and quality of girls' education.

Thus, *Suthar-Luhar* and *Karadiya* caste panchayats are dedicated for career advancement of their new generation. The *Koli*, *Bharwad*, and *Vankar* caste panchayats constructed hostel at *Sanand* city for their students where students reside at free or minimum fees. These activities flourish through the donation of caste members, advertisement, and/or fund of caste panchayat.

- The *Suthar-Luhar*, *Karadiya*, and *Valand* caste panchayats build community building where they organize different caste functions like, *Samuh Lagn*, personal marriage, student-oriented activities, meetings, programme of selection of mate, get-to-gather etc. Sometimes such building is offered to members of other caste for social-religious ceremony at rent which is surplus income for the caste panchayat.

- All caste panchayats organize “*Samuh Lagn*” (Mass Marriage) which is common trend in the castes where poor families can marry their youth at very low expenditure. The respondents reported that the rich caste members donate money, gifts, and *kariyavar* (ornaments made from gold and silver, items of housewares, kitchen wares etc.) to the bride and sometimes to groom. It is notable here that the *Koli* caste panchayat are forbidden to arrange individual marriage at home.

They force and make compulsory for every caste member to marry at *Samuh Lagn* which is arranged by caste panchayat at any village of their ghol. If any caste member of *Koli* caste refuses to marry in *Samuh Lagn*, then caste panchayat of *Koli* applies social restrictions for such member. The *Bharwad* and *Koli* castes organize *Samuh Lagn* for all the brides of village as well as all the brides of family (households of blood relatives) where brides of other village can be married.

- The caste panchayats restrict and reduce persons to take along with in wedding ceremony, betrothal, *seemant* (religious ceremony of the parting of hair performed at the time of first pregnancy), different rites, and *samskaras*. The few respondents stated that the rich families of their caste violate such rules and invite more relatives and caste member into all social-religious ceremony to exhibit their prestige.
- Most of caste panchayats control and reduce the gifts under the custom of “*Paheramani*” which is given to the sisters, daughters, and son-in-law by head of family at different social-religious ceremony.

- The Koli, Bharwad, and Karadiya caste panchayats forbid the drumming of band and/or hammering of D.J. and sparkling crackers during the Varghodo (marriage procession on its way to bride's place) and Fuleku (marriage procession of bridegroom going to marry).
- All caste panchayats determine the bride price which was once uncontrolled. However, few respondents reported that although it is restricted by caste rule, some caste members receive it secretly or demanded from father of groom.
- The members of caste panchayats always restrict the divorce, as is reported by respondents. If the dispute happens between couple then members of caste panchayat convince and interfere between them and make effort to prevent divorce. In case if divorce become inevitable, the terms and conditions of the divorce are defined in the presence of the members of caste panchayat.
- The Koli, Thakore, and Karadiya caste panchayats decide to stop the ceremony of Pinda Dan and Funeral Feast which is generally arranged after 11-13 days after the death of a family member while the Vankar caste panchayat makes it voluntary and other castes retain it without changes.
- The Karadiya panchayat agrees to ban the engagement of new generation at adolescence age. However, it is important to note that the age of marriage doesn't raise, compared to higher castes of Hindus. All the respondents have expressed that age of marriage in their caste is 16-20 years for the girls and 18-24 years for the boys. The Koli caste panchayat advices to their caste members to elicit consent of their youngsters before the engagement, so that can be helpful in averting future disputes between married couple.
- The Bharwad caste panchayat approves to cease the ceremony of seemant while the Thakore caste panchayat prohibits drinking of liquor.
- The Suthar-Luhar caste panchayat has started the schemes for assistance for widows and supply the grocery kit.
- The Bharwad and Ramanandi Sadhu caste panchayats convince caste members before going to police station and court in disputed matters.

Impacts

The current functioning and activities of the caste panchayats have been instrumental in envisaging change in their customs and rules, thereby impacting social-economic life of caste members as follow:

- It creates uniformity about the customs and rules of caste through written directory. So, most of members of different castes accept and confirm the customs and rules of caste without any confusion. Also, they consent reformative or changed in customs and rules of caste due to demand of caste members with active participation. On the other hand, violation of customs and rules by rich families of the caste is a general pattern, which is reported by some respondents.
- Members of caste panchayat meet at specific period which initiates active interactions among them. They can frame some activities and reformation in meetings and make possible active participation of caste members in it. The leaders and rich members of the caste donate for various activities. All such things increase the caste unity in areas under present study.
- The educational awareness and its importance increase, except in Waghari and Ravar castes, due to the education related activities of the caste panchayats. The new generation of the Karadiya, Bharwad, Vankar, Rohit, Koli, and Thakore castes held various positions in the bureaucracy.
- Student-related activities of caste panchayats lead to caste consciousness and casteism in new generation. Furthermore, educated new generation reinforces caste consciousness and casteism by holding the positions in the caste panchayat and prompt such kinds of activities.
- They restrict and minimize the involvement of people in marriage, engagement, seemant, and other social-religious ceremony; they restrict bride price, they stop false spending during different social-religious ceremony, and they cease some customs described above. Such kinds of steps lead to improve the economic condition of caste members because of less expenditure in various social-religious ceremony. Consequently, proportion of selling and mortgage of land as well as proportion of debt decrease day-by-day. Overall, their economic conditions improve due to such restrictions applied by caste panchayat.

- The cases of divorce get reduced due to interference of caste panchayat which strengthen the family and marriage institutions. Most of respondents stated that they consciously made effort to restrict the cases of divorce. The Koli caste panchayat has declared the penalty of Rs 51,000 when spouse wants to take divorce without any reason.
- The political awareness increased among Koli, Karadiya, Bharwad, and Thakore castes through the attempts of their caste panchayat. The fact is that the candidates of Koli and Karadiya castes win the last three legislative assembly elections because of dominance of population and their unity. Members of such castes possess the key positions in Panchayati Raj system too in entire Sanand Taluka.
- The caste-members are aware of various schemes of government through the educated members of caste panchayat who publicize and help in getting benefits for their caste members from the government, bank or panchayat.

Conclusion

The above analysis reveals that Koli, Karadiya, Bharwad, Suthar-Luhar, Thakore, and Vankar caste panchayats are more active and effectively control over their caste members. They didn't only meet but they prohibit and constrain deep-rooted customs and regulations, enact new rules and regulations as well as impose restrictions with the reformative approach. They manage to apply and enact it through representative of village in caste panchayat. The active participation of caste members in social reforms is the outcome of caste unity which makes caste panchayat more effective.

Such reformative implementation leads to the positive outcome which is endured by caste members too. Their socio-economic and educational conditions are transforming through their collective effort and induction of educated caste members into caste panchayat. Of course, not all caste panchayats are active in same degree and extent. Waghari and Ravar caste panchayats are inactive due to less unity and large proportion of poverty. Violation of rules and regulations, partition in caste by political interest, disputes and quarrels among caste members are hindering factors in social reform through caste panchayat.

Facilitating factors of social changes are active in modern India though the caste panchayat still exists as powerful organization in lower castes with adaptive changes and activate the traditional functions as well as reformative activities. So, the government must encourage caste panchayats to make social change at village level as well as envisage social reformation into caste system which can lead to overall change of social system of rural India.

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Appraising Literacy in Urban and Rural Areas of Gujarat

Dr. Harshida G. Jagodadiya* Dr Sanjay A. Pandya**

[The developmental story of Gujarat's economy is very long, but the state of Gujarat in terms of human development and social development may not sound as good compared to its other performances although the literacy rate in Gujarat is higher than the overall literacy rate of the country, the picture of literacy does not fit with the development images of the state. The present paper highlights the literacy status of all the districts of Gujarat state as per the 2011 census. The researchers have mainly tried to observe the literacy rate of rural and urban areas in various districts of the Gujarat. Moreover, the study emphasizes to differentiate male and female literacy rate in urban and rural areas of the state.]

The state of Bombay was split into present Gujarat and Maharashtra on 1st May, 1960. Gujarat has completed sixty years of its establishment. Since inception of the state, the structure of its economy has been changing significantly. Not only the State's GSDP and Per Capita GSDP have increased, but it has shown all signs of developed and urbanised economy. The State has maintained its high rank in key economic indicators among the Indian states.

Gujarat has emerged as a leading industrialised state in the country providing to be the ultimate destination for many investors, both within and outside India. Gujarat's economy has been well recognized as growth engine of India with its strong economic fundamentals. Gujarat state has achieved a strong double-digit economic growth of 10 percent, in the past one and a half decade. Gujarat has contributed about 7.9 percent to the country's GDP, with the population share of only 4.99 percent.

Gujarat is one of the most prosperous states of India. It has achieved many milestones in various sectors. It enjoys the status of industrially developed state of India with its 16.8 percent share to country's industrial output. Despite many difficulties, Gujarat is an outstanding performer in agriculture sector too. It is a leading in exports with more than 20 percent share to India's aggregate exports. It has the lowest unemployment rate among the major state economies. It is set to achieve 100% institutional delivery as it increased from 55.9 percent in 2003 to 99.4 percent in 2018-19. Gujarat excels in skilled manpower. It is far ahead in per capita GDP from national average.

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Research Problem

Gujarat has completed sixty years of its establishment. Since inception of the state, the structure of its economy has been changing significantly. Not only the State's GSDP and Per Capita GSDP have increased, but it has shown all signs of developed and urbanised economy. The State has maintained its high rank in key economic indicators among the Indian states.

But the state of Gujarat in terms of human development and social development may not sound as good compared to its other performances. Gujarat ranks 11th in terms of literacy according to 2011 Census Report, among the major states in the country. While it stands on the 15th position in terms of female literacy. All Union Territories (except, Dadar and Nagar Haveli) are in better position than Gujarat in terms of overall literacy and female literacy. Although the literacy rate in Gujarat is higher than the overall literacy rate of the country, the picture of literacy does not fit with the development images of the state.

The present paper highlights the literacy status of all the districts of Gujarat state as per the 2011 census. The researcher has mainly tried to observe the literacy rate of rural and urban areas in various districts of the Gujarat. Moreover, the study emphasizes to differentiate male and female literacy rate in urban and rural areas of the state.

Objectives of the Study

The present research paper has been prepared in view of the following objectives:

1. To present the picture of literacy in Gujarat state as per 2011 census
2. To study the differences in rural-urban literacy in the state

3. To study the difference between male and female literacy rate in urban and rural areas of the Gujarat state

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses have been formulated by the researcher before observing the data:

1. There is no significant difference between rural and urban literacy in the state.
2. There is no significant difference between the literacy of women and men in the state.

Research Methodology

The present paper has been prepared by using secondary data. Secondary data means data which are already available, i.e., it refers to the data which have been collected and analysed by someone else.

Secondary data may be either published data or unpublished data. The most reliable sources have been used for the present study. The statistical data have been properly tabulated. Hypothesis testing has also been done by appropriate statistical tool (t-test). On that basis conclusions have been drawn.

Literacy in Gujarat State

Literacy rate is one of the key indicators of the economic situation in any country. The contribution of Human Capitals is considered as one of the key factors in accelerating the process of development. From this perspective, it is very important to observe the literacy growth. The increased literacy rate leads to enhancement of a country's human capital. The following table presents a picture of literacy progress in the state of Gujarat.

Table-1
Literacy Rate of Gujarat and India

Sr.	Census	Male	India		Difference between Male and female Literacy	Gujarat			Difference between Male and female Literacy
			Literacy			Literacy Male	Female	Total	
			Female	Total					
1	1961	40.4	15.35	28.3	25.05	41.12	19	28.8	22.12
2	1971		45.96	21.97	34.45	23.99	46.11	24.75	35.79 21.36
3	1981	56.38	29.76	43.57	26.62	62.07	36.94	49.9	25.13
4	1991	64.13	39.29	52.21	24.84	60.99	40.62	51.15	20.37
5	2001	75.26	53.67	64.83	21.59	79.66	57.8	69.14	21.86
6	2011	82.14	65.46	74.04	16.68	85.8	69.7	78.0	16.1

The above table shows the literacy of the State of Gujarat and the whole of India from 1961 (Establishment of the State of Gujarat) to 2011 (Final Census Report) and the status of Gender Gap among them. It can be seen from the specifics of the table that the literacy rate of the state of Gujarat and the nation as a whole has steadily increased. The literacy of Gujarat was greater than the literacy of the entire country during each census.

In terms of female literacy, Gujarat is notably ahead compared to overall female literacy of the country. The state of Gujarat and the entire country have a high gender disparity in terms of literacy. The Gender Gap has, however, been decreasing since 1991. This

progress may, of course, be considered very slow. Gujarat, which has more literacy than the country's overall literacy rate, ranks 11th in terms of literacy among the top 28 states in the country.

In terms of female literacy, Gujarat stands on 15th position. Moreover, more than 17 states have a gender disparity in literacy. The gender gap in literacy has, however, been decreasing in the state of Gujarat and across the country since 1991, but this distinction varies in each state. Based on 2011 census, the literacy and gender disparity in the state of Gujarat and its separate districts are as explained below.

Status of Literacy rate in Gujarat State

Table No-2
Literacy in Gujarat State (Percentage According to 2011 Census)

Sr.	District	Rural Literacy			Urban Literacy			Combined Literacy			Difference in male-Female Literacy			Difference in Urban-Rural Literacy		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	Katchchh	75.1	53.7	64.9	87.1	73.9	80.8	79.4	60.9	70.6	21.4	13.2	18.5	20.2	12.0	15.9
2	Banas Kantha	76.4	48.7	62.9	89.1	70.9	80.4	78.2	51.7	65.3	27.7	18.2	26.5	22.2	12.7	17.5
3	Patan	81.0	57.0	69.3	90.0	75.8	83.1	82.9	61.0	72.3	24.0	14.2	21.9	18.8	9.0	13.8
4	Mahesana	90.7	72.8	82.0	93.5	82.8	88.4	91.4	75.3	83.6	17.9	10.7	16.1	10.0	2.8	6.4
5	Sabar Kantha	85.6	62.4	74.2	91.2	77.6	84.6	86.4	64.7	75.8	23.2	13.6	21.7	15.2	5.6	10.4
6	Gandhinagar	91.1	71.5	81.6	93.1	81.4	87.5	92.0	75.8	84.2	19.6	11.7	16.2	9.9	2.0	5.9
7	Ahmedabad	82.9	58.4	71.0	92.2	83.3	87.9	90.7	79.4	85.3	24.5	8.9	11.3	24.9	9.3	16.9
8	Surendranagar	79.2	56.1	68.0	89.2	74.7	82.3	82.1	61.5	72.1	23.1	14.5	20.6	18.6	10.0	14.3
9	Rajkot	83.0	65.9	74.7	89.9	80.6	85.4	87.1	74.4	81.0	17.1	9.3	12.7	14.7	6.9	10.7
10	Jamnagar	78.2	59.4	69.0	85.5	72.5	79.2	81.5	65.3	73.7	18.8	13.0	16.2	13.1	7.3	10.2
11	Porbandar	78.6	59.8	69.4	88.4	76.0	82.4	83.5	67.7	75.8	18.8	12.4	15.8	16.2	9.8	13.0
12	Junagadh	82.2	62.6	72.6	88.7	75.5	82.2	84.4	66.9	75.8	19.6	13.2	17.5	12.9	6.5	9.6
13	Amreli	80.5	62.9	71.8	87.1	75.5	81.4	82.2	66.1	74.3	17.6	11.6	16.1	12.6	6.6	9.6
14	Bhavnagar	81.5	59.5	70.7	88.3	75.6	82.3	84.4	66.1	75.5	22.0	12.7	18.3	16.1	6.8	11.6
15	Anand	91.3	73.4	82.7	93.1	82.9	88.2	91.8	76.4	84.4	17.9	10.2	15.4	9.5	1.8	5.5
16	Kheda	91.1	71.2	81.4	92.1	81.1	86.7	91.3	73.5	82.7	19.9	11.0	17.8	9.9	1.0	5.3
17	Panch Mahal	80.9	55.2	68.4	92.0	80.9	86.7	82.5	58.9	71.0	25.7	11.1	23.6	25.7	11.1	18.3
18	Dohad	68.0	44.8	56.4	88.8	75.2	82.1	70.0	47.6	58.8	23.2	13.6	22.4	30.4	20.8	25.7
19	Vadodara	77.1	58.1	67.8	93.4	85.9	89.7	85.4	72.0	78.9	19.0	7.5	13.4	27.8	16.3	21.9
20	Narmada	79.8	60.7	70.5	92.3	82.4	87.5	81.2	63.1	72.3	19.1	9.9	18.1	21.7	12.5	17.0
21	Bharuch	85.0	70.5	78.0	92.0	84.2	88.3	87.5	75.1	81.5	14.5	7.8	12.4	13.7	7.0	10.3
22	The Dangs	81.8	65.1	73.4	92.8	84.1	88.3	83.1	67.4	75.2	16.7	8.7	15.7	19.0	11.0	14.9
23	Navsari	87.0	76.2	81.6	92.6	84.9	88.9	88.7	78.8	83.9	10.8	7.7	9.9	8.7	5.6	7.3
24	Valsad	79.3	65.2	72.3	92.7	84.3	88.8	84.5	72.1	78.6	14.1	8.4	12.4	19.1	13.4	16.5
25	Surat	82.8	70.6	76.9	91.1	83.2	87.7	89.6	80.4	85.5	12.2	7.9	9.2	12.6	8.3	10.8
26	Tapi	73.0	59.2	66.5	89.9	79.3	84.7	75.4	61.2	68.3	13.8	10.6	14.2	20.1	16.9	18.2
27	Gujarat	81.6	61.4	71.7	91.0	81.0	86.3	85.8	69.7	78.0	20.2	10.0	16.1	19.6	9.4	14.6

Table no-2 shows the details of literacy percentage in the State of Gujarat and its various districts as per 2011 census. This table also shows the total literacy as well as rural and urban literacy rate separately. In each of them (i.e., rural-urban and overall literacy) gender is also shown separately. This gives a clear picture of literacy of different areas such as, rural and urban and different classes- such as, male and female. Some other differences are also reflected in this data table.

From the details of the table, it can be seen that the proportion of literate people in the state of Gujarat is 78%. This literacy of the state is more than 73% of the whole country. During 2001-2011, the literacy rate of the state increased by 8.86%, i.e., from 69.14 to 78%. The literacy rate of the state has increased during this period as compared to 7.85% during 1991-

2001. During this period, the literacy rate of the entire country has increased from 64.84% to 73%. Thus, the literacy rate of the whole country has increased by 8.16%.

During 1991-2001, the increase in literacy rate in the state of Gujarat was less than the increase in national literacy. While during 2001- 2011, the literacy rate of the state has increased more than entire country. In terms of literacy, Gujarat ranks tenth among the 28 states in the country. Even in 2001, the state was ranked tenth. Some of the following important findings can be concluded from the study of Table no-2.

1. Among all the districts of Gujarat, the highest literacy rate is 85.50% in Surat district and the lowest literacy rate is 58.8% in Dahod district.

2. In Gujarat, male literacy is 85.8% and female literacy is 69.7%, hence there is 16.1% gap between the literacy rate of men and women. However, the literacy rate for men and women was 20.37% in 1991 and 20.55% in 2001. In this regard, with the increase in literacy, the gap between the literacy of women and men has decreased during the period 2001-2011. In all 26 districts of Gujarat, women are less literate than men. The highest female literacy is 80.4% in Surat district and the lowest female literacy is 47.6% in Dahod district. The highest gap between male and female literacy is 26.5% in Banaskantha district and the lowest is 9.2% in Surat district.
3. The literacy rate in urban areas of Gujarat is 14.6% higher than in rural areas. The difference was 20.57% in 1991 and 20.55% in 2001. Thus, the gap between rural and urban literacy in the state of Gujarat has improved during 2001-2011. In all the districts of Gujarat, literacy is lower in rural areas as compared to urban areas. The highest literacy gap between rural and urban areas is 25.7% in Dahod district and the lowest is 5.7% in Kheda district.
4. Similar results are obtained by studying the difference between male and female literacy in the state of Gujarat and its districts separately from rural and urban areas. This means that female literacy is lower than that of men in rural areas in all districts and in urban areas in all districts.
5. Rural women have the lowest literacy rate in the state of Gujarat and in all of its districts.
6. According to the 2011 census, a comparative study of male and female literacy in rural areas yielded a table value ('t' Tab) 2.012895567 and a calculation value ('t'Cal) 10.24420377 in the 't' test. The calculated value ('t'Cal) is greater than the table value ('t' Tab). Thus, it can be said that in different districts of the state of Gujarat, there is a significant difference between the literacy of men and women in rural areas.

Similarly, a comparative study of the literacy of men and women in different districts in an urban area yields a table value ('t' Tab) 2.026192447 and a calculation value ('t'Cal) 11.63067792 in the 't' test. The calculated value ('t'Cal) is greater than the table value ('t' Tab). Thus, it can be said that in different districts of the state of Gujarat, there is a significant difference between the literacy of men and women in urban areas. A comparative study of male and female literacy in different

districts of the state of Gujarat as a whole yield a table value ('t' tab) 2.018081679 and a calculated value ('t'Cal) 8.60086043 in the 't' test. The calculated value ('t'Cal) is greater than the table value ('t' tab). Thus, it can be said that in different districts of the state of Gujarat, there is a significant difference between literacy between men and women as a whole.

7. Comparing rural and urban literacy, the 't' test yields a table value ('t' tab) 2.026192447 and a calculated value ('t'Cal) -9.189604973. The calculated value ('t'Cal) is less than the table value ('t' tab). Thus, it can be said that there is no significant difference in literacy between rural and urban areas in different districts of Gujarat.
8. The 't' test yields a table value ('t' tab.) 2.022690901 and a calculation value ('t'Cal) -9.768046056, comparing the literacy of rural women and urban women. The calculated value ('t'Cal) is less than the table value ('t' tab.). Thus, it can be said that there is no significant difference in the literacy of rural women and urban women in different districts of Gujarat. Based on the details of Table No-2 and the findings and statistics based on it, it can be said that with the increase in literacy in the State of Gujarat during 2001-11, the gap between rural-urban and male-female literacy has also decreased.

The state of Gujarat, which is at the forefront of the country in many respects, ranks tenth in terms of literacy. Even though primary education is free and compulsory in Gujarat, the literacy rate of rural people, especially of women, is very low. Hence, this is the subject of further study.

Important Findings

1. Literacy rates in Gujarat and across the country have increased in every census. Also, the literacy of the state of Gujarat has been more than the overall literacy of the entire country. However, Gujarat ranks 10th among the major states in the country in terms of literacy and 11th in terms of female literacy. Which does not match with the developed image of the state.
2. In India and Gujarat in every census (1961-2011) female literacy rate is lower than male. Also, according to the 2011 census, female literacy rate is lower than male in all the districts of the state.
3. Also, according to the 2011 census, the rural literacy rate in all the districts of the state is lower than the urban area. Rural women have the lowest literacy rate in each district.

4. There is a significant difference in female and male literacy in India and in the state of Gujarat. However over time this gender gap in literacy is narrowing.

Conclusion

Literacy rate went up from 69.1% in 2001 to 79.3% in 2011. Despite the good increase in the literacy rate of more than 10% over the decade, Gujarat still has a lot to achieve, given that it stood 18th when figures for all the 35 states and union territories are taken into account. The literacy rate at the national level was 74% in 2011. In 2011, 87.2 % of Gujarat's males were literate as against 70.7% of females; a gap of 17.2%. The corresponding all-India figures are 82.1% and 65.4%; a gap of 16.7%. Gender Gap in literacy is a hindrance in all district of Gujarat state. Extensive efforts are required to address this problem.

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RTI act in top Ten Central Ministries in India (2005-06 to 2018-19)

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[The Right to Information (RTI) gives, in a real sense, the true meaning of democracy where citizens have the right to ask information from its government. The RTI helps in making informed citizenry in our country which helps in bringing transparency and accountability in governance. The RTI on 12th October 2020, completed fifteen years of its existence and it allows us to study its implementations at this important juncture. Therefore, this article will focus on RTI implementations from (2005-06 to 2018-19) with the latest publicly available data for the top ten public authorities under the Central Government or Government of India.]

To bring transparency in governance, the Indian Parliament passed on 12th May 2005 one of the most important transparency law in independent India in the form of Right to Information (RTI) Act which received the assent of the President of India on 15th June. It empowers the citizens to ask information from the government which helps make their lives better and more importantly, helps in bringing some kind of transparency and accountability in the working of the government.

The RTI act has completed its fifteen years (it came into force on 12th October 2005) and has gone through different phases since its existence. Although the RTI act has been implemented throughout India, this article aims to study only its implementation at the Central Government level. The reason being that updated RTI information is easily available in the public domain in the form of the annual reports of the Central Information Commission.

Status of Right to Information Act in India

Table 1.1 shows that in the last 14 years (2005-06 to 2018-19), there has been a total of 1.08 crore RTI applications (backlog and fresh receipts) reported by the public authorities under the central government

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(according to the latest publicly available data). It increased from 24,436 RTI applications in 2005-06 to 16.30 lakh in 2018-19. The largest increase in a single year has seen in 2017-18 with 14.48 lakh applications, in comparison with 11.28 lakh applications in the previous year i.e., 2016-17, except for the years 2010-11, 2014-15, and 2016-17 saw a decline in applications, and in all other years, there was an increase in RTI applications.

In terms of growth in RTI applications percentage-wise, during 2006-07 it is (650.6%) in comparison with the previous year 2005-06. Similarly, it was (56.57%) in 2007-08, (26.23%) 2008-09, (72.88%) 2009-10, (27.03%) 2011-12, (25.59%) 2012-13,

(8.56%) 2013-14, (37.89%) 2015-16, (28.40%) 2017-18, and (12.52%) 2018-19. As per Table 1.1, the new RTI applications filed every year at the central government level are increasing from a mere 24,436 applications in 2005-06 to 13.70 lakh applications in 2018-19, except for three years, when there was a decline in RTI applications in comparison with the previous year i.e., in 2010-11, 2014-15, and 2016-17.

The largest decline of RTI applications in a single year was seen in 2010-11 with 4.17 lakh applications in comparison with 5.29 lakh applications in 2009-10. Similarly, the largest increase was seen in the year 2017-18 with 12.33 lakh applications in comparison with 9.15 lakh applications in 2016-17.

Table 1.1: Right to Information Applications in India (from 2005-06 to 2018-19)

Year	Backlog of RTI from the previous	New RTI received in the year reporting year	Total number of RTI (backlog)	Number of requests for information + new RTI	Percentage of rejection vis-a-vis rejected number of new RTI received
2005-06	0	24436	24436	3387	13.86
2006-07	12026	171398	183424	15388	8.97
2007-08	23926	263261	287187	18966	7.20
2008-09	32792	329728	362520	23954	7.26
2009-10	97474	529274	626748	34057	6.43
2010-11	137771	417955	555726	21413	5.12
2011-12	76016	629960	705976	52313	8.30
2012-13	75331	811350	886681	62231	7.67
2013-14	128447	834183	962630	60127	7.20
2014-15	89785	755247	845032	63351	8.38
2015-16	188538	976679	1165217	64666	6.62
2016-17	212430	915749	1128179	60428	6.59
2017-18	215466	1233207	1448673	63206	5.12
2018-19	259919	1370129	1630048	64344	4.69
Total	1549921	9262556	10812477	607831	6.56

Source: Authors' Compilation of Data from various Annual Reports of Central Information Commission (2005-06 to 2018-19), Government of India.

One major hurdle in the effective implementation of RTI has been seen not only at the central government level but also at the state level, due to the increase in the backlog of RTI applications. The reason being the applications within a reporting year are not disposed, as a result, these are carried over to the next year and become a backlog. In 2006-07, the number of backlogs was 12,026 which is (6.55%)

of the total RTI applications during that reporting year. It slowly increased to 23,926 (8.33%) in 2007-08; 32,792 (9.04%) in 2008-09; 97,474 (15.55%) in 2009-10; 1.37 lakh (24.79%) in 2010-11.

However, it decreased to 76,016 (10.76%) and 75,331 (8.49%) in 2011-12 and 2012-13 respectively. Again, it increased to 1.28 lakh (13.34%) in 2013-14 and, then decreased to 89,785 (10.62%) in 2014-15. But after that, there has been seen an increasing trend 1.88 lakh (16.18%) in 2015-16; 2.12 lakh (18.82%) in 2016-17; 2.15 lakh (14.87%) in 2017-18 and, 2.59

lakh (15.94%) in 2018-19 (see Table 1.1). In the majority of the years, during the period from 2006-07 to 2018-19, the percentage growth of backlog RTI applications are more than the new or fresh RTI applications in comparison to the previous years.

For instance, in 2007-08 it saw an increase of (98.95%) backlog RTI applications in comparison to 2006-07, whereas for the same period it witnessed an increase of (53.59%) for new or fresh RTI applications. Similarly, increase in 2008-09 (37.05%) for the former and (25.24%) latter; 2009-10 (197.24% vs. 60.51%); 2013-14 (70.51% vs. 2.81%); 2015-16 (109.98% vs. 29.31%) and lastly, in 2018-19 (20.63% vs. 11.10%).

Analysis of Top Ten Central Ministries in terms of RTI Applications and Rejections

The top ten central ministries that report the largest number of RTI applications, since the beginning of the act till now (i.e., from 2005-06 to 2018-19) are given in Table 1.2. According to which, the Ministry of Finance topped the list with a total of 14.67 lakh applications, followed by Ministry of Communication & Information Technology 10.99 lakh, Ministry of Railway 7.75 lakh, Ministry of Home Affairs 6.45 lakh, Ministry of Human Resource Development 5.85

lakh, Ministry of Defence 4.26 lakh, Ministry of Labour & Employment 3.74 lakh, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions 3.42 lakh, Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs 2.73 lakh, and Ministry of Health & Family Welfare 1.87 lakh. The total RTI applications of these ten central ministries was 61.78 lakh which accounts for (66.70%) of the total 92.62 lakh RTI applications received by the all central government ministries/departments/independent organisations etc.

If we see, the top ten central ministries individually in terms of their RTI applications percentage to the total RTI applications of all central government ministries/departments/independent organisations etc., then the Ministry of Finance accounts for (15.84%) of the total RTI applications, next comes the Ministry of Communication & Information Technology (11.86%), Ministry of Railway (8.37%), to be followed by Ministry of Home Affairs (6.96%), Ministry of Human Resource Development (6.32%), Ministry of Defence (4.60%), Ministry of Labour & Employment (4.04%), Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions (3.70%), Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (2.95%), and Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (2.02%) respectively.

Table 1.2: Top Ten Central Ministries in terms of RTI Applications and Rejections (from 2005-06 to 2018-19)

Ministry	Total number of RTI received	Number of requests for information	Percentage of rejection (%) rejected
Ministry of Finance	1467534	262986	17.92
Ministry of Communication & Information Technology	1099250	44930	4.08
Ministry of Railway	775992	8435	1.08
Ministry of Home Affairs	645102	79920	12.38
Ministry of Human Resource Development	585949	7273	1.24
Ministry of Defence	426201	35668	8.36
Ministry of Labour & Employment	374373	21910	5.85
Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions	342934	22004	6.41
Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs@	273774	1855	0.67
Ministry of Health & Family Welfare	187587	3412	1.81
Total (top ten central ministries)	6178696	488393	7.90
Total for all central ministries/ departments/independent organisations etc	9262556	607831	6.56

Note: @ since 2017 Ministry of Urban Development was renamed as Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs.

Source: Authors' Compilation of Data from various Annual Reports of Central Information Commission (2005-06 to 2018-19), Government of India.

However, in terms of percentage of RTI information requests rejection, the top ten central ministries are: Ministry of Finance 2.62 lakh rejection which is (17.92%) of the total requests received by this ministry, followed by Ministry of Home Affairs

79,920 (12.38%), Ministry of Defence 35,668 (8.36%), Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions 22,004 (6.41%), Ministry of Labour & Employment 21,910 (5.85%), Ministry of Communication & Information Technology 44,930 (4.08%), Ministry of Health & Family Welfare 3,412 (1.81%), Ministry of Human Resource Development 7,273 (1.24%), Ministry of Railway 8,435 (1.08%), and Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs 1,855 (0.67%).

A total of 4.88 lakh RTI requests rejected by ten central ministries which accounts for (7.90%) of the total RTI applications received by them. The (7.90%) RTI applications rejection of top ten central ministries is much more than the overall average of (6.56%) i.e. (total RTI requests rejection of all central ministries/departments/independent organisations etc.). So, the rejection of RTI requests in the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Home Affairs, and Ministry of Defence are above the overall average of (6.56%). Similarly, the Ministry of Finance alone constitute (43.26%) of the total RTI applications rejection of all central government ministries/departments/independent organisations etc. Next comes the Ministry of Home Affairs with (13.14%), Ministry of Communication & Information Technology (7.39%), Ministry of Defence (5.86%), Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions (3.62%), Ministry of Labour & Employment (3.60%), Ministry of Railway (1.38%), Ministry of Human Resource Development (1.19%), Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (0.56%), and Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (0.30%).

Sections invoked for Rejection of RTI Applications

To have a better understanding of the reasons for the rejection of RTI applications by the top ten central ministries, it will be very useful to look at Table 1.3.

Under the RTI Act, there are five Sections (8, 9, 11, 24 and 'others') which can be invoked by the public authorities while rejecting the RTI requests. So, Section 8 talks about exemptions from disclosing information which affects the sovereignty and integrity of the country; the security, strategic, scientific or economic interests of the state etc. Section 9 deals with rejecting request for the information would involve an infringement of copyright subsisting in a person other than the state. Section 11 deals with procedure for the third-party information whether to disclose or rejection of request for the information. Section 24 discusses information being exempted concerning to certain intelligence and security organisations.

Table 1.3 clearly shows a total of (3.21 lakh) times Section 8 was invoked by the top ten central ministries, followed by 'Others' (1.78 lakh); Section 24 (57,849); Section 11 (12,414) and Section 9 (3,622). A total of (5.73 lakh) times provisions under various aforementioned Sections invoked for rejecting the RTI requests from the period 2005-06 to 2018-19. Also, during the aforementioned period, the total for all central ministries/departments/independent organisations etc., combined shows (3.97 lakh) times Section 8 was invoked followed by 'Others' (2.59 lakh); Section 24 (58,303); Section 11 (14,823) and Section 9 (4,412).

A total of (7.35 lakh) times provisions under various Sections invoked for rejecting the RTI requests. The top ten central ministries accounts for (78.05%) of the number of times provisions under various sections invoked of the total central ministries/departments/independent organisations etc. The use of Section 24 by the top ten central ministries accounts for (99.22%) of the total central ministries/departments/independent organisations etc., followed by Section 11 (83.74%), Section 9 (82.09%), Section 8 (80.91%) and 'Others' (68.53%).

Table 1.3: Sections invoked for rejection of RTI Applications in Top Ten Central Ministries (from 2005-06 to 2018-19)

Ministry	Number of times provisions under various section invoked					Overall Total
	Section 8	Section 9	Section 11	Section 24	Others	
Ministry of Finance	225791	1234	4605	4006	91559	327195
Ministry of Communication & Information Technology	28452	531	2485	341	15794	47603
Ministry of Railway	5699	146	124	6	3079	9054
Ministry of Home Affairs	20259	154	2388	43962	19090	85853
Ministry of Human Resource Development	6527	5	157	1	5254	11944
Ministry of Defence	12733	735	1244	5586	17495	37793

Ministry of Labour & Employment	6275	735	902	908	13871	22691
Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions	11455	74	291	3039	10165	25024
Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs@	1396	1	174	Nil	776	2347
Ministry of Health & Family Welfare	3402	7	44	Nil	942	4395
Total (top ten central ministries)	321989	3622	12414	57849	178025	573899
Total for all central ministries/ departments/independent organisations etc	397941	4412	14823	58303	259748	735227

Note: @ since 2017 Ministry of Urban Development was renamed as Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs.

Source: Authors' Compilation of Data from various Annual Reports of Central Information Commission (2005-06 to 2018-19), Government of India.

Also, Table 1.3 highlights the dominance of four central ministries in case of use of various Sections in comparison with all other central ministries/ departments/independent organisations etc. Firstly, under Section 8, the Ministry of Finance leads the chart with 2.25 lakh times this Section invoked which is (56.73%) of the total central ministries/departments/independent organisations etc., followed by the Ministry of Home Affairs 20,259 (5.09%) and Ministry of Defence 12,733 (3.19%). Secondly, under Section 9, again the Ministry of Finance taking the lead with 1,234 times this Section invoked which is (27.96%) of the total central ministries/departments/independent organisations etc., next comes Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Labour & Employment with both each having 735 (16.65%) and Ministry of Communication & Information Technology 28,452 (12.03%).

Thirdly, under Section 11, the Ministry of Finance occupied first position with 4,605 times this Section invoked which is (31.06%) of the total central ministries/departments/independent organisations etc., followed by the Ministry of Communication & Information Technology 2,485 (16.76%), Ministry of Home Affairs 2,388 (16.11%) and Ministry of Defence 1,244 (8.39%). Fourthly under Section 24, surprisingly the Ministry of Home Affairs alone accounts for 43,962 times this Section invoked which is (75.40%) of the total central ministries/departments/independent organisations etc., next comes the Ministry of Defence 5,586 (9.58%), Ministry of Finance 4,006 (6.87%) and Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions 3,309 (5.21%).

Fifthly, under the 'Others' category, the Ministry of Finance having 91,559 times this Section invoked which is (35.24%) of the total central ministries/ departments/independent organisations etc., followed by Ministry of Home Affairs 19,090 (7.34%), Ministry of Defence 17,495 (6.73%) and Ministry of Communication & Information Technology 15,794 (6.08%).

Overall, the Ministry of Finance invoked a total of 3.27 lakh times various Sections (together) which is (44.50%) of the total of all central ministries/ departments/independent organisations etc. The Ministry of Home Affairs 85,853 times which is (11.67%), Ministry of Communications & Information Technology 47,603 times (6.47%), and Ministry of Defence 37,793 times (5.14%).

Conclusion

In the last 14 years (from 2005-06 to 2018-19), there has been steady increase in the number of RTI applications filed by the people every year except for the year 2010-11, 2014-15, and 2016-17. The increase in the number of RTI every year shows its importance and also indicating the faith of the people in the RTI act. However, an increase was also seen in the backlog of RTIs. Out of top ten central ministries, the three ministries which emerge at the forefront in terms of overall (RTI applications, rejections and sections invoked), RTI implementation at the Central Government level are; Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Communication & Information Technology and Ministry of Home Affairs, especially the issue of RTI rejections and sections invoked needs to be taken seriously. Although the RTI act has completed 15 years, but still there exists some challenges and hurdles which hamper the way leading to the successful implementation of the RTI act in India.

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Economics & Globalization as Mirrored in Amitav Ghosh's Ibis Trilogy

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[The ibis trilogy of Amitav Ghosh expands to 1700 and odd pages under the titles *Sea of Poppies* (2008), *River of Smoke* (2011) and *Flood of Fire* (2015). The fulcrum of this trilogy is opium trade and war. A close study of this trilogy exhibits the survival strategy of people in Asia. The readers perhaps migrate from India to Hong Kong and China along with the natives as the novels progress. The historical dimension of this trilogy exhibits a lot of Indian characters speaking different native languages and dialects. The foresight of this research article is to edify the economic scenario of the countries during opium trading and the impact of Globalization.]

Amitav Ghosh unveils the plight of Indians who migrate as plantation workers to several parts of the world under British Empire in *Sea of Poppies*. The apparent historical instances of entire world occurred during 1838 shrinks into the pages of *Sea of Poppies*. The expansion of opium plantation for trading globally, the role of business tycoons involved in narcotics, the economic changes from the micro to macro level of a country due to opium trading form the crux of *River of Smoke*. Globalization through technical advancements and international economic upheavals due to opium trading and war are inferred from *Flood of Fire*.

Amitav Ghosh exquisitely delineates the contradictory connections between abundance and poverty, intimacy and exclusion, authority and self-deception, chance and fate further to the ineffable economic impacts over the life of Indians. These three novels termed as Ibis trilogy sustain adequate scope for Sociologic, Climatic,

Environmental, Commercial, Political and Economic criticisms. This research article is an attempt to explore the macro-economic theoretical traces deciphered from the Ibis Trilogy that comprises the above stated three novels.

Globalization in Ibis Trilogy

The Ibis trilogy edifies the hierarchical gradation of India in caste, class and division as the vital reasons which seemed to be infectious in making one's career choice. Factually stating this certainly gets interlinked with the economic upliftment of that individual, and his family. When Indians migrate to other countries under the British Empire, there have been enormous and indispensable changes in the life of those Indians, their families, the societies in which they live and the nation ultimately.

Amitav Ghosh has brought to the limelight how every single career choice made by an Indian in the arena of plantations contributed to the uncanny economic policies of the nations in this Ibis Trilogy. In fact, there is a swinging connectivity in the thematic twining of the stories which are strongly centred around travel and diaspora,

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historical memories, encountered violence, loss and throughout crossing the expectations and work art and Anthropology.

Amitav has also embarked on the recent critical scenario of Global Warming which widens the avenue of exploring into the economic impacts of a nation due to climatic changes that originate from global warming. "The challenges of navigating through his rich prose expose readers to a verbal cornucopia, which feeds a series of related themes sustained by a narrative rhythm of convergence and divergence, all stemming from asymmetrical colonial relations during the opium trade" (John Kertzer).

Economic Theory in Ibis Trilogy

The economic theory especially during the 19th century is well exhibited in the literature of Amitav's Ibis trilogy. Here in these novels, one may observe how theoretically, Amitav enunciates which is mainstream to consider monetary hypothesis of zeroing in a restricted arrangement of causally applicable variables and to inspect the results of their working in lack of discrepant components. A more solid record of the experimental world would require further consolidation of the economic causes that help to foresee the transformation and economic impacts globally.

Perhaps, the traces of Marxian power and political perspectives backed up by the foundation of a nation's economy also comes to the limelight from the subsequent quote extracted from *Flood of Fire* (2015), a component of Ibis trilogy: "How is it possible that a small number of men in the span of few hours and minutes to decide the fate of millions of people yet unborn. How was it possible that the outcome of those brief moments could determine who could rule whom, who would be rich or poor, master or servant for generations to come. Nothing could be greater injustice yet such had been the reality ever since human beings first walk the earth" (Amitav Ghosh).

Economic theories of J.S. Mill (1832) Karl Marx (1858) Carl Menger (1883) and Alfred Marshall (1890) shall be inferred from conceptualizing Amitav's Ibis trilogy. Although incomplete, these economic theories have of course been comprehended in terms of their "premises" that has been witnessed as its fact. In these premises, agents have been labelled as self-centred hoarders of material riches and wealth. Noticeably, the agricultural deterioration which directly affects a country's economy as seen in Ibis trilogy testifies only the significance given to opium cultivation in India and trading in the countries under British regime.

On the other facet, the nation's revenue reaped from the agricultural sector is obviously from the plantations and trading of narcotics. Henceforth, less significance has been given to cultivation of food grains like paddy, wheat, maize and millets. Amitav opens up certain discussion on narcotics and its cultivation and permits a lapse for certain untold realities about food grain cultivation, irrigation and crop rotation practices of Indians.

Conglomerated Nations in Ibis Trilogy

In September 1838 a tempest explodes on the Indian Ocean and the Ibis, a boat conveying a transfer of convicts and obligated workers from Calcutta to Mauritius, is up to speed in the tornado. At the point when the oceans settle, five men have vanished - two lascars, two convicts and one of the travellers. Does the storm overturn the fortunes of those on board the Anahita, an opium transporter heading towards Canton? What's further, what destiny occurred for those on board the Redruth, a strong two-masted brig traveling East out of Cornwall? Does the tempest change their course or the destiny of those abandoned travellers who have been exposed to considerably impressive powers?

On the amazing size of an authentic epic, *River of Smoke* follows its tempest that has thrown the characters to the jam-packed harbours of China. There, notwithstanding the endeavours of the sovereign to stop them, ships from Europe and

India trade their cargoes of opium for boxes of tea, silk, porcelain and silver. Among them are Bahram Modi, a well off Parsi opium vendor out of Bombay, his repelled half-Chinese child Ah Fatt, the stranded Paulette and a diverse assortment of others whose quest for sentiment, wealth and an amazing uncommon bloom have put together.

All battle to adapt to their misfortunes - and for a few, impossible opportunities - in the rear entryways and swarmed streams of nineteenth century Canton. As shipping and entrancing as a sedative initiated dream, *River of Smoke* will before long be proclaimed as a work of art of twenty-first century writing. Opium trading is the conglomerating link that builds a commercial bridge between India, Britain, China and Hong Kong. Ibis has a significant role in this commercial connectivity based on narcotic commodities.

Economy of Colonized Nations in Ibis Trilogy

Monetary speculations of frameworks of urban areas clarify why creation and utilization exercises are packed in various metropolitan territories of various sizes and modern synthesis instead of consistently dispersed in space. These hypotheses have been progressively impacted by four parameters stated subsequently.

- i. Ordinary metropolitan financial matters underlining the pressure between economies because of the spatial centralization of movement and diseconomies emerging from that fixation;
- ii. The hypothesis of modern association as it identifies with between industry linkages and to item separation;
- iii. New Economic Geography which disregards land showcases yet accentuates exchange among urban communities, fixed rural hinterlands and the endogenous development of topography;
- iv. The endogenous monetary development is part of this hypothesis. Among the issues analysed are specialization versus expansion of urban

communities in frameworks of urban communities, how city frameworks add to expanding returns in public and the worldwide economies, the variables that decide ability circulation and pay uniqueness between urban communities, the effects of pay difference on government assistance, regardless of whether populace development should make monetary movement become pretty much amassed in metropolitan zones, and how assets ought to be distributed productively in an arrangement of urban areas.

An absolute hypothetical investigation of city frameworks is that markets bomb in effectively apportioning assets across urban areas when certain intercity communications are available and that a part for focal arranging might be fundamental.

Conclusion

In Amitav's Ibis trilogy there are three continuous explorable historical fictions dealing with power and politics which opens avenues for an economic research too. They are in this trilogy – comprising, *Sea of Poppies* (2008), *River of Smoke* (2011), and *Flood of Fire* (2015) - a narrative on the opium exchange among India and China. The economic perspectives of J.S. Mill (1832), Karl Marx (1858), Carl Menger (1883) and Alfred Marshall (1890) are seen through the dealing of individuals as contracted works by the East India Company during mid-nineteenth century.

The enigmatic diaspora is the intersection of the “shadow lines”, the geological limits among nations and the main lands. The basic needs of human beings and their efforts to acquire their food and shelter expands the scope of economic research in this Ibis Literature of Amitav. Perhaps, it extends the provision of discovery about economic hypotheses of J.S. Mill (1832) Karl Marx (1858) Carl Menger (1883) and Alfred Marshall (1890). The typical narrative style of Amitav Ghosh serves as the best component to identify the economic needs of the labourers who may be classified in the Marxian

power structure of the society of the countries namely, India, China, Hong Kong and Britain.

The Marxian super structure and the base have their fixed roots on the economic standards of one's lifestyle. The economic need is thrust and compelled to choose one's profession thoughtless of general ethics. No man is ready to think whether opium is good or evil. Instead, they seem to either readily pursue their trade on opium or consume opium. As there seem to be no rescue from slavery, Indians and colonized people are shown to involve themselves in opium trading which outbreaks the prime cause of war between nations.

The dealers, the mariners, or the exchanging organization specialists, who cross the 'dark water' out of their own advantages, share some basic encounters of yearning to go home, nervousness, torment and affliction with those of the reluctant abroad carriers like the coolies and convicts. Simultaneously, they show their impact and share some normal grounds, a compelling concern, the British colonization just as the job of East India Company.

Practically all the characters of the set of three are diasporic, who embrace deliberate or persuasive development from their countries into new districts, are uncovered to be by one way or another associated with the colonization. This paper means to follow out those elements of the British colonization, uncommonly the opium exchange run by the East India Company that built the financial existence of India and Canton, and how they are answerable for all these

conundrums of boundary intersections deciphered from the Ibis trilogy.

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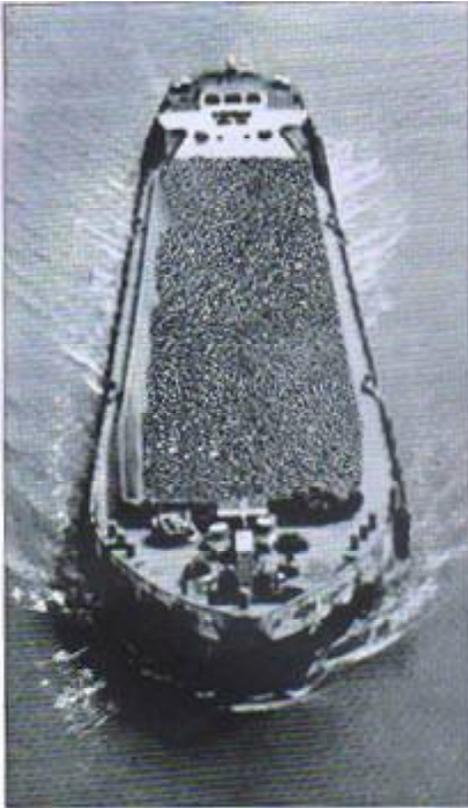
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जानकारी
यानी भूकंप से निपटने की तैयारी



झुको, ढको, पकड़ो



जैसे ही भूकंप के झटके लगें :

- फौरन किसी खुले स्थान की ओर दौड़ें
- यदि यह संभव न हो तो तुरन्त झुका कर अपने डेस्क या मेज के नीचे धले जाएँ
- अपने सिर को किसी मज़बूत चीज़ या अपने बस्ते से बचाएँ
- दौड़ कर किसी कोने में खड़े होकर अपने आप को बचाएँ

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